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Volume 11 – Edition 2

HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – March 2014

Welcome

It is amazing how many times you will hear John's name mentioned during the course of a week, or a month. I will be sharing a number of these instances during the course of this newsletter. All I can say is that John's music will live forever – of that, I am absolutely certain.

I think there may be a resurgence in folk music here in Australia. Judging from the number of people attending events such as the Port Fairy Folk Festival and other music festivals around the state of Victoria recently, good folk music is very much alive and well. March seems to be John Denver month across America and Australia and many of our members have written in some glowing reports of the tribute concerts they have attended this month. Those reports are included in our newsletter.

It is always exciting when I receive photos of our friends and members getting together. Recently Vicki stayed with the Wilsons, and also met up with the 'Newcastle' girls. Here is one of the photos of the ladies recently.



(left to right – Carmel, Melanie (standing), Vicki, Jan, Lorraine, Marlene)

2014 JD Tribute Weekend

Our annual John Denver Tribute Weekend will be held on the Weekend of **Friday 10th – Sunday 12th October, 2014**. We are holding the weekend in Boonah Queensland, at the Outlook Centre. Mark the weekend in your calendars and we would love to see you all in October. More details will be published over the next couple of months. At this stage, we do not have to pay a deposit to the Outlook Centre for the weekend. The theme will be **Christmas**, so brush up on your carols and favourite Christmas songs over the next few months! Our non-refundable deposit of \$40 will

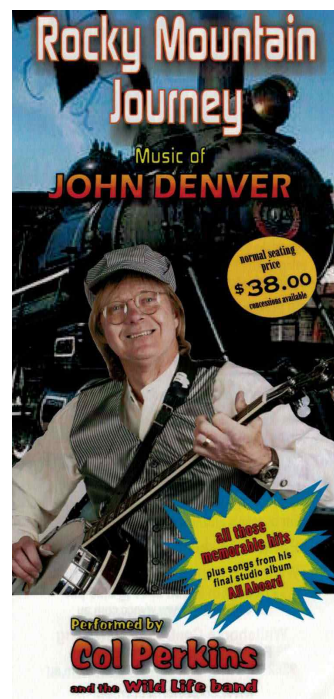
be collected from June, and I will remind you about where to make your payment closer to the time. The deposit will be your food kitty contribution and the price of the accommodation will be paid to the owners during the weekend. Over the next few weeks, please start thinking of what we are going to do this year to raise money for eagle rehabilitation. I think we have some items left that would be suitable for a small silent auction, but we might want to try something else. As usual, all funds raised for the fundraiser will be donated to a small eagle rehabilitation centre. A quilt will be donated for the annual raffle. Last year, we raised \$400 for our raffle, and it would be nice to raise a similar amount again. This year's quilt is called 'Around the World in 80 blocks'. It is an I Spy quilt and there will be photos in the next newsletter. If you have any questions about this year's weekend, email me!

Rocky Mountain Journey

The Horwells and I saw the Col Perkins' new John Denver tribute show on Friday evening at the Wyndam Cultural Centre in Werribee. He is also playing at the Whitehorse Centre in Nunawading on April 11th at 8pm. We thoroughly enjoyed his concert, and also enjoyed the fact that he did sing many songs that are usually not included in a tribute show lineup, such as Dreamland Express, and Sing Australia. Check out his website:

<http://www.colperkins.com.au/rockymountainjourney-1.html>

Following on the success of our previous concert featuring the magic of a John Denver Rocky Mountain Christmas, this new show will again bring to you that unbelievable experience of once again being touched by the music of John Denver. Col Perkins has been performing the songs of John Denver to audiences throughout Australia for



over 10 years. Close your eyes and you will think you are at a John Denver concert ... open your eyes, and you will again think somebody has been playing tricks with you - the resemblance is uncanny.

This concert will showcase something very special



for the true fan of John Denver and his music. Together with the Wild Life band, Col will present all those memorable

hits, plus a selection of new songs from John Denver's last recorded studio album "All Aboard" which was released during the year of John's untimely death in October 1997.

Join us for an unbelievable "ROCKY MOUNTAIN JOURNEY".

Take Me Home

I mentioned last year, when I saw Bevan Gardiner performing as the support act for Charley Pride, that he would be returning to Australia in 2014.

The tickets have been released for his performances in Melbourne on 30th August, and Sydney on the 31st August. Tickets are now on sale from Ticketmaster.

http://www.ticketmaster.com.au/search?tm_link=t_m_header_search&=&user_input=take+me+home&q=take+me+home

We have our tickets, and we are looking forward to this concert.

A Little Something on the Jim Curry Concert I Attended!

Written by Diane Wetmore.

An Afternoon With Jim Curry Sunday March 9 2014

Walking into the Citrus Learning Center in Lecanto, Florida I was again, for the second year warmly welcomed by the sound of John Denver's music softly playing from the "colors in Time" album by Pete Huttlinger and Chris Nole.

Instruments were set up on the stage and there were video screens set up high in the background so right away everyone knew there would be music and pictures too!

I attended this afternoon concert with my sister for a second year and this time we had excellent seats—fifth row, center! It really doesn't get much better than that!

The first song Jim and his band played was "Rocky Mountain High" followed by many other of John Denver's all-time hits including but not limited to "Leaving on a Jet Plane" and when Jim introduces us to his lovely wife, Anne, who is also part of the band, Jim told us a little bit about himself—what it was like growing up in a military family(Navy)

much like John did and his(Jim's) courtship with Anne at which time he sang, "Annie's Song" as he also sang it for her on their wedding day.

It was really such a great afternoon listening to John's music being played live again and singing along with all of the favorite John Denver tunes we all know and love so well: "Montana Skies", "Rhymes and Reasons", "Back Home Again", just to name a few more...

Jim tells the audience that they'll be going next to Dallas, Texas to play with a symphony orchestra which is always a thrill for them and he continues and says that after all the years they've been doing these tribute shows he's hooked up with one of John's photographers who also helped John produce live videos for his(John's) concerts. Jim and the band shared with us one of those videos under John's song, "Mathew". In the video, you can see John working on the farm during wheat harvest surrounded by all that golden wheat and a clear, blue sky above...

