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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – March 2006

Welcome

Welcome to our March newsletter. First and foremost, we have a number of new members who have joined us this month. Welcome to our ever expanding group and I really hope that you enjoy being part of HGA as much as we enjoy being part of the global John Denver family.

Have fun reading this newsletter.

Remembering...

During the last couple of weeks, we have lost two actors:

Dana Reeve died on March 6, 2006 at the Reeve was thrust into a public role after her husband became a quadriplegic as a result of a horse riding accident in Culpeper, Virginia on May 27, 1995,. The Reeves founded the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, which funds research on paralysis and works to improve the lives of the disabled. To date, it has awarded more than \$55 million (USD) in research grants and more than \$8 million in quality-of-life grants.

Dana Reeve was active as a motivational speaker and activist for the rights of the disabled and proponent of stem cell research. After her husband's death on October 10, 2004, she assumed the role of chairperson of the organisation.

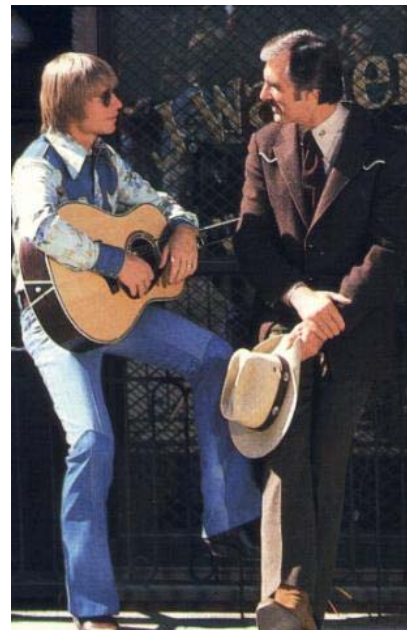
Dennis Weaver died on February 24. Who can forget that wonderful episode of McCloud (the Colorado Cattle Caper) in which John also starred in 1974?

Weaver also appeared with John on the John Denver Special in 1976, singing a duet about the LA Freeway.

Weaver had been a vegetarian (since 1958) and student of yoga and meditation since the 1960's. He was also renowned as an environmentalist, promoting eating lower on the food chain, alternate fuels such as hydrogen and wind power through an educational organisation he founded, The Institute of Ecolonomics. He was also involved with John Denver's WindStar Foundation. The "Earth Ship", the personal home he built in Ridgeway, Colorado during the late1980's,

incorporated recycled materials in its construction and featured advanced eco-technologies for the time. To read more about Dennis Weaver, follow this link: <http://www.dennisweaver.com/>

For anyone interested in collecting the episodes of McCloud, the first two seasons are available on DVD. Unfortunately, season 4 (the one that John appears in), does not appear to be available on DVD yet. We will certainly be looking out for it in the future.



"Why is it thus we are here and so soon we are gone?"

Happy Birthday to You....

It is Margaret's birthday on 25th March. We wish her the very happiest returns for her special day. We also wish her and Maureen a wonderful holiday in Perth.



Sing Australia

Genie from Queensland is becoming an Aussie on March 23rd. On behalf of all of us at HGA, welcome and good luck as you embark on the future as an Australian.



John Denver Weekend Oct 2006

The John Denver weekend will be held from Friday 13th – Sunday 15th October, 2006. We will be returning to the friendly town of Boonah, approximately one hour out of Brisbane. We will be returning to the Outlook Training and Resource Centre, Ipswich-Boonah Road, Boonah, Queensland.

The accommodation has been booked and a deposit paid. Because we are not asking for a deposit for the accommodation (you will pay the full amount on arrival in Boonah), we will ask that all numbers are finalised by the 29th September. People who commit to coming and then pull out at the last minute cause problems with the members who are organising the event.

Our weekends are self-catered. We ask everyone for a **NON-REFUNDABLE** deposit of \$15, which will be a deposit for the food only.

Costs for the weekend are as follows:

Accommodation: **\$36.00 per person per night**

Food: **\$30.00 per person for the weekend (\$15.00 deposit, plus \$15.00 paid at the beginning of the weekend)**

The total cost for food and accommodation for the weekend is **\$102.00 per person**

Please contact Margaret and Maureen on marjo@powerup.com.au to organise payment of your food deposit.

