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<http://hgavic.wix.com/hgavic>

## HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – March 2016

### Welcome

Welcome to our March newsletter.

### HGA John Denver Tribute Weekend

I am happy to let you know that we have a great place for our tribute weekend on the 14-16<sup>th</sup> October. I took a trip down to Cowes (Phillip Island) last week and booked CYC The Island for the weekend. Set on five acres, it is located within a short walk to the township and to the beach.

The address is 41-53 Church St Cowes 3922. It is approximately 2 hours drive from Melbourne airport. <http://theisland.cyc.org.au/>

Cost is \$87.00 per person for the weekend. We have three sleeping cabins, a kitchen/activities room, BBQ, and they will also provide a fire pit for our 'campfire'.

Food Kitty is \$40.00 per person for all meals. The Victorian people will provide the casseroles for the Friday night's meal.

To secure your place, we will require a \$40 deposit (food kitty). The deposit can be paid directly into my account;

BSB: 733-039

ACC: 542649

Name: Mrs Janette Frawley

Please enter JD + your name in the description so I know who has paid, and follow it up with an email to [jefrawley@bigpond.com](mailto:jefrawley@bigpond.com)

### Fundraiser for Peggy McDonald

We have not yet decided on how we are going to raise funds this year. I think we all agree that the auction has run its race and that we should find another way in which to raise some funds. Please let me know if you have some ideas.

All funds raised for HGA before and during the weekend of the 14-16 October will be donated to Peggy McDonald of Australian Raptor Care & Conservation. We have been supporting Peggy and her wonderful work for a few years and are honoured to help this worthwhile organisation with our fundraising efforts.

Please check out the website for more information on the work that is done by ARCC for the rehabilitation of raptors.

<http://www.australianraptorcareandconservation.com/>

The ARCC Facebook page is

<https://www.facebook.com/ARCCInc/> Please check out the excellent videos that are posted on

the site, and do not forget to 'like' the videos and leave your comments.

### Raffle - 2016

We will hold a raffle again this year to contribute to our fundraising effort. There will be another quilt, which is currently under 'construction'. There is a special story attached to this quilt, which I will relay in the next newsletter. You will receive your raffle tickets in the mail soon, and we encourage you to sell as many tickets as possible.

### Bevan Gardiner

Bevan Gardiner's Take Me Home tour has been hugely successful. Some of our members attended the Newcastle concert on Saturday night. Regrettably, despite all good intentions, I was unable to attend the concert, but I have had wonderful feedback.

We all enjoyed Bevan Gardiner's concert last night, he really does a wonderful tribute to John, with video snippets projected on the back of the stage with John providing the story to each song. Carmel and I both agreed that his show last night was much better than the first one we saw, he has added some extra songs and sings some beautiful duets with Georgie.

Pat Evans also attended the concert and really enjoyed it, saying that he did himself proud.

**The remainder of the concerts will be held in Queensland and Darwin. Please check the end of this newsletter for the locations and dates, and please support this lovely young man.**

### House Party at the Therriens!

Steve Gillette (Darcy Farrow) and his wife Cindy recently gave a house concert for 44 people at Judy and Charlie Therrien's house. By all accounts, it was a wonderful concert, enjoyed by all who attended.



Thanks for the photo, Judy. I wish I could have joined you all!

### **Mother's Day Gift Idea**

Jimmy's CD, *My Time With John Denver* is available for \$25 (2 for \$40) + Postage. If you would like to buy a CD or 6, please contact me on [hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com), and I will arrange to have them shipped or delivered to you.



Jimmy's other CD '*Just When You Thought*' is also available. This CD includes all original songs. To quote Molly Meldrum, 'Do yourselves a favour and go out and buy these CDs'. You will not be sorry.

### **City of Aspen Old Power House Conversion Proposal**

There is a proposal for the Old Power House conversion in Aspen. The idea is to use the space for live performances, musical and environmental education. This proposal outlines the way in which the community can honour the life of John Denver through converting this building into one that can be used by the entire community. Please follow the link and read the proposal.

