



**HIGHER
GROUND
AUSTRALIA**

CONTACT:
Janette Frawley
hga.vic@gmail.com

<http://www.hgavic.com>

Volume 19 – Edition 3

HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – September 2022

WELCOME

I am writing this newsletter from the place where HGA held its first gathering in 2001. I am currently in Halls Gap in the Grampians National Park, where the weather is freezing and it hasn't stopped raining all day. I hope to be able to visit the first tree we planted in memory of John Denver on 12 October 2001 tomorrow morning (if it stops raining for a short time).

I will be in the United States in October, but unfortunately will be unable to join the festivities in Aspen as I have other commitments. I am attending a Judy Collins concert in Berkeley CA on October 1 before embarking on a cross-country journey by train. Apparently, the scenery is stunning, so I am looking forward to the experience.

Many of you will be preparing for your individual pilgrimages to the annual Aspen in October event for 2022 after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. I hope that your time spent with your friends and returning musicians is as much a reunion for yourselves as it is a celebration of the life and music of John Denver. I know that I will be looking forward to hearing from you. I would also like to honour the friends who have passed away since the last AIO. They will be so missed this year.

The Aspen in October arrangements are progressing and new events have been announced since our last newsletter. Please check out the official Aspen in October Facebook page for up-to-date information on what's happening during the 25th anniversary week.
<https://www.facebook.com/AspenInOctober/>

As you return to Aspen next month after a lengthy two-year break for many, I'm sure you will be thinking that you are 'back home again'. I've included the lyrics to the song at the end of this month's newsletter. I now associate this song especially with John's home in Starwood after Jimmy Fong pointed out that the 'four-lane was only a mile or so away' from our vantage point. Watching and hearing the traffic moving along the highway below, it was easy to imagine a storm rolling in, the eerie sound of a truck's brakes, and the sense of being grateful that you are home.

I hope that your stay in Aspen is everything you want it to be; meeting new and old friends and falling back into the old rhythms of song and celebration.

Stay safe, stay well.

DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

Our dear friends Ray and Dianne Dunk lost their beloved daughter on 26 July 2022 to cancer. Laura was just 36 years old and lived every day of her life to the fullest. Living in Switzerland with her husband Marco, she fought a brave battle against aggressive breast cancer and died in the loving arms of her family. Ray, Dianne, Marco, and Laura's brothers have lost their beautiful best friend, but she will live in their hearts for ever.

Bob Dylan's words are especially poignant:

May God bless and keep you always

May your wishes all come true

May you always do for others

And let others do for you

May you build a ladder to the stars

And climb on every rung

May you stay forever young

Forever young, forever young

May you stay forever young.

Ray, Dianne, Marco, and Family, we are all with you in spirit.

May Laura rest in peace.

HIGHER GROUND AUSTRALIA

As mentioned in previous newsletters, we are not able to hold a weekend gathering in 2022 and we will be deciding on the future of the annual gatherings soon.

This newsletter will continue to be released as regularly as possible and our website and Facebook pages are still regularly updated and available.

Website: www.hgavic.com

Email: hga.vic@gmail.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/higherground.australia>

ASPEN IN OCTOBER 2022

There are plenty of events to attend during the Aspen in October week starting from October 5, 2022. We would love to hear from people attending AIO this year. Please share your photos and your stories to be published in our next newsletter.

OUR TREES IN BOONAH

Rhonda Banditt has been checking on the trees we planted in Boonah, Queensland for a number of years. She has advised that they continue to thrive and the people at Outlook in Boonah have replaced some of the grevilleas. We appreciate the updates and the photos!



JOHN DENVER'S 'ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH' TURNS 50: LOVE, CENSORSHIP AND CONSTANT TRIBUTES DEFINE SONG'S HISTORY

COLORADO SYMPHONY WILL FETE THE ICONIC SONG WITH A CONCERT THIS FALL

John Wenzel, The Denver Post, June 15 2022

This year marks five decades since John Denver's iconic, occasionally controversial and resolutely pastoral folk anthem "Rocky Mountain High" was released, and Coloradans can celebrate with a major concert — as well as some self-directed excursions.

Colorado Symphony last week announced a Sept. 8 show at Boettcher Concert Hall honoring the song and Denver, a two-time Grammy award winner and former poet laureate of Colorado. He'll be present, in a way, via archival footage of him performing songs from the 1972 "Rocky Mountain High" album and other hits.