NOTE: Margaret and Maureen will be away for two weeks, until the first week of April, so if you do not hear from them, don't panic, they will get back to you.

Riverwood Downs

The wonderful generosity of people never ceases to amaze me and the next story is such a case. We have a member, Thom, who lives in NSW and who visits Riverwood Downs regularly. He wrote some time ago and sent us pictures of the plaque, but had alerted us that the tree seemed to have disappeared. He also offered to replace it. I wrote to Riverwood Downs, asking them what sort of native tree would be suitable for the area and

explained that Thom was going to plant it on our behalf. Please read what Thom has written to us.

I have had a couple of visits up to Riverwood over the past month. During my last visit the plaque had been moved (probably as a result of lawn mowing). I was able to reposition it to the spot where you initially placed it in 2002. I decided to take the chance and just turn up with a native Australian tree and hope for the best. I made a trip up there yesterday and was able to speak with the manager (Amanda). She agreed to allow us to plant another tree which I did. I have enclosed a photo of the tree which (all things being equal) will grow to 10 meters high and 5 meters wide. It is a berry tree which according to the nursery assistant is famous for attracting birds which I thought would be appropriate.

I am aware that you have been waiting on a response from them however they are very layback up there and I am a regular attendee at Riverwood and I had trouble getting to Amanda! I trust that this is okay with you, Janette. However I couldn't stand to keep going there and see the plaque being moved around. I will keep an eye on it and provide you with periodic photographic updates. I am assured that it is a drought resistant tree and should cope with the dryness of Riverwood Downs.

Regards

Thom

I have already said it to you, Thom, but this time I will shout it...

On behalf of us all at HGA, **THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH.**

I speak for everyone when I say thank you and that we really appreciate the effort and forethought. Thanks also for the wonderful photo.



Max's Wanderings (written by Alistair Wilson)

Max Moore has been having a wonderful time for the last couple of months. On the 14th January this year Max arranged tickets for Margaret, Maureen, Noel and Kathy to see "Dirty dancing" in Brisbane. And he escorted them to the show.

They had a great night meeting Col Joye and Sandy Scott.

Max decided to stay with them for a few weeks as well and he spent his 83rd birthday there. He was able to catch up with his old friend Alan Heffernan (the accountant for Lee Gordon and later for Jacobsen Entertainment) and his wife Val. Alan was also celebrating a birthday so the girls took Max to have lunch with Alan and Val for a combined birthday celebration.

Then he went up to visit friends on Mt Tambourine for a week then down to Bangalow to see more old friends for a few days.

He caught the bus down from Byron and Carmel and I picked him up at 10.30pm in Newcastle.

That long trip took a lot out of him but he was OK for a few beers the next day.

Max stayed with us for 12 days and we ordered the plaques for this years gathering, I was playing for a fundraiser at Drayton's winery and I just got to sing Some days are Diamonds for Max when a wild afternoon storm hit and we had to pack up the instruments and call it a day.

We put Max on the Sydney bus a couple of days later and his son Rob picked him up from there and took him to Bowral.

He is a remarkable fellow for his age and he is really enjoying life getting to catch up with new and old friends we enjoyed many of his stories while he was here, nearly every music DVD we put on Max had been involved in some way with them.

I was also grateful to Max for sending me Alan Heffernan's book "the Big Shows". It is an excellent account of the life of Lee Gordon and the people who worked and supported him to make the shows happen. As I was with Max's book I could not put it down till it was finished.



Photo is of (Left to right) Alistair, the young bloke in the centre is Max and Carmel.

Max's Interview

During Max's visit to Queensland, he took part in a radio interview, which was aired a few weeks later. Unfortunately, I have not yet heard the interview, however co-incidentally, I did hear all about it.

I was recently in Queensland visiting my brother, during which time I took him down to the local pub to meet up with his friends. One of them started telling a story about an interview he heard a couple of weeks prior. He said that he did not know who it was, but then went on to talk about the contents of the interview. He said that he was driving home from work when it came on and that he could not get out of the car until the interview was finished.

After he described the interview, I was able to inform him of the interviewee and that Max is a good friend of ours.

Congratulations Max – the interview had an impact on people, and what a co-incidence it was mentioned the moment after I arrived at the pub.

