

REACHING FOR HIGHER GROUND

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO THE AWAKENING AND UPLIFTMENT OF HUMANITY
AND PLANET EARTH WITH JOHN DENVER



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ISLANDS

Islands call out to me
Like the highlands that I always see
In my dreams of home
I am never alone when I'm there

Islands like so many dreams
Are like canyons but off the main stream
And there's no one there
The dreamer is always alone

And the mighty blue ocean
Keeps rolling on every shore
Like the spirit that binds us together
We are so much more than Islands

Islands belong to the sea
Like the dark sands of my memory
When the morning comes
They are stepping stones to the sun

And the mighty blue ocean
Keeps rolling on every shore

[illegible]

If you read Eileen's message to you on the nl website, you know that I'll continue with the publication of the newsletter until she is able to take over, again. She's doing such a wonderful job, and I want to thank her for giving of her time and energy; for making a difference!!

[illegible]

2. Visualize a beautiful cloud of emerald green light surrounding you. As you breathe in, you take this healing energy into your lungs, your cells, and your heart. Concentrate on your heart

a moment, as you allow the emerald-green light to cleanse away any negativity that may have caused you to feel pain.

3. With a deep breath, be willing to allow the light to carry away any fears you may have about love. Be willing to release the fear of feeling love. You need do nothing else except breathe and hold the intention to heal yourself of the fear of love. Just be willing to be healed, and God and the angels will do everything else. Take another deep breath, as you become willing to release the fear of being loved, including the fear that if you are loved, you could be manipulated, tricked, used, abandoned, rejected, persecuted, or hurt. With another deep breath, allow all of these fears from any lifetime to be lifted and carried away.

4. Now, allow the light to cleanse you of any fears you may have about giving love. With a deep breath, be willing to release the fear that if you give love, you could be controlled, abused, deceived, betrayed, maimed, or hurt in any way. Allow all of these fears to be lifted completely, and feel your heart expanding to its natural loving state.

5. Allow yourself to release any old unforgiveness you may be harboring toward those who seem to have hurt you in a love relationship. Become willing to release unforgiveness toward your mother ... toward your father ... toward other parental figures ... toward your siblings ... toward your childhood friends ... Toward your adolescent friends ... toward your first love ... toward those whom you dated and loved ... toward anyone you lived with or married.... Allow all of your hurts and disappointments associated with love to be cleansed and fully carried away. You don't want the hurt, you don't need it, and with another deep breath, it is lifted to the light where it is transmuted and purified. Only the lessons remain, and the pure essence of love contained within each relationship, since that is the only thing that was ever eternal and real within each of your relationships.

6. Now, with another deep breath, allow the light to cleanse you completely. Be willing to release any unforgiveness you may hold toward yourself connected to love. Be willing to forgive yourself for betraying yourself, for ignoring your intuition, or for not looking out for your highest interests. Give yourself a hug, either in your mind or with your arms. Reassure your inner self that you will never again engage in self-betrayal.

7. You now commit to following your intuition and discernment, so you could never be or stay in any relationship that would hurt you. Fully release the unforgiveness for any mistakes that you think you may have made in any relationship, including your relationship with yourself. And with another very deep cleansing breath, feel yourself healed, whole, and ready to enjoy the love that is the truth about who you really are. As we lose the fear of love, we become more aware of the rich range of feelings that are part of our human experience."

I AM THERE

My home is on the Mountaintop,
Windblown, Cold and Sere;
My home is on the Wild Free Wind,
Which blows, both far and Near.
My home is in the Gentle Rain
That washes 'way your tears,
My home is in the Ocean's Wave,
That soothes away your fears.
My home is in the Fleecy Clouds,
Which grace the Mid-day Sky,
My home is in the Red-Gold Rays
Of the Sun in the Westering Sky.
Each breath you take is part of
The breeze which is my Home,
Each step you take falls gently
On Soil which I have known.
My Home is where I make it;
My bed is where I lie;

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Submitted by Eileen:

When I first moved to Carmel-by-the-Sea, California I lived in the cutest little cottage. "Morning Glory" on Crespi was very tiny, painted white and trimmed in blue. It looked like something straight out of Wales. Often I would arrive home to find someone standing in the garden taking photographs, or sometimes they would knock on the door and ask to see more. One day while working on a sculpture in the back yard, I heard a rustle in the tall hedge. It was Mel Gibson who was visiting the movie star (Patrick MacGoohan) who lived next door. "Oh, Hi", he said, "It's just me, MEL. Great garden you've got there". He felt a little awkward at being discovered.

One day while working among the columbines in the front yard, I had on the usual print dress, an apron, a broad brim hat and dirt up to my elbows. A car drove slowly by. Then it drove by again. The third time it came by, I paused and looked up at the driver. The pale gray Porsche convertible stopped and the driver flashed me a broad smile. "The sight of you in the garden in front of this cottage -- well, it just took my breath away. I had to get another look".

I smiled back and said, "Don't you just love it?"

He said, "Glorious! Well -- it's just FAR OUT".

The charming driver was John Denver. His plane crashed in our bay a few months later. I will never forget that. I regret I didn't invite him in for tea. Anyway, over the years, I painted about a thousand of these.

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=3653727482&category=20158>

(this is where the story is from)

Submitted by Virginia Cowie:

Thich Nhat Hanh: This monk is very revered/respected by people of all faiths. Some of you are probably familiar with him already. I've read one of his books that daughter Dawn has (she's a big fan of his)...so good. Dear soul, he is! Listen to this. You'll hear him speak these meditations himself. Awesome! It requires RealAudio but if you don't have it, you can download it from this page free. Here's the link to the page as well but I think you can just click on the meditation names: http://www.beliefnet.com/story/43/story_4371_1.html

Being Peace Audio meditations by Thich Nhat Hanh

Submitted by Eileen:

The makers of M&M candies has teamed up with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation to raise funds through the sale of their new "pink & white" M&M candies. For each 8-ounce bag of the special candies sold, the makers of M&M (Masterfoods) will donate 50 cents to the foundation. The next time you want a treat, please pick up a bag (now sold in stores nationwide) - you will be donating to a great cause and satisfying your sweet tooth.

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

Helen Keller

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"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, teachers."

Richard Bach (Illusions)

[illegible]

IN JOHN'S MEMORY

October 15, 1997 - Gannett News Service

John Denver harbored dream to fly in space - by Tom Roland and Rick de Yampert

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - John Denver was once hailed as "the pied piper of environmentalism." The label was deserved by a man who unabashedly hailed the Rocky Mountains, West Virginia country roads, sunshine and ocean sailing - uncharacteristic topics for the pop song format. He also was a pilot and harbored a deep ambition to fly in space.

Denver, who died Sunday in an airplane crash, saw his "pied piper" position as a mission. "Environmentalists need to talk about social issues," he said. "The environment is more than just whales. We each have our own personal environment - the emotional, the physical, the spiritual environment." Denver's concern with those environments formed the basis for his career, as a singer and as a songwriter. "When I write a song, I want to take the personal experience or observation I have and express it in as universal a way as possible," he said. "I absolutely believe there is something in all of us that binds us together."