While John Denver tribute shows have been common in Colorado since his 1997 death at the age of 53, the show will also feature members of his band performing live and telling stories about the singer-songwriter. Tickets, \$15-\$98, are on sale now at coloradosymphony.org.

On June 8, Gov. Jared Polis also marked the song's 50th anniversary by renaming the Mountain Lion Trail in Golden Gate Canyon State Park to Rocky Mountain High Trail.

"Here in Colorado, we've always known that our majestic mountains, our bright blue skies, our starlit nights and our forest and streams were the stuff of legends — but John Denver made them the stuff of song lyrics, too," Polis said in a statement. "And not just any lyrics, but world-famous lyrics that span genres and generations."

Released on Oct. 30, 1972, "Rocky Mountain High" became a chart-topping hit in 1973 and a staple of Denver's live sets. He had moved to Colorado three years prior, according to Red Rocks and the Colorado Music Hall of Fame (the latter of which inducted Denver in 2011), and his time living in the fast-changing mountain town of Aspen — now synonymous with glitz and unaffordability — inspired him to see Colorado through itinerant eyes.

"When he first came to the mountains his life was far away," he wrote in the gentle, melodically intoxicating song. "On the road and hanging by a song / But the string's already broken and he doesn't really care / It keeps changing fast and it don't last for long."

Denver had just debuted at Red Rocks Amphitheatre on June 21, 1972, about four months before "Rocky Mountain High" began climbing the charts, according to the Castle Pines Connection. That kicked off a run of 16 concerts that would position Denver as the first-ever artist to play four consecutive nights at the venue. His final show there was in the summer of 1989.

Even when he was alive, "Rocky Mountain High" had come to symbolize Colorado's musical identity for many in the state, and was approved by legislators as the state's second official song in 2007 (the first is "Where the Columbines Grow" by Dr. Arthur John Flynn).

It's also become shorthand for Colorado culture to many people outside of our state, its name borne on craft beers, art exhibitions, theater productions and other public culture. Denver's pioneering eco-activism is now often synonymous with Colorado.

"Denver used his popularity to promote his favorite cause: the environment," Colorado Music Hall of Fame officials wrote upon his induction. "He founded the Windstar Foundation in 1976 in Snowmass as an education and demonstration center dedicated to a sustainable future."

The song, however, was not always universally loved. At both the time of its release and during its 2007 induction as a new state song, critics charged the "high" in the song referred to drug use. In the early 1970s, some radio stations even banned it. Denver would probably have been flummoxed in 2007, as well, when his so-named sanctuary in Aspen removed "scandalous" lines from his songs in a bout of hasty

ensorship, according to The Aspen Times, including “Rocky Mountain High.”

“My brother didn’t write it that way, and he never sang it that way,” Denver’s brother told the newspaper. “He’d be pissed like I’m pissed. It’s just not right.”

Denver had already experienced and in many ways anticipated future reactions before he died.

“This was obviously done by people who had never seen or been to the Rocky Mountains ...” Denver told Congress as part of the Parents Music Resource Center in 1985, according to Eric D. Nuzum’s 2001 book “Parental Advisory: Music Censorship in America.”

The fact that Colorado has successfully pioneered legal, recreational cannabis in Colorado since 2014 is something Denver might have found amusing, given his defense of the lyrics and the fact that openly admitting to smoking pot in the 1970s was still problematic (at best) for a musician, even a top-charting one.

Denver was no saint. Ex-wife Annie Martell said Denver choked her and cut their bed in half with a chainsaw near the end of their marriage (they were divorced in 1982). Denver owned up to that — sort of — in his autobiography “Take me Home,” confirming but toning down the events. He racked up DUIs, including one after crashing his car into a tree in Aspen. Before he died in a plane crash in 1997, he had defied a court order that kept him from flying his plane. (To be sure: there was no evidence of alcohol involvement in his death, according to NTSB public meeting notes.)

Regardless, fans of the song and Denver can mark the 50th anniversary in their own ways by hiking his newly, so-named trail, learn more about him via the Colorado Music Hall of Fame (cmhof.org), or check out the exhibit on him at Red Rock’s Trading Post (free and open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. every day), where his stately “Spirit” statue now resides. It never stops looking forward.

