



**HIGHER
GROUND
AUSTRALIA**

CONTACT:
Janette Frawley
hga.vic@gmail.com

<http://www.hgavic.com>

Volume 21 – Edition 2

HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – September 2024

WELCOME

Aspen in October 2024 is being held between 2-7 October 2024 in Snowmass and Aspen.

As many people look forward to Aspen in October 2024, they will know that some big changes have been made for this year's celebration of the life and music of John Denver.

*'He was born in the summer of his twenty-seventh year
Coming home to a place he'd never been
He left yesterday behind him
You might say he was born again
You might say he found a key for every door.'*

On this twenty-seventh year since John passed away, the Aspen in October team was offered an alternative to the Mountain Chalet in Aspen, which is currently under construction.

The new venue is The Mountain Chalet in Snowmass, which offers similar amenities to that in Aspen. I believe that the Mountain Chalet is currently fully booked for the Aspen in October week, but I am sure there are several reasonably-priced hotels close by.

The COVID pandemic knocked the stuffing out of almost everything globally, and I know from my own recent travels how hard it has been for towns, cities, and even countries to pick up and move on. The amount of businesses that have closed and the centres of towns almost abandoned have been almost overwhelming for the tourists, let alone the residents. So, I am very glad that this once-large and international gathering is still going strong, albeit smaller and more intimate. I extend huge thanks to Laurie Stower, who is the go-to person for information, manages the Aspen in October page on Facebook and has managed to secure not only the Mountain Chalet in Snowmass but has followed up on people's questions and requests. None of this happens without a person at the helm doing the hard-yards, And nothing happens without a team of people who help with the coordination of events and activities. When you see Laurie, please personally thank her for her hard work in getting this to happen. I'm sure she would appreciate it.

Later in the newsletter, I will attempt to list the concerts and activities. Please check the Facebook page as well, as Facebook has the annoying habit of

changing the times to the local times wherever you are, which is not that helpful when I live in Australia.

Apart from Aspen in October 2024 there may be other John Denver events happening elsewhere, specifically in Monterey, California, on Saturday October 12, where there is a beach cleanup and small group gathering at that site at 1275 Ocean View Blvd, Pacific Grove CA 93950-2039.

Thanks to everyone here who work to keep John's music alive. It never ceases to amaze me how often his name is mentioned through the media, mostly on radio, and how much people still not only enjoy his music but talk about how his music generates memories.

It's been a tough year in regard to world events, forthcoming elections, and other things that affect us personally. Please take advantage of your time in Snowmass and Aspen this October and enjoy the gifts from nature that surround you. And whilst you are wandering around the John Denver Sanctuary in Aspen, please spare a thought for those innocent people who have lost their lives over the past year as a result of war, terrorism, and random gun and knife violence.

I hope that you have a wonderful time in Aspen/Snowmass, reigniting friendships formed over the past twenty-seven years, and most importantly, immersing yourselves in the music of those magical mountains. I will be there with you in spirit.

HIGHER GROUND AUSTRALIA

Since COVID-19, we have kept in contact remotely, and we've not had as many opportunities to catch up as we would like. Our lives are busy, and we are getting older... enough said!

However, all is not lost. Melanie was in Melbourne for a conference recently and Carolyn and I were able to meet up with her for a meal. Of course, we talked all at once and tried to fill each other in on what has happened since we last met. Conversation returned to THAT road trip taken 12 years ago from Las Vegas to Los Angeles and the Aspen bits before, and we still talk about it as if it was yesterday.



Colin also dropped in on the Cessnock crowd as he passed through on his way home from Queensland last week. Dinner with Carmel and Alistair and another night of memories, none of which would ever have happened if not for our common bond – the music of John Denver.



We may have been quiet for a while, but we are still around and would love to hear from you if you are travelling through Victoria, where I am, New South Wales or Queensland any time soon.

Website: www.hgavic.com

Email: hga.vic@gmail.com

Facebook:

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

JOHN DENVER TRIBUTES IN AUSTRALIA 2024

Darren Coggan has a number of John Denver tribute concerts coming up in October in Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and New South Wales. For Newcastle/Cessnock people, he is performing his John Denver tribute at the Performing Arts Culture in Cessnock on November 22. Please check his website for other dates and venues near you.

<https://www.darrencoggan.com/gig-guide/>

OTHER JOHN DENVER TRIBUTES 2024

Take me Home, The Music of John Denver, Starring Jim Curry on Sunday, October 6, 2024, at the Richard and Karen Carpenter Performing Arts Center, Long Beach California at 2 PM.

