



John Ludwigson

OCT 28, 1938 - SEP 8, 2015



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John Ludwigson

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John Ludwigson, 76, left this blue marble, Earth, from his home on Sept. 8, 2015. His family was by his side to say goodbye.

A science writer and editor, John had diverse and intense interests from technology to ocean science to animal welfare. An Apple aficionado and geek, he eagerly leaped onto social media, through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and his own websites and blog and was a vocal online presence in groups such as the National Association of Science Writers.

Born in Massachusetts and retaining some New England snobbishness about the best clam chowder, among other things, John spent his formative years in Shaker Heights, Ohio. After graduating from Western Reserve University, he became the science writer at the Cleveland Plain Dealer, covering stories ranging from the space program to water pollution in the Great Lakes. In Cleveland, he also became an avid caver and member of the National Speleological Society.

After moving to Washington, D.C., John wrote for Mosaic, a National Science Foundation magazine, and for Science News. He wrote the official position paper on the environmental aspects of natural resource management for the 1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm. He was editorial consultant to the National Academy of Engineering's Marine Board and to the U.S. National Committee for the International Hydrological Decade under the National Research Council.

"Earth is a water planet," he wrote on his website Scienceworks. "The oceans affect nearly every aspect of human endeavor, from farms to literature and from commerce to warfare." His fascination with the oceans informed his work as Washington correspondent for Oceans magazine, editor of Ocean World magazine and associate editor of Ocean Science News, a publication of Nautilus Press, where John met his wife of 38 years, Rose Jacobius.

She and their daughter, Elli Ludwigson, survive him.



Obituary

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He recounts on his website the November day in 1963 when an editor rushed into the newsroom shouting that the president had been shot. “He headed straight for the press room and became the only person I know of who actually yelled, ‘Stop the presses!’ To his astonishment, they stopped. Later that week I wrote a four-line poem about the assassination, which the paper printed. To this day, it’s my only published poetry:

“The pond froze over last night,
“And little icy fingers of frost
“Have touched the leaves,
“As lately they have touched our hearts.”

Funeral services are private. The family suggests that fitting tributes to John would include memorial donations to the National Speleological Society, the Cornell Feline Health Center, or a charity of your choice.



Tribute Wall

John Ludwigson

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JH

Joe Heisler posted:

So, so sorry ... My heart goes out to you, John's gems, his pride and great joy.

September 21 at 3:23 AM

LN

Laura Newman posted:

I got to know John late in his life through NASW, my blog, and his foray into social media. He was always a bright light and I enjoyed our virtual back-and-forth the last few years on twitter and Facebook mostly. My condolences to Rose and his daughter. He will be missed. Laura Newman

September 15 at 4:24 PM

KC

Kay Coyte posted:

Rose, I am so sorry to learn of John's death. Your home in Gambrills was so full of love and happiness and comfort; I am sure John is much missed. My thoughts are with you and Elli. Love, Kay

September 15 at 3:15 PM

TP

Tabitha Powledge posted:

Thank you, John, for your kind words about my work. -- Tammy Powledge

September 15 at 7:32 AM

VR

Vince Rinehart posted:

I met John in the late 1980s when I was a relatively new part-time copy editor on the Post's Style section and was being regularly saved by the kind mentoring of John's wife, Rose. Rose knew that I had worked at The Oil Daily before joining the Post and that John needed some help editing papers for an oil spill conference, and out of that generosity came a freelance editing gig that proved a lifesaver for my family. John patiently taught me all the particulars of editing these very difficult-to-edit scholarly works. The check was nice, but even better were the few hours I got to spend in John and Rose's living room in Gambrills, enjoying a wonderful conversation. I have never forgotten his erudition, wit and kindness. I see the photos up on this site, and as a motorcyclist, I have one more regret: That I wasn't around on a bike when John was riding his. He'd have been an awesome riding companion, I am sure. To Rose, Elli and family, please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers and that I am grateful for my moments with John. I wish you the blessing of his memory and the solace of those who love you dearly. Best, Vince Rinehart

September 14 at 12:28 PM



Tribute Wall

John Ludwigson

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RS

Roseann Schwaderer shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.



John's Greatest Gifts It is thanks to John that I was introduced early in the 1970s to the marshes, waters and critters of Chincoteague Island, an introduction that I have joyfully been able to pass on over the years to friends and family. His friendship, and that island, are his greatest gifts to me. John and I worked together at Nautilus Press, transitioning from office colleagues, to spending time together after hours and on weekends and developing the structure for a lasting friendship. Shortly before I left Nautilus Press in 1977 Rose joined our small staff and she and John found the love and strong bond that will endure in each of their forevers. Some years after John took me to Chincoteague for the first time, I was fortunate to be able to buy a beautiful property and small cottage on Sheepshead Creek, and Rose, Elli and John enjoyed getaways at the cottage many times, often planning the dates to coincide with Rose's or Elli's birthdays. (John's photo with his obituary shows him standing on the property's bulkhead with the Assateague Lighthouse – which he loved – in the background.) As Rose said to me recently: "I can't tell you how many of our memories are tied to that island." I know how she feels, because so many of my memories are there as well. For certain, John's presence at the Chincoteague cottage will survive his passing. There wasn't a year that when by without John's handiwork showing up, as he went about fixing things during vacation time spent there. One of the most visible fixes is shown in the photo accompanying this memorial. You see, the spiral staircase that leads to the upstairs bedrooms has potentially lethal corners on each of the steel steps. The small size of the living room means one has to walk extremely close to the steps when crossing that side of the room – and it's a good idea to lower one's head while doing so. John's "fix-it" gift very early on during one of his visits was (brilliantly, I believe) to cut a small slice in the cover of tennis balls and place them on the killing edge of each stair step. Many of are probably alive today as a direct result of this intervention and creative engineering. I loved his intelligence, his knowledge of the marsh and ocean, his talent as a writer, and his kindness. He was a good man. He is missed. Roseann Schwaderer

September 10 at 5:57 AM

EL

Elli Ludwigson shared 3 photos to the **Pictures of John** album.



