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Higher Ground Australia



www.highergroundaustralia.com/

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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – June 2005

Congratulations,

Rachael, Mark and Liam

On the birth of your beautiful new baby girl and Higher Ground Australia's newest member, Sarah Ann McGee.



Congratulations also to Grandpa Alistair and Grandma Carmel

Ancient Rhymes

Two days before the moon was round,
You felt the urge of sun's light beams.
The muffled world of dolphin sound
Slipped down and back into your dreams.
For nine full months that passed before
You learned of all life's ancient rhymes.
Then mother sensed a farther shore
And brought you forth into these times,
So taste the air of your new world
And gently guide us to your mind.
It knows the winds and sails unfurled
And holds to heart the dolphin kind.

Welcome precious earth made child,
We met you first in your father's songs
And mother's smile and waters wild,
It's in this place you now belong.
I know you know of all these things
And feel the faith of a dolphin's sigh
For you were born on silver wings
To taste the high blown crystal sky.
So sing one day to all of us,
The songs you learned in dolphin lair,
Giving hope to life as all we must
And teach us how their grace to share

(words and music by John Denver & Bob Samples)

Welcome

Hello everyone and welcome to our June newsletter. I hope that you all well as we move into the end of the first half of the year. Where has the time gone?

New Members

We welcome three new members to Higher Ground Australia, one of whom is from the Newcastle/Hunter region of New South Wales. She would like to join us in Bateman's Bay, but would like to know whether there is someone from that region of New South Wales who would like to share the driving and petrol costs to Bateman's Bay. Please let me know if you are interested and I will put you in touch. jfrawley@telstra.com

2005 Gathering – Bateman's Bay NSW

Our 2005 JD weekend will be held on the 7th – 9th October in Bateman's Bay, NSW. Anyone out there who would like to join us for this wonderful weekend with friends, do not hesitate to contact Carmel on hifis@bigpond.com.au. She has done a wonderful job already with the initial stages of the organisation of this weekend. For more information about this lovely setting, their website is <http://www.south-coast-accommodation.com/>. The cost for the weekend (Friday to Sunday) will be \$60 per person for the accommodation and \$30 per person for food. A deposit of \$30 per person is required ASAP (\$15 deposit for accommodation + \$15 deposit for food).

Silent Auction 2005

Don't forget about the silent auction when you are trawling through markets and op shops for that John Denver treasure. It is amazing what you can find when you are not really looking. I was able to pick up two brand new books recently that were in a bargain bin and are most appropriate for the auction. All proceeds [that is, 100%] will be donated to an eagle rehabilitation refuge in New South Wales. We have already got a number of items such as stickers, books and CDs. Please email me if you have something you would like to donate. jfrawley@telstra.com

Our silent auction has been very successful in the past and I am sure that it will be a good one again

this year. I have received a number of pledges for items and I thank each and every one of you for your participation and your donation. A catalogue will be emailed to you a couple of weeks before the October weekend and bids will be accepted by email from people in Australia.

Eagle/Raptor Rehabilitation Refuge

If anyone knows of an eagle rehabilitation centre somewhere in new South Wales, please contact me. jfrawley@telstra.com Carmel and Alistair have contacted the people at Birdland, which is close to Bateman's Bay, but we would like to know if there are other, maybe smaller ones that would benefit from a donation from us.

STOP PRESS...GREAT NEWS

A Song's Best Friend: John Denver Remembered DVD has been released

After much anticipation, this DVD has finally been released in America. The PAL version will be available in Australia from July 4th. I am reasonably sure that this will be available from the regular stores like Sanity and JB HI FI on July 4th, but if you would like to pre-order it, you can either click the link on our website or order it through the Sanity website

<http://www.sanity.com.au/product.asp?intProductID=622933&intArtistID=4472>

This DVD is AUD\$24.55.

Some people who have already seen this DVD all give it the thumbs up and said it was really enjoyable.

Some Days are Diamonds

It may not have been John's favourite song, but it is well-loved here in Australia.

On May 21st, Col Joye and the Joy Boys appeared in Melbourne at the request of the Elvis Presley fan club. Col Joye and the Joy Boys is one of Australia's longest-performing bands and successful bands. Col and his brother Kevin Jacobsen, were long-time personal friends of John's.