The mid-1970s peak of Denver's career, however, helped to momentarily tear apart a portion of Nashville's music community. Denver won the Entertainer of the Year award from the Country Music Association in 1975, as well as song of the year for "Back Home Again." When his name was pulled from the envelope for the entertainer trophy, Charlie Rich torched it with a pocket lighter.

In retrospect, the moment was ironic, for "Back Home Again" and "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" - his biggest hit that year - were more innately country than the cosmopolitan country sound that Rich, and many other country stars, then employed. But Denver, a Colorado resident, and Olivia Newton-John, an Australian who concurrently found success in both pop and country, were outsiders to Nashville. In reaction to their influence on country music, some performers established the Academy of Country Entertainers, a short-lived organization designed to promote Music City talent.

"I think John and Olivia caused Nashville to maybe get its act together," Bill Ivey, executive director of the Country Music Foundation, said. "I would not say that was the only element, but when you look at what happened in the late '70s with the Outlaws, and people like Emmylou Harris, and the strong back-to-basics movement, I think it was in part motivated by the success John and Olivia Newton-John had in the country field."

Denver freely acknowledged in more recent years that every hit he ever had required a great deal of work on the part of RCA Records to get a response at pop radio. His songs were, after all, simple, plaintive and direct - not what you expected to hear on mid-'70s pop radio. "He could kind of get to the heart with a kind of positive message," Ivey said. "I think of his songs as being the kinds of songs that will last around camp fires for generations. While he didn't have the ironic or sardonic edge that some folk singer-songwriters specialize in, I think John's more all-American, positive kind of simple approach to love and life has a place."

Eight of his songs found a place in pop music's Top 10 during the 1970s, and six of those singles - "Take Me Home Country Roads," "Sunshine On My Shoulders," "Annie's Song," "Back Home Again," "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" and "I'm Sorry" - sold 1 million records. In addition, he starred opposite George Burns in the 1978 movie "Oh, God!," and won an Emmy for his 1975 TV special "An Evening With John Denver." He wrote the Peter, Paul & Mary hit "Leavin' On A Jet Plane," hosted the Grammy awards numerous times, and his Windsong record label was the launching pad for the Starland Vocal Band's 1976 hit "Afternoon Delight."

He also scored country hits in the 1980s with "Some Days Are Diamonds (Some Days Are Stones)" and "Wild Montana Skies," a duet with Emmylou Harris. He also collaborated with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on "And So It Goes," from the 1989 album "Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Vol. II," and with Newton-John on 1975's "Fly Away." "He will be so missed," Newton-John said Monday. "He did so much for our planet, and he left us a beautiful legacy with his music."

Denver spent a month in Nashville during March 1981 to record the "Some Days Are Diamonds" album with producer Larry Butler. They rode horses and hung out at Butler's ranch, but music was never far from Denver's consciousness. "The guy was a music addict,"

Butler said. "Every time I looked around, he had a guitar in his hand, working on guitar licks or trying out new song ideas. When he heard a song idea in something somebody said, you'd see his eyes dilate."

Born Henry John Deutschendorf in Roswell, N.M., on Dec. 31, 1943, Denver grew up in a mobile Air Force family. As a student at Texas Tech University, he performed in the local club scene, but in 1964 he dropped out of college, adopted Denver as his stage name, and moved to Los Angeles. He joined the Chad Mitchell trio for a stint. After fashioning the Peter, Paul & Mary hit, Denver became one of the icons for the 1970s, with his denims and wire-rimmed glasses reinforcing his clean-cut, environmentally aware image. "He was so different from anybody else," Butler praised. "A lot of the people in the music business didn't think he was serious about the country aspect of his writing. That was his roots. He could take you on trips with his lyrics, like the Rocky Mountains, a country road. He painted pictures with his words that the eyes never saw."

Though his hit-making waned in the late '80s and throughout the '90s, Denver continued to be known for his involvement with humanitarian and environmental causes. He served on a presidential commission on world and domestic hunger with fellow musician Harry Chapin, and visited Africa in 1985 to call attention to the hunger there. In 1976 he established the Windstar Foundation to promote environmental education and research. In 1992 he attended the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but he was disappointed by the meeting and told Gannett News Service, "I was embarrassed about the United States' role at Earth Summit. It's the first time I've ever been embarrassed about our country."

In the late 1980s, he performed benefit concerts for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Russia, and the children of the civilian astronauts who died in the Challenger disaster. Denver's interest in aviation was so deep that he actively pursued his dream to fly in space. "I was actually the catalyst for the whole Civilians in Space program," he told The Tennessean in 1989. "I had virtually been told that the first flight was mine until President Reagan said he was going to send a teacher first. NASA didn't turn me down."

Denver also said the Soviets had approached him about participating in one of their space flights (he had performed in the Soviet Union in 1985). But the impending birth of a daughter, upheaval in the Soviet Union and the \$10 million cost for the flight scuttled Denver's space-travel dream.

It is ironic that Denver, an accomplished pilot who was licensed to fly everything from antique biplanes to Lear jets, would die in a plane crash. But his passion for the air, for outer space and for the planet merely underscored his concern for people and their environment. "He struck me as somebody who had more to say about what was going on in the world than just music, and he seemed incredibly sincere about it," said Lon Helton, who interviewed him several times for syndicated national radio shows. "The things he said he cared about, I felt he really did."

IN JOHN'S WORDS

From the Summer 1987 Windstar Journal:

The following is excerpted from John Denver's opening presentation, "A Personal Perspective" at the 1987 Choices for the Future Symposium:

"There is beauty above me. There is beauty below me. There is beauty all around me. I walk in beauty." This is an old Anasazi Indian saying, and from our spring Windstar Journal, in Dik Darnell's article, a quote from Sitting Bull: "See brothers, spring is here. The Earth has taken the embrace of the sun and soon we shall see the children of that love. All seeds are awake and all animals. From this great power, we too have our lives. And therefore we concede to our fellow creatures even our animal fellows, even to every living thing, the same right as ourselves, to live on this Earth."

I wanted to read these poems because they demonstrate one of the things that I want to

share with you. I would like to have you use this in your listening this weekend, and if it serves you in your life.

A poem is a work of art. Now, I'm sure there's probably as many definitions for art as there are people in the room. I would like to share with you my definition of art. Art is a window into yourself. In the experience of art you discover who you are. There's nothing you can do about it. It is magic in that way.

Let me explain. Perhaps you see a beautiful painting, a scene of the ocean, the sun setting, the palms waving in the breeze, and all of a sudden something might come to the surface. Something you can't restrain. What comes up may be your memory of a time when you were at peace. Your heart and your eyes were open to that beauty. It comes up in a flood. When you hear a song or see a dance and the emotion comes, that's art working. That's what art is for. It's a way for you to really begin to discover yourself, because what you're experiencing there is yourself. That's who you are. You are the truth. So the value of art is that it shows you where you come from, what you believe in and the truth about yourself.