The audience loved what I like to call "the participation songs" like "Thank God I'm A Country Boy", "Grandma's Feather Bed" and Jim treated us by singing the verse Jim Connors wrote that is not usually played or heard in that song and "Take Me Home, Country Roads", is always an audience favorite and now, "Yellowstone: Coming Home", the last song John wrote is a great audience participation song since the audience is usually asked to make the wolves' howling sounds.

One of this show's highlights (for me) was the captivating performance of "Eagle and the Hawk". Jim explained that since this is such a difficult song to sing, through the years, the range had to be lowered several times by half steps so that it would be comfortable enough to sing. Now, for the orchestra arrangement there are actually three scores.

You could hear Jim really "belt out the lyrics up from his toes" and I felt as though I was right there, flying along with an eagle over some high mountaintops being carried by a west wind from the sound of Diane Ireland's marvellous and stimulating flute playing along with the rest of the band complimenting the lyrics and the videos. The videos were of John holding an eagle and of eagles in free flight...just breath-taking and magnificent

Some other songs that were played were "I Want To Live" inspired by John's work with The Hunger Project, "Shanghai Breezes", and the other show highlight for me, beyond question is "Eagles and Horses" which gets introduced by Anne highlighting Diane playing a Native American drone flute(I believe that is what it is called) which contains two flutes in one which Jim and Anne's son also plays. Their son wrote this introduction which Diane now plays and if you get the chance to hear this played live, or on one



of their recordings, you will hear its beauty and uniqueness and specialness added to the song. I believe that if John ever heard this introduction played for his song the way it is played here, he would have re-recorded the song with this new introduction. It is truly beautiful and I hope you get to hear it sometime!

During the singing and playing of "Sunshine on My Shoulders" the audience was magically transported to Aspen, Colorado in video where we walked in the John Denver sanctuary gazing at the song stones with words inscribed on each stone to various songs John wrote. You felt like you were really there in the moment!

Near the end of the show, in Jim's usual cordial style, he invites everyone out to the lobby afterwards for some "meet and greet" time.

To start closing the show, they played "Aye, Calypso" and for a first encore, they performed one of their own songs, "long, Lost Friends" then, for a second encore, they closed the show the way John often did with "this Old Guitar".

It was a great show and Jim and the band were at their best playing and singing able to reach all of those wonderful but often really difficult high notes. Their voices and playing filled the room robustly and everyone who attended had a really good sing-a-long time singing and clapping enthusiastically to some of the most beloved music from one of America's most beloved songwriters so dearly missed, John Denver.

You will be in for a treat if Jim and his band play in or near your area and you get the chance to enjoy this wonderful tribute show.

Pete Huttlinger in Connecticut

Barb and Dick Stevens took a friend to see Pete Huttlinger when he appeared at the Roaring Brook Nature Center in Connecticut last weekend.

Barb's observation was that he was 'awesome', and thoroughly enjoyed this concert. This is what Barb has written:

We just got home from the Pete Huttlinger appearance at the Roaring Brook Nature Center in CT and he was awesome!!

He looked great and was a real comedian and had us laughing a lot. He seemed to be having a ball. It was good to see him in concert and he sang great, joked about his medical problems and everyone in the room was laughing and seemed to enjoy him. We brought a friend with us and she was really impressed about the concert and his great attitude and laughing.

Special Consensus High on John Denver Tribute Album

Chrissie Dickinson, Special to the Tribune, March 24, 2014

John Denver died in 1997, but his music has never gone away. He still has a manager and a fan club. His hit "Take Me Home, Country Roads" recently became an official state song of West Virginia. Now, Special Consensus gives the late artist the tribute treatment.

"It's a heartfelt project," says Greg Cahill, founder and banjoist of the long-running Chicagoland bluegrass band. "We really love and respect the music of John Denver."

The proof is on "Country Boy: A Bluegrass Tribute to John Denver" (Compass Records), which releases Tuesday. The release features Special Consensus members Cahill, guitarist Dustin Benson, bassist Dan Eubanks and mandolinist Rick Faris playing on every track. The band is joined by a slew of rootsy guest stars, among them bluegrass diva Rhonda Vincent, acclaimed singer-songwriter Jim Lauderdale, fiddle maestro Buddy Spicher and Claire Lynch, the reigning International Bluegrass Music Association's female vocalist of the year.

Cahill and crew cover Denver's biggest hits ("Country Roads," "Rocky Mountain High") and some of his less-well-known numbers ("Eagles and Horses," "Matthew").

"It's the whole package," Cahill says. "John was a great writer who told stories. He was an environmentalist. We wanted to give people a well-rounded feel for his music."

With all the worthy candidates out there, how did the band land on the idea of covering John Denver's canon? Cahill recalls that several years ago a friend suggested there would be cross-market appeal in a Denver tribute, given that the singer-songwriter's fans span several generations. Cahill tucked the idea in the back of his mind.

After Special Consensus' 2012 album "Scratch Gravel Road" was nominated for a Grammy, he knew the group needed a unique follow-up that would appeal to a wide selection of folks. The John Denver idea came back to the fore.

Denver, a pilot who died in a single-person airplane crash in 1997 at age 53, enjoyed his greatest commercial success in the 1970s. With his shaggy blond hair, hippie-ish wire-rimmed glasses, embroidered Western shirts and wide smile, he was an accessible, outdoorsy and nonthreatening figure of the era, more mountain boy than mountain man. He had a knack for writing addictively hookish folk-pop smash hits about getting high on nature and love. In a sturdy yet honeyed tone, he sang such enduring numbers as the plain-spoken ballad "Sunshine on My Shoulders" and the soaring ode "Rocky Mountain High."

It's easy to see why his warm, acoustic, melodic songs lend themselves to a bluegrass treatment. Musically and emotionally, Denver's material is a natural fit with the genre.

Compass Records owner Alison Brown, a Grammy-winning musician in her own right, produced the tribute album. "Bluegrass bands have been covering John's music for a really long time," she says. "When you break down one of John's songs, the form of his music and the harmonic structure, it's an easy hop into



bluegrass. Some of the inherent themes of his music resonate with bluegrass: his green message, his attachment to the earth. Coming out of an agrarian society, bluegrass really has that connection to place and simpler times."