<https://www.denverpost.com/2022/06/15/john-denver-rocky-mountain-high-50th-anniversary-colorado-symphony/>

A number of our friends attended the concert and hiked the newly named trail recently. I would love to see their photos and hear about their experiences.

HOW JOHN DENVER FOUND HIS INSPIRATION FOR HIS GREATEST HITS

Rachel Rasmussen Cultursmmag.com

John Denver grew up a military B.R.A.T. shadowed by his father’s military status. But as he grew up, he created his own identity that inspired his music.

“Dutch’s Boy”

Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr. (later known as John Denver) was born on Dec. 31, 1943 in Roswell, N.M., U.S.A. to Captain Henry John “Dutch” Deutschendorf Sr. of the United States Army and later the U.S. Air Force. With a father in the military, Denver lived in many different countries and states.

From the time that he was a baby to about 6-years-old, Denver lived in Japan. In his autobiography, Denver mentions that he didn’t remember his time.

At age 6 his family moved back to the U.S. where they resided in Tucson, Ariz. Denver developed a very shy and introverted personality with no sense of personal identity. To the outside world, Denver was simply “Dutch’s Boy.”

But this was the time when Denver’s love for music began. He got his first guitar from his grandmother and joined a boy’s choir.

After Ariz., his family moved to Montgomery, Ala. during the bus boycotts. The transition proved to be difficult for Denver as he hadn’t been very exposed to segregation during his years in Ariz.

Becoming His Own Person

During his time in Ala., Denver sang in front of his boy’s choir for the first time. After his performance, Denver was no longer just an Air Force kid who stayed in a town for a little while. The world no longer knew him as “Dutch’s Boy.” Denver became his own person. Although he was still a loner and individualist, he became more sensitive towards others and their emotions.

Denver spent his high school years in Fort Worth, Tex. as a shy teenager who turned to music to express his emotions in private.

His father was a stern man who had difficulty opening up and showing his emotions towards his family. So Denver says he got his emotional side from his mother, Erma Louise. It was because of his emotions that Denver was able to write some of his greatest hits.

The Inspiration Behind Some of John Denver’s Greatest Hits

Denver would write his songs from events that were happening in his life. Throughout his entire life, he was on the move, either with his family or for his music. He used his time in new places or his longing for something different as inspiration for his lyrics.

Denver wrote “Leaving On a Jet Plane” during a time in his life where he was constantly traveling as a part of the Chad Mitchell Trio. He was longing for someone to love and how his constant traveling prevented him from achieving it.

“Annie’s Song” was a homage to Denver’s first wife, Annie Martell. In his autobiography, Denver talks about how he wanted to write the song for his wife to

show her how he feels in a way that he couldn't just tell her.

He came up with some of the lyrics for "Rocky Mountain High" on a camping trip with his wife, Annie and some of their friends. Denver witnessed a meteor shower in the middle of the night that looked like it was "raining fire in the sky."

"'Annie's Song,' 'Rocky Mountain High,' 'Country Roads,' 'Sunshine on My Shoulders,' 'Back Home Again,' and 'Leaving On a Jet Plane' were not songs that flowed from the pen between 9 [a.m.] and 5 [p.m.]" Denver says in his autobiography. "They were my nature expressed, they were experiences musically stated. They were my emotions being brought up out of being there and seeing it and being there and seeing it. You write the song so that you are true to it."

Denver's Wanderlust

As Denver's career and popularity grew, he constantly traveled from place to place to perform. He suffered from wanderlust, or a desire to keep moving and traveling around. This is something that, according to a dissertation by Edward C. Queair titled, "Children of the U.S. Military and Identity: A Narrative Inquiry into the "Brat" Experience," is found in many military B.R.A.T.s.

In his autobiography, Denver said he didn't really care about where he was. He cared about what he was doing there.

Denver's music didn't just take him around the U.S., but to the other side of the world.

In 1986, Denver performed a concert in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. According to the John Denver website, his performance was the first done by a U.S. artist since the Cold War. He returned in 1987 to perform a benefit concert for the victims of Chernobyl.

In October 1992, he also performed a multi-city tour in mainland China. He became the first artist from the West to do this and it shocked him to find out how popular his songs were in China.

After Denver died on Oct. 12, 1997, his legacy lived on in his many humanitarian efforts and organizations, his family and of course his music.