I propose to you that this weekend will be for many and hopefully for all of you, a work of art. Perhaps out of listening to these speakers, getting to know each other and sharing your visions, something will come up for you that is like a flood. Something that is so clear that it cannot be denied. Something that is truly who you are. I ask you to listen to that when it comes up, both this weekend and in the days ahead. Be open to that happening. Don't shut it away when you start to feel it. Whether it's an emotion, a laugh, a pain, a fear or the kind of thing that says, "You know, that makes sense to me. That's how I feel. I've never heard anybody say it like that before, but that's how it is."

That's what happens for me. Sometimes I notice people in the audience when I'm singing "My Sweet Lady" or another love song, and the guy has his arm around his lady and he turns to her and says "I was going to write that song. If he hadn't beat me to it, I would have. Because that's how I feel." That's what I get to accomplish when I'm working at my best as a songwriter and as a performer. I can put it out there so clearly that people say "Yeah, that's how I feel."

So you ask questions and you start looking for what you can do. You ask, "How can I demonstrate these things that I feel, these things that I believe? How can I do whatever is possible in me to live a sustainable life?" Part of the imbalance of everything that I see in the world is due to a lack of sustainability. I don't see how we can continue to sustain our lives and lifestyles. Fifty cents of every dollar we spend on food goes to transporting it to the consumer. It takes 80 gallons of gasoline to grow an acre of corn today. It's hard to believe they grew corn back before they discovered gasoline!

One of the things that I have endeavored to do is to expand that beyond things that I am able to write in my songs. Part of that has been my growing process, if you will, because I think I'm putting more depth, certainly a broader and more human experience in the songs that I'm writing today. I couldn't write "I Want To Live" 20 years ago. Twenty years ago I wrote "Poems, Prayers and Promises," ten years ago "I Want To Live," and a couple of years ago "It's About Time." Last year "Let Us Begin (What Are We Making Weapons For?)," which I'll tell you more about in a moment. That's a process in which you keep peeling away layers and getting deeper inside yourself and farther outside. In that process you become more and more aware of the levels and the subtleties of life around you.

The best thing that I think I've done in my career and perhaps in my life (in this instance they are totally connected), was a private initiative to go to the Soviet Union. I know that people everywhere are the same. Truly. Mothers and fathers everywhere. Lovers everywhere. Children are like children everywhere! In the Soviet Union, I had an incredibly moving experience and out of it came a song. Quite often the completion of something moving in my life is giving it a form in words and music. But on this particular occasion that wasn't enough. Last October I was again in the Soviet Union with Jerry Jampolsky and Diane Cirincione and their "Children as Teachers of Peace" program. I made arrangements to record with a friend of

mine, Alexandre Gradsky, today's most popular male singer-songwriter in the Soviet Union. He is known as Sasha to close to a hundred million people.

With Sasha's help on the Soviet end, together with the help of other friends I made there on previous trips, I re-recorded the song "Let Us Begin (What Are We Making Weapons For?)" in a studio in Moscow. To my knowledge, it's the first time an American and a Soviet artist have recorded together. It's the first time that the same record was released simultaneously on Melodiya Records in the Soviet Union (which is the only record label they have) and on RCA Records in the United States. We made a video and again I think the combination of the video, the song itself and its being sung by people from two really different parts of the world, is the best thing that I've done in my career.

I wanted to share that as an aspect of individuals continually taking it another step further and asking, "What can I do now?" It was a very courageous thing for Sasha and the other people involved, and it was a very difficult thing for me to accomplish.

This leads me to something more in regard to my personal perspective, that is our ability to grow, our willingness to grow and our commitment to act out of that growth. You know there are things in each of our lives where we can look and say, "I know better now." I'm reminded of that old country song, "Oh, if I could just go back and know what I know now!" But that's not the way it works. Even if we do know better now. Part of what goes on in the world and certainly in our relationship with the world is acting out of knowing better now, and it's more important now than ever before. It's one thing to see someone in the car up ahead throw litter out onto the street, and to forgive them by saying, "They don't know any better." It's quite another thing to allow neighborhood industries to continue polluting our air and water and say they don't know any better. It's not the case, nor is it the same. It's unforgivable. Nor can we forgive our country when we see it spend the majority of our resources, time and energy on weapons at the expense of our health and the education of our children and the future. The same is true when we look at the results of the Chernobyl accident last year. Irreversible damage is being done and yet we continue to act out of ignorance concerning our lives on this planet together.

People are always asking me, "What can I do?" I don't want to tell anybody what to do. I want them to do what they are inclined to do. I want you to do what comes up for you. Because what comes up for you is the truth, is real, and will be effectual. If you keep looking, if you keep asking the question, things will constantly come up. Then you need to have the courage to act on that.

Now I also don't want to tell you the "way that is." I ask you to hear what I'm about to say as my perception of the way that it is. I want you to listen to this openly, and see if any of it rings in your heart. That's all I want you to hear, if some little thing, a chord, like that feeling I mentioned earlier when I was talking about art, gets plucked right down here. It's not important whether one agrees or disagrees, what counts is one's ability to recognize that what you feel intuitively can be translated into words and actions.

Now what this has to do with is change. If you look at events like the accident at Chernobyl, the eruption of Mount St. Helens or AIDS, they are very real occurrences that represent incredible change that are right now effecting our entire planet. These things are happening very quickly. We are immediately confronted with these problems. That's one aspect of change and we have to deal with it according to our own ability. That's as simple as I can be about looking at change, seeing what's going on all around us.

There's a statement I wanted to quote, also from the spring Windstar Journal. In Payson R. Stevens article, it said, "We the people of the world face a new responsibility for our global future. Through our economic and technological activity we are now contributing to significant global changes on Earth within the span of a few human generations. We have become part of the Earth's system and one of the forces for Earth change," whether we want to or not. Truly one of the things that Windstar emerged from was a vision that changes were going to happen to our planet. Changes that most people were not going to be able to handle. I wanted

to create a facility, a place, that would be able to respond to these changes, to perhaps guide people through these changes. I look at them as planetary changes.

I have done a lot of thinking and research about changes. I found out several things in the process. I had a couple of ideas. Why is it that every aboriginal, indigenous society has legends of pre-civilizations? The Chinese have ten. The Hindus have four, the present one being the fifth. The Aztecs and the Mayans speak of past civilizations through their inscriptions and traditions. (I am indebted to Greta Woodrew's *On a Slide of Light*, New York, Macmillan, 1981, for this information.) Although they all have different names, every civilization has legends about times or places like Atlantis, Lemuria or Mu.

Now how could that happen? What could possibly happen that would destroy a civilization to the degree that it would start over again? I thought a lot about that. I didn't think nuclear war was possible because I've learned a little bit about plutonium and some of these things. And I don't see how the Earth, which as we understand is some 4.3 billion years old to get where we are today, could start over from that kind of a holocaust, if you will. So what is it that happens?

I asked Bucky Fuller about the possibility that the Earth is a magnet. And magnets, to my knowledge, shift poles on a given frequency and a given cycle, depending on the size, the density, the purity of materials, that make up the magnet.

