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Volume 11 – Edition 3

## HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – May 2014

### VALE

#### **STEVE WEISBERG**

It is with much sadness that I tell you that John's lead guitarist in the 1970s and our very good friend, Steve Weisberg passed away on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May after a valiant battle with cancer.

Having read through many tributes to Steve on Facebook, one common theme binds each of them together – that Steve was a good musician, songwriter, great storyteller and a thoroughly fantastic bloke.

Dear Steve,

*I cannot remember when we first 'met' over the internet. I think it was sometime in 2009, when you asked to join Higher Ground Australia and to receive our regular newsletters. Each time you received a newsletter, you would email me and thank me for keeping John's memory alive. Over the years, we shared many such emails, and I even plucked up enough courage to ask you to write an article for the HGA newsletter, which you did obligingly. I will dig out that article and publish it again in a later newsletter.*

*In 2012, four of us arrived in Aspen, introduced ourselves, and were each treated with bone-crushing bear hugs. It was like as if we had known you all our lives, and over the next few days, we caught up with you and shared a lot of laughs.*

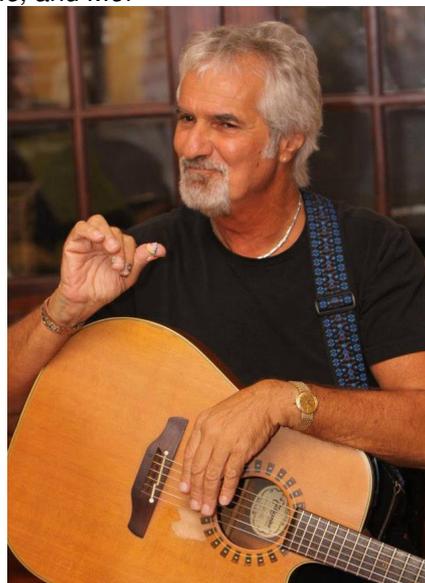
*I am not sure that you were really prepared for some of the antics we got up to – all legal (sort of) of course. I will never forget the look on your face the night we arranged to meet in the lounge for a drink. What you did not expect was that once we had arranged ourselves out on the balcony, conned the staff to light the heaters, the market bag containing the glasses, cans of Canada Dry for you, and the odd bottle of alcohol for us, emerged from under the table. I do not think you realised that BYO (Bring Your Own) was part of Aussie culture but you embraced it. We were like a bunch of kids that had escaped from boarding school. Over the course of those days, we attended concerts, visited the wonderful natural treasures surrounding Aspen and took full advantage of our environment and the many activities that would talk about with you later each day. And you introduced us to the Aspen you loved through the stories you told.*

*We were also most fortunate that we took the opportunity to attend one of your Up Close and Personal hotel-room gigs. Along with the*

*immensely talented Chris Bannister, we not only enjoyed a prolonged concert, we relished it. All too soon our week in Aspen ended. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner with all those left in Aspen at the Irish pub. It was a fitting farewell and although there were about twenty people at the table that night, you seemed to get around and talk to each and every person before the end of the evening. It was with much sadness that we said goodbye to Aspen, but we promised that some of us would catch up again in 2015.*

*It was a shock to us all to hear that you were battling cancer about this time last year. You seemed to have taken control of it and your positive attitude should have seen you through. You fought so hard and remained so upbeat throughout your treatments, never whingeing and still writing emails each time you received the newsletter.*

*Steve, you were called away from this earth far too early. We had arranged to meet in the lounge of the Limelight Hotel in October 2015. You have another gig to attend, but I will be there, hopefully with a bunch of your friends. I will bring the market bag containing glasses and cans of Canada Dry and (probably a bottle of brandy), and together, my friend, we will toast the life of a thoroughly nice bloke and I am sure that if we listen really carefully, the riffs introducing 'Christmas for Cowboys' will be heard on a cool Aspen Mountain breeze. With love from all of us at HGA, but especially, Melanie, Carolyn, Lorraine, and Me!*



**This newsletter is a tribute to our friend, Steve Weisberg. Rest in Peace my friend – you are a treasure!**

(From Steve's Website)

<http://www.johndenverofftherecord.com/bio.html>

I really can't remember not wanting to make music. Begged Mom & Dad for violin lessons in the 2nd grade. They 'suggested' another instrument. We settled for piano. We didn't own one, so they were safe. Third grade, I found my passion... slide trombone. Practicing in the... shower after school for that awesome echo. (My licks were going down the drain). Trying to cop Dixieland licks from trumpeter Al Hirt. Then the grand marches of John Phillips Sousa. And then the whole world changed. Rock n' roll had arrived. Can you name ONE famous rock n' roll trombonist? It was time to slide onto..... guitar. Bands were still called 'combos'. THE KONTOURS in high school, playing British Invasion and 'Louie, Louie'. And then some older guys hired me. 'THE PREACHERS'.... . We wore clerical garb & long wigs while playing a James Brown revue to drunken fraternity crowds: 'The Preachers' Featuring "FORTY-FIVE MINUTES OF SOUL." We actually timed our set once. (27 minutes, but we had excellent management.) The lead singer always fainted at the end of 'Please, Please, Please'... just like James did. Half our contracts read "Band must wear clerical garb". The other half read "Band must not wear clerical garb". Only now do I pity my parents for what they must have thought as their middle son, student at a very expensive private school, left for weekend work wearing skinny black pants, shiny black boots, long wig, and a minister's collar! The Preachers were playing the same circuit as THE CHESSMEN (Jimmie Vaughan's & Doyle Bramhall's band), FELICITY (Don Henley's band) and such. We didn't know Jimmie had a little brother named Stevie. First time I heard Henley his band was playing a frat party. Linoleum tile floor w/2 beer kegs. No stage. But when he started to sing, you just knew he'd make a living. I moved to Austin in the late 60's & hookah'd up with the local players; many would later become known. Some who never made it big were astounding, like Ernie Gammage. Most great singers would kill for his voice. I was one of a nice handful of good rock n' roll / R&B lead guitarists looking for a break into the real industry. Then Michael Murphey came to Austin, and set the town on its ear. Austin's music suddenly went from electric cover bands to acoustic singer/songwriters, their new lead players filling their songs with R&B licks, rock n' roll licks. I realized there was empty & necessary niche I could fill; playing subtle melodic licks, in subtle melodic songs. Warmth versus heat.

