



## John D. Harrigan

April 22, 1947 - December 26, 2022

COLEBROOK - John Dennis Harrigan, 75, of Colebrook, died on December 26, 2022 at the Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, with his family by his side and following a brief illness.

Born in Littleton on April 22, 1947, John was the second of Frederick J. and Esther Belle (White) Harrigan's four children.

He grew up on Park Street in Colebrook and at Clarksville Pond with his second family, Rudy and Joan Shatney, going to help them run their full-service sporting camp at the age of thirteen. The combination of a newspaper family and an outdoorsman's livelihood in his early years combined to mold the life of a man who would become integral to the protection and celebration of the Granite State's traditions and lands throughout his life.

After high school John attended college in New Mexico for less than a year, returning to New Hampshire with his then-wife Belinda Ramirez, the mother of his three children. After several years in Nashua at the Telegraph and in Manchester at the Sunday News, in 1976 John moved his family back to the North Country. They resided in Colebrook until John purchased the Coös County Democrat two years later, and settled into a big old Victorian on North Main Street in Lancaster.

John encouraged his children to roam freely, play outside in the rain and

respect all things wild. His parenting style is perhaps best summed up in this note for his eldest daughter's fifth grade teacher: "Please excuse Karen from school today. Her assistance is needed on a survey of the trout population in the upper Connecticut River watershed."

His ridiculous sense of humor was also a mainstay of his parenting, most memorably on rides in a variety of vehicles over the years that included his faithful Scout, the tank-like Toyota Land Cruiser, and a succession of old Ford pickups. On a downhill grade he would pretend the brakes had gone out, screaming, "Nooooo braaaakes!" while waving his hands in the air and sending young Mike into a panic. He and Belinda kept the kids engaged on long rides with a litany of corny old songs that still haunt them to this day.

He provided his children with countless memories of hikes, canoe trips, hunting and fishing experiences, adventures at his favorite camps on Clarksville Pond. He always encouraged his kids and was proud of them, never exerting pressure to join the family business but pushing them to explore their own paths.

After his parents died in the early 1990s, John moved to the family homestead on South Hill and continued to run both his newspaper and theirs, The News and Sentinel. Ultimately, John would sell the Democrat to Salmon Press and the Sentinel to his daughter Karen, who remains the publisher and editor of the three-generation weekly to this day. During his years in Lancaster he was involved in the Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce, and in Colebrook was an active participant and supporter of the Dixville Races and a member of the Kiwanis Club.

John was a passionate advocate for the North Country and collected legions of friends in both the newspaper and conservation worlds, who remained friends his entire life. He was as equally comfortable in the deep woods as he

was jogging with a newly nominated president in Washington, and had an innate ability to have meaningful conversations with all he met. A lauded writer and journalist, he was also a deeply protective and caring son, brother, father, uncle and friend, and still and always a supremely difficult man to quantify adequately.

John was ultimately a strong keeper of family, a champion and defender from both near and far, and a strong patriarch after the passing of his father in 1991. Sister Mary remembers his support at age six, when a neighborhood boy was gleefully pelting snowball-encased rocks at her, and John placed him unceremoniously head-first into a six-foot snowdrift.

In her adult years he would unexpectedly show up, sometimes with brother Peter in tow, to both cheer on and embarrass her at horse show events around the country. They were blessed to make a number of trips together, including an off-grid fishing trip up into the northern reaches of Canada.

His nieces were frequent visitors at South Hill, where John, alongside Esther and Fred, gifted them with a love and appreciation for the family's northern roots and the homestead that he treasured as much as his parents had.

He leaves behind his three children, Karen Jay Doolan, her husband Mitch and children Sawyer and Kamryn of Lancaster, John Michael Harrigan and fiancée Alison Klooster of St. Louis, Mo., and Kathryn Elba Harrigan, Walter Greenwood and their son John Greenwood of Derry; his sisters, Susan and her husband Peter Benjaminson of New York City, and Mary and her husband Pat Trowbridge of Bridgewater, Conn.; and his beloved nieces Sarah (Harrigan) Livnat, Anne (Benjaminson) Naarden and Rachel Harrigan and their families.

