



**HIGHER
GROUND
AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.hgavic.com>

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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – August 2019

WELCOME

"Music does bring people together; it allows us to experience the same emotions. People everywhere are the same in heart and spirit. No matter what language we speak, what colour we are, the form of our politics or the expression of our love and our faith, music proves: We are the same."

I have recently returned home after spending the month of July in North America. Since I often travel solo, it is important that my itinerary includes a healthy balance of tours, meeting up with friends, as well as using 'alone' time to visit the places I really want to see and to challenge myself to both physically and emotionally. I have also been so blessed to have many good friends who have not only shared their homes and families, but have truly given me part of themselves. These people offer far more than a place to stay, but unforgettable memories that will remain with me. Somehow the words, 'Thank You', seem inadequate in these instances.

I've often said that the song, *Take me Home, Country Roads*, is probably the one most recognisable and loved song in the world, and this opinion was firmly confirmed recently.

Imagine this scenario in Calgary, Canada: At the end of the rodeo, as the speakers boomed out John Denver singing *Country Roads*, approximately 25,000 people sang it joyfully as they filed out of the stadium in beat with the song's steady tempo. Just playing this song publicly brought a crowd of strangers together for those few minutes, but probably, more importantly, it provided an atmosphere of comfort, safety, and a sense of 'home' to the crowd.

Renee Armand recently said that John Denver's most important legacy is his ability to bring people together.

As I reflect on the years I have been with Higher Ground Australia, and the visits I've made to Aspen, and more importantly, the many friends I have made during this time, I firmly believe that John's music has played a huge role in bringing people from all walks of life together. I also cannot think of another musician that is so universally loved, and one whose songs have touched so many hearts.

Happy reading!

2019 TRIBUTE WEEKEND

We have finalised the venue for our annual John Denver Tribute weekend from October 11-13, 2019.

We will be staying at Rosie's Cottage in Buninyong, Victoria, just a short distance from the central regional city of Ballarat. Thanks to Colin, who has visited many places in and around Ballarat to find the best possible place for our needs. Thanks also to Carolyn for your input. Finding a venue is not always easy, especially when the perfect place gets snatched from under you, as what happened to us last week. However, the advantage of Rosie's Cottage is that it's out in the country, far away from neighbours.

It's fairly reasonably-priced, and depending on our final numbers, will cost between \$50 and \$100 in accommodation per person, plus food kitty.

The total cost per person will be determined once we have confirmed our final numbers. I'm taking deposits for the weekend now. Please deposit \$30 into my bank account to cover the food kitty.

Account Name: Mrs Janette Frawley (Westpac Bank)
BSB: 733-039

Account: 542649

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

Some fundraising ideas have been discussed, and will be finalised in the coming days. I think I've got a wonderful 1st prize for a raffle; more details later.

HIGHER GROUND RAPTORS

This is probably the best thing that Leigh Sales has ever featured on her Current Affairs programme. Follow the link to watch the story of Peggy McDonald and her work with Australian raptors. For the past few

years, we have donated all of the proceeds of our fundraising efforts to Higher Ground Raptors. We have also planted trees dedicated to John Denver and to his Australian tour manager, Max Moore on her property.

Peggy's passion for her work in raptor rehabilitation is second to none, and we continue to support her and her groundbreaking work in enclosure design and rehabilitation methods. This film segment is really beautifully produced. By the way, it is not a coincidence that Peggy shares her facility's name with us. We have formed a firm bond with Peggy through John's music and his love of raptors, so Higher Ground Raptors was named after our group and we share a common respect for the wonderful work Peggy does.

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

After watching the video, if you would like to donate directly to Higher Ground Raptors, you can do so through Peggy's website

www.highergroundraptors.com.

JIMMY FONG: MEMORIES OF PENANG

Take me Home, Country Roads is one of the first songs Jimmy Fong learnt to play when he was young and living through civil unrest in his native home of Penang, Malaysia. Establishing himself as a singer, Jimmy also started to write his own songs. Jimmy met and performed with John Denver in 1994 in Malaysia and was struck by his humility and sincerity, and his words of encouragement. Many of Jimmy's original songs reflect upon the love he has of his native Malaysia and his own experiences from childhood through to his life today in Melbourne Australia. Jimmy regularly performs his favourite covers from the 60s and 70s, as well as his original material. His instrumental, *Maroon Bells*, was inspired by his visits to the Maroon Bells State Park, CO in 2015 and 2017, and *Country Roads* is a regular favourite amongst his extensive repertoire.

After sell-out audiences in Penang in June, 2019, Jimmy will present his show, *Memories of Penang* here in Melbourne on September 7 at MC Showroom, Level 1, 48 Clifton St, Prahran, VIC 3181 at 8pm.

