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Higher Ground Australia



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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2004

Welcome

Welcome to HGA's new-look newsletter. We are hoping to produce these on a regular basis and we welcome any input by members. Also let me know what you think of it and if you would like to see the format changed. This is your newsletter.

Members

Our member numbers are swelling gradually and we now have 41 members internationally. Many people have joined since the new website was established and I would like to extend a huge welcome to those people. Thank you all for your support and contributions.

We will profile a member each time we produce a newsletter. These profiles are provided by the member. If you would like your profile added to the next newsletter, email me.

Member Profile

Name: Fred Stone

Location: Texas Queensland, Australia

Profile: I grew up near Quilpie, Queensland, the son of a grazier (wool grower). We lived a very isolated life and I was educated through the School of the Air before going to boarding school in Brisbane for five years, where I first heard John Denver's music. We had no TV and the radio reception was patchy when I grew up so music is very much part of life for the 'country boy', and Slim Dusty & Tex Morton were heroes. I relate to John Denver's songs and still play many of them on my guitar. I now live near Texas, QLD, which is a sheep, fruit and wine-growing region.

Although not so isolated now, I love my way of life. I hope to be able to join you all in Boonah in October.

Logo

Thank you, Genie for the logo at the top of this newsletter. I think it is perfect.

Website

As you know, the new web address is www.highergroundaustralia.com. Come in and visit from time to time and don't forget to tell your

friends. **Big Huge Hugs** to our webmaster who is doing a great job on the site.

2004 Gathering Boonah, Queensland

Our 2004 weekend gathering will take place in Boonah, Queensland on the weekend of 8th – 10th October 2004. This will be a wonderful weekend for all involved. The weekend will start on Friday night with a shared meal and a meet-and-greet. Saturday will be largely at leisure to explore the wonderful area around Boonah, including National Parks, nature walks, lavender farms, art and craft galleries and more. Saturday evening will start with the AGM, followed by a BBQ dinner, silent auction, peace-cloth contribution and sing-a-long. Our trees will be planted, messages read and the plaque placed in front of John's tree on Sunday morning, followed by lunch and very sad goodbyes until next year. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining us please let me know. Full details are included on the website or contact me jfrawley@telstra.com

Silent Auction

I am now going to call out for donations for our silent auction. Please dig deep and find something to contribute to this successful annual event. I have already got a video and some CDs. Please email me and let me know what you can donate to this worthy cause. Books, magazines, CDs, videos, DVDs – anything with a John Denver theme and that would be of interest to us. I need to know what you are donating so that the list can be compiled and emailed out prior to the auction. People can bid by email if they are not able to attend the gathering.

Donation

Last year we raised \$830, which was donated to the Healesville Sanctuary for their Eagle exhibit. We are currently looking at a number of eagle rehabilitation facilities in SE Queensland. If anyone knows of any places in this region that would be worth looking at please let us know. The **entire** proceeds of the auction will be donated to an eagle facility. We endeavour to donate to a place in the state in which the annual gathering is held. All donations are made in John's name from HGA.

Recipe Book

Genie is going to start compiling the recipe book soon and needs your help. Please send in your favourite recipes for inclusion to the recipe book. The book will be sold at the gathering in Boonah and will also be posted to anyone who would like to purchase one, but cannot be with us for the weekend. **All** proceeds will be donated to the eagle rehabilitation facility. Genie is donating the materials to put this book together so that 100% of your money will be donated. Please email Genie at mysoutherncross@yahoo.com.au

Song Book

Each year I produce a song book for each person attending the gathering. I am going to make a teeny-weeny change this year in regard to the song books. I will be producing a larger-than-usual book, including a lot more songs, which will be distributed to each person attending the weekend. Please email me with a list of songs you would like included in the book. Old favourites and new favourites will be included. Also, if there is anyone who would like their book to be in a larger print, please let me know and I try to do this. jfrawley@telstra.com

Windstar

It is official! There are now enough members to start an Australian Windstar Connection. Contact Genie for further information Windstar_Oz@yahoo.com.au

Let This Be a Voice

I normally will not sign petitions, but this one is special. Let This Be a Voice is currently available on video, but Scott Wolf would like it to be created in DVD format and needs about 1,000 signatures. Please sign this petition. Your email address will not be displayed on the page to prevent any SPAM or other illicit email. You will receive an email 'receipt'. Here is the link from our website for those who have not already signed. <http://www.highergroundaustralia.com/LTBAV.html>
!

A Good Book to Read

No mention of John, but if you would like to read about the music, civil rights movement and non-violent protest against Vietnam, try to get hold of a copy of **And a Voice to Sing With – Her Own Story by Joan Baez**. Like John, she went out of her way to make a difference in the volatile 1960's and 1970's, using her music as a tool to achieve this. As well as being easy to read, it is a remarkable insight into American history of the 1960's and 1970's.

My rating: 8/10

One Small Star (Eric Bogle)

I found this song on an Eric Bogle CD and I want to share it with you.