I was now playing to a listening audience, vs. the dancing one. Willie was still in Nashville with short hair, and Jerry Jeff was still in early retirement in Florida. (When they later hit Austin, the place exploded, and the whole 'Progressive Country' thing took root.) But there were no Outlaws yet, and I still think Murphey started it all. Lead guitarists were just scratching out a living, and I needed a gig with someone on the move. Murphey was the only guy in town with a record contract, but he was churning through lead players like M&M's. Jimmie Vaughan was playing tiny bars. Henley had gone to L.A. intent on doing serious business. I'd been touring as a duo with Willis Alan Ramsey, my first real singer/songwriter. When we played, no one spoke, and I was hooked.. ready to try out for the big league. But Austin was still a long way from the record business.

I'd heard that this guy John Denver, the guy with 'Country Roads' on the charts, didn't have a lead player (that was not the case, by the way... it was very fortunate misinformation). So I moved to Aspen, to let him discover me. I had his number immediately, but knew not to call. I ran into him at a store, but knew not to pitch myself. I somehow knew HE had to find ME. Misinformation can open a lot of doors.

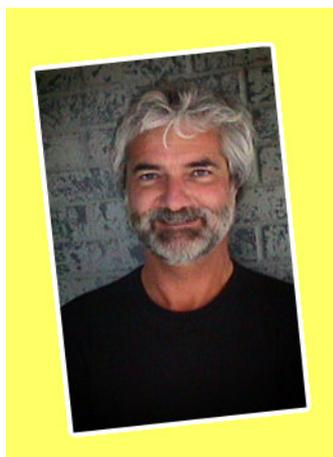
The 70's were an amazing time in Aspen. Buffett was about to move there, soon to break out of cult status. Steve Martin was sitting in Monday nights on banjo with our little bluegrass band. Jack Nicholson slouched on a couch at The Jerome Bar between movies, while Hunter Thompson held court at the corner table, talking so fast you had to work just to catch half of it. An unknown band called The Eagles was playing 6 nights a week at The Gallery in preparation for their first record & tour. I was playing 4 apres-ski gigs a week where nobody listened, and 4 coffeehouse gigs at night where nobody talked, just waiting for this guy Denver to walk in & discover me. (He never did.) But the rumor mill in Aspen treated me well, so one day John Denver calls... needs a new lead player.. asks if I'd be interested. (Oh yeah). I'd soon be Leavin' on a Private Jet Plane. Spent 1973 thru 1977 doing all John's concerts, records, TV shows, and writing a handful of songs for him. I played lead guitar, dobro, pedal steel, and sang the low harmony. First record session was 'John Denver's Greatest Hits Volume I', then 'Back Home Again', 'An Evening with John Denver', 'Rocky Mountain Christmas', 'Windsong', 'Spirit', and 'John Denver's Greatest Hits Volume II'. Seven of his nine Platinum records, the other two having preceded me. Looking back, those were his golden years. I got to co-write, record, tour, or be featured guest with Michael Martin Murphey, Sammi Smith, Willis Alan Ramsey, B.W. Stevenson, Gary Morris, Jose Feliciano, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Billie Joe Shaver, Ray Wiley



Hubbard, John McEuen, Steve Fromholz, Rusty Weir, Delbert McClinton, Willie Nelson, John Prine, Arlo Guthrie, and my very first musical mentor, Al Hirt (who said he'd never played with a guitarist before!)

A sucker for the fast lane, I was chicken fried by 30. Aspen had been a 7-year party, a killer for some. A friend later described us as 'The Terminally Hip'. We were, in feeble defense, absolutely the A-list to hang out with, but we were on a fast track going the wrong way. Moved back to Dallas over Christmas of 1977. I was fairly involved in what we now call globalization; supporting potato-growing countries who exported good vodka. But it's a twisting road for some of us, and my vices finally brought me to recovery, then to my knees, and then to the real source of all music. (I'd always thought that music was magic, coming from inside me. Now I understand it is a magical gift from a higher source, coming through me).

Today I play all kinds of gigs & projects involving my original Steve Weisberg music and the classics; big shows like Red Rocks, little shows, symphony shows, and intimate living room events called 'John Denver Off the Record'. And since 1990, I prefer my potatoes baked. I'm so grateful to find an audience who still wants to listen, bless their hearts! ...[John Denver Tribute](#) shows, home concerts, sitting in with great players like John McEuen from the Dirt Band, Murphey, and playing solo gigs (my newest endeavor) which combine originals, unoriginals, some stories, and a lot of



stupid humor, with a sometimes spiritual punchline. And I get session calls & producer calls. As a lead player, I found a niche long ago that's never failed to come through for me: I leave the 'hot licks' to others. But I play 'warm licks' with the very best of them, and it always feels good

to create warmth. So I get well paid for feeling good. Things have now gone full circle, without the vices that chewed me apart in younger days. When I'm at home, I play Sunday mornings at The Red Oak Lone Star Cowboy Church, where the pastor calls God 'The Great Trail Boss'. Me ? There ? Now who'd 'a thunkit ? But I'm enjoying this life. And that's a good thing, because none of us is getting out of it alive.

<http://www.steveweisberg.net/music/bio/>

The first time John Denver and I played together, in my Aspen living room, 1973, we thought we'd

played for about an hour, but it had really been almost *three*. Time disappears when musicians find a common groove. It's the possibility of that magic that keeps musicians playing.

The band was John, myself, and Dick Kniss on bass. I played lead guitar, dobro, pedal steel, and sang the low harmony. Then we added John Sommers. In the audio tapes of his book, John says "*It was that constellation, along with some terrific studio musicians, that carried me thru some big years touring and recording*".

My first studio work with him was *John Denver's Greatest Hit's, Volume 1*, then *Back Home Again, Evening With John Denver, Rocky Mountain Christmas, Windsong, Spirit*, and *Greatest Hits Volume 2*. And he included a few songs that I wrote for him.

### **Lovely Facebook Tribute by Rory Young**

wrote these words on Steve's page... they mean so much:

Gosh, Steve... how long it's been since we first met, and driving to work, this morning, I realized to myself, "This is the first day I'll live without Steve in my life."

The fun times we had, just listening to you play... listening to you reminisce about the old stories, whether at our home, or yours... or Aspen. The times you played for... the Dallas folks at our house, and man alive.... you sure put on a show! The concerts, the business behind the concerts.. both the good and the bad... introducing you to the newer generation of JD singers, and secretly getting you backstage at the Wheeler when no one was looking (when I was working backstage security). Talking shop and money over how to do home shows. Taking concert photos of you. Going to lunch with you in University Park in mid-Dallas, one time, after you had that backside "procedure", and you faithfully carried your "donut-pillow" with you... I just smiled at the waiter, who thought we were crazy!

Telling me that you were thinking about selling your house in the Dallas suburbs, and thinking of buying some land and becoming a "cowboy"! After all, you said, you'd wrote a successful song about it! You wanted to finally get out of the city and live your dream!