Col played non-stop for over one and a half hours singing all his hits, including his song for John – Some Days are Diamonds. We had a table of friends and relations and it was a great night all round. I would love to see Col appear in the very near future. After the show he made himself available for autographs and kisses. Of course – you know who jumped into the queue, but had to rely on the camera phone to record this event – hence the bad quality of the photo!



If ever you get a chance to see Col Joye and the Joy Boys, jump at it. I can guarantee that you will have a wonderful time.

Thanks Col – for a great night! See you next time you are in Melbourne!

'Almost Heaven' makes it to New York

From one of our friends in America.... Thanks

In case you guys haven't seen this news about the 'musical' of JD's music... "Almost Heaven: Songs and Stories of John Denver".... it's due to play in an off-Broadway theater in the fall! Check out the news....

(FYI... the title is supposed to be just "Almost Heaven," or something like that by then.) Linda

—*Almost Heaven*, a bio-musical utilizing the songs and stories of the late John Denver, is scheduled to arrive off-Broadway in October following a run at the Center Repertory Company in Walnut Creek, California. Featuring direction by Randall Myler and a book by Myler and Peter Glazer, the show first played at the Denver Center Theatre Company in both 2002 (prior to Myler's involvement) and 2003. Although Myler has received good notices for his past work on similar off-Broadway musicals using the catalogs of Janis Joplin (*Love, Janis*), Hank Williams (*Hank Williams: Lost Highway*) and The Mamas and the Papas (*Dream a Little Dream*), none of those shows managed to turn a profit.

Almost Heaven is also playing at these venues on the following dates: It may be coming to a town near you! If anyone would like to write a review of this stage show, please feel free to send it to me. jfrawley@telstra.com

August 9-14, 2005 - Galveston, TX - "Almost Heaven, John Denver's America" / Moody Gardens Convention Center / One Hope Boulevard * <http://www.galvestonmusicals.com> (800) 54-Shows / (409) 737-1744 [This is a new title for "Almost Heaven: Songs and Stories of John Denver"]

September 8 - October 8, 2005 * Walnut Creek, CA "Almost Heaven: Songs and Stories of John Denver" - Center Repertory Company / Jennifer Orr 925-295-1413 < marketing@dlrca.org > 925-943-SHOW

From Mary Ledford in USA

Hi Guys!

Pam and I were talking last night and we have got to get more publicity for all the events in Aspen. The media flocks to Memphis in August but there has been no extensive media coverage for Aspen which we both feel is a heck of a lot more important. You know it's bad when we've talked to people in Glenwood Springs who have no clue!!!

The bottom line is that if the Wheeler attendance falls off ... so does the celebration then all the events suffer. The Wheeler shows in particular are extremely expensive to produce and the whole purpose is to have as much money go to Challenge Aspen as possible (they're already going to get a smaller check this year). And there has already been a change for this year (details to follow shortly) and I would hate to see things change to no shows at all. So, let's all pool our resources and see if we can't get a rigorous media campaign going. Pam is going to contact a Fort Worth paper (since John lived there).

We will be in New Mexico for the show in August ...

Roswell is not far so hopefully we can contact a paper there. We could also target TV, radio; put flyers up in record stores; especially this year, target folk music groups (I'm going to contact the WFMA here in DC) since the Mitchell Trio will be there.

The key is that we really need to go outside the normal JD realm ... maybe we can find people that might not have been a fan of John's music per se, but a fan of what he stood for ... of course, both would be great! I think if we all work together, this can happen and we have Aspen continue for many, many more years.

So, put your thinking caps on and in the meantime, I'm going to work up a little press release and can forward and/or post here so that we can get this thing going and keep Aspen alive!!!

Thanks guys!

Mary (eagleshorses@yahoo.com) and Pam (pamela.beasley@airmail.net)

Mary K. Ledford

EaglesHorses Productions

Post Script from Janette

If anyone out there can offer any ideas, please do not hesitate to contact Mary or Pam.

Windstar Australia Connection

The Windstar Australia Connection is being managed by Lynn for the time being. All enquiries about the Australia Connection may be directed to webmaster@highergroundaustralia.com

As there have been some changes recently, we will need to reorganise the next meeting. There will be more news about Windstar Australia in the next newsletter.

Third Annual Windstar Connections Conference

October 8, 2005

Third Annual Windstar Connections Conference

CELEBRATE!! our Connections with us from 9 am to 5 pm on the Windstar land.