<http://www.aspenpitkin.com/Portals/0/docs/City/Purchasing/DOC111414-11142014144510.pdf>

### **DC Singer/Songwriter Owen Danoff Made a Splash on 'The Voice'**

By Andrew Beaujon on March 9, 2016  
Owen Danoff got a "four-chair turn" on the NBC show *The Voice* Tuesday, which means the former DC singer/songwriter had Pharrell Williams, Christina Aguilera, Blake Shelton, and Adam Levine all asking him to join their "teams" following his blind audition. Danoff chose Levine's squad.

Danoff performed Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right." He no longer lives in DC, but his roots here are deep—his dad, Bill Danoff, was a cofounder of the Starland Vocal Band and cowrote the John Denver hit "Take Me Home, Country Roads," and Owen Danoff was an artist-in-residence at Strathmore in 2012 and 2013.

Here's his audition:

<http://www.washingtonian.com/2016/03/09/dc-singer-owen-danoff-made-a-splash-on-the-voice/>

Keep watching out for Owen's progress on *The Voice*

### **Young John Denver Oral History**

I'm Carl Franzen, author of *On The Road*, the song John Denver recorded on his *Back Home Again* album. I want you to help me go on the road again. This time to produce an oral history of Young John Denver.

I want you to help me travel to capture faces and voices of those who worked with John before he became a musical and cultural icon. Songwriters like **Bill Danoff**—Washington DC. **Jim Conner**—Alabama. **Mike Williams**—Ohio. And touring artists **Noel Paul Stookey**, **Peter Yarrow**, **Tom Paxton**.

I'll pack up my gear to meet with Chad Mitchell Trio members **Mike Kobluk** in Spokane, **David Boise** in Houston, backup musician **Paul Prestopino** in New Jersey. And remember **Michael Johnson**, the last member to join the trio? He's now a Minnesota boy, just like me.

I'll set my camera in front of sideman, **Denny Brooks**, and New Christy Minstrels guru, **Randy Sparks**, both early mentors of John in Los Angeles. I also want to chronicle what close associates, **Milt Okun** and **Hal Thau**, have to say about their early days with John.

The oral history I collect will become part of the Young John Denver Collection at the Nicollet County Historical Museum in St. Peter, Minnesota, the town where John first met, and later married, **Annie Martell**. It's also where my friend, the late Mark Ahlstrom, captured passionate, fun, and classy pictures of John before he became a household name.

I love this idea, hearing unique voices from John days as an emerging artist. You'll be able to catch updates on the Young John Denver Facebook page throughout the collection process. And you'll be so proud when you see the final result.

Watching it in Minnesota, or Aspen, you'll turn to your friends and say, "I made this happen."

So, wanna give me a push? Maybe a mile or two?

<https://www.crowdrise.com/young-john-denver-oral-history1/fundraiser/carlfranzén>

*If you wish to donate to this crowd fundraiser, please click the link. Carl released this short film in Aspen last year.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmVzheMmQCk>

### **'Rocky Mountain High, the Music of John Denver' Returns to the Red Room**

Puerta Vallarta Daily News February 22 2016 – Debbie White

John Denver has been gone for 18 years, but his music lives on and continues to be rediscovered and appreciated by new generations of music lovers. Last season and this past November at Act II Stages, Paul Aleman and Renee Armand presented their highly acclaimed show, *Rocky Mountain High, The Music of John Denver*. This John Denver tribute show is returning to The Red Room for 6 shows in March. These performances are scheduled for Thursday, March 3rd at 7:30



pm; Friday, March 4th at 9:30 pm; Saturday, March 5th at 7:30 pm; Thursday, March 10th at 7:30 pm; Friday, March 11th at 9:30 pm; and Saturday, March 12th at 7:30 pm.

In this show, you'll love both the music and the background stories from Renee Armand, a John Denver band member who performed with John for six years. Renee also appeared on the DVD, *Thank God I'm A Country Boy* and on *Rocky Mountain High*.