The Earth is a magnet. It has a North and South Pole. Maybe it switches poles, too. The Encyclopedia Britannica has information about the mid-Atlantic ridge where the Earth is actually being formed or born. As it's spreading apart and comes up from the interior of the planet, it forms layers. There are some 176 pieces of evidence in these layers that prove the shift in polarity from one age to another. It's proven that this occurs. I think that's very interesting.

If the Earth does switch poles, how long does that take? And what might human beings do to affect that change? It's a built-in cycle. So what do we do that either affects that or recognizes it? Can we live our lives accordingly to that possibility?

In my opinion, when the Earth was formed it stabilized itself. Now it's an unstable planet. We wobble in our orbit, we're not perfectly round, and our orbit around the sun is not a perfect circle. This is an unstable planet we live on. Now, it balanced itself once. And maybe more times is what I'm trying to tell you. It has to balance itself. I think it's getting ready for a rebalancing.

You know, if you look around you, you see 13 to 18 million people starving to death per year, on a planet that produces enough food to feed twice the population. That doesn't sound like balance to me.

Look at over 800 million people living in abject poverty, illiteracy and without access to medicine and things we take for granted. That doesn't sound like balance. Look at nations spending 900 billion dollars a year in weaponry out of our fear and insecurity. We in the United States spend close to 300 billion dollars every year. If you don't count Saturdays and Sundays, that's a billion dollars a day. That doesn't sound like balance to me. We had 47,000 small family farms go out of business last year. Just about as many small family businesses go down the drain. It doesn't sound like balance. If you look at the weather and look at the droughts and things like that, it doesn't sound like balance. It occurs to me that what we have done affects this cycle shift. Who knows? Nobody knows.

I do believe that everything has a purpose, that everything that happens in our life is purposeful. So I look at this kind of a change and I wonder what the purpose of it is. Especially if it's something that's built in.

Then what is the purpose of this? We begin as "I am." Consciousness. That very first aspect of consciousness separates you from everybody else. I am. I am not you. I am me. I understand

you're like me, but you're not me. I am. I think that we begin in separation. A part of our path is to find completion, if you will, and wholeness to learn that the "I am" includes you and every other aspect of life on this planet.

I look at this as something that is built in by the incredible intelligence that created all of this. Whether you call her God or not makes no difference to me. I think that there's something to keep us all from destroying ourselves and our potential for being here, which nuclear weapons are capable of doing.

What it's about is recognizing the change in consciousness and making the consciousness shift from "you or me" to "you and me." If we can't do that out of the fact of 13 to 18 million of our brothers and sisters starve to death every year, 35,000 people everyday, what does it take to learn? When an earthquake happens in Mexico and 10,000 people are killed, it's news all over the world. All kinds of things happen to help these people, and yet 35,000 people starve to death everyday and we do almost nothing about the ongoing persistence of hunger. We no longer see front page stories about this obscenity in our lives. Either we haven't learned or we don't know better. I don't believe either. We have learned and we do know better but we haven't committed ourselves the past two years since We Are the World and Live-Aid. Once again we have dealt with a crisis and been momentarily successful and yet the problems remain to be solved until there are no more hungry. We can do something about it.

There is an analogy about the nuclear arms race that is very interesting. It describes the arms race as being like two people sitting in a puddle of gasoline, spending all of their time, energy and resources making matches. And of course we want to get rid of the matches as quickly as we can. But more importantly we want to get rid of that puddle of gasoline. For me, that puddle of gasoline represents the environment of fear, mistrust and insecurity that we live in. Yet we continue to invest heavily in weaponry, not as my friend Bucky Fuller suggested, investing in "livingry."

I look at all of this and ask "What does it take for us to learn to begin to work together?" It occurs to me that the changes that are going on now may be an effect of changes happening in the interior of the planet. Maybe it's getting ready to rebalance itself. If we could get past all the stuff that separates us from one another and begin to join truly as human beings, we can probably figure that out. We could find, not only some peace in it, but some furthering in it. Then we could recognize how, as this particular civilization on planet Earth, as human beings now, we can take the next step and not be forced back into beginning all over again, which is what I think has happened before.

I think that there are very real changes coming upon us as human beings on planet Earth. I believe that I have a role and we all have critical roles to play in affecting those changes and being responsive to those changes. Part of that is why I go around the world and sing of the environment and the state of the Earth and its people. Part of that is why I'm so committed to the end of hunger on our planet and the end of nuclear weapons, and encourage space exploration and alternative forms of "livingry." These are the opportunities for us to begin to work together and to dispel the environment of fear and mistrust in which we live.

This weekend we'll talk about these things and the choices that we can make as individuals. We have the opportunity not only to recognize the changes and respond to them but to begin, out of who and what we are and our conviction, to put ourselves on the line as an expression of our commitment. That is going to effect positive change all over the planet.

As I said last year, "We are the living place of incredible possibilities. As we discover ourselves, as we expand our knowledge, as we make conscious choices, we can create the world that we've dreamed about for ever and ever and ever." We can end hunger. We can eliminate AIDS. We can rid ourselves of nuclear weapons. We can begin to live in peace, in prosperity, in humanity, and in spirituality. It is my sincere hope that what goes on here for you this weekend will be a catalyst toward that kind of activity in your lives."

Editor's Note (Eileen): I know that although John has left the planet physically he is still concerned about our plight and wishes to remain involved in the healing process. This in itself implies a continuum between this world and the next, and validates the importance, necessity,

[illegible]

from a Yahoo JD group message board (by Laura):

Anyway, I first did "O Holy Night" the year that JD's Christmas in Concert CD came out, and his version brought me to tears. WOW! So when I was approached to perform it at our own church concert, I looked for inspiration from that version. I needed the inspiration badly. It would be the first time performing in front of an audience since my accident that robbed me of my vision, and truth be told, I was scared to death. I had visions of my voice cracking with emotion.

Fast forward to Xmas 2003...same routine, same song and this time, as the light from the spotlight shone down, a bright yet hazy light appeared to me out of my left eye...the one that had a one in a million chance of ever letting me see the light (and it would have to be bright) of day again. It was like being touched by the man himself.

I was shaking like a lear when I got off the stage. My male friend had noticed something was wrong because, in his words, "your face had a weird look on it." He thought I had lost my marbles, but when he took me to my specialist I found out I wasn't imagining things. Yeah, I did see a light...not much...but hey I am satisfied. It is light - the first light I have seen in a long time. I've seen the haze of a warm fire and can tell if the sun is bright on a sunny day. If it is a dreary cloudy day I see nothing because nothing is bright. So now I look forward to listening to the weather forecasts...LOL.

Faith is a very personal thing, and I've talked to God a lot the last few years. He listened, and he gave me the best Xmas present I could ever hope for...his light. As for JD...he was there too...I know he was.

[illegible]

Blessing Ceremony for Mother Earth

Medicine Wheel Turtle Island - The Blessing Ceremony For Mother Earth's Mountains & Water Magnificent Nineteen +1 = 20

A vision and a message from the magnificent and wondrous mountains found in America's North Western peaks has come to ask the Indigenous Nations and humanity to come to the aid of Mother Earth and her inhabitants.

