



**HIGHER  
GROUND  
AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.hgavic.com>

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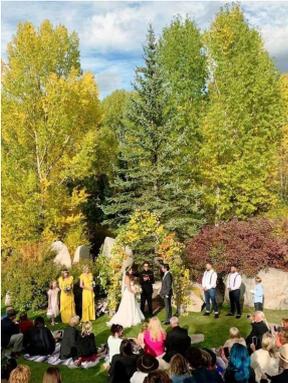
Volume 16 – Edition 6

## HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – October 2019

### **WELCOME**

*"For you, for the rest of my life  
For you, all the best of my life  
For you alone, only for you"*

Congratulations to Jesse Belle Denver, who married Eli leGate on September 28, 2019 at the John Denver Sanctuary in Aspen. It was a beautiful Autumn day and the colours of the aspens were spectacular. We wish Jesse Belle and Eli every happiness as they start their new lives together.



(photo source not known)

Many people are already gathering in Aspen in preparation for this week's tribute to the life and music of John Denver. For some, it will be a bittersweet visit, as our friend's Pat Feldmeier will be absent, as will Susan Leaver, whose ashes will be laid to rest this week. We wish that all people travelling to Aspen this week will travel safely, and enjoy the company of their friends and acquaintances during the week. We all have wonderful and happy memories of our visits to Aspen, and although we all cannot be there to enjoy each other's company and the music, Aspen is not too far from our thoughts this week. Hopefully, someone will keep us up to date with the events as they happen. Photos would also be nice.

Happy Trails....

### **2019 TRIBUTE WEEKEND**

Some slight difficulties have occurred recently, resulting in the cancellation of Rosie's Cottage. Our tribute weekend will go ahead, albeit a much smaller 'affair'. Catching up once a year has been one of our most important and loved activities, so although some are unable to attend the John Denver Tribute weekend this year, we will miss you all.

Special best wishes to Melanie, who is sitting her very last exam to complete her Pharmacy degree on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. Study hard, and we'll have a Margarita toast, just for you.

### **HIGHER GROUND AUSTRALIA WEBSITE**

Our web address is <https://www.hgavic.com/>. I'm continuing to collate photos and comments about our previous gatherings. <https://www.hgavic.com/about-us> If anyone has photos from the first gatherings, please send them e to me. I seem to have a problem with locating some of the earlier files. The draft constitution has also been added to the page. Please contact me on [hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com) with your photos, comments, and feedback.

### **ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

Peggy's work with raptor rehabilitation is so very important for continued conservation of our raptors [www.highergroundraptors.com](http://www.highergroundraptors.com) and <https://www.facebook.com/HigherGroundRaptors>.

Please donate to this worthy cause through Peggy's website. All monies raised through donation and fundraisers is used for special projects. Check out Peggy's website also to see the photos of the recent upgrade to the circular aviary, which is used for the rehabilitation of birds prior to their release back into the wild.

If you didn't see this wonderful segment on Peggy's work, which was on the ABC recently, click the link to view it.

<https://www.abc.net.au/7.30/caring-for-injured-birds-of-prey/11290932?jwsourc=em>

### **JIMMY FONG: MEMORIES OF PENANG**

I recently had the absolute pleasure of seeing Jimmy perform in Melbourne. This show, aptly named, 'Memories of Penang', was mostly made up of his original songs, which reflect many parts of his homeland, Malaysia. The songs are easy listening; each one telling a specific story of something that has influenced Jimmy's life, and yet is easily recognisable regardless of one's background. The songs are about home and family and elements of nature. When he sang 'Dancing Fireflies', I was immediately transported to a recent visit to rural Tennessee, where fireflies abound as soon as the velvety darkness descends. Little lights glowing as the flies go about their nightly rituals. Jimmy finished off the concert with 'Country Roads', and encouraged everyone in the audience to

join in. It was a wonderful experience and I never get tired of attending live music events.

### **SUSAN LEAVER'S MEMORIAL – ASPEN, 2019**

A memorial has been planned to honour the life of Susan Leaver in Aspen on October 9, 2019 following the **Meet and Greet event at the John Denver Sanctuary.**

As many of you know, when Susan attended the Aspen in October event in 2018, she was terminally ill. She used this opportunity to say goodbye to her friends with whom she had shared many special memories. Susan spent her last days in the gentle and loving care of the superb staff of the Aspen Hospital. She was cremated and her ashes will be scattered at the memorial service on October 9. Flowers may be purchased from the recommended local florist, *Mountain Flowers of Aspen*

<https://www.mountainflowersofaspen.com/>. If you would like to order flowers, but cannot attend the memorial yourself, Laurie Stowers has kindly offered to collect them and take them to the service. Please advise the florist when you place your order that they will be collected by Laurie. Alternately, should you wish to make a donation in lieu of flowers, I suggest a monetary donation to the Aspen Hospital may be appropriate.