This show is performed in a 'classic style' similar to that of Carole King and James Taylor. Renee and Paul delve deeply into the music in a thoughtful and honest way. All the music is 'live' and skillfully communicated by these incredibly accomplished musicians. Renee's lifetime as a truthful communicator of heartfelt lyrics and music along with Paul's incredible musicianship on guitar and vocals make their show a 'one-of-a-kind' experience in Vallarta's entertainment scene.

As a musician, Renee was discovered by Tony Bennett and mentored by Carmen Mcrae. As a singer/songwriter, she wrote and recorded with many well-known artists. Her songs were recorded by Michael Jackson, Mama Cass, Linda Rondstadt and John Denver. Renee has performed all over the world and continues to do so. As a Los Angeles studio singer for 10 years, she recorded movie themes, records and even a few commercials. Renee is also known for singing her Academy Award winning song "The Morning After" from the movie, *The Poseidon Adventure*. She wrote "One Day In Your Life" that was recorded by Michael Jackson and also wrote "I Dream of Highways" with Hoyt Axton. She performed with The Coyote Sisters as well.

In their show, *Rocky Mountain High*, Paul and Renee will present the music of John Denver along with stories from the road and insights into the music. They are not imitators of John Denver, but rather interpreters of his music. Paul Aleman is, in his own right, a gifted partner in this show.

After years of making records with the most important musicians of her time, Renee admits that it's important to work with a top professional musician like Paul Aleman, who contributes a high level of musicianship and success to the show. Paul and Renee together, bring a night of pure music magic. Although Renee's years with John Denver were only about 6 out of her 50 year career, those years are an important part of her diverse musical foundation that spanned from a Chinatown bar to Madison Square Garden. Renee and Paul are excited to return to Puerto Vallarta with their show, because they realize PV is a place that actually loves talent and has audiences that support it in the sweetest way. Renee always enjoys her time here in PV. She will be available for private vocal and performance coaching and will also offer a Master Class in songwriting.

On Thursday, March 3rd at 7:30 pm, Paul and Renee open, *Rocky Mountain High*, at The Red Room. With honesty and pureness, they recreate the magic of John Denver's music as their voices blend together in beautiful harmony. With Paul on guitar, they deliver a performance that will sweep you away with the beauty and simplicity of the music. To have John Denver's music communicated so authentically, by world-class musicians is thrilling. With the remarkable voices of Paul and Renee, rediscover the inspiring music of John Denver.

The Red Room Cabaret at ACT II Stages is located on the corner of Insurgentes and Basilio Badillo on the South side of Puerto Vallarta. Tickets are now on sale at the STAGES box office or online at [www.actientertainment.com](http://www.actientertainment.com) <http://www.vallartadaily.com/living/entertainment/rocky-mountain-high-the-music-of-john-denver-returns-to-the-red-room/>

### **Calypso Set to Sail Again**

As 2016 begins, Calypso will be getting a whole new life, 20 years after its accident in Singapore! After having explored the possibility of a future for Captain Cousteau's iconic ship in Monaco, a different solution has finally been found to save Calypso.

Francine Cousteau, president of the organizations he created, has been fighting to save the vessel for the last 20 years.

The Cousteau Society bought the ship from Loel Guinness in order for it to be a living representative of ecology sailing the oceans of the world.

Thousands of fans from around the world have brought their moral support to The Cousteau Society for the full refurbishment of Calypso. The considerable costs entailed by this project have, on too many occasions over the last 20 years, prevented this goal from being achieved.

Finally, The Cousteau Society has managed to gather a group of generous and highly motivated international sponsors, whose objectives are compatible with those of the Cousteau Society. At the end of the first trimester of 2016 Calypso will be able to leave the Concarneau's shipyard, to begin its new life.

In addition to the historic hull and ship equipment, Calypso will be fitted with two Volvo Marine motors, which were bought in 2009.

Francine Cousteau adds that « When Calypso will return to the Mediterranean, she will be seaworthy and powered by her own two motors, as was Captain Cousteau's wish. I am extremely happy to announce this great news, after a 20 year long struggle against adversity and various mishaps. I am grateful to those who have helped us, and I invite all of those who share our joy today to join us.