He was predeceased by his brother, Peter Harrigan.

Calling hours were held on Friday afternoon, December 30 at the Jenkins & Newman Funeral Home in Colebrook, followed by a social gathering at the Black Bear Tavern. The family will gather in the summer to spread John's ashes at South Hill and other places he held dear around the North Country.

Donations in John's memory may be made to Barry Conservation Camp for youth in care of the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301, specifying that the gift is for the Barry Camp Fund; New Hampshire Public Radio, NHPR, PO Box 9645, Manchester, NH 03108-9645 or [www.nhpr.org](http://www.nhpr.org); The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Attn. Anne Truslow, 54 Portsmouth St., Concord, NH 03301 or [www.forestsociety.org](http://www.forestsociety.org).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **30**. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Jenkins & Newman Funeral Home  
103 Main Street  
Colebrook, NH

# Tribute Wall

KB

“ My husband and I were long-term residents of New Hampshire for many many years, and Mr. Harrigan was one of our favorite reporters for the Granite State News. He posted a story on April Fools’ Day many years ago that turned my husband inside; the state was to pave the top of Blue Job Mountain and make a parking lot out of it. Rather than disagreed with my husband, I let him go right ahead and send a letter to the NH Department of Forrestry, and they were kind enough to tell him to look at the date on the article, which, of course was April 1. My husband was not particularly thrilled with being tricked, but he was good-natured about it. My condolences to you and your family for the loss of such a kind, happy spirited, nature loving wordsmith, who appreciated his fans.

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**Kate Buckley** - April 02, 2023 at 07:36 PM

KF

“ .....like the Old Man of the Mountain and Marty Engstrom, we’ve lost another thread jn the North Country fabric of society.

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**Kevin Fearon** - January 20, 2023 at 03:45 PM

JD

“ I never met John but did write him a letter about an article he wrote in my local paper. He surprised me by responding. He was very friendly and impressed by my taking care of my disabled wife at home. I certainly wished I had met him. He even hinted that we may have been related somewhere in the past in Ireland. May John's Soul Rest in Peace. Jack Donahue, Meredith, NH

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**Jack Donahue** - January 16, 2023 at 10:46 AM

RM

“ My deepest sympathies to his family. I met John when I joined the UL SN staff in 1971, We worked together until he left the paper to return to the News and Sentinel. I had the opportunity to hunt with him in Colebrook and met his parent. For many years we played poker after the Sunday News went to bed, sometimes till dawn. He was a true friend and I will miss him.  
*Dick Morin (UL Photographer retired)*

Richard Morin - January 07, 2023 at 09:27 AM

LF

“ I did not know John personally, but like him I was a big runner. I remembered one year in the 1980s John sponsored the Lancaster road race when it was a 10K race. After the race the runners enjoyed a keg of beer that he supplied in front of the Lancaster National Bank where we swapped running stories among other topics. To say the least it was one of the most unique finishes to a race I ever ran in.

*I always looked forward to reading his weekly article in the Democrat. My deepest sympathies to his family.*

*Lee Foster  
Lancaster*

Lee Foster - January 05, 2023 at 07:53 PM

YW

“ I am sorry for your loss.



Yvonne Willey - January 05, 2023 at 02:29 PM

JK

“ We have special memories of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and imbibing with John. He was the one who took us thru Pittsburg pucker-brush and found Camp 5 out the Magalloway for us over 30 years ago. Guess we can say that ol “Hurricane” is now enjoying the Happy Hunting Grounds with Moose, Frog, Whale and Polar Pig. He taught us all about being a “Swinger of Birches”. Mal and Judi Knowles, Sandwich, NH.

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**Judi Knowles** - January 02, 2023 at 03:36 PM

MJ

“ We are so sorry for your loss. A North Country icon is lost to us all. He will be sorely missed. Sending love to the whole family. Michele and Rick Johnsen

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**Michele Johnsen** - January 02, 2023 at 09:05 AM

SC

“ My deepest sympathy to John's family. So very sorry for your loss.