She has asked the Indigenous Nations to assist in the re-connection of humanity's awareness not only to herself, but also to the universal presence of the stars. The dream spoke in a mysterious way, reminding us WE are the "keepers of the earth and its sacred wisdom." WE ARE to help all things and ourselves once again realize that "all things are related" upon earth and within the universe.

The Elementals of earth, wind, fire and water have asked us to prepare the mountain peaks and bodies of water for a powerful ceremony. The ancestral spirits have spoken giving direction to build and reset into harmony a huge medicine wheel. This wheel is to be activated in the spring or summer of 2004, (date will be announced). The boundaries of this medicine wheel will encompass nineteen well-known mountain peaks and bodies of water. It will cover an area whose radius is some 600 miles, with Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming as its center. The areas are located in close proximity of these sacred sites:
· Sullivan Lake, North · Saskatchewan River · Qu'appelle River · Souris River · James River · Missouri River · Platte River · Arkansas River · Cimarron River · Colorado River or (Lake Mead) · Lake Tahoe · Okanagan Lake · Mt. Taylor · Mt. Humphrey in the San Francisco Peaks · Mt. Whitney · Mt. Shasta · Three Sisters · Mt. Rainier · Lake Louise · Grand Teton Peaks (THE CENTER OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL)

The spiritual vision is calling the Indigenous Nations, along with other cultures, living within this 600-mile area to come forth and put our relationship with nature back into harmony and order with sacred vibrations. We will come forth with the use of sacred prayers, utilizing our drums, songs and sacred vibrational tools.

By utilizing prayer and the sacred vibrations of our drums, by chanting our songs these ancient sites will re-vitalize. The intent of the pre-ceremony is to place back into harmony and balance those lands, mountains and bodies of water that are now "out-of-harmony," due to the reckless development within these areas that has happened within the United States at large. The dream mentions that when the ceremony takes place negative thought forms, which lie within these areas, will be released.

Releasing this 600-mile area out of the bondage of negativity is for the benefit of our families, us and for mother earth. By re-attuning these sacred sites, to work together with one another as the ancestor's once did in the past before colonization took place, the ceremony then becomes an important tool to teach all individuals the importance of our mother earth and the blessings she has given all of us. The re-harmonization will help bring back the rains and so the springs will come to life once again. Water that sustains life, is our lifeblood that is blessed by our father sun, watched over by the universe.

The animals, winged ones, water beings, trees and rocks as well as the Creator of the Universe will work with us to vibrate the same thought forms. This will bring about a co-creative effort of harmony blessing the earth, the wind, the fire and the water. The vibrations and sacred prayers will flow through Yellowstone Lake to its twin complement the Caspian Sea on the other side of the earth. The duality we live in requires us to consider "both sides of the earth" when striving to keep balance if we are to keep things in harmony. In doing so, we will see a significant change in the attitudes of all those living inside and outside the wheel.

Not only in Yellowstone but also in the Caspian Sea area of Turkistan, Iran, Iraq and the surrounding countries. The powerful vibrations of war, the robbing of the lands minerals and resources are causing mother earth to fall from harmony and balance there, here and everywhere.

These negative vibrations are affecting the Yellowstone/Grand Teton National Park areas producing small earthquakes and volcanic activity underneath the Yellowstone Lake causing a caldera to rise. Not only in this vicinity, the trembling continues around the world, as her environments of weather change everywhere. The Eastern Shoshone from the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming and others from the area who choose to participate will gather under the Grand Tetons, the center of the wheel, in Grand Teton National Park. At the same time other tribal nations; groups and cultures within the areas of the nineteen sacred sites will use their songs, chants and drumming to vibrate and bless these areas.

Simultaneously we in the Wyoming area will combine our ancestral songs, chants and drums within the Grand Tetons. This combined effort will, without doubts bless our Mother Earth and all her creations beyond imagination. When these sacred mountains and waterways have been reset back into working order, balance and harmony Mother Nature will be re-orchestrated in beauty. Upon these sacred sites will be placed sacred stones with prayers upon them to hold the energy. Electrically-magnetically charged energy vibrating at a high velocity will heal Grandmother Spider's web.

Reconstructing the web of Life back into a blossoming flower , Heaven upon Earth will burst forth and everything will once again emerge into harmony. The rains will fall and the waters and springs will flow again. Plants will grow, animals will flourish and "all things related" will prosper.

To bring this about, I have been directed by a vision to travel and talk with the Indigenous Nations and other cultures. I am to ask for their assistance in activating these sacred sites. We must all do our parts as humans to bring about harmony within this huge star gate called a medicine wheel. For what is above is below. As in the universe, so it is upon the surface of our mother earth and below her surface all within the crystalline matrix, makes up her great heart.

After the ceremony the Indigenous Nations, groups and cultures that have participated in the manifesting of this vision will then work together. This will awaken and re-integrate the ancient teachings of the Indigenous Nations as brothers and sisters. By working with all sacred traditional knowledge's we will bring harmony back to our mother, we will then all begin to remember our ceremonies. This is to be a joint effort of all involved. We must be in the highest form of sacred thought while in prayer. We must work in a straightforward manner. There will be no disagreements as to who is right and who is wrong, for the twenty mountains and rivers of this medicine wheel have already had enough of this. The vision showed that this undertaking would be a joint effort working together in peace. Working with our families as we are surrounded by the four colors of race, mankind. We shall bring back peace of mind to our spirits, to our hearts, and to our homelands. We will release the bondage of negative thought forms and prejudice within our minds for the betterment of all living things. Mother Earth will assist us in these areas that are being prepared. She will activate the sacred vibration of harmony throughout the sacred medicine wheel.

In closing, I pray that the whole world will choose to be aware of this ceremony as it takes place in the spring of 2004. I pray each will choose to be in a sacred site meditating on the peace and harmony we all so desire for our future. The human race is depending on us for WE ARE the "keepers of the earth and its sacred wisdom. "We are the one's we have been waiting for," Hopi prophecy.

Bennie E. LeBeau, Sr., Eastern Shoshone Wind River Indian Reservation
Ft. Washakie, Wyoming - January 5th, 2004

"The Circle has healing power. In the Circle, we are all equal. When in the Circle, no one is in front of you. No one is behind you. No one is above you. No one is below you. The Sacred Circle is designed to create unity. The Hoop of Life is also a circle. On this hoop there is a place for every species, every race, every tree and every plant. It is this completeness of Life that must be respected in order to bring about health on this planet."

