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Higher Ground Australia



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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER - September 2005

Welcome to Mitchell Joseph...

Congratulations to my sister, Megan and her husband, Chris on the birth of their second child, Mitchell Joseph, born on 25th August, 2005.



Congratulations on 50 Golden Years

My parents celebrated 50 years of marriage on 17th September 2005. My brothers and sister organised a surprise party for them. Guests who attended came from all over Australia, Singapore and New Zealand. Although it was very difficult to keep it a secret, despite Dad going to Canada for a holiday for a month and mum coming to Melbourne to await the birth of Mitchell. The night was a huge success and everyone who attended had a good time.



Welcome

Hello everyone and welcome to our September newsletter. With just a couple of weeks left before our John Denver weekend at Old Mogo Town, Bateman's Bay, we have lots of information to include this month.

We would like to extend our best wishes to everyone in the world who are celebrating the life and music of John Denver, particularly those in Aspen, Monterey and New Zealand.

Canberra Airport

As long as the air traffic controller in Canberra does not sleep in on the 7th October, most of the flights from Brisbane, Melbourne and parts of NSW will be arriving around 9am. There will be a few hire cars driving from Canberra. We would like to ensure that all people flying into Canberra will have transportation to Bateman's Bay. If you have any spare spaces in your car please let me know. Cost will be the hire of the car divided by the number sharing plus a share of the petrol.

Getting to Batemans Bay from Canberra

For those people who are flying to Canberra and driving to Batemans Bay, it is a 2 hour drive on the King's Highway. This road takes you through the Great Dividing Range and you should give yourself some extra time, particularly if you are not sure of the road.

The King's Highway connects Canberra and Batemans Bay. It starts at Capital Hill then via Canberra Avenue, passing through Canberra's suburb of Fyshwick to Queanbeyan and heads south-east to Batemans Bay.

It is signed as National Route 52. However, the NSW Road Traffic Authority website refers to it as Main Road number 51, Canberra to Queanbeyan. Main road number 52 is from Canberra to Crookwell.

The Kings Highway links Highway 1 (Princes Highway) to the capital



Getting to Old Mogo Town from BB

Old Mogo town is some 10 kms from Batemans Bay. Access is easy by following the well-defined signs at Mogo Village on the Princes Highway. Turn into Annett Lane and you will not be able to miss Old Mogo Town.



What to Bring

Your accommodation and meals are included in the \$90pp cost for the weekend. Please bring along your own drinks (tea and coffee will be supplied).

Water

Please bring a small bottle of water, which you have filled from your tap at home. This water will be poured together into a bucket and used to water our trees during the tree planting. This will symbolise the joining together of the friends of John.

Songbooks

For all the people who attended the weekend in Boonah, please bring your songbooks with you to Mogo. I will bring enough songbooks for our new friends and those who did not attend last year. If you received one last year (and I know who you are) and you do not bring your book with you, you will be asked to donate \$5.00 to the raffle fund in order to receive another one.

Dress Ups

I emailed the people who are attending this year, but this is to remind you to bring along a costume or part of a costume for our Saturday night 'campfire' sing-a-long. In keeping with the spirit of the Old Mogo Town theme of early Australia, we will all be dressing up in traditional clothing. Before you start panicking, a mob cap and apron, a drizabone, a hat with corks, flannelette shirt and

braces would suffice. We will ask for a 'gold coin' donation for dressing up.

Musical Instruments

We have some very talented musicians within our ranks, but we are always looking for more. Please bring your guitars, ukuleles, maracas, bongos, uilleann pipes, lagerphones and any other instruments along for a wonderful night's entertainment.

Good Sturdy Walking Shoes

Please bring a good pair of runners or walking shoes with you. Some of the tracks around Old Mogo town are rough.