The Denver tribute idea was also inspired by the 40-year anniversary of "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," the 1972 Nitty Gritty Dirt Band album that featured the country-rock band and an illustrious list of guest artists covering country classics. Special Consensus decided to mirror that concept with its own release.

"We thought it would be great to make a heartfelt, miniversion of the 'Circle' record," Cahill says.

"We said, 'We've got great music and great words. Let's bring in a bunch of friends as guest artists that people will recognize in the world of bluegrass music.'"

Lynch shares lead vocals on "Wild Montana Skies" with Special Consensus member Faris. On the original version of the song, Denver was accompanied by Emmylou Harris.

"Even though John was a pop success, his thinking was very roots-oriented," Lynch says.

"Being close to the earth and loving the mountains has a lot to do with acoustic roots music. It's a natural fit. I'm glad his songs can be appreciated in a different way."

Lynch also addresses Denver's squeaky-clean image.

"Has anybody mentioned the cheese factor with John?" she says with a laugh. "John Denver seemed to be the brunt of jokes about being cheesy. And yet in my house, I listened to him a lot and enjoyed it."

Indeed, in his heyday Denver was beloved by fans but often dismissed by critics. He was frequently seen as too commercial to be a serious folk artist and too pop for country.

Some in Nashville, Tenn., saw him as an interloper. When Denver won entertainer of the year in 1975 at the Country Music Association awards, the award's previous winner, Charlie Rich, read Denver's name on the winner's envelope, then pulled a lighter from his pocket and torched the slip.

The years have softened and erased such resistance. In some respects, Denver's legacy is similar to that of Karen Carpenter's. Her square, middle-of-the-road image in the brother-sister duo the Carpenters made her an object of derision in the 1970s. But in the ensuing years, the late Carpenter has been embraced as a gifted singer who left a number of indelible performances. Cahill says that, for those who initially dismissed Denver as a lightweight, time has vindicated the artist. "There are people in the last few years who've figured out just how great a songwriter he was and just how influential he was in the world of music."

As far as acceptance is concerned, Cahill feels a connection with Denver. Though Special Consensus, which celebrates its 40 anniversary as a band next year, is widely embraced and highly respected in the bluegrass world, it wasn't always so.

"Being a bluegrass group from Chicago, it took a while for us to get respect," he says. "We had to be determined. Now, of course, you look at some of the prominent artists in bluegrass, and they don't have to be from the South. Alison Krauss is from Champaign, Bela Fleck is from New York, and Noam Pikelny is from Skokie. Folks have broken down the barriers over the years."

"But it was a rough thing for us in the beginning."

So we're happy to come back with a joyful presentation of John Denver's music that transcends all boundaries of age and geography."

This is available from the usual outlets and iTunes

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/country-boy-bluegrass-tribute/id821030889>

Joe Frazier Passed Away, aged 77

Joe Frazier, who was a key member of the **Chad Mitchell Trio** during their most popular years, died on Friday (28th March) at the age of 77.

According to sources, his passing was unexpected. While he had some age-related illnesses, he had been getting stronger in recent weeks.

Frazier learned guitar and singing from his father at an early age and had his own local radio program before going into the Air Force.

Unfortunately, Frazier ended up being discharged after spending three months in the stockade while he was investigated for the books he read and the music to which he listened, including Pete Seeger and the Almanac Singers. As Frazier wrote on his biography page "If I wasn't a radical when I went in, I was certainly one when I left."

The original Chad Mitchell Trio was formed at Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA) in 1959 by Mitchell, Mike Kobluk and Mike Pugh. Their career received a push from Harry Belafonte and they soon found themselves on radio and TV shows with Arthur Godfrey and Pat Boone.

Pugh left the group in the summer of 1960 and, after a lengthy audition process, the group chose Frazier as his replacement. While the early group was more oriented towards traditional folk music, shortly after Frazier joined they released the political *The John Birch Society* which led to a much more controversial repertoire.

Over the four years, the group released eight albums including *Mighty Day on Campus* (1961 / #39), *Singin' Our Minds* (1963 / #39), and *Reflecting* (1964 / #29). Throughout, politically oriented material stood out including such songs as *The I Was Not a Nazi Polka*, *The Draft Dodger Rag* and *A Dying Business*. At the same time, they were able to dress up some traditional folk music to appeal to a larger



audience.

Mitchell broke off to start a solo career in 1965 and a young John Denver was brought in as his replacement. The new version of the trio recorded two albums, *That's the Way It's Gonna Be* and *Violets of Dawn*.

In 1967, Frazier decided to leave the group because, in his words "I was living through the 60's in a more politically radical and counter-culturally questionable fashion than Mike and John. I had, frankly, become more than somewhat unreliable."

After a bit of time on his own, he attended Yale Divinity School from which he graduated in 1973 as an ordained Episcopal priest. Over the years, he has served parishes in Pennsylvania, Delaware, California and, finally, at St. Columba's Church in Big Bear Lake, CA.

Mitchell, Kobluk and Frazier reunited twice over the years, in 1987 for a few shows, including a PBS special, and again in 2005 as a semi-permanent unit that played occasional concerts

Read more:

<http://www.vintagevinylnews.com/2014/03/passing-s-joe-frazier-of-chad-mitchell.html#ixzz2xXdVFh1R>

The song, Joseph and Joe was written about Joe Frazier by John Denver.

Almost Heaven with Suzette Herft

Whilst we were at the Port Fairy Folk Festival, we attended one of the performances by a Sri-Lankan/Australian singer. She does a Joan Baez tribute show, which we thoroughly enjoyed. We also found out that she often performs in some of the local 'Irish' pubs and is well-known by mutual friends. As she was going to perform at the Burke and Wills Winery in country Victoria a couple of weeks ago, we decided to take a weekend away and see this show. The Burke and Wills Winery is run by Andrew Paterson, who once owned the *Troubadour* in Melbourne, and who runs regular



folk festivals at his winery during the summer months. After the show and dinner, Suzette offered to play a few

songs on the proviso that we would sing along. A mutual friend also collected his guitar from the boot of his car and the two of them provided us with a wonderful evening of folk songs and great music. Before it started, one lady yelled out to sing some 'John Denver' songs, and Suzette and Tony obliged by playing 'Take me Home, Country Roads'.