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

<https://www.cultursmag.com/how-john-denver-found-his-inspiration-for-his-greatest-hits/>

JOHN ADAMS ANNOUNCES A NEW CONCERT

JOHN DENVER 'The Tribute concerts will be held on Saturday October 1, 2022 at 7:00 PM at

The [Newman Center for the Performing Arts](#), University of Denver 2344 East Iliff Avenue Denver CO 80208.

Tickets will be available soon.



CHRIS COLLINS & BOULDER CANYON IN ASPEN

We have a special announcement! We will be returning to Aspen, Colorado during the John Denver Celebration week and to the stage at the Wheeler Opera House on October 8, 2022!

TICKETS GO ON SALE JUNE 1, 2022 AT 12:00 NOON, MOUNTAIN TIME! Tickets will be available on line at www.aspenshowtix.com or by calling the Wheeler Opera House's box office at 970-920-5770 or 866-449-0464 (toll free).

As some of you know, 2022 will mark 25 years since John Denver left us way too soon. This will be a special anniversary concert, with some special guests, to celebrate John Denver's music, life and legacy. We look forward to seeing everyone!

RICK SCHULER CONCERT NEXT WEEKEND

Rick Schuler’s Rocky Mountain High Experience concert will be held on September 24 at Gracious Savior Church, Edwards Colorado at 4:00 PM. Details below



RADIO PROGRAMMES – WILLIE HOEVERS

Willie Hoever's of the Rocky Mountain Foundation for the Performing Arts has worked tirelessly to promote John's music through the foundation and through his regular radio programmes.

In 2013, Willie launched his fortnightly online show, 'The Music of John Denver' for American Veterans radio, which is available globally on www.avradio.org

The next show is on Saturday **February 27** at 2pm Mountain Time.

- 4 - 6 pm Eastern time
- 3 - 5 pm Central time
- 2 - 4 pm Mountain time
- 1 - 3 pm Pacific time
- 12 -2 pm Alaskan time
- 2100 - 2300 UK time
- 2200 - 0000 European time
- Next Morning – Sunday May 9
- 4 - 6 am Japan time
- 6 - 8 am Sydney, Australia time
- 8 - 10 am New Zealand time

Additionally, Willie hosts the show in the UK on Ridge Radio. The next show will be held on **February 20** at 6pm UK time www.ridgeradio.co.uk

Here is a time zone conversion chart:

- 6:00pm - 8:00pm UK Time
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm European Time
- 4:00am - 6:00am Sydney Australia Time
- 5:00am - 7:00am Auckland New Zealand Time
- 2:00am - 4:00am Tokyo Time
- 1:00pm - 3:00pm Eastern Time
- 12Noon - 2:00pm Central Time
- 11am - 1:00pm Mountain Time
- 10:00am - 12pm Pacific Time
- 9:00am - 11:00am Alaskan Time

Watch this space for other syndicated shows. For more information, please contact Willie

willie@rockymountainfpa.org

<https://rockymountainfpa.org/home>

ASPEN IN OCTOBER – 2022 EVENTS

(From the Aspen in October Facebook Page)

Please check the Facebook page for events and tickets.

www.Facebook.com/aspeninOctober/events

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5, 2022

Meet & Greet John Denver Sanctuary

Singalong – Mountain Chalet

Campfire, Cookout, Singalong Maroon Bells

THURSDAY OCTOBER 6, 2022

8 AM Crystal Mill Jeep Tour. For more information, check out their website

<http://www.smithfamilycolorado.com/CRJT/>

This is a jeep tour to the town of Crystal and also to the Crystal Mill. The ride will be rough but not difficult to walk around once you get to the location. You will need to dress warmly, bring layers. Bring water, sunscreen, and lunch or a snack. There are no toilets along the way. So if you are uncomfortable copping a squat in the woods, you may not want to do this tour. There are outhouses at the town of Crystal and at the mill if you can stand to use those. The tour group will provide TP.

Cost is \$800 per jeep. Each jeep can hold five people. So that comes out to \$160 per person to be paid at the time of check-in. No money is needed right now. The tour can handle up to 20 people. We will be doing the five-hour tour. This will be a first to contact me, first served. Anybody beyond 20 people will be put on a waitlist. So please confirm with me through messenger with the names of people if you will definitely be going so I can start a list and can keep track of who is coming. So as not to cost more than \$160 per person, I need at least five people or 10 people or 15 people or 20 people. Anything less than a number divisible by five means it will cost more money for people to go. If that does not make sense, please contact me and I'll try to explain it better.

