



**HIGHER  
GROUND  
AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.hgavic.com>

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## HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – September 2018

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the September newsletter. My sincere apologies for this late newsletter. I have spent two glorious months travelling through the United Kingdom and Ireland, arriving home just a few days ago. We attended a family wedding in County Clare, Ireland. Despite thinking we would visit most of the country during that month, the truth is, we spent much of our time travelling through the *County roads*, stopping often for photos of ruins and of the superb wildflowers. Summer is the time for the music festivals, and we were lucky enough to attend quite a number of traditional Irish music festivals. During the second month, we visited many places between John O'Groats in the far north east of Scotland to Lands End in the far south west of England. John's songs were never far out of mind, as *Country Roads*, was played wherever we went. To see the younger generation jump up onto the dance floor when the first bars of the song were played was a surprise, as was the arrangement of this iconic song. Suffice to say, even Christy Moore's Lisdoonvarna was somehow woven into one of the choruses. The beauty of the music of the 60s and 70s era is that it is universal, and none is more loved than *Country Roads*.

The year is fast disappearing, and in a few weeks, the John Denver Tributes in Aspen and Kurri Kurri, Australia will be upon us. Our tribute weekend here in Australia will be a fairly low-key one this year as many of our members are currently overseas, returning in early October. With this in mind, it will give us an opportunity to regroup and to make decisions on how we want to move forward with *Higher Ground Australia* in the future. There are some quite exciting ideas floating around, as we tackle new challenges, especially in fund-raising for our annual donation to Peggy McDonald of *Higher Ground Raptors*.

### **Swing low, sweet chariot...**

Our friend and long-time member of HGA, Sandra Horwell, *slipped the surly bonds of earth*, passing away on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018. As I sit here trying to put some words together, I find myself smiling at her memory. We first met Sandy and her husband, Colin, in 2003, when they arrived at our weekend venue at Warburton. Within minutes, it felt as though we had known this couple all our lives. Her laughter and sense of fun were

infectious and we often laughed so much that tears came to our eyes.

Sandy loved the music of John Denver, and the one luxury she allowed herself was to attend his concerts whenever he came to Melbourne. She often recalled memories from those concerts and the pleasure that John's music gave her. She was known to have worn out several video and cassette tapes because she played them so often. I think everyone in her family were delighted when they were replaced with almost indestructible CDs and DVDs.

A couple of years ago, I received a call from an almost distraught Sandy. Her car had been broken into and the only things of value that had been stolen were her John Denver CDs.

In 2007, Sandy and Colin joined us in Aspen for John's tenth anniversary. We had a fun time, visiting the places that John talked about, including Maroon Bells and Windstar. They had planned to return last year, but were unable to make it.

No matter what challenges Sandy faced during her lifetime, she tackled them with a smile on her face. We felt as though we were part of her extended family, and she was a much-loved member of ours. Her presence, her love and laughter will be always missed, but we are so glad that she was a part of our little group. Knowing Sandy has enhanced all of our lives.

On behalf of us all at *Higher Ground Australia*, we extend our deepest condolences to Colin, their five children, their grandchildren, Sandy's family and everyone who knew her.



### **2018 JD Tribute Weekend**

We have finalised the arrangements for our 2018 John Denver Tribute Weekend, which will be held on the weekend of 12-14 October. I am just about to adding finishing touches to the last few things this week and we are good to go.

The venue is the *Hunter Valley Hotel Academy, McLeod Road, Kurri Kurri NSW*. We have booked two cottages for the weekend. I currently do not have the costings, as I don't have the final

numbers yet. As usual, we try to keep our costs to the minimum, and I don't think the accommodation for two nights would exceed \$100 per person.

Thanks to those who have paid their deposits. For the others who would like to join us or wish to ask for more information about the weekend, please let me know as quickly as possible on

[hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com)

A non-refundable deposit of \$40 (food kitty) per person may be paid at any time to me by direct deposit to:

Westpac Bank

Branch #: 733-039

Account #: 542649

Name: Mrs Janette Frawley

Please put your name and JD in the description so I know who has sent the money through.