Not long after, another patron got up and told us that one night John Denver had gone into the *Troubadour* and had sat down and played for the people in that night. . We had a wonderful day, great music, great fun and all in a wonderful setting.

I had made a mental note to see if I could find that story about John Denver singing at the Troubadour in Melbourne on the internet – this is what I found!

Folks! Shut up and Listen

August 20, 2003 Larry Schwartz.

Music entrepreneur and winegrower, Andrew Pattison, was upstairs in his Brunswick Street venue, the *Troubadour*, at about 7.15pm on a Tuesday when he heard the front door slam and looked up to see one of the biggest stars to cross its threshold.

Twenty years have passed since the surprise visit by singer-songwriter John Denver, who died aged 53 when his single-engine plane crashed off the California coast in late 1997.

But as he prepares to host an event this week to mark the 25th anniversary of the venue he founded, Pattison clearly cherishes his memory of an encounter with the entertainer.

Melbourne's *Troubadour* evolved from a coffee house to busy music venue in more than a decade, during which it shifted from Bowen Crescent, St Kilda, to Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. With Pattison insisting on "a real shut-up and listen policy", it introduced audiences to Australian artists as diverse as Eric Bogle, Judy Small and John Williamson and overseas acts John Hammond, Dave Van Ronk, Jesse Winchester, Tom Rush and Mickey Newbury

But Pattison, 54, says: "The greatest story was the night John Denver walked in off the street. He introduced himself and chatted and looked around for about five minutes and I thought maybe he was looking for somewhere to catch the local music late at night. And then he said he'd like to come back and sing a few songs. About 10 o'clock, when I'd given up hope of him coming, he turned up and very politely sat at the back while we got through the other acts and then wandered onstage and played for an hour."

Son of a Warwickshire tenant farmer, Pattison left England in 1973 eventually sailing to Perth. For several years, he ran a mobile disco at Footscray Football Club.

"We'd open at 10pm and go to 2am and were swamped. When it closed, I used to think, gee it would be nice to have somewhere to go and listen to some gentle acoustic music. That's really how the *Troubadour* came about."

Paul Wookey played the opening night in August 1978. "He came and auditioned for me in the rubble when the renovations were going on and played *Gentle on My Mind*."



Pattison sold the Troubadour in the late 1980s. He says it closed in March 1990 after a kitchen fire and financial difficulties.

He has kept it alive since then in several guises, including as marque venue and wine bar at major folk festivals and annual folk festival, the Troubadour Weekend. Pattison continues to present musical tours.

The Troubadour's 25th birthday concert is this weekend at Campaspe Downs Country Resort, Trentham Road, Kyneton. For more details phone 03 54335292, or visit www.wineandmusic.net <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/08/19/1061261128850.html>

Sometimes you read something that....

...just has to be shared. This next article was written by Michael Wells on the Friends of John Denver List on Facebook recently.

Knowing someone like John doesn't make you better than anyone else, but it does broaden your horizons and gives you perspective. I liken it to having traveled to exotic places, and even lived in some.

I met John in July of 1966 when just 19, I got a job at the Cellar Door in Washington, DC. He had recently replaced Chad Mitchell in The Mitchell Trio and they were the first act to play in what became my almost 11 years there. John was just 23 and seemed to enjoy hanging with us when not 'working'. Most of the staff were grad or law students at Georgetown University, I was an undergrad at Virginia Tech. KO, one of my mentors at the club, later became his manager and, of course, that's where he met my long time friend, Bill Danoff (and later his wife, my dear friend Taffy).

Perhaps my most treasured memory involved John dating a Georgetown coed friend of the club. For that reason, he was around us quite a bit then when not touring with the Trio. One night as we were sitting around after closing, he came running in out of breath and says, "Hey guys... just finished a song, listen to this..." His guitar comes out as he's still talking and the next thing we hear is "Babe I Hate To Go." (changed to Leavin' On A Jet Plane by PP&M). The gal he wrote the song for is still a friend, but for her privacy will remain unnamed, it was not Annie. One of my material treasures is a private album named "John Denver Sings" that is inscribed "Mike, I am proud to call you my friend". When he married Annie, we were all invited to the wedding in Minnesota.

I remained friends with John for the rest of his life, but there were many other moments along the way. In 1975 our paths crossed in Australia on the tour when he created a ruckus by admitting in an Aussie interview that he smoked pot. I was to stay with Australian friends whose 14 year old daughter had been staying up every night trying to win John Denver tickets on a radio call-in. When I arrived, I told her to get some sleep and went to

meet up with John and KO at the hotel. That night, she and I sat right in the front row center and when he did his apple juggling bit, he tossed one right to her. After the show, he spent at least a half hour with her alone before he'd even speak to the record label guy or the press. I think she probably still has that apple and her mom told me later that she didn't wash the hand he'd shaken for weeks.

Two years later, we had a reunion at the Cellar Door for all who had ever worked there including waiters and performers... guess who showed up? The place and the business was seductive, but at 30 I was feeling that my time there was up. I was complaining to John about 'hitting the ceiling' and he told me of a club that was for sale in Aspen and invited me to come out and check it out. He put me up for a couple weeks until I'd decided to stay. I did stay for almost three years, but while the club didn't work out for me, much else did. I didn't ask for his help, one unpleasant thing I learned about being a celebrity was that people were constantly hitting on them for one thing or another. Not me, the peek behind the veil and feeling the palpable aura that creative people exude was plenty.

We remained friends, but after I left Aspen I returned to visit just once and only saw him whenever he came through DC, either for concert or book tours. I was renovating my house and was temporarily living in my RV in Taffy's driveway when John was killed. We cried for days, but man... did we ever feel privileged to have been that close to the flame.

A guy who can't play a stereo competently, music was my life for a while.

What will the Colorado Music Hall of Fame Look Like?

March 24, 2014 L Wayne Hicks

The first renderings of the Colorado Music Hall of Fame have been released, and show how the Trading Post gift shop at Red Rocks Amphitheatre will be transformed into the first permanent memorial to the state's musical history.