<https://www.carpenterarts.org/>

Jim Curry Presents the Music of John Denver live on October 24, 2024, at Arlington Music Hall, Texas,

‘From the very first song you will know why Jim was cast to be the voice of John Denver in the CBS movie “Take me home: the John Denver Story”. The combined talents of Jim and his band have brought John Denver’s Music back to thousands upon thousands of people.’

www.arlingtonmusichall.org

NEW RIGGING SYSTEM COMING TO WHEELER OPERA HOUSE

Aspen Times, 19 September 2024

Aspen’s historic gem is entering a new phase of theatrical improvements.

The Wheeler Opera House will receive a new rigging system this fall, the city announced in a Wednesday news release. The new system, managed in collaboration with Aspen Contractors and Barbizon Light of the Rockies, is an effort stemming from three years ago.

“This project began in the summer of 2021, when Wheeler staff and the Wheeler Advisory Board identified the rigging system replacement as the highest capital priority,” the release states. “The discovery phase included LIDAR screenings and a detailed analysis of the theater’s structural integrity, particularly focusing on beams affected by the historic fires of 1912. Following this analysis, necessary reinforcements were identified and will be completed by Aspen Contractors ahead of the rigging installation.”

The current rigging system, which supports essential stage elements such as lights, curtains, and other scenic components, has long been a critical part of the Wheeler’s backstage operations, the release states. Comprising motors, pipes, wires, and electrical connections, the system is being updated to meet modern standards and to continue supporting the rich array of performances for which the Wheeler is known.

“Following the Aspen Music Festival and School’s production of The Marriage of Figaro, 2,300 pounds of orchestra pit components were reassembled. Additionally, 20,000 pounds of steel and metal were removed for recycling, and 450 pounds of soft goods, including curtains, were folded and stored,” the release states. “A total of 3,000 pounds of lighting instruments were also removed and stored, and 6,000 square feet of plastic sheeting was deployed throughout the theater to protect it from dust during the rigging system replacement.”

While the mainstage will be closed during the structural upgrades and rigging installation, the Wheeler is excited to continue hosting performances in the Vault Lobby. This intimate space is perfectly suited for smaller concerts and events, ensuring that audiences can still enjoy live performances while the mainstage undergoes its transformation. Don’t miss Consensual Improv’s Halloween Spooktacular on Friday, Oct. 25, tickets on sale now.

Mainstage programming is scheduled to resume the week of Jan. 13, 2025, when audiences can look forward to a full calendar of exciting events and performances. The timing of this project was carefully selected to minimize disruption and coincide with a slower period in the performance season. When theater programming resumes, audiences can look forward to comic Brian Regan, the return of the Changemaker Speaker Series with Brian Skerry, Peter Hillary, and Cory Richards, family-friendly Cirque

Kalabante, International Guitar Night, ABBA Mania, and more.

Stay updated on the progress of the rigging system replacement and all upcoming events by visiting the website, www.wheeleroperahouse.com.

Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon have organised their annual concert to be held at Aspen District Theatre in Aspen on 5 October 2024 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are available from www.aspenshowtix.com

FROM THE ARCHIVES

SHARING MEMORIES OF JOHN DENVER

Michael McLaughlan, The Aspen Times, October 11, 2013

If someone were to ask you if you've ever heard Jim Horn play music, most people would reply, "Who?"

But really, the answer should be, "Yes."

In fact, it's almost certain that you have, considering the list of hits and musicians he's recorded with.



Horn is in Aspen as part of the John Denver Celebration. He'll be performing from noon to 2 p.m. today on the fifth floor of the Mountain Chalet in Aspen, playing some of his music and sharing stories about Denver. Tickets are \$50 for general admission. He was part of Denver's band for 18 years, longer than any other musician played with the iconic folk singer. He's also the most recorded woodwind player. Ever. The opening flute solo on Canned Heat's "Going Up the Country"? That's Horn. The woodwinds on "Up, Up and Away" and "The Age of Aquarius" by the Fifth Dimension? Again, that's Horn. How about the horns on "Strangers in the Night," by Frank Sinatra, or "Tears of a Clown," by Smokey Robinson, or maybe the oboe solo on the Karen Carpenter hit "For All We Know"?

An impressive list, but it's barely scratching the surface of acts Horn has played with.

He was part of the Mad Dogs & Englishman Band, backing Joe Cocker. He toured with George Harrison and was part of the 1972 Concert for Bangladesh. Horn recorded with The Rolling Stones, Elton John, the Beach Boys, Joni Mitchell, Steely Dan, Stevie Wonder, Tina Turner and all four Beatles on their solo projects. He's also performed with Garth Brooks, Billy Joel and Sting.

"I didn't even realize how big some of those people were at the time," Horn said. "I was just a teenager for a lot of that."