Silent Auction

We have had such an incredible response to our call for items for our annual silent auction. Thank you to each and every person who has contributed items. A list will be going to be circulated to the Australian members next week. Bids can be emailed up to and including 4th October. You will be notified if you have the winning bid on the 11th October, after the weekend, when arrangements will be made regarding payment for any items that have been won by email

For those people who have sent a cash donation, it will be included in the Silent Auction proceeds. One hundred percent (100%) of the proceeds from the auction, the proceeds of the cookbooks sold after last October, and any cash donations will be donated directly to Birdland to be used to rehabilitate and maintain injured and birds that cannot be rehabilitated in John's name. A plaque will be placed at Birdland to commemorate John. This plaque will be supplied by Birdland.

2005 Raffle – Country Road Quilt

We are very lucky to have a great group of people around us who are so willing to donate. This year's raffle prize is a cot-sized quilt or lap quilt. Made from navy, red and cream cotton, top, back and filling are 100% natural cotton fibre, but the binding is polycotton.

Tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 tickets for \$5.00. The raffle money is used to pay for the trees, plaque and the stone the plaque is mounted on.



Fundraiser - Calendars

We are producing a small number of full colour JD 2006 calendars. These will be available at Mogo. For further information about the calendars, please contact Lynn on lmagann@iprimus.com.au

Old Mogo Tavern

Due to the possibility of cool weather over the John Denver weekend on the NSW south coast, we have decided to ensure that all our guests are comfortable. For the 'campfire' sing-a-long, we have taken the liberty of booking the tavern at an extra expense. We are hoping that the raffle money will stretch that far, so please buy some extra tickets for this wonderful prize.

Please make sure you bring a jacket – just in case it is cold.

Costs

Just a reminder that the accommodation cost for the weekend is \$60 per person for Friday and Saturday nights and \$30 for food. Meals included for the \$30 cost are Friday night dinner, Saturday breakfast and dinner and Sunday breakfast and lunch.

Any Questions about the weekend?

If you have any questions about the weekend at Batemans Bay, please do not hesitate to contact Carmel on hi-fis@bigpond.net.au

She will answer any questions that you might have, or contact me on jfrawley@telstra.com

Please contact us if we have forgotten anything. For anyone who wants to see what they are missing out on, here is the link to Old Mogo Town.

<http://www.oldmogotown.com.au/sitemap.html>

Arrival at Mogo

The people flying into Canberra around 9am should be arriving at our destination around 1pm. This takes into consideration the time it will take us to find a coffee shop to stabilise our caffeine levels (it IS CANBERRA, after all) and to take plenty of time to safely drive the distance between Canberra and Bateman's Bay. If anyone needs assistance, is running late, is lost or just wants to chat, please call my mobile number **0407 417459**.

I have been assured by the telephone provider (3) that there will be coverage on my phone in the Batemans Bay area, however. If you would like to leave you mobile phone number with me, please email me the number on jfrawley@telstra.com (Australian residents only please)

Birdland

Here is some information about the eagle that we will be sponsoring this year at Birdland, NSW.

She was found injured below overhead powerlines by a couple down at Bemboka about 2 years ago. They rescued her and kept her in their fowl yard and fed and cared for her for several weeks. Veterinary opinion was that although she had no fractures she appeared to have damage to the nerve supply to her left wing and required an extended period of convalescence to see if function would return.

After some weeks the wing was still very weak and the carers sent her to us to see if a larger purpose built cage improved her. She seemed to enjoy the extra space immediately and has made some improvement in her mobility but still remains unable to fly so would not survive in the wild where she would have to fly with maximum speed and agility to stay alive by hunting prey.

We are providing her with a safe house and are feeding her a variety of prey and are trying to make her life as interesting as possible. She has a high perch which allows her to watch over most of the parks 8 acres of gardens and animal and bird exhibits. Regards David Burnett



The Wedge-Tail Eagle

(from Newsletter from GOANA Australian Air Safaris)

Like the Bald Eagle or Condor, this majestic bird is power and strength gracefully epitomised. It holds extra interest to aviators for several reasons. Being the top of the food chain, it does not recognise our Skyhawks (aircraft) as predators or a danger. We should always be mindful that we are the 'visitors' in its domain as we frequently see them some thousands of feet up, some time quite close.

