

Contact Details:

Janette Frawley
PO Box 8155
Camberwell North VIC 3124
Australia
higherground_australia@yahoo.com.au



www.highergroundaustralia.com/

Volume 12 – Edition 6

HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – November 2015

Welcome

Welcome to our November newsletter. As many of you know, I have been on the road for the past two months. My travels have taken me from the far north of Canada and Greenland to as far south as New Orleans, in Louisiana. During this time I have had the privilege to be able to meet and converse with many musicians from so many walks of life, and I want to share some of it with you. I joined an expedition to Nunavut, Canada, where I followed in the footsteps of Franklin out of the Northwest Passage. As part of this trip, I had the absolute honour of meeting Barney Bentall, who is one of Canada's well-known contemporary folk singers. Together with David Newland, James Raffin, and Mark (a bird counter) on the piano, the music really flowed onboard. James Raffin fondly told me that we were asked to play Poems, Prayers, and Promises at a funeral of a Canadian politician. I was also able to witness first hand the music of the Inuit, from the traditional songs of the drum dances and the wonderful throat singers to the fiddle and accordion music and square dancing that are performed in the remote communities of the Canadian North. I even took some throat singing lessons with one of our Inuit culturists on board. In Greenland, we were treated to the choirs and gospel songs for which the Greenlandic people are famous.

My magical music tour continued into Aspen, and I will talk about some of the highlights of this wonderful week in Aspen in October during the course of this newsletter.

I then flew to the centre of Country music – Nashville, where I not only attended the Grand Ol' Opry, but I was treated to another concert given by Renee Armand, which was exquisite. Next I went to visit the centre of Dolly Parton's world in Pigeon Forge before eventually experiencing the history of Rock 'n Roll in Memphis, experienced the home of the blues by venturing into the cotton fields of Mississippi, before hitting the epicentre of Jazz, New Orleans. There are too many experiences to share with you here, but I have been blessed to have the opportunity to grasp these experiences and to come home fully appreciating the music that I have been able to listen to over the past few weeks. More than merely listening to music, the one thing that I have been able to do this time is to talk to musicians

about their craft, what inspires them to perform and to write songs. Since my own talents extend to a couple of gutteral sounds and a new-found skill playing the vuvuzala with the Adventure Canadian soccer cheer squad, I can only appreciate and love my travels this year. Now read on.....

My Time With John Denver

Melbourne – August/September

Jimmy's four performances in Melbourne of My Time With John Denver were all well-received at the end of August and beginning of September. All shows were a great success with most of them being sell-outs. I was involved with the first two shows, and was fortunate to be able to sign up some new people for our newsletters. This is a photo of the first audience – see if you can recognise yourselves!



The following night, Ray and Dianne joined Jimmy on stage.



Aspen – October

Our good friend, Jimmy Fong performed his 'My Time with John Denver' in Aspen last month and was a hit with all who attended. Despite some technical hitches, and with the assistance of

Susan Stenehjem, who held up the iPad with the media footage, everyone loved the unique stories that Jimmy told about his performance with John Denver in Malaysia.



Veteran's Radio Show – John Denver special.
Susan also sang with him during that show.

I think that one of the best songs performed during the Aspen in October was 'In a Far Away Land' with Karen on the flute.

From my perspective, I was so glad that I was able to see these performances by our friend and member of Higher Ground Australia. Thank you Jimmy for the music.

After Aspen in October, Jimmy was invited to perform in the beautiful Kimo theatre in Albuquerque. It was a resounding success, but I will ask Jimmy to submit a report for the next newsletter. However, check out this picture of his name up in lights!



Jim Connor also took a liking to Jimmy and asked him to perform 'Grandma's Feather Bed' with him. This is an excerpt from that performance; <https://www.facebook.com/217738491683359/videos/357350981055442/>

Jimmy also performed for the



2015 Aspen in October

This year's Aspen in October followed a different format to previous years that I have attended. All the performers were tribute artists from around the world, with two exceptions; the aforementioned Jim Connor and the beautiful and talented Renee Armand, whose performance on the Friday night was really special.

It must be extraordinarily difficult to organise artists from Europe, Britain, Ireland, Australia, and across America, and I would like to extend my thanks to Willie Hoevers for a job well-done. I really enjoyed my time in Aspen this year, and I hope to attend many more concerts in the years to come.