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Horn was a senior in high school when a musician friend of his, Larry Knechtel, convinced him to go around town to some jam sessions he knew about. At those sessions, Horn met producer Phil Spector as well as the saxophonist for Duane Eddy, Steve Douglas.

By the way, Knechtel ended up winning a Grammy playing piano on Simon & Garfunkel's hit "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Douglas was impressed with Horn's playing ability and offered him his job in Eddy's band. Horn dropped out of high school and went to New York to be on the Alan Freed show with Eddy. He returned to Los Angeles and became a sought-after studio horn player.

Horn met Denver in 1977 at RCA Studios while Horn was recording with Jose Feliciano. Denver asked Horn if he could add some horns to Denver's music, which started their 18-year professional and personal relationship.

"John allowed me a lot of musical freedom," Horn said. "I got along great with John from day one because we had a lot of fun playing together. He was a different guy, and I ended up hanging out a lot with him."

Horn said they became the best of friends and spent many evenings eating and talking.

"There were a lot of times when he really needed somebody just to talk to," Horn said. "Luckily, I was that guy. We talked intimately. Sometimes we laughed; sometimes we cried. We were best friends. I even flew with him in his biplane when nobody else would."

Horn witnessed the change in Denver's music when he went from love songs to songs with a message. He watched his friend suffer when people didn't respond to his music like he envisioned.

"That didn't stop him from recording what was on his mind," Horn said. "I'm sure he would still be touring today if he was still with us."

Horn has many John Denver stories, some of which he'll share today during his performance at the Mountain Chalet.

"One night we were talking about Roy Orbison after he passed away," Horn said. "I had recorded with the Traveling Wilburys, and John asked me if I thought the guys would let him replace Roy in the band. John loved the Beatles and really wanted to play music with George Harrison. I told him I'd ask, but I knew they wouldn't go for it. John hung out with the country-folk people, and that was a very different crowd than

the rockers. Luckily, John never asked me about it again because I would have hated to disappoint him.”

Horn also shared how the John Denver Celebration began.

“Right after he died, Annie Denver invited some people up to their home,” Horn said. “I had a few drinks with Mitch Machito Sanchez, John’s percussionist. We went outside and grabbed some pots and pans and started banging them together and singing John Denver songs. Annie heard us and said we should play John’s music every year in Aspen, and that’s when the celebration started.”

Horn’s memories in Aspen are strong and full of good times, and they’re about to get stronger. On Sunday, Horn is getting married in Aspen to Stephanie Newbern.

“We wanted a private ceremony with some close friends,” he said. “This is such a beautiful place and the perfect place to marry the one you love.”

Horn would enjoy seeing all of Denver’s old bandmates come back to Aspen in the future and play his music again.

“John’s music will stand forever,” Horn said. “He had that great voice and great messages. I think John would be amazed and grateful that he’s still so popular today.”

mmclaughlin@aspentimes.com

HARVEY REID BLOG

‘The Considerable Mystery of the highest Flying Troubadour’

During recent travels through cyberspace, I came across this blog written by Harvey Reid. Lengthy, which is why I am not reproducing it in this newsletter, and with some cynicism filtering through, it is a fairly good discussion on why John Denver became the megastar he did whilst others at the same time and in the same space did not have the longevity of John Denver. It’s worth reading.

https://harveyreid.com/blogs/john_denver_saga.html

MY JOHN DENVER STORY

Another blog site, this is a collection of stories written by ordinary folk about John Denver. If you would like to share your story, you can submit it through the website and wait to see if it appears in the blog.

<https://myjohndenverstory.tumblr.com/>

JOHN ADAMS BAND

John Denver: The Tribute concert will be held on Saturday, 12 October 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Newman Centre in Denver Co. Tickets are available from jdt.newmantix.com

RADIO PROGRAMMES – WILLIE HOEVERS

Willie Hoervers 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 and on Ridge Radio in the UK www.ridgeradio.co.uk <https://rockymountainfpa.org/home>

ASPEN IN OCTOBER – 2024 EVENTS

I’ve collated the list of events planned to date for Aspen in October 2024. If I have got something wrong (dates and times) or if I am missing something, please let me know hga.vic@gmail.com. The following have been taken from the Aspen in October Facebook Page.

Please check the Facebook page for events and tickets. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1705313536543973>

Also, details are available at the Mountain Chalet, Snowmass.

Despite the events taking place in Snowmass Village this year, make sure you find some time to visit your favourite places like The John Denver Sanctuary, Maroon Bells (reservations are required ahead of time from the Aspen Chamber Resort Association), Woody Creek Tavern (have a margarita for me!), Independence Pass, and if you want to mingle with a ghost or two, Ashcroft Ghost Town. Of course, October is a spectacular time of the year, so don’t forget your camera.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2, 2024

3:30 PM: Meet & Greet/Campfire Snowmass Chapel/John Denver Garden, 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co

THURSDAY OCTOBER 3, 2024

12:00 PM: Singer/Songwriter Event Snowmass Chapel, 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co.

