



**HIGHER
GROUND
AUSTRALIA**

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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – March 2019

Welcome

The sad start we've had to 2019 has continued with the passing of Maureen O'Neill Krauel and with veteran drummer, Hal Blaine. Last week's tragic shooting in New Zealand is a wake-up call to us all. New Zealand is one of the happiest and safest places on earth, so this incident has made us all very much aware that terrorism and mass-shootings don't happen somewhere else; they can happen on our own doorstep. Please pray not only for the victims of this terrible incident, but for all innocent victims who have lost their lives in similar circumstances. In the same vein, Sean Della Croce's article about grief has been included. We hope that there are some more upbeat happenings in the John Denver World before next month's newsletter, but nonetheless, we all can rejoice in the knowledge that those who have passed have all touched our lives one way or another. Please don't hesitate to send me links to John Denver-related stories hga.vic@gmail.com for inclusion in this newsletter.

2019 Tribute Weekend

I will start looking for a suitable venue for our 2019 John Denver tribute weekend fairly soon. I'm hoping to have something booked by the end of April. I might have to ask for some extra help from our members near the Ballarat region for some ideas.

Annual Fundraiser

Let me know if you have any ideas for a fundraiser that will raise mega-bucks for our annual donation to Higher Ground Raptors. Peggy's work with raptor rehabilitation is so very important for continued conservation of our raptor species. All ideas will be discussed. www.highergroundraptors.com and <https://www.facebook.com/HigherGroundRaptors>.

Higher Ground Australia Website

Our web address is <https://www.hgavic.com/>. I'm working on some changes, so please check it out from time to time. Please contact me on hga.vic@gmail.com with your comments, and I thank those who have sent me valuable feedback recently.

Tribute to Maureen O'Neill Krauel

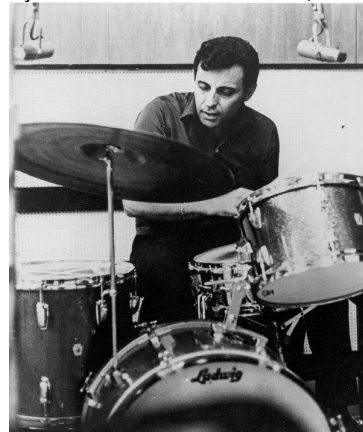
We lost another one of our JD friends with the passing of Maureen O'Neill Krauel on

March 13. She was a much-loved member of the global John Denver family and spent many happy times during the annual Aspen in October tributes. We extend our deepest condolences to her family and friends. Of all the photos I've seen of Maureen posted on social media this week, I think this one is my favourite. God bless, Maureen. You are among friends.



Hal Blaine, Wrecking Crew Drummer, Is Dead at 90

By Richard Sandomir March 12, 2019



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Hal Blaine, the ubiquitous drummer whose work in the 1960s and '70s with Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, the Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel, the Ronettes and many others established him as one of the top session musicians of all time, died on Monday at his home in Palm Desert, Calif. He was 90. His son-in-law, Andy Johnson, confirmed the death.

Mr. Blaine, who played on at least 40 singles that reached No. 1 on the Billboard pop chart, was a

reliable and adaptable musician, able to offer delicate brushwork on a ballad or a booming beat on records produced by Phil Spector, who was known for his so-called Wall of Sound.

Mr. Blaine brought drama to a song's transitions, often telegraphing a big moment with a flurry of strokes on a snare drum or tom-tom.

If he had a signature moment on a record, it was on the Ronettes' 1963 hit, "Be My Baby," produced by Mr. Spector. The song opened cold, with Mr. Blaine playing — and repeating — the percussive earworm "Bum-ba-bum-BOOM!" But the riff came about accidentally.

"I was supposed to play more of a boom-chicky-boom beat, but my stick got stuck and it came out boom, boom-boom chick," he told *The Wall Street Journal* in 2011. "I just made sure to make the same mistake every few bars."

Three years later, he used the same beat, but in a softer way, on Frank Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night."

Mr. Blaine was part of a loosely affiliated group of session musicians who in the early 1960s began dominating rock 'n' roll recording in Los Angeles. Along with guitarists like Glen Campbell and Tommy Tedesco, bassists like Carol Kaye and Joe Osborn, and keyboardists like Leon Russell and Don Randi, Mr. Blaine played on thousands of recordings through the mid-1970s.