***Please bring a bottle of water from your home and your song books.***

### **Picture Book Donation**

I have donated three books on behalf of *Higher Ground Australia* to Luurnpa Catholic School in Balgo, Western Australia. This school is very remote and the books have been accepted with gratitude. Our annual book give-away has been very successful, providing us the opportunity to share the music and lyrics of songs John Denver sang in a very visual way.

To date, we have donated approximately 30 books to schools in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia.

We will return to our usual book ballot next year.

### **2018 Fundraiser**

I'll be sending out the raffle books for our annual fundraiser at the end of September. I know it doesn't give you much time to sell tickets, but please try to sell as many as possible. The cost of the tickets is:

\$2 for 1 ticket

\$5 for 3 tickets

\$10 for 10 tickets.

First Prize is an original painting named *Flying for Me* by Davy Turner of England.

Second prize is a mystery box, filled with a variety of items, valued at least \$50.

***If you have something you would like to add to the mystery prize, please let me know.***

Donations are

also welcome, if you would prefer not to sell tickets. Please let me know.

If anyone else would like to purchase tickets from me directly, I can organise it, and send you a scanned copy of the tickets, which will be included



in the draw. Please email me if you would like tickets (Australian members only).

You will be notified after the weekend if you are the winners.

ALL proceeds will be donated to *Higher Ground Raptors* to fund (in a tiny way) Peggy McDonald's excellent work with the rehabilitation and release of raptors. Please check out her website

[www.highergroundraptors.com](http://www.highergroundraptors.com) and

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

### **Higher Ground Australia Website**

Our web address is <https://www.hgavic.com/>. I'm not sure whether I have some sort of glitch with the way the website looks with one of the updates of Windows 10. It is presenting OK on earlier versions, but I'm trying to sort it out now. Please let me know if our site isn't viewing properly.

PS: The mobile version hasn't been updated for a while – I'm also working on that as well!

Please contact me on [hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com) with your comments, and I thank those who have sent me valuable feedback recently

### **The 'Official John Denver Celebration Concert' plots eight-city Down Under tour**

Jeremy Roberts: Retro pop culture interviews and elusive love feelings sustain this University of Georgia Master of Agricultural Leadership alum. Email: [jeremyr@windstream.net](mailto:jeremyr@windstream.net)  
August 2, 2018

Twenty-one years after the shocking demise of beloved singer-songwriter John Denver, fans can experience the Colorado poet laureate onstage via video. Taking its cue from the innovative "Elvis: The Concert"—which coincidentally debuted in 1997 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death—"The Official John Denver Celebration Concert" marks its first international pilgrimage by sailing to Australia for a mini eight-city tour.

Sanctioned by Denver's estate, the itinerary kicks off December 14 at the Enmore Theatre in Sydney and winds through Gold Coast, Tamworth, Newcastle, Wyong, Adelaide, and Melbourne before culminating at the Astor Theatre in Perth two days before Christmas. Denver's affinity for the nation brimming with uninhabitable desert and lush coastal vegetation is irrefutable. The ubiquitous TV, film [e.g. trading barbs with cigar-chomping comedy icon George Burns in *Oh, God!*], and Hot 100 entertainer whose '70s oeuvre would be considered country in modern times amassed 63 Australian shows—plus four in neighboring New Zealand—between 1975 and 1994, even shooting a 90-minute conservation-themed ABC television special there in 1978. His second, albeit acrimonious marriage was to Aussie actress-singer Cassie Delaney.

Previously known as "John Denver: A Rocky Mountain High Concert," the multimedia visual experience combines Denver road band alums with archival concert footage. Taken from the past