The Colorado Music Hall of Fame, which made John Denver its first inductee in 2011, has occupied temporary space at 1stBank Center in Broomfield but last year began looking for a permanent home. Chuck Morris, the concert promoter and chairman of the Hall of Fame, announced in November an agreement with the city of Denver to move into the Trading Post space.

The Colorado Music Hall of Fame is expected to open in time for the first wave of summer concertgoers at Red Rocks to see the collection of memorabilia related to such notables as Judy Collins, the Astronauts and, of course, John Denver. A bronze statue of John Denver will be installed outside the Trading Post.



The center room will be the home of exhibits dedicated to concert promoter Barry Fey and Denver Folklore Center founder Harry Tuft, who both were inducted in 2012. Collins, the Serendipity Singers and other members of the Hall of Fame's Class of 2013 will be showcased in the main room as well.

The John Denver exhibit will be in the room to the left. The room to the right will house the exhibit on rock in the 1960s, including the Astronauts, Sugarloaf and Flash Cadillac. Through the rear door will be a coffee bar and exhibits devoted to Red Rocks itself. The outdoor venue was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2011.

Blue Goose Inc., the Denver company that produced the renderings, made the exhibitions at 1stBank Center.

A complete list of the Hall of Fame's inductees can be seen here. <http://cmhof.org/inductees>



http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/blog/cultural_at_tache/2014/03/what-will-the-colorado-music-hall-of-fame-look.html

Q&A with Tommy Emmanuel on his 2012 Tour

Justin Tedaldi – Music Q&A Examiner July 26, 2012

“I’m good as gold,” says a beaming Tommy Emmanuel, who offers me a firm handshake and a bottled water as we prepare to chat backstage at New York City’s legendary Town Hall just moments before his latest performance. Born in 1955 in New South Wales, the two-time Grammy-nominated guitarist is a household name in his native Australia, renowned in equal measure for both his complex fingerstyle technique and warm, witty personality onstage.

Born into a musical family and turning pro at the tender age of six, Emmanuel’s stature has continued to grow around the world. In 2008 and 2010, he was named “Best Acoustic Guitarist” by the readers of *Guitar Player* magazine, and he’s recorded and performed with a score of legends (including personal idol Chet Atkins, with whom he recorded the 1997 joint album *The Day Finger Pickers Took Over the World*).

Emmanuel’s summer U.S. tour continues tonight (July 26) at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown, New Jersey, and wraps July 29 in Norfolk, Connecticut. He returns for more dates across America beginning Sept. 8. In this exclusive interview, I spoke with the celebrated picker about being a child prodigy and mentoring new talent (like fellow Aussie ax virtuoso Joe

Robinson), his unique inspirations, and his future goals as a musician.

When was the last time you were in New York?

Last year, I played at B.B. King’s on 42nd Street. I’ve played [Town Hall] a couple of times with A Prairie Home Companion as a musical guest. I didn’t do much comedy. Actually, Garrison [Keillor] and I sang a couple of old traditional Australian folk songs that he had learned and I learned when I was a kid, so it was kind of funny. He surprised me with them.

“Waltzing Matilda”?

“Waltzing Matilda” and “Road to Gundagai.”

That must have been a thrill.

(Laughs) Yeah, it was great fun.

That seems like an unlikely collaboration. Are there any others you’d like to have fall into your lap?

When Chet Atkins and I recorded back in the mid-’90s, we actually had a plan, because it was kind of going to be a launch of my career into America and a re-launch of his career here as well, because Chet had kind of quit the road for a while—mainly because of health issues—but when we made the record Columbia was so excited about it, and we had made a plan to do all the TV shows and basically tour all over America. But he got a brain tumor, he got cancer in the brain, and it never happened.

He’d been influential to you since you were seven years old. What’s it like to work with your hero?

I’d been in love with his music and so inspired by him at such a young age. I wrote him a fan letter when I was 11 years old and he wrote back, so we became kind of pen pals, you know? And you wouldn’t think that it was possible to have a relationship with your hero and your idol, but it was true, and I think purely because of the person he was: he was such a loveable person and he cared very much about people who wrote to him. When I met him the first time in 1980, it’s funny, because I said to myself, I’d listened to his music so thoroughly that I got to feel like I knew him, and when I met him, I did know him, because he was who I thought he was just by the way he played. So it taught me a lesson: it taught me that you can’t separate who you are from your music; the two are one. So when I play, what you’re hearing is me from deep inside, you know what I mean? The same when I worked with Les Paul. What a wickedly funny, naughty boy he was, and that’s exactly how he played (laughs).

How would you describe how your personality is infused in your performance style?

Hmm, how *would* you describe my style? It’s a slightly softer version of a Sherman tank coming straight at ya (laughs).

You’ve been playing guitar since the age of six. How does it color your life as a musician later on?



Everything about my life has been opposite to most people. I couldn't care less about education; I ran away from school. But I was already on the road with playing gigs and doing radio and doing TV. By the time I was eight years old, I had already done a lot of television, a lot of radio. I was comfortable onstage with adults, and the only way I can explain that is I kept getting on shows all the time, and people kept featuring me because I had a personality, and the fact that I was a kid and I could actually play; this wasn't some circus act, this was a kid who could really play and it was like, holy sh*t, what's this? And I think that kind of gave me that edge when I was younger.

When you're around people in the business—comedians, singers, great entertainers—you steal everything you possibly can from them, and you observe them because what they're doing is working, you know what I mean? You go right back to Frank Sinatra learning stagecraft from Bing Crosby, and Bing probably got it from someplace else. And that's just one example. All the things that I learned and begged and stole and borrowed when I was young, I still draw on today. And I love interacting with people onstage, I love improvising in music, in dialogue, in everything. And when I go onstage I never use a plan, I never use a setlist, I just walk out and start playing and see what's going to happen. And I learned all that, and I'm still working on that. You've just got to learn from people who do things really well and successfully, and I was very fortunate to be around some good people, and I stole everything I could from them.

I've seen other young guitar prodigies on TV these days like Yuto Miyazawa. When you see performers like that, what's your take on that? Well, I've seen all that before.

Does it bring you back?