Information regarding the evolution of the Calypso's situation will be regularly posted on our





website:

[www.cousteau.org](http://www.cousteau.org)



Calypso Beyond the Horizon is a documentary that can be viewed on YouTube. It is the story of the Calypso Ship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itvhRG4EMUw&feature=youtu.be>

### **John Denver Deserves to be in the Country Music Hall of Fame**

By Randy McDaniel January 7, 2015

The year was 1975. At the Country Music Association Awards that year the most coveted award, 'Entertainer Of The Year', went to John Denver.

Denver was on the road touring that night and Charlie Rich was the presenter. On stage Charlie announced the nominees (which included 4 eventual Hall of Fame members: Waylon Jennings, Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty and Ronnie Milsap).

When Charlie announced that John Denver was the winner, John couldn't see the stage and accepted the award via satellite, thanking Charlie and giving his acceptance speech.

What he didn't see was Charlie Rich, apparently and allegedly inebriated, take out his lighter and burn the envelope after reading the name 'John Denver.' Apparently Charlie (and many of the 'mainstream' country fans) didn't think John Denver was 'country enough' to have earned the honor.

(On a personal note, I always found that interesting since I've always loved Charlie Rich music, but I don't consider it what might be called traditional country.)

Such was the musical career of John Denver. In the 1970's he was too 'country' for pop/rock radio stations and listeners, and he was too 'pop/rock' for country radio stations and listeners. So what did he do?

Well, he didn't change and sold millions and millions of albums to country and pop/rock fans. And he did it with songs like 'Take Me Home Country Roads'.

John Denver took his songs around the world, and in the process brought country music to millions of people who, otherwise, would never have 'discovered' artists like Waylon, Willie, Buck, Conway, Loretta, Dolly and, yes, Charlie Rich. One of John's 'signature' songs was 'Rocky Mountain High'. Really, you don't think this is Country?

Whether singing about his beloved Rocky Mountains, about the pure joy of going 'Back Home Again' or saying I Love You to his wife Annie, it's all rings Country Pure now.

With several Top Ten Country hits, including three #1's..Two #1 Country albums (1974's 'Back Home Again' and 1975's 'Windsong') and multiple CMA Awards, it's time now to extinguish that infamous flame from Charlie Rich's lighter and induct the great John Denver into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Yes, and Thank God He Was A Country Boy!

<http://kxrb.com/john-denver-deserves-to-be-in-the-country-music-hall-of-fame/>

### **At 40, 'Take me Home Country Roads' Still Belongs**

April 6, 2011 Jess Gitner

John Denver had trouble filling a room prior to releasing his 1971 album *Poems, Prayers, and Promises*. As a solo act, he was virtually unknown. All that changed with the album's single, "Take Me Home, Country Roads," which launched Denver's career and made him an international star. But the song almost never happened.

Denver first heard "Take Me Home, Country Roads" in the Washington, D.C., apartment of songwriter Bill Danoff. Danoff and his girlfriend, Taffy Nivert — also his writing partner — had met Denver years earlier, first when Danoff was working at the famous Cellar Door nightclub, and again on later tours through Washington. Later, when Denver was passing through the city, he arranged to meet at Danoff's apartment after a performance. Denver almost never showed. He was injured in a car accident on the way over and taken to the hospital with a broken thumb. But he proceeded to Danoff's anyway.

#### **'That's A Hit Song'**

Denver asked to hear what Danoff and Nivert had been working on. Nivert urged Danoff to play the "Country Roads" song, which he'd been working on for several months, but he hesitated.

"I said, 'He won't like that. It's not his thing, you know, because it's for Johnny Cash,'" Danoff said in an interview.

At the time, Danoff and Nivert were only local performers. But they aimed to make it big by writing a hit song for bigger artists.

"So I played him what I had of 'Country Roads,' and he said, 'Wow! That's great, that's a hit song! Did you record it?' I said, 'No, we don't have a record deal,'" Danoff said.