For such a large bird (our largest raptor, and one of the world's largest at up to 2.3 metres wing-span, that's just under 8 feet!) to alight on its nest platform, it has to employ some technology. We may know them as leading-edge slots, but in the bird world, the feathers mid span are called 'alulas' and effectively, in conjunction with those creating slots at the tips, give the bird excellent lift and stability at low speeds and high angles of attack.

Higher Ground Caps

We are currently looking into purchasing some caps, embroidered with our name – Higher Ground Australia on the front. As an optional extra, we can have the URL embroidered on the back. Prices are AUD\$22.00 for the one with our

name on the front and \$27.50 for the embroidery on both the front and back. Postage will be approximately \$4.50 (this to be confirmed). Please contact Lynn for further details.
Imagann@iprimus.com.au

Take Me Home, Country Roads

Take me Home, Country Roads is the third book in the series that has been illustrated by Christopher Canyon. This wonderful picture book has been released by Dawn Publications.

Book Giveaway

Last year we donated a copy of each of the Christopher Canyon picture books, Sunshine on My Shoulders and Ancient Rhymes to two primary schools. These were selected by ballot.

This year there will be three books donated, including the new Take me Home, Country Roads, which has been recently released. Last year, both books were 'won' by schools in regional areas and were nominated by Pat Evans and Marina Green. If you would like to nominate a school or kindergarten that you would think would benefit from receiving one of these beautiful books, please contact me. Write the name and address of the school in an email and I will enter them into the 'raffle'. If you are attending the weekend, you will be able to fill in a ticket with the details.

Hurricane Katrina

The devastating aftermath of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast a couple of weeks ago was such a shock. I have visited New Orleans on two occasions and it is one of the most vibrant cities I have ever visited

As well as the wonderful food, culture and natural history, New Orleans has a rich heritage in music. As well as the Jazz, Blues and Zydeco styles of music, many contemporary songs were written about this region of the United States. Of course, John sang the very famous Steve Goodman song about the train, 'City of New Orleans'. I also heard a lovely song recently sung by Emmylou Harris and Willie Nelson called Gulf Coast Highway (I think written by Nancy Griffith and others). Lovely song, but would bring tears to your eyes knowing that much of this coastline has been so badly damaged.

Our heartfelt prayers are offered to the people of this region of the United States

Almost Heaven

The Musical, Almost Heaven was playing at Walnut Creek, California recently and I thought that I would include one of the reviews that was passed on to me:

Hello, Folks

This is one of the latest reviews from the Walnut Creek area showing of the John Denver musical (near San Francisco, CA). This is a really well-known repertory theatre, and usually one of the last 'runs' before a production is moved on to a Broadway/ or "off-Broadway" showing. Let's hope that JD's musical makes a better 'statement' for the public than "Lennon" has done of late! This looks hopeful, at least....Linda W

Article Last Updated: 09/15/2005 03:10:05 AM
John Denver musical hits Rocky Mountain highs and lows

By Chad Jones, STAFF WRITER

IN 1975, if you had guessed that 30 years into the future a musical about John Denver would end up being better than a musical about John Lennon, you'd have been laughed off the American pop scene.

It's true. "Lennon," which had its pre-Broadway tryout in San Francisco earlier this year was a big, overblown pop fest that turned the former Beatle's life into a cross between The Who's "Tommy" and an Up with People concert. The show missed with critics here and is struggling to find an audience on Broadway.

And now here comes "Almost Heaven: John Denver's America," another musical biography on its way (producers hope) to New York.

Only this show isn't running in a big San Francisco theater. It's at the Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek and opens the season for Center Repertory Company.

One of the primary reasons "Almost Heaven" succeeds where "Lennon" didn't is that producer/creator Hal Thau and director Randal Myler have scaled their show to a more appropriate, less ambitious level.