Commonwealth Games

March 5th was Clean Up Australia Day. Melbourne is also gearing up for the Commonwealth Games, so it was extra important that Melbourne and its surrounding environs were nice and clean.

For those who will get telecasts of the Commonwealth Games over the next two weeks, you are looking at one of the world's most beautiful cities (of course, I am biased!) We are expecting great weather and plenty of visitors.

I have just watched the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games and it was truly magnificent. Built in 1853, the Melbourne Cricket Ground has played host to many historical sporting events, including the Olympic Games in 1956. It is probably one of the largest stadiums in the world, now seating 100,000 people. The MCG often has sell-out crowds for football games, cricket matches.

Nitty Gritty Interview on Kerry-Anne

John McEuen (Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is over here in Australia at the moment promoting a new play "And in the End - The Life and Death of John Lennon", <http://www.andintheend.com/first.html> which he also produced. He was on Kerry-Anne this morning talking about this play and playing some mean tunes on his banjo. Too bad he didn't bring the rest of the band over here and play a few gigs! (written by Melanie)

Thanks Melanie. If anyone happens to be able to see this play in Sydney, please do not hesitate to email me a review. I checked the website, but it looks like it is only playing in Sydney.

John McEuen was involved in the **Will the Circle Be Unbroken** projects? These were designed to get bluegrass-style music out into the general public. The second one, which included some of the best Country and Bluegrass performers in America (and John Denver) was brilliant. The

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band also wrote Dance Little Jean, Ripplin' Waters and And So it Goes. If you have never heard this album, please have a listen to it as it also includes artists like Johnny Cash, June Carter and Roseanne Cash, Ricky Scaggs and Emmylou Harris. I know that it was brought out on a video some years ago, which includes interviews with all the stars and the songs they sing.

This style of entertainment has also been repeated by performers like the Chieftains, who went to America and got some of the best bluegrass performers to perform their music with them in a concert. Down the Old Plank Road is fantastic and Nitty Gritty also appear along with the Chieftains in this project. This is also available on DVD and CD and they are highly recommended viewing.

These are all produced to create an interest in this style of music so that it never dies out as the original artists gradually pass into Appalachian Heaven

At the Harbor Lights concert, John said that he had always been enamoured with bluegrass, thus being the influence for the Fox Fire Suite.

British Newspaper Article

If any of our British members are able to attend this concert, please do not hesitate to write a review.....

Fan joins the band

Mike Morgan, Evening Gazette A Stokesley cobbler's dreams will come true when he takes to the stage with original members of legendary country star John Denver's band.

Fanatic Ray Freeman, 58, of Kirkby-in-Cleveland, was thrilled when three members of Denver's original band agreed to let him sing with them when they play Kirkby Church Hall this summer.



Ray and wife Jackie persuaded the famous trio of guitarist Pete Huttlinger, pianist Chris Nole and Mack Bailey on guitar and vocals, to come to Kirkby.

Ray, who runs the Feet First shop on Stokesley High Street, is such a big fan that he has even named one of his children after John Denver and another after the singer's home town.

Tickets for the shows, which will be held on July 14 and 15, are £20

Ray's wife Jackie said: "My husband Ray will be singing the Denver tribute and this fantastic original line-up will be a dream come true."

She added: "People are interested from one end of the country to the other. We also have other big USA names coming over to our Kirkby venue."

Jackie said Ray is always humming or listening to one of John's classic hits, playing them on his signed guitar or singing them. Country star Denver died in a freak accident when the private plane he was piloting crashed into the sea in 1997 due to a fuel shortage.

Ray said: "John Denver had a great voice and was a superb guitar player.

"If you hum Annie's Song anywhere in the world, people know it instantly."

Ray's late dad Leslie gave Ray a John Denver tape more than three decades ago.

Jackie said: "It started a lifetime's obsession of memorabilia, books, tapes and records."

Ray's favourite possession is a guitar signed for him by John Denver at a concert at the Albert Hall in 1997.

The couple's children are also JD fans.

There's Benjamin Denver, seven, Megan, five and Kai Aspen, two - named after John's famous home!

This tribute concert will be held on July 14 – 15. If you have any questions about this event please email Christine at <http://www.fojd.org.uk>

New Video Clip/Netherlands Site

Each month Michiel places a new John Denver video clip on his website. These video clips are wonderful reminders of how versatile John was. Please visit this site at least once a month to check out the new clip.