Tickets are available from

<https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=529285&>

See Jimmy perform his signature song, *Memories of Penang* by clicking the link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=JtYNc0WYv_o

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 stefpoo@outlook.com

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.

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>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

John Denver had many 'firsts' during his lifetime, one of which was to be the first Western artist to have his songs aired on Chinese radio.

DENVER IN CHINA: HE HAS A DREAM

By Jim Mann, TIMES Staff Writer, July 3, 1985 12 AM

PEKING — China has offered John Denver the Great Wall, but he is holding out for the Forbidden City.

For the past 1 1/2 years, he has been trying to arrange to do a televised concert in China this fall to be broadcast live via satellite throughout the world. So far, no deal has been made, in part because Denver hasn't reached agreement with Chinese officials on where he will sing.

"'John Denver live from the Great Wall' has a nice ring to it, but where are you going to put the audience?" Denver asked Tuesday, soon after arriving in China for another round of negotiations with Chinese officials.

He said the Chinese have suggested that he sing in some indoor arena, but he wants an outdoor location that will be instantly recognizable as China.

"If it's indoors, it could be anywhere," he told reporters. "We could do it in Mann's Chinese Theater."

Denver would like to sing either in a courtyard of the Forbidden City (the old residence of Chinese emperors) or at the Temple of Heaven, another renowned site. But he said the riot that broke out here after a soccer game May 19 appears to have the Chinese authorities "scared to death" about crowd control.

"They're nervous about a large crowd," he said, "especially when I'm trying to put a large crowd in a 'national treasure' like the Imperial City or the Temple of Heaven."

The pop singer stopped in Peking after a tour of the Soviet Union; in Moscow he did nine concerts for Russian audiences. He is scheduled to leave Thursday for the United States and concerts scheduled this weekend.

"To be quite honest with you, I have no idea where I am or what time it is," he told a group of Chinese broadcasting officials at a banquet Tuesday night.

Zhang Shaoji, vice president of China Central Television, said he hopes an agreement with Denver can be reached "on the basis of friendship and cooperation."

Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" is one of the best-known English-language pop songs in China these days.

His connections--or, as the Chinese would put it, guanxi --with the country's leaders could not be better. He performed before China's top leader, Deng Xiaoping, at the Kennedy Center in Washington when Deng was there in 1979, and he sang for Premier Zhao Ziyang last year in New York. "I think the Chinese are more familiar with me than with any other Western artist," Denver said.

But he said he has been unable to line up a network or a sponsor for the China concert, which he still hopes to do Sept. 1.

"I haven't done anything on television for several years, and I haven't had a record in the Top 10 for 10 years," he said. ". . . For a live concert in the United States, I need something more, especially since I'm not so hot right now."

Denver is hoping for a television program that might show scenes from throughout China. He would like, for example, to show pandas in the province of Sichuan, or "show what it's like for a family in China."

But his dream is to perform at Tian An Men, the Gate of Heavenly Peace in the heart of Peking, where Chinese leaders like Mao Tse-tung and Deng have addressed the masses. He imagines a helicopter filming overhead.

"There would be a million people in Tian An Men Square, and there I would be at the rostrum, starting a concert," he said.

What song would he open with?

"Anything they want, if they'd let me do that," he replied.

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-07-03-ca-10388-story.html>

TRIBUTE ARTISTS

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

WILL KRUGER

This was posted by Will Kruger on Facebook. Please PM him for details, or watch the various Facebook pages for more information.

I'm thinking of hosting a John Denver retreat September 25 through the 29th at a friend's lakehouse in Twin Lakes, WI. It will be a few days of music jamming, and friendships for those who love John's music. I'm still trying to bring things together, and things are still in flux. If you are interested in attending please private message me so I can make a communication list to give you updates as things and details progress. All the very best, Will.

BRAD FITCH

The 16th Annual Estes Park John Denver Tribute Concert will be held on August 31, 2019 at YMCA of the Rockies, 2515 Tunnel Road, Estes Park Co. 80517. Tickets are available from

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-john-denver-tribute-concert-estes-park-lions-club-tickets-63434781138?fbclid=IwAR3yUoLbnCZ7a-O6AcjMAWbi-z6aM-EiAUzzbVYVB1Wln6oJyEUFiCoFNIM>

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>

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

Mountain Chalet, (5th 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 - 4th 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 - 22nd 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

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



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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.

Take me Home, Country Roads

(Bill Danoff, Taffy Nivert Danoff, & John Denver)

*Almost heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, blowing like a breeze*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads*

*All my memories gather round her
Miner's lady, stranger to blue water
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky
Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads*

*I hear her voice, in the morning hour she calls me
The radio reminds me of my home far away
And driving down the road I get a feeling
That I should have been home yesterday, yesterday*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads*

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads
Take me home, down country roads
Take me home, down country roads*