September 10 at 2:49 PM



Tribute Wall

John Ludwigson

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DW

Dean Wilder posted:

JOHN LUDWIGSON - 60 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP I first met John when we were both at Shaker Junior High School in 1954. I was a lonely boy, and he was my first and only friend at the time. I became interested in astronomy, and many times we would take my small telescope out to look at the stars. In high school, we both took up photography, built darkrooms, and took the same photography class. We were both photographers for the school paper. While I was at Western Reserve University, my mother died suddenly, and John and his mother provided a second home for me. We both became interested in caving, joined the National Speleological Society, and have remained members ever since. After we both graduated from Western Reserve, I went into the army, while John joined the Peace Corps. After I left the army, I got a job in Washington, D.C. Soon after, John also moved to Washington. We resumed our caving with the D.C. chapter of the NSS. When John's first marriage broke up, I inherited his dog, Freya, who was my constant companion at Cornell University, where I did some graduate work. When John married Rose, I was present at the ceremony. I purchased a cabin on a mountain in the Blue Ridge. John and his family would visit me there, and we had many good times together. After I retired, I sold my house in D.C. and moved to the mountain permanently. I don't travel well, so we didn't see as much of each other as in the past, but John and his family would visit me on the mountain from time to time. John always kept in touch via email, and always remembered my birthday. We both developed a love for cats (I now have 4). When John became ill last year, I understand that he didn't fully appreciate the seriousness of his situation. I couldn't accept it either. I really expected him to make another visit to the mountain this year. He has always been there for me. I will miss him. Dean Wilder

September 10 at 2:14 PM

BG

Birgit Gruenberg posted:

I only got to know John towards the end of his life, when he wasn't communicating verbally that much anymore, but I was very touched that he did take the time to tell me the lovely story of how he met Rose. Clearly that meant something to him! Peaceful sailing, John, to the great beyond. Birgit

September 10 at 5:57 AM



Media

John Ludwigson

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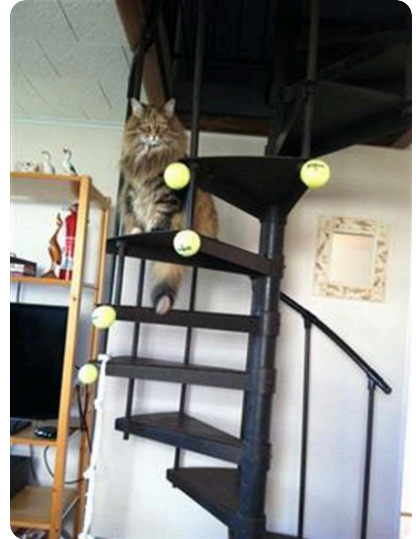


Roseann Schwaderer shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

September 14 at 5:21 AM



Visiting with John, July 13, 2015



John's creative engineering



Media

John Ludwigson

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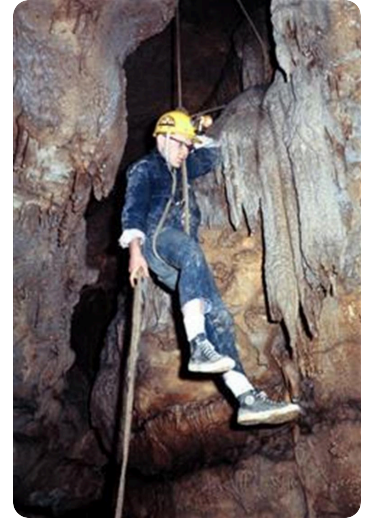


Elli Ludwigson shared 3 photos to the **Pictures of John** album.

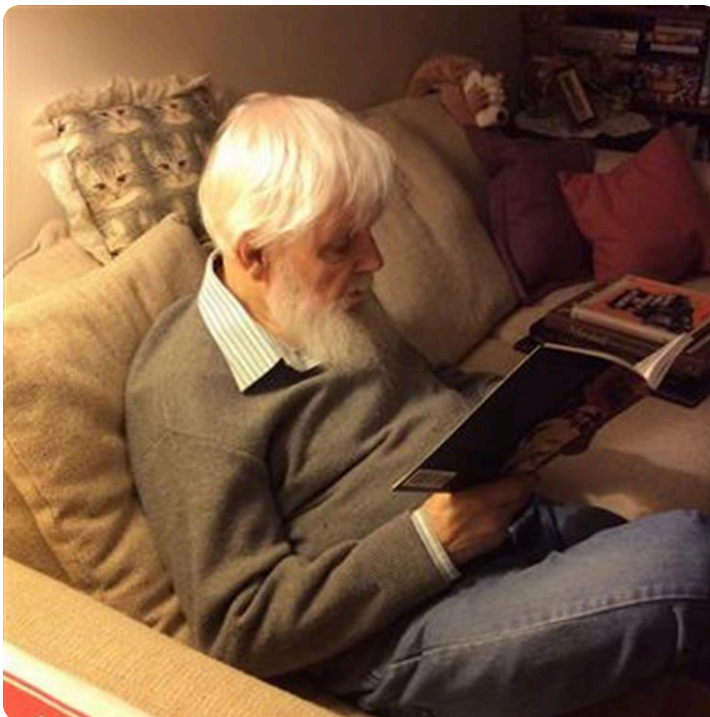
September 10 at 2:49 PM



From Dean Wilder- John on his motorcycle in Shaker Heights, OH.



John in Warners Broken Dome, 1959- D. Wilder



John at Christmas, 2014



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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