He famously said he gave the group its name, the Wrecking Crew, although Ms. Kaye has insisted that he did not start using that term until years after the musicians had stopped working together. His skills led producers to use Mr. Blaine as the drummer for various groups' studio work, replacing their credited drummers. The drummer heard on the Beach Boys' records was often Mr. Blaine and not the drummer the group's fans knew, Dennis Wilson, whose brother Brian was the band's creative force.

"I must tell you, first of all, Dennis was not really a drummer," Mr. Blaine told *Modern Drummer* magazine in 2005. "I mean, they had bought him drums because they needed drums in the group. So he learned as they went on."

Asked if Mr. Wilson was angry that he was replaced in the studio, Mr. Blaine said he was not. "He was thrilled," he said, "because while I was making Beach Boy records, he was out surfing or riding his motorcycle. During the day, when I was making \$35 or \$40, that night he was making \$35,000" performing live.

Mr. Blaine's other studio credits include Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love," Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson," the 5th Dimension's "Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In," the Byrds' "Mr. Tambourine Man," Ms. Streisand's "The Way We Were," the Crystals' "Da Doo Ron Ron" and Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass's "A Taste of Honey."

In 2000, Mr. Blaine was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame with four other studio musicians, including the drummer Earl Palmer, who had helped introduce him to session work. The Recording Academy gave Mr. Blaine a lifetime achievement Grammy Award last year.

Hal Blaine was born Harold Simon Belsky on Feb. 5, 1929, in Holyoke, Mass., to Meyer Belsky, who worked in a leather factory, and Rose (Silverman) Belsky. When he was 7 the family moved to Hartford, where he was inspired to learn drumming by watching the fife and drum corps of the Roman Catholic school across the street from his Hebrew school.

"One of the priests noticed I was watching, and before long I was playing with these kids," he told *The Hartford Courant* in 2000.

On Saturdays, he regularly went to a theater in Hartford to watch big bands, singers and vaudeville acts, and he grew to admire virtuoso drummers like Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa. When he was 14, he moved with his family to Southern California. He attended high school in San Bernardino while his parents opened a delicatessen in Santa Monica.

After serving as an Army cartographer during the Korean War, Mr. Blaine attended a drum school in Chicago run by Roy C. Knapp, who had been Mr. Krupa's teacher. He began to play drums in strip clubs, and by the late 1950s he was working with a jazz quartet. He then worked with the teenage idol Tommy Sands and the pop singer Patti Page. He also played briefly with Count Basie's big band at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, filling in when Mr. Basie's regular drummer, Sonny Payne, was sick.

Until the early 1960s, Mr. Blaine thought of himself as a jazz drummer. But his work in the Los Angeles studios identified him, almost exclusively, as pop music's go-to session drummer.

Once he established himself in the studios, Mr. Blaine rarely performed live. One exception came in the 1960s, when Nancy Sinatra persuaded him to work with her at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas; she put his name on the marquee and arranged for a nanny for his daughter, Michelle. And in the mid-1970s, John Denver brought him on tour.

"His favorite time was with John," Mr. Johnson, Mr. Blaine's son-in-law, said in a telephone interview. "They were like brothers, and he was really torn up when John passed." Mr. Denver died in 1997 when the single-engine airplane he was piloting crashed into Monterey Bay in California.

Mr. Blaine is survived by his daughter, Michelle Blaine, and seven grandchildren. He was married and divorced five times.

Mr. Blaine was far less busy in studios in the 1980s. By then producers were increasingly relying on drum machines, and more self-



contained bands insisted on playing their own instruments. He started giving drum clinics and worked on commercial jingles. He played most recently at a party for his 90th birthday at a Los Angeles nightclub.

Jim Keltner, a drummer who also became known for his session work, recalled the first time he saw Mr. Blaine play, in the 1960s.

"I can hardly describe the effect it had on me," Mr. Keltner wrote in the foreword to "Hal Blaine & the Wrecking Crew" (1990), an autobiography written with David Goggin. "He was playing a beat I'd heard thousands of times but was giving it a certain kind of sophisticated funk that I'd never heard before."

"How was he able to do these things with his drums?"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/obituaries/hal-blaine-dead.html>

Sean Della Croce

In 2017, in Aspen, I was fortunate to attend a concert at which the talented Sean Della Croce performed. For someone so young, Sean's talent is incredible, but then again, she had some great influence from her step-father, Pete Huttlinger. Just last week, Sean played at the historic theatre in Franklin, Tennessee, and launched her new CD, *End All Be All*.