This year, the weather was superb, the sky was blue and the aspens were golden. Without a doubt, the colour of the aspen trees was the very best I had ever seen.

Renee Armand

I was honoured to attend Renee Armand and Paul Aleman concert on Friday 9th October in Aspen. It was a lovely evening and Renee regaled us with stories of her time working with John Denver.

https://www.reverbnation.com/paulaleman/song/19622986-poems-prayers-and-promises?fb_og_action=reverbnation_fb:unknown&fb_og_object=reverbnation_fb:song&utm_campaign=a_public_songs&utm_content=reverbnation_fb:song&utm_medium=facebook_og&utm_source=reverbnation_fb:unknown

Following the end of the Aspen in October, Renee and I crossed paths near Nashville, where I attended another concert with Paul and Renee. This small venue was wonderful and I was privileged to be able to attend this wonderful and intimate celebration.



2015 JD Tribute Weekend – Kurri Kurri

Our 2015 JD weekend was held at the Kurri Kurri Campus of the Hunter TAFE, New South Wales (near Newcastle) on the weekend of 9-11 October.

From all reports so far, the weekend was wonderful and the Australian group had a good time. Thanks to Laraine, Carolyn, and Sandy who sent through the movie of them singing 'Sweet



Caroline'. I am so glad that you shared that with me – I can see that you were having a ball. Thanks to the musicians, for another wonderful evening.

The raffle prize of a hand made quilt was won by Debbie, a friend of Sandy's.

Laraine's nominated school 'Wallsend South Primary School' won the picture story book, 'Take me Home, Country Roads'

I am waiting on the final amount to be donated to Peggy McDonald.

Thanks to those who gave me some updates.

Here are some photos;



Blue Water Weekend, Monterey

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGug5wLplnE&google_comment_id=z12kxxrwqzj4gh5wu04chlkx5zrjh5ng1iq&google_view_type#gpluscomments

(Jim & Anne Curry)

We could not have asked for better weather in Monterey, as we met with our John Denver family for a group gathering in Monterey CA. It was warm (not hot) and we enjoyed clear blue skies as we did various activities like layaking, train riding, and beach cleanup.

The kayak group had smooth seas and no wind (perfect conditions). Our guide identified birds and kelp, and we saw both while we were out on

our trip. Our guide also had to instruct us to keep paddling when a curious otter decided to climb up on our kayaks. We are not supposed to be so close to the wildlife, but none of us can out-paddle an otter?? Luckily he decided to give up, and left us wishing we had gotten a picture of his halfway up on Yvonne and Eddie's kayak!

We had a great singalong, Jim and Anne, Diane Ireland, Tom Williams, Pete Huttlinger, Charlie Therrien, and Judy Therrien all joined in with their instruments. Julie Capili sang the wonderful song she wrote about Pacific Grove 'Butterfly Town'.

(see the YouTube video)

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0015YK1SADF69mxh2-4UXNWpr2IJPR9luJS0IFGP1QPmZa5HTJvTEIkY4g1ZT-Jgeo6a5E-SctX_ilMB0ZIRlmqOv4k4B0_I1SDp_I3BiQIVEVQVdjP5mxoDFRPNpDpnOJMtzqD_YOTMqAMnIIFPhLBdwM7EAxiuy_UJXY3RTp48oIWb7YG6py9BaZPzHDwdKKiHLXZjXk=&c=AZBbwDbIsjGla32ltD1FT26EcrzTnfDIA8OPxtly9qtZP2v7pUelsQ==&h=U3SPZWKposoxnk776Sqw6C3r9tU8R-rtANMJ24N5J-g4D9sBnnD60w==

We made Blue Water Weekend badges at our meet and greet, thanks to Connie Poquette and Margie Hoff who donated the supplies and lots of treats and goodies to eat. Thank you Margie and Connie??

The train ride, the concert, and the beach cleanup were all well attended and enjoyable. Thanks again to Margie Hoff and Connie Poquette for bringing the cleaning supplies and chairs so we could enjoy the beach and do a little more singing. Hochima joined us with her guitar – and her very handy song book of John Denver songs.

The weather was so good, Diane Gaskill was able to fly her plane above us and drop flowers in the water in memory of John Denver. She circled us several times and wagged the plane wings for us – thank you Diane!!