I remember that day when you told me you'd met someone "special". She lit up your life. You told me, years later, that she was always the one... Driving tractors together, in your pasture... you and Connie Young, buying and selling horses, tack, and just swapping horse sense. You and Donna were the bomb!

Letting us stay at your place when we needed a night away...

Connecting with everyone and taking a few photos at your wedding... just allowing us to be a part of it meant the world to Connie and I.

Working with you on your website, your business plans, ideas you had for the future. You were always so positive, so upbeat! So happy! I



remember once when Heritage Auctions asked some of us to validate John's old guitars for auction, and I called you up... you wanted to drop by, but you were across town, and no one gets across Big-D at 2:00pm quickly...

Helping you sell your guitar on ebay... that was fun I remember, I was working one day, and you called me up and said, "Hey, Rory, do you remember what albums of John's I was on in the 70's? Cuz I durn sure don't remember!" So, I faithfully figured out the list for you...

Listening to you when you'd call me up on the phone, just to tell me something funny that you heard, or a small "life" tidbit that you had just discovered... you always told me, "Don't sweat the small stuff... and it's all small stuff!"

But in all the times we had, together, you always gave freely of yourself. Steve, I know that you were so proud of yourself for kicking the alcohol and drugs, and I commend you for that. Maybe this, too, is "just small stuff", and you've reconciled with the great Trail Boss in the sky... and maybe some day we'll ride tall in the saddle, together again.

You were such a huge blessing to so many! You weren't always politically correct, but you were ever available... and if there's a God that teaches us to give ourselves as living sacrifices, then you've shown us, countless times, how to do just that. Love you, bro, ...always.

Rory

### **Al Boulter, Tribute to Steve**

I just woke up to sad news, a friend from back in the days Steve Weisberg, passed away last night. For those of you who recognize the name, he played guitar and dobro among other instruments for John Denver during John's most popular years ...during mid 70s. We met in Aspen and would run into each other whenever Denver would tour into this area. I lost track of him after he left the band and until a few years ago ran into him again, so to speak on ebay. He was selling a chair that JD liked to sit in while at Steves parents house. After a couple of emails on ebay we caught up on fb. Steve was a remarkable and very talented musician. He wrote one of my all time favorite Christmas songs, "Christmas for Cowboys." He had a bout with Cancer a few years ago and had beat it but recently it had returned. My Prayers to your family and your friends and fans. RIP Pokey, I'll save a few hubcaps for you.

### **From Ed Stowers**

Steve Weisberg passed away today. I am still trying to get my thoughts wrapped around the suddenness of his passing, for it was unexpected. Though Steve had cancer for more than a year, he was adamant that his doctors told him it was the most survivable kind and he was determined to beat it. Though he had trouble with the last batch of chemotherapy, he told me as recently as two weeks ago that his doctors were telling him

they weren't telling him to get his affairs in order, so he felt he had plenty of time. Though I can't know for sure, I suspect his death came as much a surprise to Steve coming as suddenly as it did as it did to all of us. I can so envision him in an out-of-body experience going "WTF?"

Steve told me several months ago that he had a dream where he had passed but was able to attend his own funeral and he had all these people lined up to tell eulogies about him. In his dream, one of them was me. I don't know that I can do justice to Steve's memory, but I will begin to make as much of a eulogy as I can for him, though he deserves much greater.

I first met Steve in Aspen in 2007 during my first trip there. He was there to perform with the John Denver Tribute Band at the Wheeler Opera House. Unfortunately, he had collided with a dog while riding his bike and had taken a tumble and had hurt his arm so he was unable to play. When I met him briefly at an after-party hosted by John Adams, he was standing in a corner conversing with Jim Connor. I approached, introduced myself, and told Steve I had always loved his music on John's records. He was gracious, but obviously in pain from his accident, and soon excused himself to return to his hotel. Our initial meeting was very brief.

The next time I met Steve was at Mark Cormican's house in Warsaw, Kentucky. Steve was doing one of his "John Denver: Behind the Scenes" events at Mark's house and several of us went there to see him. For a guitarist who grew up on John Denver music, how could it get much better than to sit and actually play music with John's lead guitarist from the big years of 73-77? See, Steve was a celebrity to me. I can so remember that in the summer of 1975, shortly after graduating high school, I found a new John Denver album called "Windsong" in a store in Dallas. It was a cassette tape. I got it shortly before going into boot camp for the Navy. So that album stuck in my head, neuro-associated to my Navy years. While going through my A-school for the Navy as an Antisubmarine Warfare Operator (AW) I came across "An Evening with John Denver" in the base exchange. That was 1976 and John was at the height of his popularity. On that album, I first heard John introduce Steve in this way: "On electric and acoustic guitar and pedal-steel guitar and weird slide dobro guitar, from Aspen, Colorado: Mr. Steve Weisberg." That was my first introduction to Steve and for the next several years I listened to those songs and those albums over and over. I can clearly remember going to the Activities Center at Cubi Point Naval Air Station at Subic Bay, in the Philippines, and checking out a big reel-to-reel audio tape of "An Evening With" and sitting in a booth, my eyes closed, listening to that concert over and over and feeling as if I was there in the audience watching it



live. I also remember flying over the Philippines, listening to the song "Looking For Space" while looking out of the window of the P-3 aircraft I flew in, watching the clouds sail by as I watched the farmland far below. Those are special moments in my life indelibly etched in my memory. I told Steve about them later and he seemed kind of awed, as if he had no idea that the stuff he did ever had an impact on anyone. So when I finally met Steve at Mark's house, I was a little nervous. This guy was a celebrity to me; I had been listening to him since I was a kid on records and seeing him on TV. He was on virtually all of the John Denver TV specials and had even been on stage with John at the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. Here I was not only about to meet him in a very intimate environment, but to play music with him and some other people. I was excited, but also nervous for two reasons. First, my guitar skills were going to be thrown naked before him with all their faults. You never want to look bad in front of a celebrity you admire. Second, as with any fan, I was afraid of how I'd feel if Steve turned out to be cold, indifferent, or stuck up, which is a thing I think all fans fear when first meeting celebrities.

I can already hear some of you laughing. If anything, "stuck up" does NOT describe Steve Weisberg. He was warm, friendly, funny and vivacious. He had a gregarious and off-color sense of humor that immediately put me at ease. While there were many other guitarist there and Steve spent time with each of them, I remember clearly when he first noticed me. We were playing the Michael Martin-Murphy song "Boy From the Country" and I did the intro. Steve's eyes lit up and he grinned at me and got in his groove. Steve always talked about his groove and how when he got in it, he just played and time passed. Later, he told me, "I didn't know there was another lead player in the house." Now I am no lead player, and he knew it, but it was a kind compliment. Steve gave us all his email and told us to keep in touch. Many of us did. True to his word, if Steve Weisberg asked you to keep in touch he really meant it. I did, and through long conversations on the phone and occasional lunches where I'd meet him, usually in Dallas, our friendship grew. I would call him every few weeks and see how he was doing and he was always lively, positive and very funny. Always. Even the last time I talked to him two weeks ago.