Our featured speaker/entertainer is singer-songwriter-environmentalist

Kyle Vincent (www.kylevincent.com). Also on the program are Cottonwood Stone, Michael Snovak and Barbara Davis. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Registration is \$100 for Windstar members and \$135 for non-members. The mail-in registration form is available at www.wstar.org.

For more information, email Barbara Davis at wdavis99@charter.net

Bearforest Update

Some time ago we featured a story about the Dutch fan club that raised money to purchase a parcel of land in John's name. The bearforest is a five acre section of Ouwehands Zoo, Rhenen in Holland where bears that were in circuses and movies can now live out their days in peace and harmony. Here is an update from Netty in the Netherlands. If anyone, particularly in Europe would like to help secure another parcel of land in John's name, please follow the link to the Dutch website. Netty visits 'her' bears each year on her birthday. We would also like to extend a very [belated] but happy birthday to Netty. Now read on....

[As every year on that day I went to my bears in The Bearforest, I once wrote about the project in this group. Here is the website once again http://www.higherground.nl/BerenbosKavelVoorJohnDenver/index-EN.htm](http://www.higherground.nl/BerenbosKavelVoorJohnDenver/index-EN.htm) . It was great to see how many bears are already saved by the donations. There was one new ill-treated bear, he was looking very poor and could hardly walk anymore. At least he found a new safe home in the forest there. No-one can hurt him anymore. We are still

saving money to buy another parcel of land for John and in that way to save more bears. Once we will succeed again :-). It was so nice to see John's name there on the billboard with the words "Together we can make a difference".

The next time we will use this line "A Wild Heart Looking For A Home" :-). ...Those wild hearts of the bears will find a good and safe home :-)

Dutch Radio Station Radio 227

This is also from Netty in the Netherlands.

A new adventure and a new chance to make people aware of John Denver :

I think I wrote before about the Radio227 station here in The Netherlands. They are playing a lot of John Denver. For a long time I have been in contact with some of the presenters of that station. One of them recorded the Roy Rivers show and interview in Amsterdam. A few days ago I received an invitation of them to visit their studio on this coming Sunday afternoon to talk about John Denver and our Dutch JD club! Of course it is a great chance to "promote" John Denver again in this country but on the other side...I am so nervous about the whole thing :-). I never before was on the radio before :-)

Please hold me in your thoughts and wish me the best ~~LOL~~

We should have an update about this interview in our next newsletter, so please WATCH THIS SPACE.

Bracksy Kills the Man from Snowy River

Currently there is a debate in Victoria, Australia. Anyone who knows the story of the man from Snowy River would know that the mountain men of the Victorian high country are a very well-entrenched part of our history and culture. Clancy of the Overflow (as mentioned in John's song, Sing Australia) was part of the same culture.

Our illustrious premier has decided in his wisdom not to renew licences for the mountain men to graze their cattle in the high country. This practice has been a way of life for 170 years. A limited number of cattle graze in the high country during the summer months. There are arguments for and against the practice. However, it is a fact that cattle grazing reduce the introduced plant species that are considered weeds. Limited grazing also reduces the fire risk in the summer. Whether you agree with the grazing issue or not, our state government has not got a great track record with the environment. Two years ago, during a back-burning operation, the department of the environment and sustainability set fire to these very mountains, destroying the natural habitat of many unique animals and plants.

The following article was found on the Planet Ark website. www.planetark.com

CANBERRA - The Australian government responded on Friday to protests by mountain cattlemen and issued emergency laws to protect their 170-year tradition of allowing their herds to graze on plains in the country's alpine region.

The protection comes a day after more than 500 mountain cattlemen rode on horseback to the Victoria state parliament in the southern city of Melbourne to protest its moves to prevent grazing in the Alpine National Park.

Environment Minister Ian Campbell listed the Alpine National Park under the National Heritage Act to protect the practice of grazing in the 640,000 hectare (1.5 million acre) plains.

"I believe the Victorian government's decision to ban grazing in the park poses a clear threat to historic heritage values," Campbell said in a statement.

Campbell will decide later this year whether to grant permanent protection to the park and its cattle grazing that inspired the poem "The Man from Snowy River" and a film of the same name.

"We're encouraged by this move by the federal government," said Simon Turner, the president of the cattlemen's association.