Dave Chief, Oglala Lakota

THE WONDER OF IT ALL
by Ralph Marston
Do you ever wonder
At the wonder of it all?
Do you ever stand in awe
of the tiniest things
and how perfectly they work together?
Do you ever stop to think
about all the possibilities
and how even though they have no limit
they grow in number with every minute?
Do you ever wonder
when the leaves flutter down in autumn
at the incomprehensible power of life
that brings them back in spring?
Do you watch the waves roll in
and then look out far beyond them
where the water seems to touch the sky
and realize
that the vast expanse before your eyes
is only a small little corner
of all there really is?
And do you comprehend that all there really is,
as unimaginably grand as it may seem,
is only a smaller corner still
of all that there can be?
Do you ever wonder
how love can stay alive
past every pleasure and every pain
and even when there can be no hope
there is more than ever?
Do you ever struggle to lift a heavy rock and wonder
how a massive mountain can rise
thousands of feet above the plain
without even trying?
Do you ever realize that
no matter how much you may know,
no matter how many wonders you may have experienced,
there will always, always be more?
Do you ever wonder
why it is you wonder
and why you know what beauty is
even though you can't define it?
Do you ever wonder
who is doing the wondering,
who is looking out through your eyes
and feeling completely at home
with the wonder of it all?
Whatever you believe,
whatever you profess,
whatever you doubt or fear or hope for,
there are some things
your heart cannot deny
when you let go
and let yourself know
the wonder of it all.
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Editor's note: This poem is from the website: <http://greatday.com>. It has beautiful slide shows

with images from Nature.

HEAVENLY CONNECTIONS

from the Lightworker.com message board: The Harmony Heart - Message from Metatron:
January 5, 2004: A Lecture and A Lesson

The Lecture

Let the Dance of the Harmony Heart Begin

Can you hear the music, dear ones?

It is time to re-member that the music comes through your own heart space.

There was a time and a place where the Star Angels sang to each other.

Can you allow for the certainty of these memories to surface within you once again?

Are you ready? Let us do this, if you are ready to allow for your heart to sing again for it is surely the easiest way for you to maintain yourself within BEING.

As a Being of Divine Love who is in-deed and in-thought equating in-action in Divine Service to All That Is, it is your heritage to claim the music that is within you.

This is the year that the music of your world merges with the music of the stars. This magic comes from the merging of one heart with another heart and then with another heart and so on and so on. This is the Dance of the Harmony Heart. The Dance Starts With You and Your Heart and Your BEING the Harmony Heart. It is your words and your thoughts that dance together, creating harmony within you and your heart space.

Being in Harmony with your Heart is more than Being in Balance or in Center as so often has been spoken of. For to be in balance or within center implies there is a counterbalance to these words and that is not the object. Can you see that if I say the goal is harmony instead of the object is harmony that there is something less than the goal that can be achieved? Yes, each word within your reality is of that importance. Utilizing words of limitation do just that to harmony. As you are striving to BE who you are in consciousness of ALL, and with the knowingness that thoughts are creations, it is the very words being used that must reflect the intention desired within you. This is a part of creating Harmony.

It is time to discard the discord that has been playing as harmony on this planet. Discord is Harmony without JOY. Discord has played here for eons and it was necessary in your past times, for Discord was one way to assist in experiencing all. Even so for all the recorded history of this place, haven't the musicians, composers and singers had their place? So many, many times they gave their piece/peace to you and to all, many times at the sacrifice of their own Being. They could have chosen an easier path and ignored the harmony they felt from within as is always the option within free will. They could have but, they could not be silenced; they would not be silenced. For in the cosmic picture of it, they provided some balance and memories within discord for HARMONY.

So many times we have witnessed those who have tried to stop the music in oh so many ways. Prisoners of your wars, who joined their voices together to sing; we heard them and we sang with them. Instruments made of earth, combs and paper to us are surely as glorious as any instrument that can be purchased on your planet. And blessed are the children who sing when they are surrounded by sorrow. And even you, dear one, you who for-no-reason-stop-and-start-to-sing, we hear you and you do not sing alone. We here have rejoiced and joined with you in times when there were efforts to stop the music.

The flow of the music could not and cannot be stopped. For as long as there are You-man hearts that beat, there is the beat of the sound of music to be heard and the music does and has always encouraged you each to be that Beating Heart of the Harmony Heart. The flow of the Harmony Heart flows just as surely as the light of the River of One Love flows within each of you. And the beat goes on.

This is the time and this is place for there is NOW and there is HERE.

The Lesson

"To Breathe is the Request for Lessons."

BEING THE HARMONY HEART

Time for fun.

First, let there be music. Turn on your stereos, your radios, your TVs, your computers and let there be the sound of music for you to hear and .be in-joy. Let there be music as you tune

Still your mind. Flood your brain with the music that is playing. Let the music carry you away within yourself. Music is the same as the light of love so many of you already know and feel. Music alters vibrations just as you already know light to do. Sound alters vibrations just as light does. Sound is another layer of love. Take the music in through your crown chakra and allow it to cascade its way down, down through all of your chakras and into GAIA and back again. For this layer of sound is the same as the layer of light that you are so familiar with. The sound vibrations resound through each of the cells of your bodies; it is something you can feel. For as you take in the vibration of the music that you hear with your ears and feel with your bodies, it is the beating of your own heart beat.

So very many of you have longed to be able to feel us here on your side, on be-half of ALL, I tell you when you take the music into your heart space and feel the beat of it; we are there, we have always been there and we will always be there. Hasn't music always been a part of you? Yes? Aren't there special songs that re-mind you of special events in this lifetime? Music to celebrate with, music to cry with; yes, each of you have created this connection to your-self and to ALL that is through sound. You have felt this before and now you can re-mem-ber this is a key for you. The keys of music, the notes of sounds, the tones of what you call music, this is part of your heritage, seize it and never let it go. And when you let go of your mind and go to your heart space, you are HARMONY. You are the HARMONY HEART. Put your hand to your chest and feel the beat of your heart. As long as you choose to have a heart that beats, you have direct access to the HARMONY HEART. Assess to the HARMONY HEART cannot be taken from you. If the ebb and flow of the HARMONY HEART is not as strong as you would like, turn up the music and get inside the flow of it. Truth is, the more music and sound you allow into your life, the stronger the beat of the HARMONY HEART grows and the stronger the connections to ALL. There is JOY in that! Let there be Joy To The World, and IN-JOY!

Yes. Just as you take colors of light and blend them together within love, you can blend sound and light together within love. There is always more for you continue to breathe, do you not?

Do you realize the truth of the Harmony Heart? It is the Heart that Sings with Laughter. And So It Is.

FROM HE WHO SEES THE EAGLE

You notice how there is some preaching going on out there amongst my listeners and others about "the proof being in the pudding" and "actions speaking louder than words." Well, I have something to say about this, actually.

Be careful about judging folks by what they do, necessarily. Many people can fit others' actions into their own agendas--make them right or wrong according to their own biases and subjections. And many people with the most decent of intentions aren't able to do all the things they would do if their circumstances were different. So yes, words can be cheap if they are not backed up by actions; HOWEVER--not necessarily those actions which are noticeable by those who may be watching in order to form judgments!

What matters isn't the grandest, most beautiful website (although I do appreciate the sincere, honest, creative efforts that go into many of these). Nor is it the number of CDs produced, nor books written, nor the lavishness of the events held in my name, either, that count. It isn't who has the best or most pictures of me, or taken with me. Believe it or not, it isn't even the most outward altruistic of actions that allow one's soul to evolve and progress while still in the flesh. (Although please do not undermine the importance of caring for others less fortunate; that's not the point I'm trying to make here.)

So...now you are probably wondering, well...what is it then? What can I do that will make a difference to my personal spiritual growth? Is there any one thing?