Often I would get him to tell me what it was like traveling in the band with John Denver. I didn't want dirt, per se, I wanted to know the experience. Steve would usually claim he didn't remember a lot of it, telling me that "until after I left the band, John had a penchant for hiring alcoholic lead guitarists." He used to joke that if you remembered the 70's, then you didn't really experience them. But occasionally he'd get serious and tell me stories. One that sticks in my

mind is about a shouting match between Fred Cordova at NBC and John's manager, Jerry Weintraub. It was all about John's insistence that he wanted to introduce his band members on The Tonight Show. Cordova and Weintraub were apparently shouting in anger at each other at the top of their lungs and Steve heard it all walking down the hallway. Weintraub won through being threatening and John got to introduce his band on the air by name. He said he later asked John why he had such a jerk as a manager and John replied, "so I don't have to be." Stories like that were things I found fascinating to hear. Not that I always liked what I heard, but I was getting the real deal on how it really was back then.

I am a writer of fiction stories by hobby and I got an idea about writing a non-fiction book, not about John Denver (there were already too many of those) but rather about the musicians and fans who are still keeping John's music alive almost 20 years after his passing. The working title is "Between the Swan and Hercules," a line from the song "Spirit" that has meaning mainly to JD folks. Steve thought it was a good idea and agreed to write the forward for me. It would have sections on professional musicians, tribute musicians, and JD fans. Sort of a coffee table kind of book about the fandom of John Denver, the current activities, performers and fans. In preparing that, I was fortunate enough to sit down on the telephone one night and interview Steve Weisberg for his section in the book. The interview was nearly two hours long and I recorded the whole thing. Steve pretty much gave me a detailed life story. I still have the recording and I will transpose it and post parts of it as I get to it. I felt at the time, and especially do now, that that recording is historic information from one of John's band members from the 70s.

Steve, I think, had no idea he was a celebrity until we fans told him some years after John's death. He seemed to be forgotten. I grew up in Dallas and had no idea at all that Steve was actually from Dallas himself, because John had introduced him as being from Aspen (at the time of the recording, he was living in Aspen). But Steve moved back to Dallas and didn't live too far from me and I never had a clue. When I found out I would have lunch with him whenever I visited Dallas to see my family. I remember going to his house one time, a horse ranch south of Mesquite. I kept thinking he'd live in a big fancy mansion but he didn't. He lived in a modest ranch house that had horses living in the front yard, trained by his then-wife. We had lunch together, Mexican food, and talked for several hours. Steve was just like that. He was a talker and he enjoyed people. I believe that Steve had no idea he was famous. It constantly shocked him whenever I said that. He had no idea people knew who he was. I think he found out, in the last four or five years, and he



was awed by the idea. "I never got it, back in the day," he'd tell me. "I always wondered, what is it about John's music people go ga-ga over? It's really plain, simple kinds of sounds, not the hard, edgy rock I liked. I just didn't get it back then. Now I get it. Back then I wasn't ready to get it. But now I understand the power of John's work. I just had no idea back then. I was just a guy playing in a band, going from one concert to another and I never had the time to actually meet any fans. We weren't in one place long enough. Not really. Now I have the time to actually meet them as people, one-on-one, to see how nice they are, and what I was missing."

I think Steve felt blessed by his return to music from meeting his fans. When I met him, he was running his father's old business selling apparel as a buyer and was not playing publicly. In the last several years Steve returned to music and was blessed by the many fans who came to see him once again, as much now as friends as fans. I know he played occasionally with the JD tribute Band, the Friends With You Band, with James Garrett in Branson and on tours around the country with Ted Vigil. I remember how thrilled I was when he came to the Mountain Chalet one night and just jammed with us. I was always awed to be a friend of his because he had been a celebrity to me in my youth and then I had found out what a warm, nice guy he really was.

Steve and I were different in a lot of ways. His past and his politics were worlds away from mine. He was a very artistic kind of man and I am not. But we hit it off despite those differences, for reasons that are stronger than those, the places where we found commonality, not difference. But most of all because Steve Weisberg was a kind, gracious, and good man. He wasn't perfect and he freely admitted his mistakes, but he was a great person for all of that. I didn't know him very long, maybe five years, but my life was enriched by the experience and the loss I feel is keen. I will miss his jokes, his laughter, and the joy he brought. I know that wherever he is he is fine now. The sadness I feel isn't for Steve, for he has gained Heaven. My sadness is for myself, my loss of a friend, and the loss to all of those who were fans or friends.

The last thing I said to Steve in our last phone conversation a couple of weeks ago was, "Steve, we all love you, man." He was silent a moment and then replied, "I love you, too."

Rest in joy wherever you are, Steve. I miss you and I will not forget you. Thanks for being the man you were and for being a friend.

We still love you, man. We always will

**From Joseph Patrick Whitefield**

Last Thursday night in a room at M.D. Anderson, a very good friend of mine passed over. I found out today that his ex-wife and his brother were with him when he expired and for that I am

grateful. Steve "Winky" Weisberg's stint in Austin was short and before most of you were born, so I don't expect any of you to know much about him. He was a great guitarist, a person who could hear a line of music and play it right back with few if any mistakes. When he played in our band in the sixties, he blew all of our ears out with his double-stack Marshall with the same wah-wah pedal that Jimi Hendrix used, but before Jimmie or Stevie he was nailing Hendrix note for note. Same with Clapton; he heard what those two played and knew how to make his guitar sound like theirs. And before I hear any whining about "Yeah, but you guys were just copy bands", yeah that was true but so were Doyle, Henly, Doug and many later "original musicians".

When our band changed personnel, Steve went to one of the great show bands in Texas, The Sparkles for a while, then he quit and moved with his wife up to Aspen, CO where he played with a blue grass band that had a soon-to-be famous banjo player/comedian, Steve Martin. Mr. Weisberg said he never asked John Denver for an audition, figuring that John would hear about him soon enough. And he was right, John heard about Steve's prowess through the musical grapevine and called Steve to come over to pick with him. When John Denver owned the airwaves in the 1970s, Steve Weisberg and Dick Kniss (from Peter, Paul and Mary on upright bass) played with John throughout. And John was kind enough to encourage Steve to write a couple of songs for the albums they recorded, thus insuring Steve's fortunes. I heard them live and although John's music is not my cup of tea, the three of them were consummate musicians and Steve had gone from one of the loudest guitarists I'd ever heard to one of the most sensitive guitarists on the planet. I knew all three of them and they are all gone now. I hope that they are not resting in so much peace that they can't welcome Steve back to his place in the band. Bless y'all and bless you, Steve Weisberg!



