

**HIGHER
GROUND
AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.hgavic.com>

CONTACT:
Janette Frawley
hga.vic@gmail.com

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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – March 2020

WELCOME

I want to cancel 2020 and start again tomorrow!
We've not had a very good start to this year so far. Whilst there were a number of bushfires across Australia recently, New South Wales and Victoria were particularly affected. 18.6 million hectares in total were burnt, almost 6,000 buildings were destroyed, 34 lives were lost, including four American volunteer firefighters, and sadly about one million native animals were killed. These fires, due to the unprecedented build-up of fuel and debris on the forest floor, together with the drought produced a catastrophic event, which will never be forgotten. Approximately 85% of the fires that ravaged our country and destroyed towns, farms, homes, families, not to mention our pristine bushland, were lit, either deliberately or accidentally by people. The good news is that many of our native plants and trees regenerate very quickly after fires. Some plants require fire to burst seed pods, so the bush is starting to recover. Not so the people who have lost their homes, their families, and their livelihoods. Many communities had been working towards getting their businesses up and running to attract tourists into the affected areas when the Coronavirus broke out and filtered through to Australia. Now, across the globe we are self-isolating, in lockdown, quarantine, or in 'home-detention' or whatever, as COVID-19 spreads across the world. Our bushfire victims are struck again with a catastrophic economic disaster as they too, are isolating themselves this insidious virus spreads. I ask everyone to share a thought for the vulnerable everywhere as we ride out this awful storm.

Personally, I never thought that, in the 21st Century, we would ever be in this situation. It appears that no matter how well-prepared we are for a pandemic; we still have a lot to learn. The COVID-19 pandemic is non-discriminating, and as it rages through our individual countries, we will all be touched in one way or another. Spare a thought for the people stranded in countries around the world or on cruise ships. I hope they are able to return home as soon as possible, and for already at home, please, please stay inside, play lots of John Denver music (with a few Kenny Rogers' and John Prine songs thrown in) and stay well.

VALE KENNY ROGERS

On October 25, 2017, I attended *The Gambler's Last Deal*, the farewell concert for Kenny Rogers in Nashville, USA. Whilst he and his wife watched on, some of the best-known country (and not so country) stars performed some of Kenny's most-loved songs. It's hard to believe that less than two-and-a-half years later, Kenny's next concert would be at that ever-growing one in the sky.

Kenny died on Friday, March 20, 2020, aged 81. We loved his music, we sang along with his songs, and we are really going to miss him. RIP.



JOHN PRINE CRITICALLY ILL

Sometime last year, it was announced that John Prine would be appearing here in Melbourne on April 14. I didn't waste any time purchasing a ticket, but my money was refunded about 6 weeks ago when he suddenly pulled out due to some medical issues. Today, it was announced that he is critically ill with COVID-19. John Denver recorded a number of John Prine songs, including Spanish Pipedream and Angel from Montgomery.

The family of John Prine says the singer-songwriter is critically ill and has been placed on a ventilator while being treated for Covid-19-type symptoms.

A message posted on Prine's Twitter page Sunday said the Angel from Montgomery singer has been hospitalized since Thursday and his condition worsened on Saturday.

"This is hard news for us to share," Prine's family said. "But so many of you have loved and supported John over the years, we wanted to let you know, and give you the chance to send on more of that love and

support now. And know that we love you, and that John loves you.”

John Prine: 'Things were going so good, I was afraid to screw it up with a new record'

Prine's wife and manager, Fiona Whelan Prine, this month said she had tested positive for the coronavirus. She said the couple were quarantined and isolated from each other.

The 73-year-old Prine, one of the most influential figures in folk and country music, has twice fought cancer. Most recently, he was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2013 and had part of a lung removed.

The surgeries affected his voice but Prine continued to make music and to tour. Before the onset of the virus, Prine had shows scheduled in May and a summer tour planned.

Joe Diffie, a country singer who had a string of hits in the 1990s with chart-topping ballads and honky-tonk tunes such as *Home* and *Pickup Man*, has died in Nashville after testing positive for Covid-19. He was 61.

Covid-19 is the disease caused by the new coronavirus. As of Sunday, it has killed more than 32,000 people worldwide and more than 2,000 in the US.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/mar/29/john-prine-coronavirus-symptoms-critical>

HGA TRIBUTE, 2020

In light of the COVID-19 disaster, I've decided not to plan for a tribute weekend this year. Our numbers have depleted over the past couple of years and I think it might be better to organise an informal catch-up sometime later in the year or early next year.

I'll continue sending out newsletters and the website will be updated soon, now that I've plenty of time on my hands to do so. In the meantime, keep sending through articles, photos, anecdotes, etc to include in the newsletter. The web address is <https://www.hgavic.com/>. Please contact me on hga.vic@gmail.com with your photos, comments, and feedback.