The words are really lovely and they were written for the victims of the Dunblane tragedy in Scotland.

**When I need to feel you near me
I stand in this quiet place
With the silver light of countless stars
Falling on my face
Though they all shine so brightly
Somehow it comforts me to know
That some who burn the brightest died
An Eternity ago**

**But your light still shines
It's one small star to guide me
And to help me hold back the dark
Your light's still shining in my heart**

**I'm learning how to live without you
Though I never thought I could
And even how to smile again
And I never thought I would
And to cherish the heart's memories
That can bring you back to life
Though some caress me gently
And some cut me like a knife.**

**Can your soul be out there somewhere
Beyond the infinity of time
I guess you've found some answers now
I'll have to wait for mine
Till my light joins with yours some day
To shine through the time and space
And one day fall in a distant age
Upon some stranger's face.**

Ecology Fund

If you do want to get involved in a global mission to save land, go to the following site and sign up. Each day, open up the site and click for free land. When you sign up, you are to select a group to which you are donating the land. The John Denver Remembrance group is a good one to join. It now has 4,645,733.6 sq feet. You will see your group total and your individual total on the left side of your screen when you open the site each day. It costs you absolutely nothing.

http://ecologyfund.com/registry/ecology/involve_home.html

Ancient Rhymes

Christopher Canyon's new book, Ancient Rhymes will be available at the end of August. The illustrations are beautiful. It is now available for pre-order at Amazon.

This would make a wonderful Christmas present for the special people in your lives.

Soapbox

This is your place to add your thoughts. This time it is my turn, but please feel free to email me any issues that you would like to discuss.

Making a Difference

“You do what **you** can do and I will do what I can do and together we can make a difference”. (John Denver)

We have heard this quote many times, but what does it really mean?

All too often I receive petitions, discussions, and links to sign up or express disgust at one thing or another. I have often looked at these sites, placed my name on a petition, etc, etc. Why? What difference will my email make to the required outcome? Very little I think. One petition with thousands of signatures still counts as **ONE** vote. The only way in which these petitions can be truly effective is if you send individual emails to those organisations.

In order to truly make a difference, we need to change **OUR** own bad habits – in other words, clean up your own backyard before you start on someone else's. If you sit down and think about everything you do each day that affects the way in which you live and change just one of those things you are on your way to **making a difference**. Changing your bad habits, will lead to your children changing their habits, and so on...

Here are 10 things that you can change without it greatly impacting on your way of life, BUT will make a difference.

1. **Reduce** the number of plastic bags you collect from the supermarket. Most stores now offer for a small cost either a calico or other re-useable bag. Use them, unpack them and place them back into the boot of your car for your next shopping trip.
2. **Reduce** or **stop** using disposable napkins (diapers). When your baby reaches the age of 30, the nappies you used will be **starting** to decompose. We do not have enough landfill space for the huge number of nappies that are constantly being thrown away. Cloth nappies are better for your baby and for the environment.
3. I use approximately 1000 litres of water each week in my washing machine alone and every drop of that water is reused on my garden. My 'grey' water is directed into a holding tank but there are many contraptions available (reasonably priced) to re-direct your water. I have not used a sprinkler in three years and my garden is large. You do not have to have a tank to

reuse water, but it helps. It will certainly 'make a difference' to your water bill.

NOTE: grey water should not be used to water your vegetable or herb garden.

4. Other water-saving hints include, take a shorter shower; don't leave the water run down the drain while it is heating up - catch it in a bucket and pour it on your vegetable garden; don't leave the water running while you are washing your teeth or vegetables, to name but a few.
5. Plant trees in your garden. For the Australians, deciduous trees should be planted in the south facing side of the house to give more light in winter. Don't be misled into thinking that natives are the best trees to be planted. Native trees may use less water, but they lose many leaves in the summer, they are often too large for the suburban garden and their roots can be invasive, damaging your pipes. Ask your nursery-person about the best plants for your area.
6. Put aside some time each weekend for your garden. Even an hour a week will make a difference to your garden and to your own well-being. Not only do we need the exercise, but we could do with the fresh air and 'sunshine on our shoulders'. Lack of sunshine is one of the reasons some people feel down in the dumps or depressed.
7. When you are at the supermarket, be aware of a product's packaging. Can you recycle it? Can you buy a refill pack?
8. Think twice before jumping into the car. Walk or take public transport if possible. It is amazing how good you will feel after a brisk walk.
9. Walk away from the computer and other sedentary pastimes. Go outside, go to the park, have a picnic (but don't forget to put your rubbish in the bins provided).
10. Talking of which. If it is recyclable, put it in a recycle bin.

'It's about you and me together and it's about time'

I am doing what I can to make a difference in my life and in the lives of my family. Not only do I FEEL that I am making some impact, but I am also saving money (Aspen here I come!). What are YOU doing?

Next Newsletter

If you want to contribute to our next newsletter, email me at jfrawley@telstra.com by 25/7/2004.