Steve & Chris Bannister – Aspen 2012



## **Chris Bannister, Aspen In October (A Limey In Colorado) Part One**

The first song I performed in front of an audience in Aspen Colorado was not a John Denver song. My partner Sarah and I had arrived the previous night at around 11pm, we had been worn out after dragging our luggage and two acoustic guitars on and off three flights and through four airports. Aspen had been a small island of light in velvet, Autumnal darkness when our airport transfer car pulled up outside The Limelight Lodge, I was finally here, for months I had tried to imagine what this week would be like and now it had begun. Jet lag is (as Billy Connolly once famously stated) 'The hell of all diseases' a little hyperbole perhaps but it's certainly a bit tough on the system. We were wide awake at 3am, frazzled, anxious and still unable to see anything from the hotel room window, we decided to hit the streets before dawn. The rapidly paling sky was already silhouetting the mountains which surround the city by the time we got outside, there was barely a cloud, the air crisp and cold, it appeared we were the only two people crazy enough to be up and about at this hour.

I had avoided the temptation of studying Aspen's geography in the months leading up to this trip, I wanted to be surprised and the thing that surprised me most was it's size. It's a wonderfully compact place, the footprint of it's 'downtown' is only a little bigger than the area of the Lancashire village I live in. We wandered the streets just taking it all in, there was very little traffic which was a good thing given my bleary state of being. The mountains sweep right down to the road on one side of town, rugged and muscular, reminding me of The Langdale's in Cumbria's Lake District National Park back home. The fact that I was breathing hard after walking only a hundred yards or so up one of the lower slopes however, confirmed that at 8,000 feet, Aspen is a wee bit higher than The Lakes. It would be a good few days before I got used to the altitude 'We got everything here except Oxygen' someone said to me later that day, very true on both counts.

We were making our way back to our hotel when we saw a tall guy in hiking trousers and sneakers heading towards us on the opposite side of the road, we had found Steve Weisberg. Steve was the reason I was here, John Denver's lead guitar player on seven platinum albums, writer of 'Christmas For Cowboys' and 'It's Up To You' the guy who had seen me on Youtube almost two years previous and expressed the hope that he and I would perform together some day. Steve and I had talked on the phone and via skype, exchanged emails etc but had never met, until now.

'Hey Steve' I called in my most respectful, early morning voice, he turned and spotted Sarah and me.

'Heeeyyyyyyy' he bellowed at full, Texas cowboy volume, birds flying startled from the trees as he strode across the street to meet us.

Any trepidation I may have had about performing with Steve disappeared about twenty seconds into our hotel room rehearsal later that morning. I was nervous at first, how could I not be, this guy had sat opposite John Denver and jammed in exactly the way we were doing now, working out arrangements for songs like 'Back Home Again' and 'Annie's Song'. Luckily I needn't have worried, sometimes it just works and thankfully this was one of those times. It's best not to overthink these things and just accept the chemistry if it's there, we played and sang and talked for what we thought was about an hour, when we checked it had actually been three.

And so to that first song in front of an Aspen audience. We were in a bar downtown later that same day, Steve was up jamming with the live band, a group of guys he'd known since the 70s, rock and roll, soul covers, good music played by real musicians in a packed bar, the way it should be in other words. Sarah and me were beyond tired but we were having way too good a time to turn in and great live music is the best pick me up I know. When the band took a break Steve introduced me to the singer.

'You wanna get up with us and do a song?' he said shaking my hand.

'You know any Warren Zevon?' I asked hopefully, he smiled

'You bet'

And so it was that my first song in Aspen Colorado was 'Lawyers, Guns And Money' Zevon's twisted tale of a rich kid's misadventures in Central America, Steve thrashing away at his old Takamine beside me, both of us grinning like loons and yelling 'The s\*\*t has hit the fan' at the songs raucous climax. I'd like to think JD would have approved.

(Read the rest of Chris' account of his visit to Aspen in 2012 on his website.

<http://www.chrisbannister-musicofjohndenver.com/aspen-in-october-2012.php>

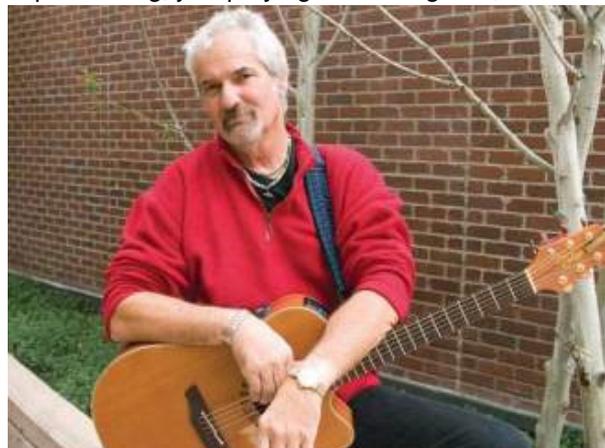
## **Steve Weisberg back in Aspen for Tribute to John Denver October 13, 2011**

ASPEN - Like a good number of people, Steve Weisberg was drawn to Aspen in the 1970s because of John Denver. Unlike most, Weisberg wasn't drawn by the description of Aspen and Colorado that Denver described in songs like "Starwood in Aspen" and "Rocky Mountain High," or by the prospect of getting to rub elbows with the singer himself. Weisberg wanted a job - specifically, the job of lead guitarist in Denver's band. "I came to Aspen in 1972 to let John Denver discover me. Seriously," Weisberg, a down-home, talkative 61-year-old with dark eyes, gray hair and a thick Texas accent, said this week



