



John LeBaron Shellabarger

September 26, 1932 - February 19, 2020

John LeBaron Shellabarger died February 19, 2020.

If you knew him, you knew him through one of his many volunteer activities (BoyScouts: he was Scoutmaster of Troop 105, a volunteer at Mission Council and later Los Padres Council, Sierra Club and a backpacking trek leader; the USFS Los Padres Forest and guardian of Chumash rock art), as a 31-year employee of Applied Magnetics Corporation as its chief chemist where he developed several patented testing procedures, as a neighbor, or as a parishioner and singer in the choir at St. Raphael's Catholic Church. He was an expert on the hiking trails of our local Los Padres National Forest, particularly the many backpacking trails of the San Rafael Wilderness. As he lost his eyesight and capacity to hike those beloved trails, we could see his soul fade too.

We knew him as Husband, Father, Grandfather. He is survived by his wife Aida, his children Therese Shellabarger, John Shellabarger, Maria Nissen and Karen Shellabarger and his grandchildren, Daniella Nissen, Rebecca Nissen and Chandler Shellabarger.

John was born on September 26, 1932, in Oxnard, California. He was an adventurer from the start. His parents Francis ("Spike") and Lorena were living in Santa Barbara at the time of his birth, but the doctor was at St. John's Hospital in Oxnard and his mother insisted that her doctor take care of the delivery. A drive in their Model A was just in time.

Shortly after his birth, his family moved to the Porterville and Lindsay areas of central California, where he grew up during the Great Depression and World War II. During that time, his family expanded to 3 brothers and a sister. John spent much of his youth in the Sequoias and Sierra Nevada foothills, especially one of his favorite places, the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River. After graduating from Porterville High School, he hitched a ride on an asparagus truck to Los Angeles to look for work, an event that engendered his lifelong love of asparagus. Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles he was called up by the Naval Reserves during the Korean War. Following his Honorable Discharge he came back to California and attended UC Berkeley where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in

chemistry. At Berkeley he met and married his first wife, Donna, and had his first daughter, Therese Lynn. When Donna passed away, he had a young daughter to raise by himself. A workmate's wife who was babysitting Therese had a niece who just arrived to visit her from Merida, Mexico. Through this connection, he met his future wife Aida and fell in love. She was his lifelong companion and in the last years of his life, his unflinchingly dedicated caregiver. They were married in 1960 and had a son, John Francis, in 1961. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Santa Barbara and had two daughters, Maria Lee and Karen Dianne. The family moved to Goleta after John got a job at Applied Magnetics Corporation as its first chemist. John remained a member of the American Chemical Society for 61 years.

When John Francis became a Cub Scout and later Boy Scout, John began his long career as a volunteer and supporter of Scouting. His many accomplishments and honors included Cub Scouts Assistant Packmaster and Webelos leader with Pack 27 at Hollister Elementary School, Assistant and later long time Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 105 at St. Raphael's Catholic Church. He also volunteered extensively for projects for the Boy Scouts Mission Council, which later became Los Padres Council. His efforts were recognized with the Boy Scouts' Silver Beaver Award for Distinguished Service to Youth, several Awards of Merit for Outstanding Service to Boyhood, and he also completed Wood Badge, Boy Scouts' weeklong leadership course. John also taught at Boy Scouts' high adventure course, Poison Oak, for many years, specializing in trek planning.

As scoutmaster of Troop 105, John was renowned for his high adventure backpacking trips. Many who were boys on his trips have told him how important an adventure he led was to them. As Scoutmaster, he organized and led many monthly weekend hikes throughout the Los Padres National Forest, winter hikes in Sequoia National Park, spring break hikes along the Sisquoc River in the San Rafael Wilderness and the annual summer High Sierra backpacking trips, including 5 treks up Mount Whitney. John was an advocate for backpacking and encouraged the families of the Scouts to participate in the backpacking adventures, including mothers and sisters of scouts at a time when the Boy Scout program was limited to males. Those who went backpacking with John often became ambassadors of backpacking themselves and developed a love of the outdoors that has continued throughout their lives.

Long after his son became an Eagle Scout, he remained a volunteer with Boy Scouts. He also continued his love for backpacking with whomever he could get together, regardless of experience, to share his knowledge and to go on a weeklong 50 mile hike in the Sierras or just a weekend trek along the Hurricane Deck in the Los Padres Forest. He also became a hiking guide and adventure trainer with the Sierra Club.

John spent his retirement hiking and backpacking as often as he could, working on his many arts and craft projects and as a volunteer for the U.S. Forest Service as a rock art guardian or working at the headquarters sharing his knowledge of the local hiking trails.

A memorial service will be planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Sierra Club or Visiting Nurses Association.