Well, yes. And no. One key word is HEART. Not what is said by someone about how important the heart is, and compassion, and all that. But maybe it's how someone responds to others in a loving, non-judgmental manner...and whether or not they are grammatically correct or eloquent in their speech is not the point...but do they actually EMIT the compassion they profess to uphold? Yes, they can feel pride about being a good Samaritan for giving somebody a ride on the way home, but if when they arrive home they yell at their wife for something they are displeased about , they have missed the point completely. Okay, so that was one of my own lessons to learn. But I observe it over and over again amongst so many people who deny they are on any ego-trip. If the truth be known, every human is on an ego-trip, whether they acknowledge it or not. Because that is what keeps you able to accomplish what you need to in your body. In a rare moment of possibly being released from that--as some have--there is a sense of oneness so complete that true bliss is quite known; however, it is so overcoming and overwhelming that nothing else can be as deserving of our attention during that time! So the ego must be allowed to serve its purpose, but yet not be acknowledged one bit beyond that. And that is where most people fall short of finding and living that balance of Right Place for Ego. Because there is the other side of it, where you might feel why bother, I'm just a loser, with nothing to offer anybody...so you don't even try. And that, my friends, will set you back as well, for that is an ego trip of a different sort--one that refuses to accept any connection with others at all.

So please, be gentle with each other out there, and before you judge another I ask that you take a look inside your own heart. Have you responded in kind? Although you have fed the hungry and clothed the needy, have you honored your friend who had to leave your party early? Or did you show just a little bit of resentment there so they left with some guilt or sadness around their own heart? I would like to emphasize once more that it IS the little (perhaps mostly unnoticed) things that do so much to make a house a home...and the heart a palace of love.

God bless you all, today and always.

Peace, JOHN.

John about his songs and music in general (*submitted by Eileen & myself*):

1-24-04

"I would like to see you build on the songs. Create something with them, consciousness-raising activities, etc.

I had written more songs, and maybe they will be recorded someday. I could've written more, perhaps, but I was intent on searching for new meanings from some of the older ones as well. Such as Rhymes and Reasons. I wrote that song for UNICEF. No, I didn't know it at the time because I wrote it in 1967, but it became the theme song for UNICEF, and that fits the vision of UNICEF very well so that's why I say was the purpose of its being written. But perhaps

[Chuckles.] I say 'we' because I am so very much a part of you all still. So very much interactive in your lives, to the extent that we are able to connect that way....You know I'm not gone. You hear me whispering in the wind and laughing at your human-ness that I relate to oh so well. You see me soaring and lacing the skies and you relish in our synchronicity. And there is nothing that makes me happier than the love of all of you, my family. This is truly a blessing, and God is so very, very good--not a grumpy old man that belts out orders from the sky, but a Great Spirit, our Creator, who loves us more than we can fathom. But the more we love each other the more we can begin to understand...the closer we are to each other the more open we are to receiving this Great Love that is reserved--generated--just for us. This is what Christ meant when he said 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

[illegible]

WILDALERT: Protect Colorado Canyons NCA

The Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Act became law in October 2000. The resulting 122,300-acre CCNCA lies just west of the city of Grand Junction, Colorado. Both ranchers and recreation seekers use the area extensively. Among the recreational opportunities that draw visitors are hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, rafting and kayaking, viewing ancient Native rock art panels, horseback riding and mountain biking in the non-wilderness portion of the CCNCA. The BLM, which manages this land for all Americans, has drafted a Resource Management Plan (RMP) which considers a number of alternatives for the area's management. Sadly, the BLM's preferred alternative plan does not address some serious and growing problems in the area.

While we support the BLM's effort to minimize conflicts between various recreational uses by focusing them in different parts of the NCA, we cannot support its proposal to construct new routes. The draft plan calls for building nearly 23 miles of new roads and trails while closing fewer than 9 miles of existing routes. We strongly believe that the agency should build no new routes unless and until it has completed site-specific analyses to ensure that new routes are needed and that proposed locations are the most environmentally sound.

Colorado River Management

The Colorado River through the NCA is a magnificent corridor by which river rafters, kayakers, and anglers can experience the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness from the water. Conflicts grow between these users and jet ski recreation that disrupts the natural quiet of these wild lands. BLM data show that motorized use generates the single largest number of complaints from visitors, though it accounts for only about 14 percent of river use. That use would continue under the draft plan. We believe the agency should consider banning jet skis from the river and to limit other craft to motors no larger than 5 horsepower.

Wilderness Management

While the BLM has done a good job generally in protecting wilderness values under the draft plan, it would leave open a jeep route through the wilderness to the Rattlesnake Arches. Use of that route will continue to damage the wilderness experience. The route does not belong in wilderness and should be closed to motorized use, allowing it to revert to a footpath.

Livestock Grazing

Cattle grazing is a legitimate use on public lands and is now permitted on 85 percent of the NCA. The desert habitats of the area, however, see scant rainfall each year and are very sensitive to activities that impact the land surface. For this reason, the agency must make grazing management decisions with land health and sustainability in mind. For example, where possible, grazing should be relocated out of fragile areas such as riparian zones. We urge the BLM to consider permanently retiring grazing allotments as ranchers voluntarily relinquish them. And we urge the BLM to ban sheep grazing throughout the NCA. Sheep are harder on the land than cattle and could introduce disease into the wild bighorn sheep herds that use the area. The agency recommends none of these sensible protections in its draft plan.

Contact Information

You can also deliver your personalized comments by regular mail or by fax. Nothing is so influential as your own thoughts in your own words. And if you've had a chance to visit this splendid part of the Colorado Plateau, please note that in your comments.

Regular mail: Jane Ross; CCNCA, Grand Junction Field Office; 2815 H Road; Grand Junction, CO 81506. Fax: 970-244-3083

Information About the Opening of the National Museum of the American Indian

Native Nations Procession - Tuesday, September 21, 2004, 8 a.m.-noon

Native communities and non-Native supporters from throughout the Western Hemisphere will join in a Procession on the National Mall starting at the Smithsonian Castle. The Procession will form a highly symbolic journey eastward to the site of the Opening Ceremony, adjacent to the museum at the foot of the U.S. Capitol building. Thousands of people, many in Native dress and regalia, will walk in unison to the stage of the Grand Opening ceremony. The procession will provide an enduring symbol for the dawning of a new era-the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian.

Opening Ceremony - September 21, 2004, 12 noon-1 p.m.

The ceremony will take place on the National Mall, with the U.S. Capitol as the backdrop. Following the speaking program, there will be significant cultural presentations followed by a Native welcoming ceremony. The museum will then be open to the public with the entrance of both Native elders and children. Participating dignitaries will include NMAI Director W. Richard West, Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and Senator Daniel K. Inouye.