He said Denver told him that they could record it together. And, several months later, they went up to New York City and did it. Danoff's first reaction to the recording was not positive.

"I thought, 'Oh, my God. There's way too much echo on that,'" he said. "I loved the song, but I thought we'd blown the record. And millions of other people didn't agree."



By August, the song had reached No. 2 on the *Billboard* singles chart.

### **A West Virginia Anthem**

"Take Me Home, Country Roads" became the unofficial anthem of West Virginia and the official song of the West Virginia University Mountaineers. But here's the catch: Danoff had never even been to the Mountain State before writing it, though he'd heard the sounds of the state as a kid growing up in Massachusetts. Danoff said he listened to "hillbilly music" on WWVA from Wheeling, W.V.

"I just thought the idea that I was hearing something so exotic to me from someplace as far away," he said. "West Virginia might as well have been in Europe, for all I know."

### **No Regrets**

Danoff would go on to write 12 more songs for John Denver. And he would also form the Starland Vocal Band, famous for "Afternoon Delight." Still, 40 years later, Danoff said, "Take Me Home, Country Roads" is his biggest moneymaker — he says he splits 75 percent of royalties with Nivert and gives the remaining 25 percent to the Denver estate. Danoff said he doesn't regret handing his biggest hit to Denver to record.

"Left to our own devices," he said, "Taffy and I may have never gotten that record cut. It wasn't a country record. We could've beat up Nashville and nobody would've recorded it. One thing I learned in this business is that things turn out other than you planned them to, no matter what it is. And you can't predict what's going to happen."

### **Encyclopedia.com**

This is a rather good biographical article about John Denver.

[http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/John\\_Denver.aspx#1](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/John_Denver.aspx#1)

### **John Denver's Porsche Sold at Auction**

This 1995 Porsche 911 Carrera 4 Cabriolet is a special order car originally owned by singer John Denver, who ordered the car on a visit to the Porsche factory while on a tour of Germany.



It sold at auction for \$61,500. Here is a link to the story behind the car.

<http://bringatrailer.com/listing/1995-carrera-4-porsche/>

### **Rocky Mountain Foundation for the Performing Arts**

The Rocky Mountain Foundation for the Performing Arts is super excited to announce its first annual "We Are One" event to honor the music and life of John Denver. It will be held in glorious Aspen, Colorado, Friday, October 14 through Sunday, October 16, 2016.

The weekend promises to be an awesome time celebrating all things John Denver-related, including a stellar concert featuring the best John Denver tribute artists in the world.

In addition, producers of "We Are One" have a few surprises up their sleeves, including presentations by notable guests, who were key figures in John's life and career.

Rocky Mountain FPA is aiming to make this event a highly memorable one and lay the foundation for its continued growth long into the future. The organization believes its expansion will play a significant role in keeping John's music and legacy alive.

We ask those of you who are interested in attending "We Are One" to sign up for our mailing list in order to receive updates about all the wonderful activities we are planning.

Go to [www.rockymountainfpa.org](http://www.rockymountainfpa.org) to add your name. And feel free to leave a comment on our Guest Book.

Thank you in advance for your support. We look forward to meeting you soon in John's "Sweet Rocky Mountain Paradise."

Note: Please direct all questions and inquiries about the event to Luanne Hunt, event producer, at [luanne@rockymountainfpa.org](mailto:luanne@rockymountainfpa.org).

See more at [www.rockymountainfpa.org](http://www.rockymountainfpa.org)

### **RMFPA – We Are One Production**

This is from Willie Hoeffers.