<http://home.wanadoo.nl/mtenbrug/denver/main.htm>

Little Mulchatna

From Pam

For all of you who have figured that a trip to Little Mulchatna Lodge is beyond your budget. Listen to this. In the past few days, I have been corresponding with Jeff, who now owns LM. Stu and Wendy have officially retired and are building their own place up there. Jeff said that he would like to have some folks who loved John to make a trip to the lodge together. I said to him that the cost was the major obstacle for most of the folks I know. He said maybe he could do something about that! Tonight I received the following email from Jeff,

I've been thinking about this idea of a get together at the lodge for some friends of John ---- I think he would like that. The lodge is much as it was when John last visited, Stu will begin removing some of his memorabilia when they have a place for it. So it would be good to schedule a visit sooner than later. I was thinking about August, it is a beautiful month in Alaska all the fireweed is in bloom and the weather is stable. How does the week of the 20th sound for about 5 days. I would have 2 cabins available, with room for two to four people per cabin depending on compatibility. As far as costs, you would have airfare to Anchorage. Once here you would fly to Port Alsworth and then on to the lodge. The cost for this is \$505.00 roundtrip based on four people travelling together. There would be no charge for lodging except for a 20.00/day charge per person to offset the cost of diesel and propane. This is for running the generator and heating water, it gets costly because it all has to be flown in. The only other cost would be for food, this could be purchased in Anchorage and brought out with you. So if you budgeted \$20/day/person for food for 5 days this would be a reasonable figure especially if you are buying as a group. That's what I've come up with so far, so if you and 3 to 7 other people you know would like to do something like this let me know. I know this will generate a lot of questions so before I proceeded any farther I wanted to see how much interest there was. It would be great to fill the lodge with friends of John, a place where his spirit is present. For me it would be a opportunity to get to know him better through others that knew him.

So, folks if you would seriously consider taking Jeff up on this offer, send me an email at firendsky@mac.com I'm going to start packing my bag now and then figure out where the money is going to come from!

I would love to visit Little Mulchatna, but a review of this holiday would be great....

Ski Lift Dedicated To John

The following is an excerpt from New West (the Voice of the Rocky Mountains), dated 27/2/2006.

...These are some of the highlights of the resorts we visited and their environmental efforts. We excluded resorts that we have not visited yet, but intend to blog their efforts at the end of our challenge.

Green — Snowmass' Cirque T-Bar — Powered solely by wind energy and dedicated to the one and only John Denver, this lift provides environmental benefits equivalent to planting 17 acres of trees, while delivering riders to a variety of backcountry-like experiences around the Cirque. Just knowing we were riding a green t-bar gave us comfort for our sins and put us in a poaching mood before dropping into a deep stash

known as AMF. More on that in our Snowmass review

The complete article can be found at this location.

<http://www.newwest.net/index.php/main/article/6605/>

Mark Cormican's Tribute Concerts

Hello folks.

It seems like a good time to give everybody a reminder of the John Denver Tribute concerts we're doing in Maryland this month. I can't tell you how much Chris Collins, Kevin Delmolino and I are looking forward to re-creating the "Friends with You" show that we did in Aspen last year. It is really going to be a lot of fun. The dates, times and locations are:

Friday March 24th at the Monocacy Valley Church
9861 Old National Pike
Ijamsville, MD
(301) 865-9100
Show starts at 7:30

Saturday March 25th at Beans in the Belfrey
122 West Potomac St.
Brunswick MD
(301) 834-7178 Contact person is Hanna
That show starts at 7:30 also.

For more information, you can email Kevin at ATPKev@aol.com. If you're going to be anywhere near Maryland on either of those dates, come check it out. It's gonna be faaar-out!

John Adams Concert

As last year, Mack Bailey along with Chris Nole, and Pete Huttlinger will be presenting their concert on Sunday night, October 15, as well. Their concert, which is always lots of fun and laughs, starts at 6:30 PM at the Mountain Chalet. Busy night, it seems. Tickets, which will include food and sodas, are \$25.00; check Mack's website: www.mackbailey.com under Concert Schedule or send a check to "Spa Creek Music", P.O. Box 201435, Denver, CO 80220 or write scm@mackbailey.com or call 301.801.9706

Arctic Dance

For many of our American friends, Arctic Dance — the Mardie Murie Story has been aired on many PBS stations.