Surfing the internet can sometimes reveal some amazing articles, and the following one was written by Sean Della Croce one year after Pete Huttlinger's death in 2016. Beautifully crafted, it poignantly reflects on the passing of her step-dad and how, as a family, they are emerging from their grief.

We Nodded Because We Understood: On Grief and Melancholy Love

LIFE, RELATIONSHIPS

In spite of the fact that I attended a formerly Baptist university for four (and a half) years, I had more than my fair share of fun in college. Some of my most cherished memories involve long nights spent crowded into booths at Pizza Perfect on 21st Avenue with my roommate and old Catholic school buddy, Sam. Sure, we had classes and extracurriculars, but our school week was mainly structured around two-for-one's on Monday nights that inevitably became four-for-two's and sometimes, if we'd had a particularly rough sociology class beforehand, six-for-three's. Living on our own for the first time, off-campus, we finally felt like adults. We'd tell stories and laugh and curse the professors who hated us and idolize the ones who seemed particularly radical and revolutionary. I fell in love in some of those booths, planned engagements, and huddled extra close with my comrades when, on more than one occasion, our respective affections were not reciprocated by pretty girls from class in horn-

rimmed glasses. 1602 21st Avenue South was the prevailing landscape of my early adulthood with all its successes and failures, and there was nothing, back then, that couldn't be fully addressed with a pint and a slice.

In January 2016, a few weeks after I graduated from the aforementioned university, I found myself crawling into one of those familiar booths yet again. This time though, as if the universe had set a deadline on foolishness, there would be no resolution and no laughter or cheers to punctuate another misadventure. I sat across from my dad and brother, and I listened as the next year of my life was outlined with a most poetic and breathtaking clarity.

In the shadow of Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where over 20 years ago this man had watched both my brother and I come into the world, my father pointed out the window towards the hospital and said, "You go back there, and you say what you need to say. Then you take care of your mother. You take care of this family. Do you understand me?" My brother and I nodded because we understood.

A few days earlier, I had received a phone call from my mother at six o'clock on a Tuesday morning. I knew immediately that the day I had been dreading for nearly 10 years had finally arrived. I think the phone only rang once, and by the time it touched my ear, my feet were on the floor.

"Things aren't looking too good here, and I think you need to come down. Now." My step-father, Pete Huttlinger, had been admitted to Vanderbilt the night before after he began to experience double vision and dizziness. You see, Pete had a congenital heart defect that plagued him throughout his life and rendered transplant impossible. In spite of it all, at 54, he had surpassed his bleak life expectancy by over 20 years. Over the course of his last five years, Pete had overcome a stroke, heart-failure, and the installation of a heart pump which doctors promised would not last forever, but was Pete's only chance for survival.

During his trials, my mom was beside him every step and stumble of the way. She took care of him and loved him without ceasing. She had found him in 2010 after he had the stroke, so when the double vision began on Monday, she grabbed his cane from the closet, and they headed for the hospital. The doctors were sure that the bleeding in his brain could be mended by morning, so when I asked on Monday night if I should visit, she said no.

On Tuesday morning I rode the elevator up to his room with three men carrying balloons who couldn't wipe the smiles off their faces. They got off on the fourth floor—Labor and Delivery, and by

the time I got off on the fifth, Pete had fallen into a coma from which he would never return. In the days that followed, family members and friends rushed to his bedside. They flew in from California and drove through the night from North Carolina to support my mom and be with Pete. We had seen him pull life out of freefall before, and we weren't giving up so easily. Doctor after doctor came in and shared opinions. Some were unbelievably smug in the face of our grief, dashing our hopes with soulless facts and figures fresh out of their med school textbooks. Other doctors cried because they knew Pete; they were there when he played his guitar 10 days after his stroke, and when he completed the Music City Half-Marathon in the same year that his heart-failure saw his weight dip below 100 pounds. I think they cried because, like us, they hoped, and like us, they knew that this was unlike anything we'd seen before.

I followed my dad's advice—I said what I needed to say, and my brother and I went back to the fifth floor and held Pete's hand and prayed out loud while nurses checked the familiar bags and tubes that so often accompany death these days. My mom stood in the corner of the room like a boxer in the 12th round. She had been Pete's advocate and champion for years, saving his life more than once, but this time a shadow of helplessness was cast over her.