"Alpine grazing is something that's been happening continuously for 170 years and gave rise to the 'Man from Snowy River' and is very symbolic to all Australians."

Victorian state Premier Steve Bracks has said the ban on cattle grazing in the national park was aimed at protecting a natural asset and important water catchment, citing scientific evidence that cattle were damaging the sensitive alpine environment.

Federal Treasurer Peter Costello said he believed most people would support the mountain cattlemen.

"They are a big part of our history. They are a big part of our mythology ... Why close the cattlemen down? I would have thought that there were bigger evils in society than the mountain cattlemen in the high country," Costello told reporters.

World Environment Day – June 5th

World Environment Day is celebrated annually on June 5th and is one of the principal ways the United Nations, through its environment program (www.unep.org) stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action to environmental issues.

There are many environmental volunteering opportunities that you can participate in. Conservation Volunteers Australia, is Australia's leading practical conservation organisation with more than 2,000 conservation projects across the country each year. (www.cva.org.au). Parks Victoria also rely on the time and efforts of volunteers to undertake much of their work either directly or through 'Friends' groups. For more information about the parks around Victoria and the volunteer groups that support them, go to www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Environmental Volunteers If you care about the environment and you live in Victoria, Australia, you can become a better earth volunteer. Transport to all locations around Victoria on weekdays and weekends is provided. Join for a day, make friends, learn practical skills and have a great time. Call Conservation Volunteers Australia on 03 9686 5554.

For people not in Victoria, you may be able to find a group near you by calling the above number.

National Tree Day

National Tree day will be held on Sunday 31st July. Now is the time to get a group together and join in the fun of planting trees. The brochures and application forms are available from the Planet Ark website. You can also contact them to find a group that will be planting in an area close to you. For those people who want to get a group together, don't forget to plant those trees in John's memory.

I have participated in a number of these National Tree Days over the years and it is great fun, great exercise and great for the environment.

Planet Ark and Trees For Life – a partnership

Planet Ark is serious about planting trees as well as counting them. As a major sponsor, Planet Ark is helping Trees For Life undertake the largest revegetation for biodiversity project in South Australia's history, at Monarto Zoological Park.

Planet Ark, Trees For Life and Monarto Zoological Park are working together to plant 120ha over five years.

The Park is in the Murray Darling Basin catchment and the project demonstrates large scale revegetation techniques that will be needed if the Murray is to be saved.

The revegetation project began in 2002. Since then Trees For Life has grown and planted a total of 49,000 local native tube stock seedlings, direct seeded 80 hectares and collected 200kg of seed.

Hundreds of volunteers have been involved in collecting the seed, and growing and planting the seedlings. Twenty four dates have been set for planting at The Monarto Zoo this year and many

thanks goes to the school students and other volunteers who offer their time and enthusiasm to revegetate this site.

Flora for Fauna

Flora for Fauna is a new federal project aimed at inspiring people in urban areas to act to support their local environment.

Flora for Fauna will show families, schools and other groups how they can change their own garden (and the way they garden) to attract wildlife using appropriate Australian plants. For any more details, contact the Flora For Fauna <http://www.floraforfauna.com.au/>

Japanese Defy Ban on Whaling

Minister labels Japanese whaling 'sick'

The Australian Government has dismissed Japan's insistence that its whaling program is for the purposes of science, with Environment Minister Ian Campbell describing Japanese practices as "sick" and "absurd".

Prime Minister John Howard has written to his counterpart, Junichiro Koizumi, to urge Japan not to increase its whale hunt and expand it to include humpbacks.

A Japanese fisheries official has hit back, saying Mr Howard does not understand the scientific value of hunting whales.

Senator Campbell says there is no evidence to support Japan's claims that its whaling is for scientific rather than dietary purposes.

"There's just no justification, no scientific committee has ever upheld their claim, and there's no science that they proclaim that they do that can't be done using non-lethal methods," he told ABC TV's *Lateline*.

"What the gentleman from the fisheries agency of Japan is saying is it will take a small core above the whale's ear to determine how old it is and then chop the rest of the many tonnes of whale meat up and send it into Japanese fish shops and school tuckshops.

"It's absurd. It's sick. History shows it's not really cultural. They started their big hunting of whales post World War II when there were food shortages there. I think anyone would suggest that the cultural reason for that has long since passed."

