



## John Manford Ball, Jr.

April 29, 1940 - October 29, 2021

John Manford Ball (81) passed away peacefully at his home on Friday, October 29th, 2021. He was born to John M and Wilma M Yocum Ball, the oldest of three children. After being paroled from Ft. Collins High School in 1958, John went on to graduate from Colorado University in 1968 with an English major and journalism minor. Preceded in death by his parents, John and Wilma Ball, his brother Clinton “Joe” Ball (Connie) and infant sister Georgia, leaving sister Karen Lake (Arvie) and nieces- Kirsten Lake, Adrienne Lake, Nikki Ball-Toughill (Michael), Abby Ball-Fojtik (Aaron), Rachel Ball-Tobin (Mark) and their children, Orlando and Evie.


John was an animal lover, outdoorsman and fearless adventurer, having skied, hiked, rock climbed, hitchhiked, biked and kayaked everywhere from Alaska to Peru, writing two books and making one movie about his bold exploits. He braved -63 degree temperatures on the North Slope of Alaska doing seismic work, traveled by bus and hitchhiking by road to finally reach the Amazon in Peru, kayaked 2,000 miles down the Yukon River and had more brushes with death than a squirrel crossing a freeway. It's no wonder his nieces called him “The Indiana Jones Uncle”. He said he did all these things, “for the experience” and that it all taught him how to keep a cool head in any situation. A skill that surely came in handy on many occasions.

John got the itch for adventure as a child and had many fond memories of

searching for arrowheads and learning camp life from his Boy Scout Troop 99.  
In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Thomas Veterinary Elder Care.

A Celebration of Life is planned for June 2022. More information to follow.

# Tribute Wall

 Jaime  
Lazarte

“ *Karen Lake Ball,*

*I just learned about the passing away of my longtime friend, your brother, John. I met him in the Ucayali River (1962) when he was 21years old as we traveled together to the Amazon River for 15+ days.*

*I did not realize how sick he was, when he wrote me about his cancer in June 2021. I am deeply saddened. I would have liked to share more time with him. I am glad that through his life I saw him in 1980 for a day, and then in 2012, when I visited with him for over a week. You and I met at your mom's house during a delicious dinner your mom prepared that time.*

*Although we saw each other only three times in his life, John and I did communicate more using mail, FB and email. John and I communicated last on August 29th, 2021.*

*Today, I remembered John and tried to get in touch with him; sadly, I found him in the obituary. Hope he did not suffer too much, He was a tenacious, remarkable, adventurous, solo man. I have our memories in my heart.*

*Jaime Lazarte*

*lazartejaime@gmail.com*

*(I am in Peru since the start of the COVID pandemic, 2020)*

---

**Jaime Lazarte** - August 09, 2022 at 01:19 PM

EH

“ From Eric Hermann

*Hello, John,*

*You were so capable of adventure in far-off and sometimes tough places, and I'm richer by the places I shared with you. They had the usual elements one finds of beautiful, wild, and exciting rivers, but always with your sparkle of humor, too!*

*I recall the Lodore Canyon in Dinosaur National Park, where you belittled Hell's Half Mile Rapid, calling it Heck's Hundred Yards. You also did a practice roll on the Green and came up without your glasses. We searched that stretch repeatedly, to no avail. You laughed it off, and on we went.*

*And your culinary attempts: four or five of us had run Westwater Canyon at 8,500 cfs, and I'd been thrashed in Skull Rapid, missing two roll attempts under my canoe before an exciting swim. You were encouraging, and that day was a blast. Later, when we huddled in your little camper van, rocked by an April thunderstorm, you cooked up some pasta for us. It tasted so good that I said, "John, your cooking is delicious!" The van fell silent, and you rushed over to me, shaking my hand, exclaiming, "Why, no one has ever said that about my cooking before!" Everyone broke out laughing—it was just pasta with butter and garlic. I guess any John Ball adventure just makes you hungry!*

*You made any time I visited or just encountered you by chance an adventure, because that was, and is, your way. I thank you always for that, John!*

*Eric Hermann*

---

Eric Hermann - December 06, 2021 at 12:53 PM

JM

“ I had the great pleasure of joining John, Ken Duncan and Mike Ryan on an 18 day kayak trip in Alaska about 20 years ago. John was reliving a past adventure and loved to just soak in the remote wilderness. He had some great stories to tell, and even after 18 days, I did not get tired of his entertainment. RIP to an awesome man. John Mattson

---

**John Mattson** - November 17, 2021 at 01:03 PM

GB

“ Y'know... a fella could... ” Words to live by. And I heard them a lot. John and I met in the summer of 1990 at a small kayak shop here in Fort Collins. As I was to find out, this was an extremely fortunate meeting. We kayaked together 3-5 times a week on the Poudre for a couple of years. As we both got better, we (mostly John) started challenging us. Summer of 1991 - "Wanna go to the Arkansas to do Browns Canyon?" "Sure." "Let's do three days of Browns." Off we went. After the 1st day... "Hey... Let's do Numbers tomorrow." "Numbers?" "Numbers." "Uhh. Umm. Ok." Next day, we did Numbers. "Hey... Let's go do Royal Gorge tomorrow." "Royal Gorge?" "Royal Gorge." "Uhh. Umm. Ok." Off we went. Summer of 1992 - We boated together A LOT! Late August, I get a phone call. "Wanna go do the Grand Canyon?" "Uh. Umm. Do you think I'm good enough?" "I wouldn't have called if thought you weren't." Ok. Off we went. Best vacation ever! 18 days on the river plus 4 days of travel to and from. There are stories and more stories. To this day, I am grateful for having John enter my life when he did. Y'know... a fella could. And he did.

---

**Greg Brigham** - November 15, 2021 at 03:22 PM

EM

“ John and I met in the 70’s when we worked at the cement plant (Ideal Basic Industries) north of Laporte CO. He intrigued me early on with the stories of his traveling down the Yukon River in a kayak. If memory serves me correctly, that trip was from the headwaters to the sea. He was eight years older than I was and he could literally ride circles around me when we would ride our bicycles up to Horsetooth Reservoir. His stamina amazed me and still does to this day. As luck would have it we both became the Instrument men at the plant and became good friends while learning the trade. I have many fond memories of John. The times we floated down the irrigation canal in his canoe near the plant looking for wildlife, the time my family’s ferret bit him and drew blood when he attempted to get Slinky out from under the couch, when he invited my family over to see the premier of his movie “The Great Alaskan Adventure”, the times we drank a couple of beers together and shared some laughter, along with many more. I left the plant after fourteen years and John and I lost touch as we pursued our own lives. I always looked up to him and admired him for all that he had done. In a way he seemed larger than life with his cool casual demeanor, knowing smile, hearty laugh, and his quiet intelligence. I’m sad that he is gone but we know that he had a well-lived life.



*Happy Trails John, Ed Meikel*

---

**EDWARD MEIKEL** - November 09, 2021 at 04:53 PM