HIGHER GROUND RAPTORS

As Peggy McDonald looked to the horizon of her South Highlands home, she could see the bushfire advancing towards her property. With the assistance of students and local vets, Peggy evacuated most of her injured birds to a local veterinary hospital. Some of the birds, which were almost ready to be released were set free, and Peggy had to pray that they would survive under these terrible circumstances. Her story was featured on The Project on January 10. Please click the link to watch the segment, <https://www.facebook.com/TheProjectTV/videos/599584317280547/UzpfSTE3OTM0NjAwMzQyNDA0ODk6MjQ2ODQxOTQ2Njc0NDUzOQ/>

Please donate to this worthy cause through Peggy's website. All monies raised through donation and fundraisers is used for special projects. Check out Peggy's website also to see the photos of the recent upgrade to the circular aviary, which is used for the rehabilitation of birds prior to their release back into the wild.

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

Click the link to view an older story on Peggy and her work, which was aired on the ABC.

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

OFFICIAL JOHN DENVER ONLINE PLATFORMS

The official platform for exclusive John Denver content is available from the official John Denver page.

<http://www.johndenver.com>

Also, the *John Denver Patreon* page is approved and run by John Denver's Estate on behalf of John's three children. It is a membership programme, which allows creators to host exclusive content to their fans in exchange for a small monthly pledge.

<https://www.patreon.com/JohnDenver>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Here is an interview with Anna Zapp, who designed many of John's iconic clothes.

REMEMBERING JOHN DENVER WITH ANNA ZAPP

On the 20th anniversary of John Denver's death, here is an interview with his personal costumer, Anna Zapp. Some music collectors would certainly love to own her stage outfits as priceless memorabilia

Oct 12, 2017 By Ellen March, Sew News



Today marks 20 years since the passing of John Denver, who was tragically killed in a plane crash off the coast of California on Oct 12, 1997. We celebrate the life of the humanitarian, political activist, award-winning songwriter and performer by paying tribute to his personal sewist and costumer, who sewed his extravagant stage shirts for 10 years. Anna Zapp, a former Sew News contributor, shares what it was like

to work with John Denver and how he changed her life, taking her sewing business to the next level and helping her become a sewist for the stars.

How did John Denver discover your creations?

AZ: One of these arts and craft fairs was in a large field in Aspen. We all had to build our own booths, from the ground up, which was crazy but we did it. On the last day of the fair I spotted (Denver) across the field checking out each booth. He finally made his way to our booth and walked in, stood and looked at the picked over shirts that were left and turned around and said "Who makes these shirts?" I held up my hand and said, "I do." He shook my hand and said "Hi, I'm John." He said he didn't care for any of the pieces he saw but made plans to come to our house and order some shirts the next week.

What's the most extravagant outfit you ever made him?

AZ: The most extravagant outfit was a black wool tuxedo with appliqué pieces on the shawl collar embellished with black diamond rhinestones (at left). He had a hard time making up his mind about what he wanted, and when he did, I only had 10 days to make it.

I called friends to come over and help me cut out the appliqué pieces. It took all 10 days and until 9pm each night. It was easily over 100 hours. It had a vest, jacket and pants. The jacket lapels were totally embellished, the sides of the jacket were embellished, four inches wide, as well as the pant sides. Lots of work!

I started out making regular western shirts, denim bodies and print yokes, and visa versa, like the one he wore on his first Johnny Carson appearance. Some of the shirts were made of used jeans. After I made a dozen of that style, I thought I'd make him some two-color denim pants. He loved them!

On our second meeting, in Stapleton Airport, he asked for something special to wear to the Country Music Awards. Right on the spot, I saw in my mind's eye a tux with tails, made from medium-blue worn denim. He said "no tails" and I told him he needed tails. We made tails. It was lined in blue satin with lapels made from lighter blue brocade with sparkling slubs running through the weave. I had silver buttons custom made for the satin shirt and silver nickel buttons made for the tux.

This (arrangement) was fine until I made his first appliqué satin shirt. That was the start of a new look for him. The shirts had designs of flowers, leaves and stems with rhinestones accenting the center flower. He then wanted "appliqué outfits." I think I made 17 of them, decorated with individually cut satin pieces that created the particular design. All of these outfits were totally different.

Can you describe the process of creating one of his shirts? Was it a collaborative effort or did he trust you to design everything from start to finish?

AZ: The short answer is yes, he trusted me! It was an artist's heaven! At first I would meet with him and show him samples of fabric for yokes only, to go on denim, and he'd pick all the swatches. After that, his secretary would call and tell me he wanted more shirts. As for the shirt and decorated pants outfits, on rare occasion he'd ask for a specific type of design, like an Indian motif.