A cast of six — three men, three women — sings about 30 Denver songs, some hits, some more obscure album tracks. Kelly Tighe's set is simple with its natural wood floor and steps and a video projection screen covering the entire back wall of the stage.

The six-piece band — led by Charlie Alterman and complete with fiddle, banjo and plenty of acoustic guitar — is visible between the actors and the projections.

That's it for production, but it's enough, and in the case of Jan Hartley's projections, more than enough.

The subtitle is "John Denver's America," and in Act 1, the projections reflect turmoil in the

country with assassinations and an unpopular war.

We're given bits of Denver's biography, but we're also subjected to an American history lesson, and a song like "Take Me Home, Country Roads" is meant to convey a soldier's wish to leave the Vietnamese jungle for the beauty of West Virginia.

Jim Newman, whose wholesome blond good looks recall David Soul and Katie Couric, plays Denver and has the sweetest voice in the company. Lee Morgan is the resident country-folk-rocker, and he's forced to sing the show's worst song, "Eagles and Horses," with Valisia Lekae Little, who does a terrific "Sunshine on My Shoulders."

By Act 2, the big screen is mostly filled with clouds, and the subtitle should be "John Denver's John Denver" as we get two of the show's best, most straightforward numbers — "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" and "Grandma's Feather Bed."

This is also when the pockets of lovely harmony that marked Act 1 give way to the kind of over-blown singing we've come to expect in these dreary "American Idol" days.

Orchestrator and vocal arranger Lewis Mead attempts to turn "Leaving on a Jet Plane," which Denver wrote, into a slow R&B jam. There's a glimmer of an idea there, but it turns out disastrously for singer Terry Burrell.

The same could be said for "For You," sung with Michael Bolton-ish angst by Nicholas Rodriguez. To make things worse, Jennifer Allen is trapped center stage having just recited a fan letter to Denver (a recurring, ineffective motif here), and reacting to Rodriguez's song with what appears to be weeping joy or utter horror. Frankly, it's hard to tell.

A truly smart revue finds themes in songs and makes interesting pairings. This happens once here with "Matthew," sung by Newman, and "Let Us Begin (What Are We Making Weapons For?)" sung by Rodriguez and Burrell.

Then there's the inevitable medley mess in Act 2. "Annie's Song," "Goodbye Again," "How Can I Leave You Again," "Back Home Again" and a little of "Leaving on a Jet Plane" become a formless mishmash with the actors singing intently into each other's faces.

We hear about Denver's divorce from Annie and his two DUI arrests, but nothing is said about his death at age 53 in a 1997 airplane crash on Monterey Bay. Instead we get an anthem about eagles flying.

In this hard-working revue, the sweet simplicity and sincerity of Denver's music and persona squeak through every now and then. His gift for melody is also, thankfully, on full display. If that's really the most important thing, then "Almost Heaven" almost gets it right.

You can e-mail Chad Jones at cjones@angnewspapers.com or call (925) 416-4853.

And another review by an audience member....

I have just returned home from seeing "Almost Heaven" in Walnut Creek, CA. It was a wonderful show. The talent is truly amazing. I did see the play in Denver 2003 and there were some changes made this year and it just gets better and better. I met with the cast after the show. They said Annie had come to see 2 performances last week. They loved seeing her :) And said she loved the show as well. The play has gotten such great response they have added more shows.. So if you're not going to Aspen, you can come to the play and join in on the events in Monterey. The cast is excited to be heading to New York soon.... (That has road trip written all over it!!!!)

Jim Newman again is portraying John. I just loved watching his emotions come out with each song. Nicholas Rodriguez was being compared to Josh Grobin, a very friendly, young man with a ton of talent. Lee Morgan who can really belt out a tune. you can check his website at www.joeandlee.com He has a new CD of his own out. Of course I tend to favor the guys! but the women were just as great. Valisia Lekae Little blew us all away with her voice. Jennifer Allen and Terry Burrell as well.. Everyone is just to talented!

I just wanted to put them in my pocket and take them home.