No, because it was different. The thing is that what I hope for those little boys and those little girls who are seen as a bit of a freak is that what happens with me—is that all that being the golden child stuff disappears later on in life, and you actually have to be a real musician and play for real.

With your own stuff and your own identity.

Yeah. You get a child up onstage, he's going to steal the show because he's a kid who's playing and you're giving him that opportunity. There was a boy in Australia who I used to feature on my shows occasionally. He was six years old and he could play like B.B. King. This wasn't just some guy copying licks; he could play the blues. And you can't explain that, it's a gift, right? He ended up with leukemia and they thought he was going to die. And he went to London, met Mark Knopfler, spent the day with him and everything, and when he flew back to Australia, they couldn't find any

cancer in him. He had a miracle, and now he's 30-something years old and he's still playing guitar.

Now we've got Joe Robinson...

He's doing great, isn't he?

Have you ever met him before?

I've known Joe since he was probably 10. And he was mentored by my brother Phil, who's a guitar player. Joe has an extraordinary gift, for Joe has what it takes to be a major, major star all over the world. He has the best attitude and he will always do well, and people will always love him because of who he is, not just his abilities. His abilities are incredible, and he will evolve into one of the greatest artists of all time. I make that prediction now.

I got to meet him last year for a press event and watch his set.

Then you would have known straight away, he's good.

I was in awe. Usually when you see these young guitar prodigies you just see some guy who's trying to shred or something, but he had soul, could sing great, the whole package.

Exactly. He's definitely got it, and earlier this year he was doing a circuit that I did about eight years ago, from Norway, Sweden, all that—I could see because the same people were booking him. And I predict that he will grow faster than I did.

It's good to know you're willing to reach out and mentor others. Sometimes musicians can be standoffish.

Oh, absolutely. You know, I can remember people who were like that with me, and I didn't like it.

Even down to turning away so you can't see what they're doing, how stupid is that? You can turn away, but I'm going to figure it out anyway, so why don't you just show me, you know?

That's why you're still doing what you're doing. It's good karma.

I can also remember all the people who are incredibly kind and generous. People like Stevie Wonder; I toured with Stevie Wonder in 1980, and he got me onstage playing with him all the time. John Denver did the same thing. In 1988, I opened for John Denver, 15,000 people a night, and I came out as a solo guitar player, like as a new artist to the audience. The Australian public had only seen me in rock bands, and now I was solo and I got that gig. I was really lucky.

That was a great spot to get, and John Denver's fans were my audience, you know? I came out and the show went really well, and at the end of the first show I went back to my dressing room and John Denver was there in my dressing room and he said, I've got a song called blah blah blah, tomorrow at the sound check, I want you to come out and pick up my guitar and just join in, you know? Because he had just married an Australian girl, whom I knew very well. But it just goes to show you, he did that. He didn't have to do that,



but he did that and brought me out at the end. That's really professional and very thoughtful.

How much of your identity now do you associate with what you do as your own man?
Everything.

Because that takes priority over everything else?

Absolutely. I mean, I don't have any kind of preconceived ideas about myself or where I'm going. What I'm doing, I'm kind of like Indiana Jones—I'm making this up as I go along, and I'm seeing where I can go and what I can do. But what I'm doing when I walk onstage is, I'm giving people as much as I possibly can and having the honest and sincere experience, you know? If someone calls out for a song I'll play it, whether it's one of mine or not; if I know it, I'll play it. It's all about being there for the people, you know? I'm hard to satisfy. I've got a lot that I want to achieve and that I want to feel when I play live, so I know that if I please me, I know the people are going to be pleased, because I'm hard to please (*laughs*).

What other goals do you have as an artist?

I'd like to get some music in a film or something like that. I'd like the opportunity to build an audience at a bigger level where I could come to New York and play here for three nights instead of one. That would be wonderful. And it's doable, but it's just going to take time, you know? I'm 57 years old, and I feel very healthy and strong, and I'm very grateful for my health. I don't think there's anything that can really hold me back from continuing to grow in this business, and I'll just hopefully continue to grow and grow my audience as time goes on and just try to get better all the time.

Next week, my tour starts in Australia and my guests are from here—Frank Vignola and Vinny Raniolo. I'm bringing them to Australia for the first time, so this is going to be the first time for them, the first time for the Australian audience to see these two New Yorkers at our place—they're going to blow peoples' minds. And then the three of us play together at the end of the show, and it just lifts the roof off. So it's great for me, it's great for Frank, it's great for the audience, and that's what it's all about.

If you could perform with any other artists at a gig, who would you most want to invite?

Some of my favorites are George Benson, Larry Carlton. I love Santana, Eric Clapton, all the biggies. Jeff Beck's one of my favorites.

He doesn't come here enough. We need to get him here more often.

Yeah. People don't realize it's a big world out there. They say, "Why don't you come to Norway?" and it's like, I was in Norway last year, and I'm somewhere else this year, because you've only got 12 months in the year and it's a big world out there. Whenever anybody ever says, "Isn't it a small world?" I always say, "Yeah, but I

wouldn't want to paint it. Have you seen the size of it?" (*Laughs*)

And then when you're on the road, you really get to see how big it is.

Yeah, absolutely. But as far as a master plan, it's always been just to grow my audience and hopefully grow into the artist that I'm supposedly destined to be. In life, everybody has their own destiny. And the older I get, the better I get, the more relaxed I am on stage, the more comfortable I am in my own skin out there. And when you're young, you feel a little intimidated by people who are that much better than you, but after a while you learn, look, you've got to accept who you are and how you play, and you've just got to keep working on that and stop trying to be like, I can't play like George Benson and I can't play like Jeff Beck, but I can get inspired by them and I can take something that they've given me and make what I do better.

I have so many people who inspire me, and we all need to be inspired. That's how we get better, and we get more adventurous, you know? If it isn't music, then it's actors or writers. At the moment—I just finished it on the plane yesterday—I read a book about people who worked with John Wayne, because John Wayne was one of my favorite people in movies, and I always felt when I was a kid, there was something so sincere about him on the screen, you know? It wasn't just his movies or that, but it was him and it was the message that he put out there. And then one of the first things I read was in an interview, when they asked him, "What are you trying to get across in your movies?" and he said, "I sell sincerity." There it is! And I sensed it as a kid; I knew exactly what he was talking about. He was the real deal. So someone like that inspires me. [Also] Muhammad Ali.