Were any of his songs particularly influential to you?

AZ: Yes! Rennie (ex-husband) and I had moved back east and it was a cold, dreary day. We were both hard at work and "Rocky Mountain High" came on the little transistor radio; it was the first we'd heard it. We both sat down in the floor, I started crying and said, "We have to go back to Colorado!" The following summer we met John and the story began.

What's your favorite "John Denver moment?"

AZ: Of course, the first moment was meeting him in the summer of 1973. One other moment was when we were in Los Angeles. He flew us out, first class, so I could hear him say on stage, "My mom didn't make this shirt, it's an Anna Zapp original, man!" And he had me stand up. Far out!

Another is when his movie Oh, God! premiered. He called to ask if I wanted to come to Aspen for the premiere, and he'd come get me in his Cessna four-seater. The Chinook winds were blowing, and we had a rough ride but arrived safe and sound. The movie was fun. The next day the winds were quite a bit stronger, and the Cessna was being thrown up and down and side-to-side. We tightened our seat belts and hung on for dear life. He said if anyone got sick in his airplane, no more rides for you!

What did your relationship with John Denver mean to you?

AZ: It changed my life! My dream as a young teenager was to sew and design for famous people. Knowing John opened all kinds of doors. He wanted me to outfit his entire band, and I met and designed for Annie, his wife. He wanted everyone he met, like Robert Redford, (to own my shirts). Redford then ordered a shirt for Willie Nelson. Many celebrities in the western music arena started wanting specialty shirts. Paramount Pictures contacted me and wanted a special shirt for John Travolta to wear in Urban Cowboy, and some shirts from my line that they found at a store in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Needless to say, sewing for John Denver was a dream come true.

Anna Zapp is the author of The Zapp Method of Couture Sewing, published by Krause/F+W Media and



available digitally at shopsewitall.com. The excerpts of this article were taken from an interview published in Sew News.

<https://www.goldminemag.com/articles/remembering-john-denver-anna-zapp>

TRIBUTE ARTISTS

Check out your favourite tribute artists. Although everyone is hibernating at the moment, check out their pages to when they are next (hopefully) performing:

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

<https://bouldercanyonband.com/concert-schedule>

CHRIS WESTFALL

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

JOHN ADAMS

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

CHRIS BANNISTER

<http://chrisbannisterthemusicofjohndenver.com>

BRAD FITCH

<http://www.cowboybrad.com>

WILL KRUGER

<http://www.willkruger.com>

RICK SCHULER

<http://www.sunshinerick.com>

TED VIGIL

<http://www.tedvigil.com>

JOHN DENVER PROJECT BAND

<http://johndenverprojectband.it>

RON MATTHEWS

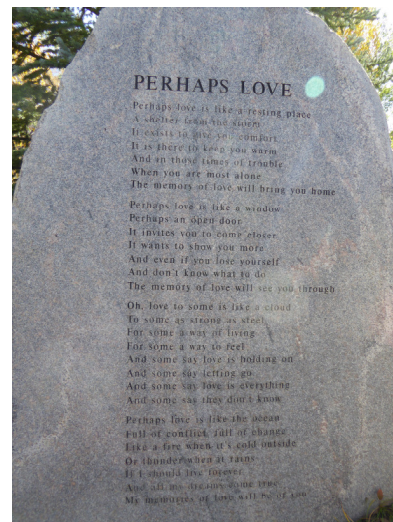
<http://www.ronmathews.net>

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

ASPEN IN OCTOBER 2020

The plans for the 2020 Aspen in October tribute have started, but things may be in limbo until further notice. However, the Aspen in October Facebook page lists concerts that are happening now. Please check their the page to see who is performing and when, and please, please support the live musicians who (like so many others) have suddenly lost their income but are sharing their music online.

<https://www.facebook.com/AspenInOctober/>



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.

Angel of Montgomery

(John Prine)

*I am an old woman
Named after my mother
My old man is another child
Who's grown old
If dreams were thunder
And lightning was desire
This old house would've burned down
A long time ago*

*Make me an angel
That flies from Montgomery
Make me a poster of an old rodeo
Just give me one thing
That I can hold on to
To believe in this livin'
Is just a hard way to go*

*When I was a young girl
I had me a cowboy
He wasn't much to look at
Just a free ramblin' man
That was a long time
And no matter how I tried
Those years just flown by
Like a broken down dam*

*And there's flies in the kitchen
I can hear all their buzzin'
And I ain't done nothing
Since I woke up today
How the hell can a person
Go to work in the morning
Come home in the evening
And have nothing to say*

Songwriters: John Prine
Angel from Montgomery lyrics © Warner Chappell Music, Inc