I have also heard on the grapevine that this wonderful documentary, which also features John, singing A Song For Two Lovers, is now available on DVD.

There is also a book, which has been recently published. They are both available from Amazon

www.amazon.com. After entering the site, type in Arctic Dance into the search field. You will get a full listing of the available products.

It can also be purchased from <http://www.dickproenneke.com/>

This documentary was narrated by Harrison Ford, so it is a double delight.

Windstar Australian Connection Chat

A Chat will be organised for April for all members of the Windstar Australia Connection. More details will be emailed as they come to hand. The Australian connection has a number of new members.

Although it has taken us a while to get up and running, 2006 looks like being successful. A number of new initiatives will be taking place as we work hard to work toward a better and greener future.

Annual Musical Tribute to John Denver

The 9th annual musical tribute to John Denver will be held on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th October, 2006 at the Wheeler Opera House in Aspen Colorado.

This is early warning, but for those who are planning on going to Aspen this year, keep it in mind.

Cambodia

Last year was a really busy year for us all and by the time mid-December arrived, we had booked and paid for 3 tickets to Thailand – that's it....

By the time we left Australia on 26th December, we had the aforementioned flights, 1 night accommodation in Bangkok, flights to Phuket and three nights accommodation at the 'Montana Grand' in Patong Beach (FYI, there is nothing GRAND about the MONTANA!)

I had wanted to see the temples since reading Nicholas Sparks' book, **Three Weeks with my Brother**. What clinched the decision was a documentary that was aired on one of the cable stations in Phuket on the temples. It appears that there was some divine intervention in regard to making up our minds and so off we went.

As you know, Cambodia has had a very sad history, particularly up until recently. The one thing that was truly inspiring was the attitude of the people and the way in which they are looking forward to rebuilding their country. I will not discuss politics here, but I will say that such is the strength of the human spirit that they have overcome all the odds and are working toward a peaceful and hopefully prosperous future.

We had just over two days in Siem Reap – enough time to visit the most important temples,

including Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Ta Prohm (the Jungle Temple), Banteay Srei, and Preah Ko. No matter what you have seen or read about the temples, nothing prepares you for the magnitude of the buildings and the detail used. Ta Prohm is the site of the very famous temples and buildings that were overgrown by the jungle.

Apart from these wonderful sites, there are the people. Personally I loved the children and of course, could not resist being 'ripped off' by these kids. They are so clever, their English is excellent, and according to our guide, the children are trying earn the money to put themselves through private English lessons. Consequently, I have brought home far too many silk scarves, packs of post cards and books.

Packages to Cambodia for the three days from Australia tend to be quite expensive (some tours quoting up to \$1200 ex Bangkok), but if you are already in Bangkok, you can easily book your flights through a travel agent. We also did not 'bother' pre-booking accommodation, which might be a bit of a risk, depending on the time of the year. Although we arrived in one of their busiest periods (New Year's Eve), we finally managed to find a hotel after a few false starts. We had a great taxi driver and he took us around until we found a hotel.

I cannot speak for other parts of Cambodia, but I felt very safe in Siem Reap. It was a wonderful experience and our 'badly organised' holiday ended up being one of fantastic experiences



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 song is one of my favourites, as many who know me could testify! However,
today I am dedicating this song to Thom who has re-planted our tree at
Riverwood Downs

Garden Song

David Mallett

Inch by inch, row by row
Gonna make this garden grow
All it takes is a rake and a hoe
And a piece of fertile ground

Inch by inch, row by row
Someone bless these seeds I sow
Someone warm them from below
Till the rain comes tumblin' down

Pullin' weeds and pickin' stones
Man is made of dreams and bones
Feel the need to grow my own
Cause the time is close at hand

Rainful rain, sun and rain
Find my way in natures chain
Tune my body and my brain
To the music from the land

Plant your rows straight and long
Temper them with prayer and song
Mother Earth will make you strong
If you give her love and care

Old crow watchin' hungrily
From his perch in yonder tree
In my garden I'm as free
As that feathered thief up there