Next year will be another opportunity to join us in Monterey, California for Blue Water Weekend.

The dates will be October 7, 8 and 9 in 2016....make plans to join us!

Keeping Up with the Currys

Here are the dates for November concerts;

NOVEMBER

Date: Tuesday, November 17

City: Pala, CA

Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Thursday, November 19 - The 5:00 Show

City: Altadena, CA

Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Thursday, November 19 - The 8:00 Show

City: Altadena, CA

Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Saturday, November 21 - This is a Private Event -



City: La Jolla, CA
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Sunday, November 22
City: Antioch, CA
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Monday, November 23
City: Lincoln, CA
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Tuesday, November 24 - **This is a Private Event**

City: Walnut Creek, CA
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Friday, November 27 - **ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS**

City: Cokato, MN
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Saturday, November 28 - **ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS**

City: Danbury, WI
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

Date: Monday, November 30 - **ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS**

City: Arlington Heights, IL
Website: [Click Here for More Info](#)

For more information about forthcoming concerts, please check the website;
<http://www.jimcurrymusic.com/>

Singalongs

<http://ideas.time.com/2013/08/16/singing-changes-your-brain/>

This article was published in Time in 2013. When you sing, musical vibrations move through you, altering your physical and emotional landscape. Group singing, for those who have done it, is the most exhilarating and transformative of all. It takes something incredibly intimate, a sound that begins inside you, shares it with a roomful of people and it comes back as something even more thrilling: harmony. So it's not surprising that group singing is on the rise. According to Chorus America, 32.5 million adults sing in choirs, up by almost 10 million over the past six years. Many people think of church music when you bring up group singing, but there are over 270,000 choruses across the country and they include gospel groups to show choirs like the ones depicted in 'Glee' to strictly amateur groups like [Choir! Choir! Choir!](#) singing David Bowie's [The Man Who Sold the World](#).

As the popularity of group singing grows, science has been hard at work trying to explain why it has such a calming yet energizing effect on people. What researchers are beginning to discover is that singing is like an infusion of the perfect

tranquilizer, the kind that both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirits.

The elation may come from [endorphins](#), a hormone released by singing, which is associated with feelings of pleasure. Or it might be from [oxytocin](#), another hormone released during singing, which has been found to alleviate anxiety and stress. Oxytocin also enhances feelings of trust and bonding, which may explain why still more studies have found that singing lessons feelings of [depression and loneliness](#). A very [recent study](#) even attempts to make the case that "music evolved as a tool of social living," and that the pleasure that comes from singing together is our evolutionary reward for coming together cooperatively, instead of hiding alone, every cave-dweller for him or herself.

The benefits of singing regularly seem to be cumulative. In one study, singers were found to have lower levels of [cortisol](#), indicating lower stress. A very preliminary investigation suggesting that our [heart rates may sync up](#) during group singing could also explain why singing together sometimes feels like a guided group meditation. [Study after study](#) has found that singing relieves anxiety and contributes to quality of life. Dr. Julene K. Johnson, a researcher who has focused on older singers, recently began a [five year study](#) to examine group singing as an affordable method to improve the health and well-being of older adults.

It turns out you don't even have to be a good singer to reap the rewards. According to one [2005 study](#), group singing "can produce satisfying and therapeutic sensations even when the sound produced by the vocal instrument is of mediocre quality. Singing groups vary from casual affairs where no audition is necessary to serious, committed professional or avocational choirs like the Los Angeles Master Chorale or [my chorus in New York City](#), which I joined when I was 26 and depressed, all based on a single memory of singing in a choir at Christmas, an experience so euphoric I never forgot it.

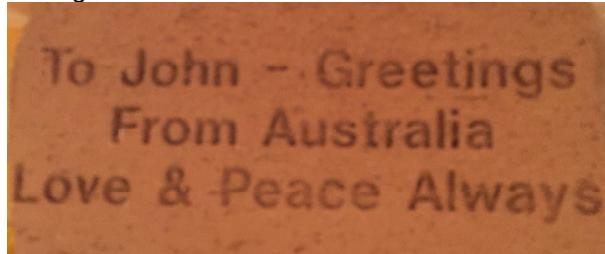
If you want to find a singing group to join, [ChoirPlace](#) and [ChoralNet](#) are good places to begin, or more local sites like the [New York Choral Consortium](#), which has links to the [Vocal Area Network](#) and other sites, or the [Greater Boston Choral Consortium](#). But if you can't find one at any of these sites, you can always google "choir" or "choral society" and your city or town to find more. Group singing is cheaper than therapy, healthier than drinking, and certainly more fun than working out. It is the one thing in life where feeling better is pretty much guaranteed. Even if you walked into rehearsal exhausted and depressed, by the end of the night you'll walk out high as a kite on endorphins and good will.