For the first time, I heard her utter what would become her chilling mantra of dread, "I'm going to be alone. I'm going to be alone. I'm going to be alone." Her refrain always punctuated by tears. On Friday at 12:30 pm we stood around Pete's bedside once again and were with him as he passed away. In those moments, fear racked my bones, but I have never felt more animated by love. One of the great gifts of this melancholy love was that it provided clarity when things fell apart, and it laid bare priorities like nothing else could. My mom, brother, and I packed up our things and left the room, our eyes cast downward, weighted to the ground by tears. We rode the elevator down to the cold, January parking garage where her car had been sitting since Monday night. When my mom got into the passenger's seat, Pete's cane was still there—waiting for her. I got behind the wheel, and drove us home.

That was almost one year ago, and I haven't left since.

When I graduated from college I had two majors, a corporate job lined up, and an apartment that looked like a Pinterest board come to life. I felt good about the future and couldn't wait to meet the woman I was about to become—"I'll bet she wears turtlenecks!" I would think to myself, "She'll be cute and boyish, but everyone will know she's powerful because her job takes her to Europe."

My sights were set on success and recognition. Especially in this world of social media, money and beauty and power seem to be the only things of consequence. What matters is what we project, how much we win, and how deep and serious we appear while remaining snarky enough to keep interlopers excluded.

Now I live back at home with a woman deemed a "widow" by society, but who is more interested in living out her title as a wife. I quit the corporate job after a few months because money lost its taste, and I simply couldn't keep pace with the waking world. Freelance writing now helps me inch past the finish line every month with student loans, and I decided to finally make the record I'd been writing for years. Mom and I cried every night for a while, and we still cry, especially on Sunday afternoons as the sun sets. We went on a road trip across country through all of the places she and Pete loved, and we celebrated many "firsts" without him—birthday, anniversary, Thanksgiving, and soon Christmas.

This first year has not been what I expected, and I recoil at the impulse to make it all "mean something" because if it were up to me, Pete never would have died. What I have learned though, is that there is value in questioning the extent to which our 20's are for ourselves. If the competitive spirit of college and the pressures implicit in a culture of excess and greed correspond with some truth, then this year has been meaningless for me, but I know better than to believe lies. Hearing my mom's laughter when I share stories of my 24 year-old romantic and professional misadventures is more precious than any affirmation, promotion, or "like." This year my meaning is forged on the Saturday nights when we drink wine in our pajamas, and she shares memories of Pete too fragile for the light of day. When my brother and I listened to my dad's empathetic and deeply compassionate charge, "Take care of your mother," we nodded because we understood.

<http://windrosemagazine.com/blog/2016/12/2/we-nodded-because-we-understood>

Aspen developer Mark Hunt buys former Main Street Bakery building, plans to open a diner

Erica Robbie Aspen Times, March 20, 2019

After sitting empty for nearly two-and-a-half years, the historic building at 201 E. Main St. — known to most as the former Main Street Bakery — sold Wednesday to Aspen developer Mark Hunt for \$5.5 million, according to records from the Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office.

"I want to make it a super cool diner," Hunt said of the 9,000-square-foot space. "I'm seriously excited about it."

It will be a place that is open in the morning, throughout the day and late night.



"A place where the kids can go after their games," Hunt said, adding it will serve as a meeting spot for tourists and locals. "I'm hoping to create a next-generation gathering place."

"A place where you can go eat breakfast late night if you want."

Longtime locals Bill and Jane Dinsmoor ran their popular Main Street Bakery and Cafe out of the pale pink-and-brick building from the late '80s until October 2016.

Post-Main Street Bakery, the plan was for Aspen restaurateur David Roth and the late investor Leslie Rudd to restore the 130-year-old building and open an Oakville Grocery. Rudd's death in May, however, stalled plans for the project. Calls to executives at Rudd's investment company last year regarding the property were not returned.

Hunt said other people were looking at buying the property and he didn't like the path they were heading down in terms of what their plans were with the building, so he bought it.

He said the town has lost too many gathering places, including Over Easy, which was in a building that he owned on Hopkins Avenue and sold to Hillstone Restaurant Group in May 2017 for \$6 million. Over Easy left the space Oct. 31, 2017, at the request of the Hillstone chain, which also owns and operates the White House Tavern next door. The building that housed Over Easy has remained empty since.