Susan's passing was sad, but given the severity of her illness when she arrived in Aspen, she showed huge determination to attend AIO one last time amongst the people she loved. Susan had a big heart and will be missed by all.

### **JIM HORN'S ADVENTURES WITH JOHN DENVER**

Jim Horn is one of America's most celebrated brass and woodwind musicians. He toured with John Denver on and off from 1978 to 1993, and also played with John in concert occasionally after that. Jim recently toured Australia with the John Denver Celebration Concert, and has participated in all the Wheeler Concerts during the Aspen in October events up until this year, when he was not invited to take part. There probably aren't too many people who have his expertise and experience. But all is not lost, because in October, he is putting on an 'up close and personal' show of his own at the Mountain Chalet.

**On Friday, October 11, at 11:30am**, Jim will be sharing stories about John Denver and how he added the right instruments to each of John's songs. He will talk and demonstrate his different instruments. 5th Floor at the Mountain Chalet.

Tickets: \$50.00 per person

Seating is limited so order tickets in advance.

To order your tickets in advance, or for more information please contact Stephanie Horn at [stefpooh@outlook.com](mailto:stefpooh@outlook.com)

### **MACK BAILEY: HOW JOHN DENVER CHANGED MY LIFE**

By Mack Bailey, Aspen Times, October 5, 2019

The 22nd annual John Denver Celebration will return to Aspen with concerts, sing-alongs and events running Wednesday, Oct. 9 through Monday, Oct. 14. The centerpiece of the festival is the Musical Tribute to John Denver at the Wheeler Opera House on Saturday, Oct. 12. It will feature performers including Aspen's own Mack Bailey alongside Gary Mule Deer, Chris Nole, Mollie Weaver, Alan Deremo and Jim Curry.

When I was growing up, music was always a major part of my life. I started playing guitar at the age of 8 and it soon became my voice and self-expression of good days and bad.

The first John Denver album I had access to was "Poems, Prayers, & Promises." Living in a very small town in North Carolina in 1971 didn't provide me the ability to buy albums or listen to them, even on the radio. But this album introduced me to what was out there. Looking back, the aspect of John's music that I appreciated most was the authenticity of the writing as well as the delivery. The lyrics, melody and chordal structure opened a whole new world for me. I could play these songs and they always seemed to convey the feelings I had about people and being outside.

When "John Denver's Greatest Hits" came out, I couldn't play that album enough. As I sat in my room with my guitar, learning his songs and feeling a true connection to him, I dreamed of watching him play in concert and even of joining him on stage.

I attended a concert in 1975 while they were recording "An Evening with John Denver." It was mesmerizing the way the videos on the screens were in sync with the music. I remember during "Eagle and the Hawk," an eagle would fly around on the huge left screen and the hawk would appear in the right screen. My young memory seems to picture the two coming together in the middle screen for the finale. It was amazing.

On Sept. 20, 1997 my life changed. I was playing in a band, The Hard Travelers, and through the vision and leadership of Kenn Roberts, we held concerts to raise money for The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. In 19 years, we raised over \$11 million for CF research. We worked with Alabama, Brooks and Dunn, Kenny Rogers, Reba McEntire and so many others.

For the 10th anniversary concert, we booked John Denver as the headliner. There was a home game for the Baltimore Orioles that day. For many years, thanks to John Sommers and Dee Belanger and the late Mark Belanger, "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" always played during the 7th inning stretch. So this day, John came to the game. At the 7th inning stretch, John went down and stood on the Orioles dugout and lip-



synched while the song played. The crowd went berserk. John was smiling and the people loved it.

When we arrived at the Baltimore Arena for sound check, John asked if The Hard Travelers would join him for the finale and play "Thank God I'm A Country Boy." What an offer! John wanted to save his voice, so he asked Kenn to sing the verses for sound check. Kenn said he didn't know the words but that I did. I sang my ass off for that soundcheck. John walked up to me after and said we would trade verses during the concert. This was about as full-circle as it gets.

During the performance, I admit that I flubbed the words and John bailed me out, but what an opportunity and thrill!

That night at the concert, I stayed backstage so that I could feel the interaction between John and the audience. It was a powerful experience for me. I remained on cloud nine for weeks. I stayed there until the morning of Oct. 13, 1997 when "Good Morning America" announced that John had died in a small plane crash in California the evening before. It took every ounce of breath out of me. I was stunned and numb.

Thanks to Bill Danoff and Kenn Roberts, the John Denver Tributes in Aspen were born. Working with John's band members and family gave me an even greater appreciation for the love of the man and the music by his peers.