in the lobby of the Limelight Lodge. "My wife and I decided I needed to try out for the big leagues. We'd been to Aspen skiing in the late '60s and saw posters - John Denver, Steve Martin, the Dirt Band. Because of the math, with Aspen being such a small town, I figured it was impossible for me to come here and John not discover me. If you were doing something musical, people were going to find out about it. "Weisberg may have had his math right, but his calculation was based on some faulty data. A friend, Nick Illes, had told him two things about John Denver who, in 1972, had one bona fide hit to his name, "Take Me Home, Country Roads." The first thing Illes said was that he had just seen Denver perform, in Austin, and it was the greatest concert Illes had ever seen. This got Weisberg's attention, because he knew Illes to be a rocker, favoring the Doors and Hendrix, not soft country-folk. The second thing Illes told Weisberg was that Denver did not have a lead guitarist. This turned out to be inaccurate; Mike Taylor, who had played the signature licks that open "Country Roads," played lead guitar for Denver at the time. But that piece of false information opened the door. Weisberg moved from Austin, where he had been studying liberal arts, then business, and playing in a series of cover bands, to Colorado. In Aspen, he hooked up with Alan Garber for a full calendar of weekly shows: "Four apres-ski gigs at Highlands where nobody listened, and four evening gigs at Jake's Abbey where nobody talked," Weisberg, who is back in Aspen to play the 14th annual Tribute to John Denver Concerts, Friday and Saturday, at the Wheeler Opera House, said. "It was a listening room, and if you spoke, the person next to you shushed you. "Not among those who turned up to listen was Denver himself. It didn't get Weisberg down. "It was naive, confidence. But it never entered my mind it wasn't going to work," he said of his plan to be discovered. A couple who was friends with Garber were regulars, and were also friends of Denver, and eventually the information got passed along. One day Weisberg's phone rang; Denver was on the other end, with an offer to audition the guitarist when Denver got back from a tour of England. The audition, at Weisberg's house near Aspen Highlands, was "magical," as Weisberg recalls. "We stopped and I looked at my watch and said, 'Oh God, that was three hours we'd been playing.' We were in that zone. I figured, no question, the job is mine." In fact, what Weisberg got was a second audition, at Denver's house, where Weisberg recalls he was auditioning as much for Denver's wife at the time, Annie, as he was for John; and then a third audition, which seemed to be for the benefit of Denver's road manager, Kris O'Connor. Weisberg apparently cleared all the bars, and got the job. It turned out to be a dream gig, more, in fact, than Weisberg ever could have

dreamed of. Denver's career was in its initial stage of ascent. In 1974, Denver released "Back Home Again," with Weisberg on guitar and dulcimer; it became Denver's first No. 1 album. The following year, Denver released "Windsong" and the live "An Evening with John Denver," both of which also went to No. 1. Weisberg would play on eight of Denver's nine platinum albums: "I had John in his richest years," Weisberg said.\*\*\*Weisberg, though, looked at playing with Denver entirely as a career move. He figured he'd use his the exposure he got as a stepping stone to his own band - something more electric, louder, more rocking. What he didn't anticipate was that he, like a lot of fans, would come to see Denver as more than just a singer. "I expected to meet a very ordinary guy. Because at the time, I didn't understand his songs," Weisberg said. "I was young, 22, and a lot of what John was doing went over my head. I valued wit more than warmth, heat more than warmth. But John was the clearest individual I ever met. Totally genuine, totally driven, totally determined to make the impossible happen - a folksinger outselling the Beatles." Growing up in Dallas, Weisberg's first musical love was the trombone. It was a total infatuation; Weisberg calls the instrument "the magic carpet," and he played it in the shower. Then surf music came along, and then Chuck Berry, and the trombone was pushed aside in favor of the guitar. First came an acoustic six-string from a garage sale; then an electric guitar out of a catalog. He wanted to be loud; he wanted to rock like the Beatles; even now, Weisberg says old-school soul with an edge - Sam & Dave, Otis Redding - remains his favorite style. In 1972, just before moving to Aspen, Weisberg started to get a different idea about music. He saw Michael Murphey - not yet known as Michael Martin Murphey - play in an Austin coffeehouse. "It was spellbinding, just playing acoustic guitar,"



Weisberg said. "That made me sell the Marshall amps, unplug and realize I'm not destined to be the next Hendrix. Every lead guitarist wanted to be the hottest, but no one wanted to be warm. I thought, I just found my niche in this industry, but I

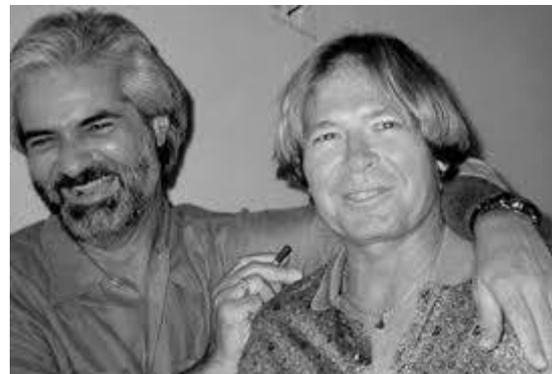


don't know how to get into it." Weisberg saw Denver as a way to break into the music business. New York and Los Angeles, the centers of the industry, seemed too crowded with musicians for him to stand out; Aspen was not only tiny, but home to a singer who was beginning to get major recognition. It was a smart career move. When Weisberg started with Denver - part of a band that included Dick Kniss, John Sommers and Hal Blaine - they played for crowds of 5,000 at most. Within two years, they were filling arenas. Weisberg benefited from Denver's famous generosity toward his band members, traveling first-class, eating in top restaurants. "If you worked for John, you'd take a bullet for him. He treated musicians like family," he said, echoing a familiar refrain about Denver. In time, Weisberg got attached to the gig: "I figured, after a few years, I'd have my own band. But I realized, this isn't a gig you quit." Weisberg was eventually cut loose in 1977, when Denver made a radical shift from a small, folk-leaning group to a big band made up largely of former members of Elvis Presley's band. "Elvis had the best band money could buy. And John wanted them," Weisberg said. Weisberg understood the motivation: "I guess John wanted a different sound, a big band. Not this little five-piece any more." Still, he said parting ways with Denver was crushing. (Weisberg did, however, have the comfort of staying two more years in Aspen, calling his six years here "the longest party I've ever been to." Known around town as the Mad Jammer, for his love of sitting in with other musicians, Weisberg toted two guitars, a dobro, a banjo and steel guitar in his trunk, so he was always prepared to play.) Weisberg found plenty to love about Denver. Weisberg, a fan of great guitarists, thought Denver was in the upper ranks. "Like a freight train. He played acoustic guitar with a sledge hammer beat," he said. At the same time, Denver's music has a simplicity and directness. "Back Home Again" - I thought, God, that's just three chords," Weisberg said. "It was simple and I didn't understand simple. I didn't understand the commonalities in all of us that John understood. That song - if you're gone and miss being home, that becomes a big deal. I understand that now. Those simple songs, simple emotions, they were perennial. Which gets to the most significant point about Denver, the reason that much of Weisberg's music career still involves playing John Denver songs for fans around the world. Denver built an extraordinary connection to his audience. "He was not just a folksinger," Weisberg said. "It was quite evident that what he was singing about became a call to action. He made people want to do something. He made people join the Peace Corps, travel to Africa." And 14 years after Denver died, when the plane he was flying crashed into California's Monterey Bay, crowds gather in