Admission: Free, but a donation of \$10 would be appreciated.

Presented by: Mark Cormican & guests, Ron Matthews, Dave Stratford, Ed Stowers.

3:00 – 5:15 PM: Where the HELL is Little Mulchatna?

Includes a showing of ‘Let This be a Voice’ from 4:15 – 5:15 PM. Snowmass Chapel, 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co.

Admission: \$15 at the door (CASH ONLY)

Presented by: Jequita JP McDaniel

6:30 PM Ron Matthews John Denver Tribute Show, Snowmass Chapel 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co.

Admission: By donation of any amount would be

appreciated (CASH ONLY)

Presented by: Ron Matthews and guests

FRIDAY OCTOBER 4, 2024

1:00 PM: Dave Stratford JD Tribute Concert 'Hidden Gems and Iconic Hits' Snowmass Chapel, 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co.

Admission: \$25 at the door (CASH ONLY).

Presented by: Dave Stratford and guests, Sarah Stratford, Karen Savarese and Willie Hoevers.

7:00 PM: John Denver Project Band (from

Italy) Snowmass Chapel, 5307 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, Co.

Admission: Free. Donations of any amount to help cover travel costs at the door (CASH ONLY).

Presented by: Davide de Bona and the John Denver Project Band.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5, 2024

7:00 PM: Back Home Again: A Tribute to John Denver with Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon Aspen District Theatre (on the Aspen School District Campus) 199 High School Road, Aspen, Co.

Admission: \$65, \$55, \$45 (+\$3 handling fee). Tickets available at www.aspenshowtix.com or by calling the box office at **970-920-5770** or toll free at **866-449-0464**.

Presented by: Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 6, 2024

9:30 AM: Aspen Chapel Sings John Denver featuring 'Local Troubadour' Dan Sheridan The Aspen Chapel, 77 Meadowood Drive, Aspen (the church at the roundabout), Co. www.aspenchapel.org

Presented by: Aspen Chapel is putting on a special service featuring the songs of John Denver.

MONDAY OCTOBER 7, 2024

10: AM Goodbye Again: Snowmass Mountain Chalet Patio (weather permitting).

Presented by: Aspen in October.

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

Please check the Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon website for their concert schedule and other information.

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

CHRIS WESTFALL

<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>

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.

Rocky Mountain High

(John Denver/Mike Taylor)

*He was born in the summer of his 27th year
Coming home to a place he'd never been before
He left yesterday behind him, you might say he was born again
You might say he found a key for every door
When he first came to the mountains his life was far away
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*

*But the Colorado Rocky Mountain high
I've seen it rainin' fire in the sky
The shadow from the starlight is softer than a lullaby
Rocky Mountain high (Colorado)
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)*

*He climbed cathedral mountains, he saw silver clouds below
He saw everything as far as you can see
And they say that he got crazy once and he tried to touch the sun
And he lost a friend but kept the memory
Now he walks in quiet solitude the forests and the streams
Seeking grace in every step he takes
His sight has turned inside himself to try and understand
The serenity of a clear blue mountain lake*

*And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high
I've seen it rainin' fire in the sky
Talk to God and listen to the casual reply
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)*

*Now his life is full of wonder but his heart still knows some fear
Of a simple thing he cannot comprehend
While they try to tear the mountains down to bring in a couple more
More people, more scars upon the land*

*And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high
I've seen it rainin' fire in the sky
I know he'd be a poorer man if he never saw an eagle fly
Rocky Mountain high
Colorado Rocky Mountain high
I've seen it rainin' fire in the sky
Friends around the campfire and everybody's high
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)
Rocky Mountain high (high in Colorado)*

The Peace Poem

(John Denver)

Dedicated to those who have been killed as a result of terrorism in the Middle East and war in Ukraine.

'If peace is our vision, let us begin.'

*There's a name for war and killing
There's a name for giving in
When you know another answer
For me the name is sin
But there's still time to turn around
And make all hatred cease
And give another name to living
And we could call it peace*

*And peace would be the road we walk
Each step along the way
And peace would be the way we work
And peace the way we play
And in all we see that's different
And in all the things we know
Peace would be the way we look
And peace the way we grow*

*There's a name for separation
There's a name for first and last
When it's all for us or nothing
For me the name is past
But there's still time to turn around
And make all hatred cease
And give a name to all the future
And we could call it peace*

*And if peace is what we pray for
And peace is what we give
Then peace will be the way we are
And peace the way we live
Yes, there still is the time to turn around
And make all hatred cease
And give another name to living
And we can call it peace*