Hunt said he has "two unbelievable operators" he is considering to run the Main Street diner. When reached Wednesday, Roth would not say if he will be involved in the restaurant's next phase. "I know that Mark shares the same vision that Leslie and myself had in the structure of the building and in what it brings to the community and what it can bring to the community," Roth said.

A major part of his and Rudd's vision was to properly preserve the historic building, which architects later learned lacked a foundation and deemed "structurally unstable."

An architect in the valley of more than 30 years, David Rybak told The Aspen Times in November 2017, "I've done a number of historic remodels and this is probably the biggest repair I've experienced."

Hunt said the boarded-up building is an eyesore and isn't doing anything for the retailers on that block so he wants to create vibrancy there.

"It's all in the best interest to get this done as soon as possible," Hunt said.

He said he is working with the city of Aspen to make that happen.

Amy Simon, the city's historic preservation officer, said stabilization work for the initial project is mostly complete.

"We expect to hear from the property owner before anything proceeds again," Simon said.

erobbie@aspentimes.com Reporter Carolyn Sackariason contributed to this story.



(Photo: Anna Stonehouse)

<https://www.aspentimes.com/news/aspen-developer-mark-hunt-buys-former-main-street-bakery-building-plans-to-open-a-diner/>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

John Denver at Home in Edina

Singing with Minnesota sunshine on his shoulders.

By Marci Matson from the June 2015 Edina Magazine Issue
Before he achieved fame and fortune, John Denver performed at Edina High School gymnasium in 1969 (Edina High School yearbook photo).

Before he became famous for his songs about country roads and Colorado mountains, John Denver made his home in suburban Edina.

On his way to stardom, Denver lived in an Edina apartment and wrote much of the material for his first three albums here, including his first No. 1 song, "Sunshine on My Shoulders," according to Denver's obituary written by Star Tribune writer Jon Bream.

How did Denver, who is most associated with his adopted state of Colorado, happen to live in Minnesota?

He married a St. Peter girl, Ann Martell, whom he met while on tour in 1966 when she attended Gustavus Adolphus College. Then a virtual unknown and without financial backing from his record company, Denver toured small-town schools and colleges, American Legion Halls and local coffee houses to build support for his first album Rhymes & Reasons.

One of those impromptu tour stops was Edina High School during a student protest in 1969. Denver's performance wasn't even mentioned in the Minneapolis Star's coverage of the protest, in which 1,200 to 1,400 students walked out of their classes to voice their disapproval of proposed teacher cuts. Kris Carlander, a protest organizer, is credited with arranging to have Denver entertain students during their sit-in at the school gym.

"Few of us had heard of John Denver, but all knew [his song] Leaving on a Jet Plane," recalled yearbook photographer Patrick Boulay. "That Saturday night, he appeared on WCCO

TV's This Must Be the Place, hosted by Bill Carlson. That's when I realized he was kind of a big deal."

<https://edinamag.com/john-denver-home-edina>

Mark Cormican

Mark Cormican has released his 2019 concert schedule, starting on the 9th March in Colorado.

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

John Adams is currently touring in the Netherlands. Please check his website for information about his concerts and for tickets.

<https://www.johnadamsband.com/calendar>

Rick Worrall

Canadian artist, Rick Worrall, together with Lee Holdridge and local symphony orchestras present *Rocky Mountain High: An Evening of John Denver.*

Concerts will be held in Victoria BC, Nanaimo BC, in May and Hamilton ON, and Toronto ON in June. Click the link for information about tickets.

<http://rockymountainhighconcert.com/concerts/>

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

www.hgavic.com

This month, I've selected the lyrics *All this Joy* in memory of innocent victims of mass shootings across the world, especially those in Christchurch, New Zealand.

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.



All this Joy

(John Denver)

*All this joy, all this sorrow
All this promise, all this pain
Such is life, such is being
Such is spirit, such is love*

*City of joy, city of sorrow
City of promise, city of pain
Such is life, such is being
Such is spirit, such is love*

*World of joy, world of sorrow
World of promise, world of pain
Such is life, such is being
Such is spirit, such is love*

*All this joy, all this sorrow
All this promise, all this pain
Such is life, such is being
Such is spirit, such is love
Such is spirit, such is love*