Aspen to hear Denver's songs. The main event is the Tribute to John Denver Concerts, featuring Denver's bandmates and writing partners. This year's lineup includes Weisberg, who is making his first appearance at the concerts in more than a decade; comedian Gary Mule Deer, who was Denver's frequent opening act; singer Mack Bailey; saxophonist Jim Horn; banjoist Herb Pedersen; Denny Brooks; and Bill Danoff, who co-wrote the Denver hits "Country Roads" and "I Guess He'd Rather Be in Colorado." All profits from the concerts will go to Pete Huttlinger, a Denver bandmate who is fighting a severe heart condition. Among the other events, the Windstar Foundation, on Sunday, Oct. 16, presents a day of talks, music and a community lunch. "There's a part of me that's astounded that people still want to hear this," Weisberg said. "But part of me sees it - those songs make people be introspective in the best sense. Not laboriously, but to see the best in themselves." Years ago, when Denver was playing a concert at Madison Square Garden, a worker at the venue told Weisberg something that startled him. "He said there were only two human beings who walk into this place and get everybody quiet, without exception - Frank Sinatra and John Denver," Weisberg recalled

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<http://www.aspentimes.com/article/20111014/AE/111019927>



#### **A Q&A With Steve Weisberg**

**22 Feb 2012 / "Time disappears when musicians find a common groove."**

Steve Weisberg said that in the bio on his [website](#). Go ahead, click the link...admit you never heard of the guy before. I'll admit to it. A few months ago, a friend in Virginia told me about him and the band he performs in- a John Denver tribute band lead by Denver look a like, [Ted Vigil](#). The band is playing Sellersville Theatre on March 3rd, but tickets are no longer available. My friend told me how interesting Steve was to talk to when she met the band at the Birchmere in Virginia and that I should interview him. Unfortunately, the Sellersville show sold out so quickly that I can't even encourage anyone reading this right now to go check out the show. I mean, you could call the



theatre and beg, but I doubt it will work. So for now, enjoy the Q&A and keep the guy in mind for the next time he tours the area. This dude has a pretty great history in music and even if you aren't a fan of folk or country, Steve is a kick-ass guitarist and someone worth checking out.

**Did I mention he used to play lead guitar for the REAL John Denver, too?** Steve was lovely enough to talk to me about John Denver, touring and recording in the 70s, jamming with Steve Martin, and advice on starting a tribute band.

**BH: How did you meet John Denver and did you feel that your musical style and his would mesh well?**

**SW:** I actually moved from Austin to Aspen in 1972, to be discovered by John. I was under the impression he didn't have a lead guitarist. That was not the case, but the misinformation served me well. When we played together, it meshed beautifully and very naturally; I never rehearsed any of his songs before we sat down to play at my interviews. I'd listened and listened, but never played them until we sat down in my living room. I knew it would be a great musical match. He hired me because he felt the same. Our two styles dovetailed very beautifully. Both of our styles are very simple and melody-driven.

**BH: What was the recording process like back in the 70's?**

**SW:** That depended entirely on the choice of the artist, his producer, and their budget. With John, we flew through the albums, replete with mistakes that nobody held against us, or possibly never heard. On about a third of the songs on the records that are now historically his biggest, the band had only been shown the song a few minutes before what was to be 'the take'. Later, on the road, we'd hone those songs. It was really pretty funny how it worked, and that it actually did work. It's also worth mentioning that with all his power and clarity of purpose, he never once told me what to play. He just let me do what I felt would work at that moment.

**BH: Ted Vigil looks/sounds a hell of a lot like John Denver. Aside from that, how are they alike?**

**SW:** Looks aside, they are two different personalities. It's funny, people compare Ted's voice to John's, but I don't hear it at all. But I've noticed the same audience response with all the tribute artists I've accompanied. As far as Ted's similarities to John, aside from the strong facial resemblance..... I see very few. Ted's as laid back as the day is long. John was the most driven human being I have ever known. Like a fine racing machine with soul. John was really a one-of-a-kind.

**BH: Now that you are touring with Vigil, do you sometimes forget who you are actually on stage with?**

**SW:** No, never, although sometimes I do disappear into the song, into the music. Music's always been my magic carpet. It's that way for every one I've ever met in the industry.

**BH: What did you do after you left the Denver's band?**

**SW:** I stayed in Aspen for a few years, playing 'under the radar', then moved back to my native Texas.

**BH: How did you end up in a John Denver tribute band?**

**SW:** The phone rang sometime after John's death, and I was asked how much it would take to fly me to Aspen to play guitar. I was suddenly back in the music business; this time as 'The Real McCoy Guitarist', being hired by various tribute artists.

**BH: What was it like being on the Johnny Carson show?**

**SW:** The studio was small; tiny compared to the venues we'd been playing. It was a little underwhelming, as I had no sense of being watched by millions of TV viewers. I was just playing guitar. Like I always did, but with a little more care that my shirt was ironed.

**BH: What was your favorite venue to play?**

**SW:** Red Rocks, outside of Denver. Last time I played there, Sting had played the week before and pronounced it the best venue in the country. That had always been my feeling. I'll get to play there this summer for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the last 4 years. I'm a lucky dog.

**BH: There are so many tribute bands, what's your advice to someone wanting to start one?**

**SW:** Hmm. I've always looked at music in general; not specifically through the eyes of tribute bands, which are a relatively new species. I suppose I'd say there are two things that have to exist: you have to like what you're playing, and you have to remember why the original artist got big enough that you're paying tribute (you have to try to capture the essence of what made all those people come out to see the original artist). For some bands, it's all music. For John, there's an essential honesty and accessibility that I think need to accompany the songs. John was a self-professed 'populist artist', so we have to go onstage just being.....regular people. Leave the attitude to the KISS tribute bands.

**BH: Steve Martin used to sit in and play banjo with you? What was he like?**

**SW:** He was very quiet offstage, until that inner madman came unleashed. When he sat in, he literally never spoke into the mike. Not a syllable. He just wanted to play banjo. And he was (and is) a killer banjo player. One night John had a handful of guys up to the house. We started playing pool on John's mint condition 1938 Brunswick table. Steve was losing, until he got tired of that; so he started delivering very fast jokes on the other



players' backstrokes.... We couldn't shoot. We were crying with laughter; afraid of ripping the felt!

**BH: Why didn't he ever join Denver's band?**

**SW:** We never asked him to join. Actually, it was very clear that he was destined to be a superstar among comedians. Lately, he's got a band that goes on tour playing to packed houses. He made a lot of money being funny, and in movies. I think he owns the other musicians. I'm annoyed he never tried to buy me.

**BH: Have you ever played the Philadelphia area before? When/Where?**

**SW:** Oh yeah, we played The Spectrum several times. Back in the 70's. I remember those particular shows. As much as a musician can remember things from the 70's.