The folks I have met, the musicians I have shared the stage with, the places that I have seen because of sharing John's music still at times seems surreal. I am grateful for each opportunity but there is no doubt that I would love to see John walk in and take the stage again.

For me, these tributes are performed with respect for the man, his music, and his legacy. If it weren't for those beginnings in my room learning his songs, I would not be who I am today. Nor would I understand the healing power of music. I'm still grateful.

**2020 JOHN DENVER CELEBRATION** events are listed at the end of this newsletter.

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

[HTTPS://WWW.ASPENTIMES.COM/OPINION/MACK-BAILEY-HOW-JOHN-DENVER-CHANGED-MY-LIFE/](https://www.aspentimes.com/opinion/mack-bailey-how-john-denver-changed-my-life/)

### **JOHN DENVER HOLIDAY CELEBRATION WITH THE COLORADO SYMPHONY**

The John Denver Holiday Celebration with the Colorado Symphony will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019 at Boettcher Concert Hall in Denver, CO. The show will feature audio and video of John Denver accompanied by a live band including some members of his former touring band and the Colorado Symphony, performing songs spanning the career of John Denver plus holiday favourites and

stories of John told by old friends. Tickets are on sale now.



<https://tickets.coloradosymphony.org/5446>

### **BRIGHT STAR**

In the 1970s, Steve Martin lived in Aspen and was a friend of John's. His performance in Rocky Mountain Christmas introduced the audience to his extraordinary skills as a banjo player. Despite Steve's success in comedy, it is his prowess on the banjo and his love of bluegrass music sets him apart from just another comedian. I saw Steve in action in 2012 in San Francisco and loved every minute of his frenetic performance, where he actually tried to fit nearly every one of his best-known tunes into his half-hour slot. I was exhausted by the end of it.

The Tony Award-winning Bright Star is a musical written and composed by Steve Martin and Edie Brickell. It is set in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina in 1945-46 with flashbacks to 1923. It is being performed here in Melbourne at Chapel off Chapel from 25<sup>th</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Tickets are available from

<https://chapeloffchapel.com.au/show/bright-star/>

### **NASHVILLE'S RENEE ARMAND IN TOWN FOR CONCERT, SONGWRITING WORKSHOP**

By MIKE HOLTZCLAW, DAILY PRESS SEP 10, 2019

A year ago this month, Florence did a number on Renee Armand. This time around, the singer-songwriter is getting the last laugh on Dorian.

Armand came in from her home in Tennessee in 2018 but had to cancel a scheduled performance at Port Warwick in Newport News over hurricane fears that turned out to be overblown. This weekend she returns — a week after the storm threat — to do a couple of intimate house shows and a songwriting workshop. She will also do a meditative show at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. in Virginia Beach.

Armand, 73, was discovered by Tony Bennett and spent years harmonizing with John Denver. She wrote songs for Michael Jackson and was the voice heard singing the Oscar-winning song "Morning After" in the hit movie "The Poseidon Adventure."

But for all her success, she is adamant in her belief that everyone has the ability to sing and write songs.

"We are born for music," Armand said. "It's what we hear inside our mothers when we're in utero — the blood flowing through her, the rhythm of her

heartbeat. To hear it again after we're born is part of being human."

For that reason, she loves up-close shows like the ones this weekend, arranged by her friend Lisa Marie Samaha as part of the Port Warwick Acoustic Arts house concert series.

"House concerts are extraordinary, because you get to be with everybody," she said. "You're not up on a stage, separated and distant from the life of what the music is doing. When it's over, it's so much easier to be with everybody."

Samaha said Armand's appearances are part of the mission of the Port Warwick Acoustic Arts series to "support the arts and bring beautiful and heartfelt music to the community."

She will be accompanied during the show by cellist Jenny Lynn Young, and by the duo of Carol Warren and Dale Whitehead, who moved from Richmond to Nashville in 1994.

Armand said it is critical that songwriters use their lyrics to tell their own stories, as opposed to emulating the styles or sounds of popular performers.

"I can't teach you how to write a song, but I can sure as hell teach you how not to write one," she said.

"When I am coaching or teaching, I simply ask people to tell the truth. That's all — but some people are too scared to do it."

<https://www.dailypress.com/entertainment/music/dp-nws-renee-armand-0911-20190910-v7dzaqrnurbnjnobjc4tuvqie-story.html>



*House concerts are very popular in the United States, but for some reason, not so widespread in Australia. Many of us do have great facilities at home to host a small intimate musical gathering and I'd love to see more of it happening in our neighbourhoods.*

#### **TAKE ME HOME, COUNTRY ROADS: A GEOGRAPHIC LOOK AT JOHN DENVER**

Someone had to do this, and I'm so glad. The link below is to a website, where fifty-five videos of people across the world sing *Country Roads*. Some you'll recognise, like John Denver himself, the CMA video, and even our friends from Italy, The John Denver Project Band. But to delve into it further and watch people from China and Japan, India, Jamaica, South America and across the world sing this iconic song is really wonderful. It's still my favourite song.