Watch Jeff Beck's *Live at Ronnie Scott's* and it'll bring you to tears, it's so beautiful. And what you're seeing is someone fulfilling their destiny, that's what it is. And hopefully, people feel that when I play for them onstage. To kind of frame this whole interview, when people watch me play, I hope that they feel that they're watching someone who's doing when they're meant to do. It's like a calling, and I've always known that when I played, something good happened to people who have heard it, so there's a good reason to show up and do your best.

Tommy Emmanuel returns to the U.S. Sept. 8-27.
For more information, visit
www.tommyemmanuel.com.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/q-a-with-tommy-emmanuel-on-his-2012-tour>

An Experience for the Senses

This article was written about out good friend Diane Wetmore, whom many of you know from the online newsgroups and from visiting Aspen.



Sightless Swimmers visit with Manatees

Nancy Kennedy, Sunday 16th March 2014



(Photo by Matthew Beck – Chronicle)

HOMOSASSA — As Butch Schultz lowered himself into the spring water of the Homosassa River, manatees swam beneath his feet.

“Being blind has nothing to do with having fun!” he said with obvious delight.

Schultz, along with Eddie Allarding and Diane Wetmore, all who are blind, braved the cold air temperature with the hope of encountering manatees in the wild.

The recent trip was courtesy of Snorkel With Manatees.com in Homosassa and sponsored by the Friends of the Blind, a social and educational support group for those who cannot see and for their friends and family who can.

“Even though I can’t see them, I can be with them, and that’s what’s so wonderful to me,” Diane Wetmore said.

Wetmore had even bought herself a new bathing suit to wear under her wetsuit.

All three had lost their sight as adults, so they knew beforehand what manatee look like. They could vividly recall the colors of the day’s brilliant blue sky and the lush green trees lining the river and could picture the river water sparkling in the noon time sun.

In addition, Wetmore said, without sight the body’s other senses become heightened.

As she climbed down the four ladder steps off the pontoon boat and into the water, she exclaimed, “It’s like I’m not even in my own body.”

She added, “You can feel the motion of the water, the current of the water and feel the temperature differences. And hearing — you can hear the manatees come up for air, and also their splashing.”

While she was still on the ladder, two of the giant mammals were swimming directly to her right and one came up directly behind her.

“It’s making its presence known,” she said. “It’s thrilling!”

Allarding, formerly from Hernando, had flown from Atlanta just to make the trip. Last summer she had fallen and broke her back, but she wasn’t going to let that stop her from this experience.

Although eager to get in the water, on her way down the ladder she hesitated.

“There’s something touching me,” she said.

Already in the water, Schultz, too, thought he had come in contact with a manatee, but it was their boat captain, Laura Wilds.

Once all three were in the water with their wetsuits and life vests on and using a foam “noodle” to hold on to, Wilds directed them to an area in the water where several groups of manatees were swimming.

One swam directly under Allarding, its back touching her bare feet.

“I could use their skin to clean my counter — it’s rough like a Brillo pad,” she said. “When you’re 72, what more fun can you have?”

Wetmore said she, Allarding and Schultz were probably the most independent blind people one could ever meet. Each lives alone; each thinks of their blindness as a mere inconvenience.

At 79, Schultz believes that he can do anything a sighted person can, with the exception of driving a car or performing brain surgery — and he’s still not convinced that his driving days are over.

In 2010, he was part of a University of Pittsburg experimental study of a device called a BrainPort that enables a blind person to see by taking images from a video camera attached to sunglasses and converting them to impulses sent to the brain through electrodes on a small square “lollipop” placed on the tongue.

Until funding was stopped, Schultz, a Navy veteran, was planning to walk from Washington, D.C., back to Florida to bring awareness of the device and its value to blind veterans.

He was thinking of his fellow blind veterans as nearby manatees splashed around him.

“I’m going to present this to the Blind Veterans organization as an activity,” he said. “This is wonderful, something I’ll remember for a long time.”

Wetmore, 55, said she and the others wanted to show other blind people that they don’t need to put limits on themselves.

“Blindness may be a challenge, but it’s not an impairment,” she said. “You can do lots of things.”

For information about the Friends of the Blind, call Butch Schultz at 352-419-7501 or Diane Wetmore at 352-726-0293. They meet from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. the second Friday of every month at Olive Garden Restaurant in Inverness.

<http://www.chronicleonline.com/content/experience-senses#.UyerRt9o6uU.gmail>

Diane, our lyrics this month are dedicated to you and your friends;

American Veterans Radio

Willie Hoevers from Dillon will present the next ‘The Music of John Denver’ show on Saturday, 5th April at 4pm (EDT). Please check the website www.avradio.org for more information

Pete Huttlinger – forthcoming shows

Please check Pete’s site for all his forthcoming events.

<http://www.petehuttlinger.com/schedule.com> For information please contact Erin at erin@morrispr.biz



Jim Curry Tribute Shows - April

Here are Jim and Anne's concerts for the next couple of months. Check their website regularly to see if they are soon to appear near you.

Pala Casino – Infinity Showroom, 11154 Hwy 76
Pala, CA, **1 Apr 2014 - 01:00**

El Portal Theater, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **3 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **4 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **5 Apr 2014 - 03:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **5 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **6 Apr 2014 - 03:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **10 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **11 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **12 Apr 2014 - 03:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **12 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd North
Hollywood, CA, **13 Apr 2014 - 03:00**

The Coffee Gallery Backstage, 2029 North Lake
Ave Altadena, CA, **15 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

The Coffee Gallery Backstage, 2029 North Lake
Ave Altadena, CA, **16 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, 198 Hill Street
Akron, Ohio, **25 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

Sturgis Young Auditorium, 201 North Nottawa
Sturgis, Michigan, **26 Apr 2014 - 08:00**

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

There are more dates on the website!