For his very biggest years, 1973-77, I played all the concerts, TV show&, records. *It was quite a ride.*

<http://www.thatmusicmag.com/index.php/2012/02/a-ga-with-steve-weisberg/#.U4HWMz-KB9B>

### **YouTube video**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L\\_48yMm380](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L_48yMm380)

### **The JD Memorial Peace Cloth**

(from Eve)

Last night we lost a special person. Steve Weisberg. This is our Christmas for Cowboys panel. The cover picture was taken at a Steve Weisberg concert. Thanks for the great music, friendship and support you gave the Peace Cloth over the years! You will be missed!



### **2014 JD Tribute Weekend**

Our annual John Denver Tribute Weekend will be held on the Weekend of **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> 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. We did not need to make a deposit on this venue this time.

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!

### **Healing**

We went to see an Australian movie last week called 'Healing'. Many of you may recognise the theme of this movie starring Hugo Weaving. It is about inmates of a prison farm being taught to look after and rehabilitate a wedge-tailed eagle that had been caught and injured in a fence. I believe it was based on the work being done in Tasmania by a raptor specialist. However, this is set in our own Yarra Valley, and using the Healesville Sanctuary and the expertise of their staff, it was a very good movie. It was rather interesting to watch the 'prisoners' building the aviaries. Having seen the wonderful aviary that Peggy has built near Bowral, I can say that maybe SHE should have been the advisor on this movie. If you have the opportunity, see this wonderful movie, and also see images of the wonderful countryside around our beautiful city of Melbourne.

### **Take Me Home**

It is really official now! Bevan Gardiner will do an extensive tour through New Zealand and Australia in July, August, and September. The full itinerary has been attached to this email, Check it out and buy your tickets!

### **Take Me Home Autobiography**

For those people who have not yet been lucky enough to get their hands on a copy of John's Autobiography, Take me Home, you now can not only purchase the hard copy but you can also buy it in digital format. Priced at just USD\$14.99, it is also reasonably priced.

<https://www.createspace.com/4672174>

In a career that spanned decades, John Denver earned international acclaim as a singer, songwriter, actor, and environmental activist. Songs like "Take Me Home, Country Roads,"



"Rocky Mountain High," and "Annie's Song" have entered the canon of universal anthems, but at his start John Denver was a young man with little more than a fine voice, a guitar, and a dream. Growing up in a conservative military family, he was not expected to drop out of college and head to Los Angeles, where the music scene was flourishing. Nor was he expected to succeed. In *Take Me Home*, John Denver chronicles the experiences that shaped his life, while unraveling the rich, inner journey of a shy Midwestern boy whose uneasy partnership with fame has been one of the defining forces of his first fifty years. With candor and wit, John writes about his childhood, the experience of hitting L.A. as the Sixties roared into full swing, his first breaks, his years with the Mitchell Trio, his first songwriting success with "Leaving on a Jet Plane," and finally a career that made his a global household name. He also explores his relationships with the women in his life - particularly his first wife, Annie Martell, and his second wife, Cassandra Delaney - as well as his parents, his children, his partners through his life, and his friends. Honest, insightful and rich in anecdotes that only a natural-born storyteller could tell so well, *Take Me Home* is a highly charged and fascinating book from beginning to end. It's like spending a couple of days with a good friend.

**About the author:**

With more than 33 million records sold and seven Billboard Top Ten albums, Denver released 23 studio albums over his lifetime. Best known for the beloved songs "Leaving On a Jet Plane," "Sunshine On My Shoulders," "Annie's Song," "Rocky Mountain High," which is a co-state song of Colorado, and "Take Me Home, Country Roads," which is a co-state song of West Virginia. In addition to his numerous awards and recognitions, Denver was instrumental in championing environmental and humanitarian causes. His popularity and continuing influence on popular culture still grow more than a decade after his untimely death.

Denver was a true adventurer, exploring all that the world had to offer. Throughout his life's journey he challenged himself on every level, which is an integral part of what made him an extraordinary man, an uncommon friend and a rare human being.

While the frontiers of the American West satisfied his spirit, less-traveled frontiers appealed to his imagination. Denver was an experienced airplane pilot and collected vintage biplanes. His interest in outer space was so great that he took and passed NASA's examination to determine mental and physical fitness needed for space travel. He then became a leading candidate to be the "first civilian in space" on the Space Shuttle Challenger. Denver planned to write a song in space, but circumstances kept him from joining the ill-fated expedition, which saddened the world when it exploded during take-off in 1986.

Many of Denver's songs reflected his relationship with nature and indeed, one of his greatest pleasures was spending time outdoors. He spent as much time as possible backpacking, hiking, climbing and fishing. He was an avid golfer and skier, regularly participating in celebrity charity events for both sports.

Today, millions of fans old and new enjoy the work of this extraordinary performer. Thirty albums and four decades after he began, John Denver's music is as relevant as ever. His humanitarian work continues to strengthen our global village, and his dynamic celebration of life, spirit and nature is a powerful inspiration to us all. To learn more about the legacy of John Denver please visit his website: [www.johndenver.com](http://www.johndenver.com).

**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>

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.



## *On The Wings Of A Dream*

*Yesterday I had a dream about dying,  
About laying to rest and then flying,  
How the moment at hand is the only thing we really own.  
And I lay in my bed and I wondered,  
After all has been said and is done for,  
Why is it thus we are here and so soon we are gone?  
Is this life just a path to the place that we all have come from?  
Does the heart know the way and if not, can it ever be found  
In a smile or a tear or a prayer or a sigh or a song?  
And if so, then I sing for my father, and in truth,  
You must know I would rather he were here by my side,  
We could fly on the wings of a dream.  
To a place where the spirit would find us  
And the joy and surrender would bind us.  
We are one anyway, anyway we are more than we seem.  
There are those who will lead us, protect us each step of the way.  
From beginning to end, for each moment, forever, each day.  
Such a gift has been given, it can never be taken away.*

*Though the body in passing must leave us,  
There is one who remains to receive us.  
There are those in this life who are friends from our heavenly home.  
So I listen to the voices inside me,  
For I know they are there just to guide me.  
And my faith will proclaim it is so, we are never alone.  
From the life to the light, from the dark of the night to the dawn,  
he is so in my heart, he is here, he could never be gone.  
Though the singer is silent,  
There still is the truth of the song, in the song.  
Yesterday I had a dream about dying,  
About laying to rest and then flying,  
how the moment at hand is the only thing we really own.  
And I lay in my bed and I wondered,  
After all has been said and is done for,  
Why is it thus we are here and so soon we are gone?  
Oh, why is it thus we are here and so soon we are gone?*