Insult to science

Senator Campbell says he believes Japan plans to roughly double its whaling program and expand the hunt to include humpbacks.

He says Japan's 'scientific' argument for whaling is ridiculous.

"Anyone who believes that you can take a magnificent and highly intelligent animal such as a whale, weighing a number of tonnes in many cases, to take a small core sample from just near its brain to determine how old it is for some scientific reason is obscene and a total insult to the word 'science' and an insult to the world scientific community," he said.

Senator Campbell says Japan is exploiting a loophole in the Convention for the Regulation of Whaling to justify its program.

"My view is that the scientific exclusion, or Article 8 of the convention, was probably put there by well-meaning people initially with an anticipation that you might take a few animals for genuine scientific research," he said.

"It's been blown into a massive loophole which now needs to be closed and that is my intention and the Australian Government's intention over the medium term, to try to close that loophole."

Senator Campbell says the Government believes diplomacy can work to end Japan's whaling program, though it is reserving the option of legal action as a "last resort".

"I think diplomacy can work," he said. "I've been working very hard with a range of like-minded countries and what you might call swinging voters on the IWC [International Whaling Commission]."

"I will continue that work right up to the meeting in Korea and, of course, beyond."

He added: "The longer-term plan has got to be to reform the IWC and the first step to that is, of course, to close the loophole. The only whaling that should exist on this planet is very small, tightly controlled, culturally sensitive takes for Indigenous populations such as the Inuit."

Postscript: Japanese TV recently aired a cooking program where it demonstrated how to cook whale meat.



New CD Release from Christopher Westfall

A new CD is out! June 11 is the release day, and this CD is MORE than fantastic! Christopher Westfall is making his debut as a song writer in his new CD titled "I'm Coming Home". Here, is the Chris Westfall SOUND ! People have been amazed by Christopher's voice for many years, and this CD is a showcase of songs by this well-loved performer. People have been touched by the words and the catchy tunes: "We'll Be There by Morning", "When You Love Someone", "Down This Road", "Waking of the Day", and have been moved by the title song, "I'm Coming Home". recorded in Nashville, Christopher is backed by Chris Nole, Pete Huttlinger, and Jim Horn, with Chris Nole producing the album. What a TOGETHER sound for all time! Other favorite songs written by other songwriters include: "Lighthouse on the Shore", "Running River", "Summer of My Dreams", and "Gandhi/Buddha". The CD contains two special songs by Chris Nole: "Appreciate" and "You're the Reason." People who enjoy John Denver's music will smile hearing "Annie's Other Song". Some have called Christopher, "A real deal . a true singer-songwriter", "pure, so refreshing", "enchanting, with his heartfelt songs", and "a truly engaging performer", with "songs that speak to the soul". From LA to Monterey to Aspen to the East Coast, Christopher's polished vocals have enchanted many. You can make this CD yours, by sending (US) \$15 for the CD and \$2 postage and, to: Christopher Westfall, PO Box 345 Berlin, NJ 08009. To hear Christopher, click on www.chriswestfall.com

You Say the Battle is Over

**And you say that the battle is over and you say that the war is all done
Go tell it to those with the wind in their nose
Who run from the sound of the gun**

**And write it on the sides of the great whaling ships
Or on ice floes where conscience is tossed
With the wind in their eyes, it is they who must die
And it's we who must measure the loss**

**And you say that the battle is over and finally the world is at peace
You mean no one is dying and mothers don't weep
Or it's not in the papers at least**

**There are those who would deal in the darkness of life
There are those who would tear down the sun
And most men are ruthless but some will still weep
When the gifts we were given are gone**

**Now the blame cannot fall on the heads of a few
It's become such a part of the race
It's eternally tragic that that which is magic
Be killed at the end of the glorious chase**

**From young seals to great whales from waters to wood
They will fall just like weeds in the wind
With fur coats and perfumes and trophies on walls
What a hell of a race to call men**

**And you say that the battle is over and you say that the war is all done
Go tell it to those with the wind in their nose
Who run from the sound of the gun**

**And write it on the sides of the great whaling ships
Or on ice floes where conscience is tossed
With the wind in their eyes, it is they who must die
And it's we who must measure the loss
With the wind in their eyes, it is they who must die
And it's we who must measure the cost**

Words and music by david mallet

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