Anne's blog is also a delight to read. If you want
to keep up with the Curry's, click this link;

<http://www.jimcurrymusic.com/appearing-on-television-isnt-as-easy-as-it-looks/>

John Adams – forthcoming shows

Friday, April 25, 2014 at 7:00 PM

Legacy High School Auditorium

2701 West 136th Avenue

Broomfield, CO 80023

Malaria claims a life every 60 seconds. Millions of
lives needlessly lost each year. Together with
partners like; *World Health Organization, United
Nations Foundation, the Red Cross, Bill & Melinda
Gates Foundation* and *Global Fund to Fight AIDS*,
the *United Methodist Church* has pledged to raise
\$75,000,000 world wide, of which \$60,000,000
already has been raised.

The Rocky Mountain Conference (156 churches)
has raised already more than \$700,000 of their
\$1.2 million dollar goal, which means saving
120,000 lives.

The JOHN ADAMS BAND will perform a concert
titled: "*When Every Minute Counts*" to help raise
money for this purpose and is working together
with the Good Shephard UMC in Thornton, CO.

More details and how to order tickets will follow
soon. <http://www.imaginenomalaria.org/> to be
redirected to the web site.

Chris Westfall Future Dates

Saturday, April 26 at 7:00, Chris returns to the
Sacred Bean Coffeehouse in Flanders, NJ

where he will split the bill at this intimate venue.
Donations are gratefully accepted and there are
some of the best homemade desserts available!
Chris has performed here many times and it's one
of my favorite spots to hear him sing. The
coffeehouse is located in The Flanders United
Methodist Church on 8 Park Place in Flanders,
NJ...just a few minutes off 206 North. For more
information, check out www.flanderumc.org.
Chris has a few shows scheduled for May through
July... Grab your calendar! More specific details
about each of these shows will be in a future
newsletter...

**May 17th at 8:00 - "Acoustic Classics" in
Doylestown, PA**

**July 5th at 7:00 - "Head to the Mountains-
Head to the Alleghenies!" at Raystown Lake,
Heston PA**

**July 27th at 7:30 - "Head to the Sea!" in
Bethany Beach, Delaware**

Are you on Facebook? Chris has an "Artist's
Page" which you can "Like" and keep up with all
the latest news. For more updates, you can also
visit chriswestfall.com. And don't forget about
YouTube where you can have your own mini-
concert any time you want! The best is being able
to hear Chris live...and if you ever have an event
or venue where you'd like to hear him perform,
you can connect with him through his website or
Facebook.

Hope to see you all soon at one of Chris'
concerts!. Till then, enjoy the melting snow and be
on the lookout for crocuses! And as always,
thanks for listening to Chris' music!

Mack Bailey – forthcoming shows

Thursday April 3, 7:30pm – Lincoln High School
Auditorium,

101 Knight Ave S, THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN

Friday April 4, 7:30pm - High School, Tilman
Hovland Auditorium,

1123 S Main Ave, RUGBY, ND

Saturday April 5, 7:30pm (MT) Trinity High
School,

810 Empire Rd. DICKINSON, ND

Monday April 7, 7:30pm (MT) Mueller Civic
Center,

801 S 6th St. HOT SPRINGS, SD

Saturday April 12, 7:00pm (MT) Thompson

Valley HS, Roberta L Price Aud.,

1669 Eagle Dr. LOVELAND, CO

All dates are part of a season subscription.

**Please contact Allied Concert Services for
more information on the availability of single
concert tickets. 763-559-8019.**

Tuesday April 22, 7:00pm (MT), Otero Jr



College, Ed Stafford Theatre,
1802 Colorado Ave. LA JUNTA, CO
Wednesday April 23, 7:00pm (MT) High School
Auditorium,
1313 College Ave. CANON CITY, CO
Thursday April 24, 7:30pm (MT) High School
Auditorium,
545 E Hale, HOLYOKE, CO
Friday April 25, 7:30pm Fox Theatre,
414 Norris, MCCOOK, NE
Sunday April 27, 2:30pm Matinee, High School
Auditorium,
1700 E 4th St, SHELDON, IA
<http://www.mackbailey.com/schedule.htm>

FaceBook

A new concept has been introduced to Facebook recently. It is a JD fan magazine. Please join in the fun and read the regular posts.

<https://www.facebook.com/faroutjd>

More FaceBook

I must admit, I was sceptical about the power of Facebook, but now that I have been using it for a while, it is amazing what one can find. I recently came across a fan page for Judy Collins, another Coloradian, Coloradoan (?), and have been interested in some of the old photos posted from time to time. Today, these gems were posted..... and very timely as well – with my reference to Joan Baez and of course, the subject of THIS newsletter!

And speaking of iconic--look what Guy Sabol found somewhere online--Mimi on the couch--Dave, lower left, Joan, Leonard, me, --I own this picture and it was taken by my old friend Linda Leibman or maybe Dave Van Ronk's wife Terri Thal in 19...



I am not sure why Vicki is holding the knife – I can only surmise it is to protect the jelly slice. Lorraine, you did not say that there would be jelly slice at the Wilsons!

Some material included in this newsletter has been derived from the public domain, such as the internet and printed media. Articles and reviews are the opinion of the individual writer and as long as the content is of a reasonable nature and it is appropriate, it will be included. Organisations mentioned or featured in this newsletter are included to educate and inform people of their role and purpose. HGA does not profit from including the names of any organisation in this newsletter.

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.



For Diane Wetmore and her friends!

Calypso

*To sail on a dream on a crystal clear ocean
To ride on the crest of a wild raging storm
To work in the service of life and the living
In search of the answers to questions unknown
To be part of the movement and part of the growing
Part of beginning to understand*

*Aye, Calypso, the places you've been to
The things that you've shown us
The stories you tell
Aye, Calypso, I sing to your spirit
The men who have served you
So long and so well*

*Like the dolphin who guides you
You bring us beside you
To light up the darkness and show us the way
For though we are strangers in your silent world
To live on the land we must learn from the sea
To be true as the tide
And free as the wind-swell
Joyful and loving in letting it be*

*Aye, Calypso, the places you've been to
The things that you've shown us
The stories you tell
Aye, Calypso, I sing to your spirit
The men who have served you
So long and so well*

*Aye, Calypso, the places you've been to
The things that you've shown us
The stories you tell
Aye, Calypso, I sing to your spirit
The men who have served you
So long and so well*