Timed Entry Passes Required for Admission to the Museum

Admission to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian is free to the public, but due to the extraordinary number of visitors expected to visit the museum in Washington, D.C., Timed Entry Passes will be necessary to enter the museum. Same-day Timed Entry Passes will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and can be obtained at the museum on the day of your visit beginning at 10 a.m. (except during opening week, September 21-26, 2004, when pass distribution will begin at 9 a.m.). While we have set aside a large number of same-day passes, we do anticipate they will be distributed quickly. Therefore, you may wish to

consider reserving advanced Timed Entry Passes (limit 10 passes per order) to guarantee your entry to the museum on the day of your visit. You may reserve your Timed Entry Pass in advance for a nominal service fee by visiting www.tickets.com, or you may call Tickets.com toll-free at 866-400-NMAI (6624).

First Nations Night: The Washington Debut of the National Museum of the American Indian
Sunday, September 26, 2004, 7-11 p.m.

This ticketed fundraising reception showcases the museum to the Washington, D.C., community. Galleries will be staffed with cultural interpreters and programming will be offered in the museum. Proceeds from this event will fund education initiatives. For more information on First Nations Night, please contact Lorraine Maughlin at maughlinl@si.edu.

First Americans Festival

Tuesday, September 21-Sunday, September 26, 2004

Immediately following the Grand Opening ceremony, the museum will commence a major six-day festival paying tribute to some of the most beloved and prominent Native American musicians, dancers, and storytellers. More than 300 singers, dancers, and storytellers, representing 30 to 40 Native communities from throughout the hemisphere, will perform traditional and contemporary programs of contemporary Indian blues, rock, reggae, jazz, and more, representing Native communities in North, South, and Central America. For more information about the Festival, please email NMAIFestival@si.edu.

First Americans Festival FAQs:

When will the First Americans Festival take place?

The festival will begin at 1 p.m., immediately after the opening ceremony on Tuesday, September 21, and continue through late afternoon on Sunday, September 26.

What are the hours of the festival?

From Wednesday, September 22, through Sunday, September 26, the festival will begin at 10 a.m. Daily programs will take place between 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Evening concerts on Tuesday (Sept. 21) through Saturday (Sept. 25) will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will last approximately three hours. The festival will conclude on Sunday, Sept. 26, at 5 p.m.

Where will the festival take place?

On the National Mall in Washington, D.C., between 3rd and 7th Streets.

What will be featured at the First Americans Festival?

The festival will present music, dance, and storytelling from Native tribes and communities of the Americas in styles and genres ranging from the traditional to the contemporary, and a blend of both, plus blues, rock, reggae, hip-hop, jazz, and more. Highly skilled regalia-makers and instrument-makers will demonstrate their arts and discuss how their traditions interweave sound, movement, and materials into timeless traditions-and how such traditions continue to thrive in the twenty-first century. Over 300 festival participants will include recording artists, dance ensembles, and community-based groups from more than 50 communities.

How do I get to the festival?

Parking is extremely limited in the area around the National Mall. We recommend that you use Metrorail. Convenient stops include Smithsonian (Orange/Blue lines), Federal Triangle (Orange/Blue), L'Enfant Plaza (Orange/Blue, Yellow/Green), and Archives/Navy Memorial (Yellow/Green).

What sort of programs will the festival include?

There will be daytime programs (from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) for students and families, and special evening concerts on five consecutive nights (beginning at 5:30 p.m. each night). There will be daily concerts, discussions, demonstrations, and opportunities for audience participation.

What are some of the festival highlights?

Evening concerts will feature some of the best-known contemporary Native performers from the U.S., Canada, Central, and South America. Friday evening's program will feature traditional and contemporary dance performances. Sunday programs will highlight gospel and other sacred song traditions. A full schedule of festival programs will be added to this site later this year.

What kinds of program venues will there be at the festival?

There will be five performance stages, including a large, open-air main music stage at 3rd Street, a large, covered music stage at 7th Street, a large, open-air dance stage at 5th Street, and two more intimate stages for music and storytelling, as well as two pavilions for instrument-making and regalia-making demonstrations. A festival map will be added to this site later this year.

Do I need tickets to attend the festival?

No, all events are free and open to the public with no reserved seating. The main stage at 3rd Street will be lawn-seating only, so we recommend that you bring blankets or portable chairs.

How many people will be attending the festival?

Festival attendance is expected to be in the tens of thousands every day.

Will there be food at the festival?

Yes, there will be four food concessions that will feature foods of the Americas. There are also indoor restaurants at several of the Smithsonian museums and the National Gallery of Art along the Mall, as well as National Park Service concessions serving standard foods.

I will be participating in the Native Nations Procession on September 21. What opportunities might there be for me to participate in the festival?

A stage will be available for a social dance from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on the afternoon of September 21. Several host drums and emcees will be on hand to organize this part of the festival and give everyone who wants to participate an opportunity to do so.

Will there be opportunities to purchase any products at the festival?

Yes, there will be a Festival Marketplace that will offer recordings by artists who are performing at the festival, crafts by festival demonstrators, museum publications, and other NMAI memorabilia. The Marketplace will be located on the terrace of the National Air and Space Museum and will be open daily throughout the festival. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (Sept. 24-26), there will be a Native Nations Marketplace offering a selection of arts and crafts from throughout the Americas.

I am a Native performer and would like to participate in the First Americans Festival. How can I participate?

The selection is virtually complete. We welcome the submission of materials for participation in future programs. We recommend that you send materials via express mail to: NMAI Cultural Arts, Office of Public Programs, National Museum of the American Indian, 470 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7103, Washington, DC 20024.

How were festival performers selected?

A committee of Native and non-Native NMAI staff was appointed to make recommendations to the Grand Opening Steering Committee and the museum's director. The committee evaluated materials from hundreds of Native musicians, dancers, and storytellers. The objective of the selection committee was to provide a fair and inclusive selection process for festival participants, so that the NMAI's opening festival would reflect the diversity of indigenous communities throughout the Western Hemisphere.

How can I volunteer to help at the festival?

Festival production will be managed by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Heritage, which will be naming a volunteer coordinator within the next few months. Please check this site for updated information.

I am a teacher. Will educational programs will be available for school groups?

Yes, school groups are invited and encouraged to attend on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (Sept. 22-24) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. when performers who specialize in presenting to students will be featured in most festival venues. Further details will be available on this site later this year.

I am a Native artist and would like to sell my work at the Native Nations Marketplace. Who can I contact?

The selection process for the art and crafts marketplace is by invitation only. Vendors will be selected by an advisory panel comprised of Native and non-Native professionals who specialize in the field of Native arts. Due to space limitations, an intimate, small-scale venue will showcase fine arts and crafts from North, Central, and South American artisans and co-ops.

How can I participate in future programs of the National Museum of the American Indian?

The National Museum of the American Indian endeavors to create opportunities for Native artists and performers, and gladly accepts materials to consider for future programs, festivals, and markets at the museum. Materials should include: biography, photos, slides, video or DVD (performance/storytelling), CD or cassette audio samples, contact information, and

I have more questions about the festival. How can I contact festival staff?
Email can be sent to NMAIFestival@si.edu. You can also send mail to NMAI Opening Festival,
470 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7103, Washington, DC 20024.

"I would make my job a work of art. I would like whatever it is that I'm doing--everyone's experience of me, everyone's interaction with me, everyone's discussion, conversation, relationship with me--[to be] an event within which they get to see who they are. I would make of my life a work of art."

John Denver