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=69a67e68bdde4bc9a5d15db33282bca5>



#### **TRIBUTE ARTISTS**

Check out your favourite tribute artists to see where and when they are performing:

##### **MARK CORMICAN**

Mark Cormican has released his 2019 concert schedule. Check his website for more information.

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

##### **JIM CURRY**

Jim and Anne Curry have released their 2019 concert schedule. 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>

##### **CHRIS COLLINS AND BOULDER CANYON**

Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon have released their 2019/2020 concert schedule 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>

##### **JOHN ADAMS**

Please check John's website for information about his concerts and for tickets.

[HTTPS://WWW.JOHNADAMSBAND.COM/CALENDAR](https://www.johnadamsband.com/calendar)

For more information about tribute artists around the globe, check out our website; [www.hgavic.com](http://www.hgavic.com)

## **ASPEN IN OCTOBER 2019**

The plans for the 2019 Aspen in October tribute are well underway. Listed below are some of the concerts and activities announced to date.

Ticket prices have been included when known. This will be updated during the year as more information comes to hand.

### **Tuesday October 8**

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

### **Wednesday October 9**

#### **12pm – Meet and Greet**

John Denver Sanctuary  
470 Rio Grande Pl, Aspen, CO

*A memorial service for Susan Leaver will be conducted after the Meet and Greet. All welcome.*

#### **4:00-6:00pm – Aspen Meadow Band**

Mountain Chalet 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

### **Thursday October 10**

#### **1-3pm – David Stratford**

Mountain Chalet (TBA) 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

### **Friday October 11**

#### **11:30am – Jim Horn's Adventures with John Denver**

Tickets \$50 [stefpooh@outlook.com](mailto:stefpooh@outlook.com)

Mountain Chalet, (5<sup>th</sup> Floor) 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

#### **4pm – Chris Bannister**

Venue to be advised

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1212631698919127/>

#### **7:00-9:00pm – Ron Matthews**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

### **Saturday October 12**

#### **12pm - 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Singer/Songwriter Event**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

#### **4:00-6:00pm – Aspen Meadow Band**

Limelight Lodge, 228 E Cooper Ave, Aspen,

#### **7:30pm - 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Musical Tribute to John Denver**

Wheeler Opera House, 320 E Hyman Ave, Aspen,  
Tickets \$50-\$70

<https://aspenshowtix.com/Online/default.asp>

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave, Aspen

### **Sunday October 13**

#### **11:00-2:30pm – Pine Creek Cookhouse lunch & Concert with Chris Collins & Friends**

12500 Castle Creek Road, Aspen,  
Tickets \$85. Contact Suzanne at  
[mountainsrose312@gmail.com](mailto:mountainsrose312@gmail.com)

#### **4:00-6:00pm – Jam at the Chapel with Mack Bailey and Chris Nole**

Aspen Chapel, 77 Meadowood Dr., Aspen,  
Tickets \$25

<https://chrisnole.com/event/2693683/496930126/jam-at-the-chapel>

#### **8pm till late – Singalong**

Mountain Chalet, 333 E Durant Ave,

### **Monday October 14**

#### **10am – Goodbye Again**

Wagner Park, 300 S Monarch St, Aspen



### **CONGRATULATIONS JESSE BELLE AND ELI**

I have selected the beautiful lyrics of the John wrote for Cassandra. *For You* was first performed publicly by John at the Sydney Opera House in 1988 for Australia's bicentennial celebration.



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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 You

(John Denver)

*Just a look in your eyes again  
Just to lay in your arms  
Just to be the first one always there for you  
Just to live in your laughter  
Just to sing in your heart  
Just to be everyone of your dreams come true*

*Just to sit by your window  
Just to touch in the night  
Just to offer a prayer each day for you  
Just to long for your kisses  
Just to dream of your sighs  
Just to know that I'd give my life for you*

*For you for the rest of my life  
For you all the best of my life  
For you alone, only for you*

*Just to wake up each morning  
Just to you by my side  
Just to know that you're never really far away  
Just a reason for living  
Just to say I adore  
Just to know that you're here in my heart to stay*

*For you for the rest of my life  
For you all the best of my life  
For you alone, only for you  
Just the words of a love song  
Just the beat of my heart  
Just the pledge of my life, my love, for you*

