



John Babbs

1937 - 2012

John Babbs died from pancreatic cancer at his home in Glenwood, Oregon on April 12, 2012. John was born Jan 21, 1937 in Columbus, Ohio to Kenneth and Frances Babbs. He grew up in Mentor, Ohio, near Lake Erie and spent countless summer days at the lake skipping flat rocks across the water. He was a

three sport athlete in high school, played baritone horn in the band and wrote for the school paper. He received a BA from Western Reserve University in Cleveland, where he also played on the football and basketball teams. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and proudly wore their pin, for he was a practitioner of their motto: "Love of learning is the guide of life."

John earned his Masters Degree in English from Ohio State University and taught at one of their satellite campuses. He also taught at a boys prep school in Pennsylvania, and at Cleveland State. Later, after moving west, he taught at Southern Oregon College and The University of Oregon. He served two years in the Army as a clerk-typist at Fort Knox.

He was one of the original Merry Pranksters on Kesey's psychedelic painted bus, Further, during the famous trip to Madhattan and back in 1964.

John moved to Springfield, Oregon in 1972 and bought a small house on M Street where he lived until the city widened the street, put in sidewalks and sent out notices the house owners would be billed for the work. John immediately sold the house along with the bill from the city, and bought his "God's Little Acre" in Glenwood, an idyllic haven of trees and shrubs and flowers bordered by a slough on three sides; a place where critters and birds roam.

John's house was his studio. There he wrote books and stories and painted large oils, almost all dealing with his lifelong passion: fly fishing. The North Fork of the Willamette River was his favorite fishing spot and he knew every pool and riffle from the covered bridge in Westfir to the Kiahanie campground, far upstream.

John never gave up his love for playing basketball. He was on the multi-year Springfield Industrial League championship team, The Springfield Creamery Jugs, and when the league disbanded, John began playing at the YMCA in Eugene, his sharp elbows and deadly jump shot a fixture on the court well into his 70's.

Along with the many friends John made at the Y, were his card playing buddies at the weekly poker game he held at his house. The hands were dealt fast, the money was flowing, and deuces were always wild. John played a cagey game and won more than he lost but the real gain was the camaraderie built up over the years, lasting until his final poker game four days before he died.

Who can forget John tooling around town in his handpainted with a fish on the hood 1974 MGB convertible? Or the smile on his face captured in a photo when he netted a fourteen inch rainbow and released it into the water. A quiet spoken, unostentatious man, well liked by everyone he met. Never married, but many loving girl friends, John demonstrated the qualities you admire in a person: persistence, meticulous in his work, a wry sense of humor.

John is survived by his brother, Ken, and nine nephews and nieces and four great nephews and nieces.

A remembrance of John's life and the burial of his ashes, followed by a potluck, will be held at Ken and Eileen Babbs's place on Saturday, April 21, 2012 at 1 PM.