45 years—a notable chunk derives from the singer's mid-'80s world tour of Japan and England along with his celebrated 1995 Wildlife Concert—the archival footage eliminates nearly all sounds except Denver's voice and acoustic guitar. The quintet features the renowned Jim Horn on saxophone and woodwinds [with Denver from 1978–1995; also played on the Beach Boys' Pet Sounds and George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh], bassist Alan Deremo [1994–1997; e.g. Jimmy Buffett and Colin Hay], pianist-backing vocalist Chris Nole [1994–1997; e.g. the Oak Ridge Boys, Emmylou Harris, Don Williams, and Buffett], master of ceremonies-guitarist-singer Jim Curry [provided Denver's vocals in the CBS TV movie Take Me Home: The John Denver Story], and newcomer Nate Barnes of hard rock trio Rose Hill Drive on drums. They bring Denver's classic tracks to life in startling fashion and provide running commentary of their years spent with the musician throughout the two-and-a-half-hour show. A string section adds further authenticity. A month-long jaunt targeting the USA's East Coast in February 2013 served as the Celebration Concert's grand debut. After a five-city Florida run later that November, the production virtually entered hibernation. For North American fans unable to travel to Australia, two warm-up gigs exist—September 28 at the Luhrs Performing Arts Center in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, followed by the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts in Jacksonville, Florida, on September 29. It is the closest thing to actually seeing the "Annie's Song" balladeer in a live setting...unless you prefer tribute artists or slightly unsettling holograms à la Roy Orbison.

In a series of email exchanges Nole exclusively divulged whether he was initially apprehensive about accompanying a deceased artist and what to expect on any given night. "When I was first asked to take part in the Celebration Concert I was certainly intrigued with the idea," said Nole. "I had the experience of performing onstage with John, and I knew there would be some similarities. My main concern was the technical logistics and the show form. It definitely took some rehearsing and experimenting with the set list and banter, but after the band and crew did some fine tuning, things came together very well.

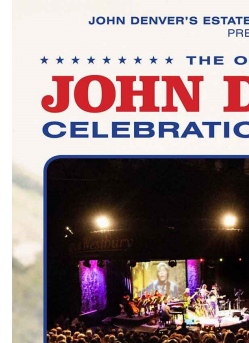
"The Celebration Concert pretty much includes many of the John Denver hits that people know and love—along with a few surprises. The set list has been fine-tuned due to the many options that we have with John's video/audio performances and the live songs that the band performs throughout the show. Another factor that now affects our set list is either the live string section or symphony orchestra that accompany many of the songs. The song selections have gone through various changes since 2013, but what we

are doing now is probably the best presentation thus far. Being our Australia tour will be taking place in December, there is the possibility that we may add a few John Denver Christmas songs to the line-up, either live band or John via video." As Denver would probably exclaim in his inimitable way, "Far out!"

<https://medium.com/@jeremyjr/the-official-john-denver-celebration-concert-plots-eight-city-down-under-tour-e36ea8e1505f>

### **John Denver Celebration Concert Tickets**

The John Denver Celebration Concert will be touring Australia in December. The concerts start in Sydney on 14<sup>th</sup> December, Gold Coast on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Tamworth on the 16<sup>th</sup>, Newcastle on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Wyong on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Adelaide on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Melbourne on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and Perth on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Tickets are available from <https://metropolistouring.com/john-denver/> Book early, as this is going to be a very popular concert.



### **Links**

There are a couple of blogs, which may be of interest to you. They were a little disjointed and long to reproduce here in this newsletter, so I'll provide the links.

<https://medium.com/@jeremyjr/the-official-john-denver-celebration-concert-plots-eight-city-down-under-tour-e36ea8e1505f>

<http://www.house-crazy.com/john-denvers-house-in-aspen-colorado/>

<http://www.rolexmagazine.com/2014/11/john-denver-kings-of-country-music.html?m=1>

### **Mark Cormican**

For anyone interested in listening to the talented Mark Cormican and Starwood, they have released their new CD, *Family Tree*.

CDs are available for \$15 (plus \$3 for shipping) to: Mark Cormican, P.O. Box 270178, Louisville, CO 80027 or go to PayPal "Friends and Family" and send \$18 to Sharon's email -

[alaskanchild17@gmail.com](mailto:alaskanchild17@gmail.com)

Mark has organised a Christmas concert at the Colorado Center for Musical Arts in Lafayette CO on **Saturday December 8th at 7:00 p.m.** Put it in your diary and more details to come later.





## **Back Home Again**

A tribute to John Denver.

*"In this time of environmental concerns, and Americans' efforts to simplify their lives, it seems that John Denver's music and message are even more relevant today, yet you rarely hear his music on the radio anymore."*

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*.

Check out Tom's website for his forthcoming show schedule.