I know someone was recently asking about purchasing a CD of Almost Heaven.

Leaving the theater tonight just makes me even more ready to see everyone in Aspen!!! See you all soon.

Tribute Show in NSW

Stephen Cheney (one of our members) will be performing his 'Tribute To John Denver' show on Wednesday, September 21st.

The show will be in one of the function rooms from 11 a.m., and will run for approximately 60 - 90 minutes. The entertainer will be Mr. Stephen R. Cheney, a local artist who has performed in the USA and New Zealand, and is known for his voice being similar to that of John Denver.

SHOW BOOKINGS: Telephone 1800 014 014
COST: Club Members - \$5.00, New Members - \$10.00

Another Tribute show in Victoria

I'm still waiting to hear about a tribute show in Victoria before the end of the year. I will keep you posted as soon as I get the information.

Tribute show in Chicago, USA

I'd like to post some info about an event that I'm holding here in Chicago.

On Friday, Sept. 30th, I will be hosting a John Denver Tribute show at **Uncommon Ground Coffeehouse at 1214 W. Grace in Chicago**.

Here is their website:

www.uncommonground.com.

Thanks very much, Travis Dow 773-315-5301

<http://www.travisdow.com>

If you are looking for some JD items...

With thanks to Marlene Shincke for the following information:

At <http://www.half.com> there is a HUGE selection of John Denver articles.

81 videos (DVD & VHS), 174 CD's (all new & sealed), and 113 books (some out of print). All are very inexpensive even with a small shipping & handling. Just type in John Denver and click on search (or go?).

The Mitchell Trio

There is a huge interest in the music from the 1960's onward, many of which have been remastered and are now available on CD. The Mitchell Trio will be appearing at the Wheeler Opera House during the John Denver events in Aspen this year, but if you are looking for any of the original albums on CD, you might like to try this website: www.rediscovermusic.com

Some of these are also available from

www.cduniverse.com

Aspen Events

The 2005 Aspen events were listed in the August newsletter. You can access this newsletter through our website:

www.highergroundaustralia.com

The Peace Cloth

I am also attaching the Peace Cloth 5th anniversary newsletter for your information. Although a lot later than I would have liked, our 2004 panel was posted to the ladies a few days ago. Photos of the panel to be posted when I have them processed. This is a wonderful project – one that is never completed. Take the time to read about it

The following is from Debra Chilton.

The Peace Cloth will be participating in the Second Annual Peace and Justice Fair on Saturday, the 24th of September, here in Vancouver, Washington. Another Mother For Peace is also creating a panel for the Peace Cloth from the original artwork of War is Not Healthy. Pretty excited about that. If you're in Aspen, the Peace Cloth will be out at various events, stop by and say hi to us. Deb

Peace

A gently flowing river,

A soothing lullaby,

A never ending rainbow

That spans the entire sky.

No borderlines or bound'ries,

All weapons obsolete,

No man declared "the victor",

For none fall in defeat.

A quiet mountain meadow,

The star strewn sky at night,

Bird song, sweet, at day break,

To welcome morning light.

Hands that join in friendship,

Voices raised in song,

All nations in one circle,

Each knowing they belong.

No man chained or broken

For what he dares to dream,

Harsh words left unspoken,

Like ripples in a stream.

A jewel more rare and precious,

Than perfect, polished pearls.

The dream becomes reality,

The vision of "One World"

Cynthia Helen Gullage

March 19,2003

All This Joy

(For all those people affected by the recent Hurricane Katrina)

*All this joy, all this sorrow,
All this promise, all this pain.*

Such is life, such is being, such is spirit, such is love.

*City of joy, city of sorrow,
City of promise, city of pain.*

Such is life, such is being, such is spirit, such is love.

*World of joy, a world of sorrow,
World of promise, a world of pain.*

Such is life, such is being, such is spirit, such is love.

*All this joy, all this sorrow,
All this promise, all this pain.*

*But such is life, such is being, such is spirit, such is love.
Such is spirit, such is love.*