A question to all John Denver fans around the world...What does John Denver mean to you and how has he affected your life to this day? Your response in a letter to John may be used in our production of "We Are One"! Please do not post your reply here, rather send it directly to me at "[willie@rockymountainfpa.org](mailto:willie@rockymountainfpa.org)". Thank you so much, Willie

### **Taffy Nivert Remembers John Denver**

This YouTube video is of Taffy Nivert talking about writing 'Country Roads', working at the Cellar Door, and touring with John Denver.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hinHz6R5ztw&feature=youtu.be>

### **Chris Bannister**

Chris Bannister will be appearing at the Wirral Folk Festival from 2-5 June 2016. Purchase your tickets from [www.wegotickets.com](http://www.wegotickets.com) or [www.ticketswirral.co.uk](http://www.ticketswirral.co.uk)

(Ralph 'Streets of London' McTell will also be appearing).



### **Marc Roberts**

Marc Roberts from Ireland was in Aspen last year. He is currently touring Ireland and the dates of his remaining concerts can be found on his website; <http://www.marcroberts.ie/index1.html>

### **Jim Curry's Newsletter**

Jim Curry's newsletter has been posted (click link below) Jim and Anne put together an excellent newsletter regularly. It also includes a link to Anne's blog, which is always fun to read, plus a full listing of where they are appearing in concert. Great news again – Jim and Anne will be travelling on a couple of Holland America ships during April.

Check out Jim and Anne's website at <http://www.jimcurrymusic.com/> for details of their upcoming concerts.

### **Rocky Mountain High Concert**

#### **John Denver: A Rocky Mountain High Concert with the Colorado Symphony - September 10 at Boettcher Hall in Denver**

We're excited to announce John Denver: A Rocky Mountain High Concert with the Colorado Symphony, featuring audio and video performances by John Denver backed by members of his former band, with the Colorado Symphony. Saturday, September 10 2016 7.30 at Boettcher Concert Hall.

Tickets available through Colorado Symphony Subscription through July 31. Single tickets on sale August 1, 10 am.

#### **Andres Lopera, conductor**

Musical legend John Denver is honored in a special concert celebration with your Colorado Symphony this fall. See and hear two-time Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter and Poet Laureate of Colorado John Denver on video performing in a concert spectacular featuring archival video footage of Denver performing classic songs backed by live performances from former members of his band with full symphony orchestra. This concert is an innovative musical treat and unforgettable tribute. Hear John Denver's voice, see vintage John Denver video performances, hear stories of John Denver told by old friends. The Concert will include hit songs spanning his career and honor Denver's memory and music.

### **American Veterans Radio**

American Veterans Radio is honored to feature the wonderful music of John Denver. Please join Willie From Dillon on his regular Music of John Denver radio show. Here is a link to the podcast of the last show.

<http://www.avradio.org/rewind---podcasts.html>

This show airs fortnightly at the following times  
4:00 - 6:00pm Eastern time

3:00 - 5:00pm Central time  
2:00 - 4:00pm Mountain time  
1:00 - 3:00pm Pacific time  
12:00 - 2:00pm Alaskan time  
6:00 - 8:00pm Chilean time  
9:00 - 11:00pm UK time  
10:00 - 12:00Mid European time  
Next Morning

6:00 - 8:00am Japan/South Korea time

**8:00 - 10:00am Australian time**

10:00am - 12:00Noon New Zealand time

Check out the last podcast, as it features Jimmy singing Some Days are Diamonds, plus Australian performers Damien Leith and Peter Brocklehurst <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoAots7zRWQ>

### **Aspen in October**

Keep checking for the events planned for Aspen in October this year. The events thus far can be found at;

<http://www.johndenvercelebration.com/events>

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.



## Some Days Are Diamonds

*When you ask how I've been here without you  
I like to say I've been fine and I do  
But we both know the truth is hard to come by  
And if i told the truth, that's not quite true*

*Some days are diamonds, some days are stone  
Some time the hard times won't leave you alone  
Some times the cold winds blow a chill in my bones  
Some days are diamonds, some days are stone*

*Now the face that I see in my mirror  
More and more is a stranger to me  
More and more I can see there's a danger  
In becoming what i never thought I'd be*

*Some days are diamonds, some days are stone  
Some time the hard times won't leave you alone  
Some times the cold winds blow a chill in my bones  
Some days are diamonds, some days are stone*

*Words and music by Dick Feller*