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

Tom's next tribute show will be on July 22-23 in Lancaster PA. Click the link for details and tickets.

<https://dutchapple.com/>

## **Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon**

**September 28:** Chris Collins & Boulder Canyon will be performing at Mishler Theatre in Altoona, PA. Tickets are \$32 and \$28 and are now on sale for the concert at [www.mishlertheatre.org](http://www.mishlertheatre.org) or by calling the box office at 814-944-9434.

We are very excited to announce that we will be back this year to be part of the annual John Denver Celebration week in Aspen, Colorado, which will include returning to perform at the historic **Wheeler Opera House on October 13th!** This will be our full show with the big screen/video for Aspen as we pay tribute to John Denver's music in the place he called home. Come out and join us this year for the show and to celebrate John Denver's life and legacy! Tickets are now on sale at [www.aspenshowtix.com](http://www.aspenshowtix.com) or by calling the Wheeler Opera House Box Office at 866-449-0464 (toll free) or 970-920-5770.

Along with the concert, we are co-sponsoring, with the Peaceful Blue Planet Foundation, a free showing of the movie "Oh, God!" starring John Denver and George Burns at the **Wheeler Opera House on October 12th**. Join us for a free movie night to see this classic movie on the big screen!

Also, we will be returning to The Annual **Pine Creek Cookhouse Event in Ashcroft, CO this year on Sunday, October 14th**. We have been involved with this event since it started 11 years ago! A great time with old and new friends, the event has music, a gourmet luncheon, an auction of some John Denver memorabilia, and fantastic views of the mountains in a well-known restaurant with one of the top chefs of Aspen! It is by reservation only and the seating is limited. You can email [rose312@embarqmail.com](mailto:rose312@embarqmail.com) for the details and reservations.

Attended by people from all over the world, it is a special week in honor of John Denver, his music, his life, and all he gave to us. Filled with concerts, events, and surrounded by the mountains he loved and inspired his music, we hope you can join us this year! You can find more information about the week at

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

Be sure to visit us at

[www.bouldercanyonband.com](http://www.bouldercanyonband.com) for all the updates on upcoming shows and news!

## **Aspen in October 2018**

### **October 10:**

10am - Meet & Greet at John Denver Sanctuary

6pm - Aspen Meadow Band at Mountain Chalet

### **October 11:**

6pm - Aspen Meadow Band at Mountain Chalet

7pm - Ron Matthews at Mountain Chalet

### **October 12:**

4pm - David Stratford at Mountain Chalet

7pm - Oh God! Screening at the Wheeler Opera House (free event)

### **October 13:**

12pm - Singer/Songwriter masterclass - Aspen Chapel

4pm - Aspen Meadow Band at Mountain Chalet

7:30pm - Chris Collins & Boulder Canyon at the Wheeler Opera House. [www.aspenshowtix.com](http://www.aspenshowtix.com)

### **October 14:**

11am - Pine Creek Cookhouse annual event.

Email Suzanne on [rose312@embarqmail.com](mailto:rose312@embarqmail.com) for details and reservations

### **October 15:**

10am - Goodbye Again at Wagner Park

For more information and booking details, please click on this link.

<http://johndenver.de/index.php/en/aspen-in-october/aspen-2018>

This month, I've selected the lyrics *Sweet Surrender* in memory of Sandy Horwell

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.





## Sweet Surrender

(John Denver)

*Lost and alone  
On some forgotten highway  
Traveled by many,  
Remembered by few  
Lookin' for something  
That I can believe in  
Lookin' for something  
That I'd like to do with my life*

*There's nothin' behind me  
Nothin' that ties me to  
Something that might have been true yesterday  
Tomorrow is open,  
Right now it seems to be more than enough  
To just be here today,*

*And I don't know what the future  
Is holdin' in store  
I don't know where I'm goin'  
I'm not sure where I've been  
There's a spirit that guides me,  
A light that shines for me  
My life is worth the livin',  
I don't need to see the end*

*Sweet, sweet surrender, live, live without care  
Like a fish in the water, like a bird in the air  
Sweet, sweet surrender, live, live without care  
Like a fish in the water, like a bird in the air*