We will need to leave Aspen at 8am and meet at Crystal River Jeep Tours headquarters. We can car pool as much as possible.

Evening of the Elk 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM Aspen Center for Environmental Studies

Ron Matthews Concert Mountain Chalet 7:30 PM

Singalong – Mountain Chalet

FRIDAY OCTOBER 7, 2022

25 Years of Celebrating John Denver Mountain Chalet

Songs for a Life: Remembering John Denver at The Wheeler Opera House 7:30 PM. Tickets are on sale now from www.aspenshowtix.com or by calling the

Wheeler Opera House's box office at (+1) 970-920-5770 or (+1) 866-449-0464 (toll free).

Singalong – Mountain Chalet

SATURDAY OCTOBER 8, 2022

Hay Farm Tour: Rock Bottom Ranch Aspen Center for Environmental Studies

A Tribute to John Denver 25th Anniversary Concert with Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon

Wheeler Opera House 7:30 PM

Singalong – Mountain Chalet

Martin Tyner – Eagle Man – 1-3pm Dunaway Community Meeting Room 120 North Mill Street, Aspen. For more information about this event, please contact Val Cooper at eagle1997@d-pcomm.net

SUNDAY OCTOBER 9, 2022

Sunday Service at Aspen Chapel

Pine Creek Cookhouse Luncheon and Concert: (SOLD OUT) 11399 Castle Creek Rd, Aspen, CO 81611, United States

Singalong – Mountain Chalet

MONDAY OCTOBER 10, 2022

Goodbye Again: John Denver Sanctuary

The list will be updated with confirmed times and ticketing information as information comes to hand.

TRIBUTE ARTISTS

Check out your favourite tribute artists.

CATHY GIANFALA CARRIERE

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

MARK CORMICAN

<http://markcormican.com/schedule/>

JIM CURRY

<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.

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

CHRIS COLLINS AND BOULDER CANYON

Chris Collins & Boulder Canyon has scheduled shows in August and September. Please check the website for details. <https://bouldercanyonband.com/concert-schedule>

CHRIS WESTFALL

Friday July 30 free concert at Bethany Beach Events & Entertainment. Details

www.townofbethanybeach.com

<http://www.chriswestfall.com/inConcert.php>

JOHN ADAMS

[HTTPS://WWW.JOHNADAMSBAND.COM/CALENDAR](https://www.johnadamsband.com/calendar)

CHRIS BANNISTER

<http://chrisbannisterthemusicofjohndenver.com>

BRAD FITCH

<http://www.cowboybrad.com>

WILL KRUGER

<http://www.willkruger.com>

Check out Will's forthcoming performances at <https://www.willkruger.com/schedule/>

RICK SCHULER

<http://www.sunshinerick.com>

TED VIGIL

<http://www.tedvigil.com>

JOHN DENVER PROJECT BAND

<http://johndenverprojectband.it>

RON MATTHEWS

<http://www.ronmatthews.net>

For more information about tribute artists around the globe, check out our website; www.hgavic.com

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.



Back Home Again

(John Denver)

*There's a storm across the valley, clouds are rollin' in
The afternoon is heavy on your shoulders
There's a truck out on the four lane, a mile or more away
The whinin' of his wheels just makes it colder*

*He's an hour away from ridin' on your prayers up in the sky
Ten days on the road are barely gone
There's a fire softly burning, supper's on the stove
It's the light in your eyes that makes him warm*

*Hey, it's good to be back home again
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again*

*There's all the news to tell him, how'd you spend your time?
What's the latest thing the neighbors say
And your mother called last Friday, sunshine made her cry
You felt the baby move just yesterday*

*Hey, it's good to be back home again, yes it is
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again*

*Oh, the time that I can lay this tired old body down
Feel your fingers feather soft on me
The kisses that I live for, the love that lights my way
The happiness that livin' with you brings me
It's the sweetest thing I know of, just spending time with you*

*It's the little things that make a house a home
Like a fire softly burning and supper on the stove
The light in your eyes that makes me warm*

*Hey, it's good to be back home again
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again
Hey, it's good to be back home again, you know it is
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend
Hey, it's good to be back home again
I said, hey, it's good to be back home again*