Recently, Jimmy and I had a discussion about the merits of getting a group of people together in Melbourne for semi-regular singalongs, whereby people can bring along instruments and sing popular and folk songs, which the majority of people know and can join in. Currently this is in the discussion stage but we would like to see it happen early next year. Some people have already shown interest in the concept and we will let you know either through this newsletter or by direct email. If there is anyone else out there who would like to join in, please let me know. At this stage, we can only organise these in Melbourne. I promise that I will not bring my vuvuzala. ☺

Spirit Pavers'

As you know, when Spirit was moved from Windstar to the Colorado Music Hall of Fame at Red Rocks, the paving bricks were not moved. Shari Sullivan brought the pavers to Aspen and I have collected our brick. However, I have also collected a second paver and I do not know who it belongs to.



If this is your paving brick, please contact me on hga.vic@gmail.com to organise collection of the paver.

In regard to our brick, I do have it, but I need you guys to let me know where you want it to be placed. This can be discussed at any time, but please do think about where we should permanently place it.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Shari, who has taken care of the bricks and organised distribution of the pavers in Aspen in October.

RM Foundation for Performing Arts

(from Willie Hoevers)

I am forming a non-profit corporation dedicated to keeping the music of John Denver alive through performance and education. As an on line radio personality at avradio.org, I host a two hour show at least twice a month since April of 2013, playing his music as well as recordings from the many JD Tribute artists from all over the world. As a musician myself, I have been playing with many of these tribute artists since 2007 on bass guitar or drums/percussion and I have become good friends with all of them which will be a great benefit for this project.

The Rocky Mountain Foundation for the Performing Arts will be used to book John Denver Tribute shows at various venues whether indoors

or outdoors around the country and eventually around the world that are holding events such as fundraisers for causes befitting everything John believed in and promoted in his music. We will also offer inspirational/motivational and educational workshops or seminars at each event given by the artists and musicians in attendance. The objective being to introduce John's music to up and coming talent who would like the opportunity to join in with us!

All donations will be used as start up funds for the corporation. I do this as a labor of love for John and his music he left us and I seek no financial gain from this. As a non-profit corporation, a board of directors will be required and needed to help with all aspects of the corporation to keep it operational. <https://www.gofundme.com/rmfpa>



Advertise your Forthcoming Concerts

Calling all tribute artists – please let me know if you are having a concert in the near future and I will include the details in our regular newsletters.

Jenny Dreamed of Trains: This song was sung several times during the course of Aspen in October – dedicated to the wonderful train trip I took recently over the Canadian Rocky Mountains from Vancouver to Jasper AB, my song for this month is Jenny Dreamed of Trains – thanks to the musicians who included this song in their lineup this year.

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.



JENNY DREAMED OF TRAINS

(Vince Gill)

*When Jenny was a little girl she only dreamed of trains
She never played with dolls or lacy kinds of things
Jenny counted boxcars instead of countin' sheep
She could go anywhere when she went to sleep*

*All she ever talked about was gettin' on to ride
She was livin' in another time you could see it in her eyes
Everyday after school she'd head down to the tracks
Waitin' for the train that was never comin' back*

*Jenny dreamed of trains
When the nighttime came
Nobody knew how she made it come true
Jenny dreamed of trains*

*The depot's been boarded up, the rails have turned to rust
There hasn't been a train through here since the mill went bust
No one believed her when she said she heard the train
She was just a little girl actin' kinda strange*

*Jenny dreamed of trains
When the nighttime came
Nobody knew how she made it come true
Jenny dreamed of trains*

*Jenny laid a penny on the track one day
In God we trust she walked away
The very next mornin' all that she could find
Was a little piece of copper squashed flatter than a dime*

*Jenny dreamed of trains
When the nighttime came
Nobody knew how she made it come true
Jenny dreamed of trains
Nobody knew how she made it come true
Jenny dreamed of trains*