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**Suzanne Cook** - December 31, 2022 at 12:21 PM

KW

“ I just heard about John's passing. I'm sorry to hear this, and my thoughts are with his family. He and my parents (Pat and Paul Allen) were friends, and I met John through them. I remember him as being a funny, kind, bright man.

*Kathleen (Allen) Woodworth  
Maryland*

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**Kathleen Woodworth** - December 30, 2022 at 07:32 PM

CB

“ Dear Friends...thinking about you this afternoon as you celebrate the life of John. For me he was friend, boss, great writer, teacher, photographer, commander of all he surveyed in the world around him. His knowledge of that world and the unique way he shared it will be a lasting memory. In the 12 years that I worked in the Sentinel, and a few years helping at the Democrat, I was always confident that his determination to tell the stories of woods and wildlife would teach me more and more about my own life. I shall miss him deeply and offer my sympathies to the entire Harrigan family.

*With sincere gratitude for a life well-lived,  
Carol M. Bartlett  
Round Lake, IL*

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**Carol M. Bartlett** - December 30, 2022 at 04:19 PM

BH

“ To the Harrigan family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this time. Reading John's column in the Union Leader for many years is one of the reasons we moved here some 30 odd years ago.  
*Bill and Diane Holman*

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**Bill Holman** - December 30, 2022 at 03:28 PM

JC

“ Finding the right words is tough. I remember babysitting for Karen and Michael and always asked if I was okay to walk across the street to go home! I am sure Mom is waiting for you with a pound of bacon and muffins for your breakfast. Keeping your family in my thoughts and prayers.



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**Jan Corliss** - December 30, 2022 at 11:46 AM

DB

*Wow that's unreal I've known him for yrs years as the Mayor Of Siuth Hill but his memory's will live on my condolences to his family Sadley Missed But Not Forgotten Rest Easy John*

**Dennis Bryant** - December 30, 2022 at 06:41 PM

DK

*John was in my class in high school. He was always friendly and kind. I will miss his column in the paper. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.*

**Donna Keazer** - December 30, 2022 at 10:22 PM

GG

*“ Deepest sympathy to the Harrigan family. I knew of John professionally in the 1990s as a fellow journalist working in New Hampshire. It wasn't until three years ago that I had the pleasure of becoming one of his many, many friends and fans. His love of words and his keen understanding about the power of words to right wrongs (like Northern Pass) was most remarkable. His congeniality, wit and passion for people, history and wildlife (to name but a few) made him a most interesting man indeed.*

**Gary Ghioto** - December 30, 2022 at 10:30 AM

SP

*“ My deepest sympathy to all of John's family. I met him when he was working to save the bobcat in 2016. I was one of many who joined in that effort. We won. Later he kindly invited me to sit in on the NH Wildlife Coalition. There was no one like him. I will forever cherish his wisdom and friendship. God rest his gallant soul.*

*Sister Lucille Thibodeau, p.m., Rivier University Writer-in-Residence*

**Sister Lucille Thibodeau, p.m.** - December 29, 2022 at 08:53 PM

SC

“ Our heartfelt condolences to the family and the community.  
*Brad and Stephanie Cross*



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**Stephanie Cross** - December 29, 2022 at 08:25 PM

RH

“ Dear Harrigan Clan:  
*We are so sorry for your loss. Please accept our deepest sympathy. The world has certainly lost the sparkling gem of the Great North Woods. John could converse on just about any subject at any time, day or night.*  
*We traveled extensively exploring Canada by train from coast to coast along with the West coast of the USA. What a pleasure to hear John's wealth of knowledge woven into a blanket of words by a master story-teller.*  
*It was indeed our pleasure to have known him personally over these many years. Rest in the deepest peace, knowing how your thoughts and friendship touched so many.*  
*Louise and Dick Harrington*

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**Richard D. Harrington** - December 29, 2022 at 07:51 PM

PF

“ *Karen-you are in our thoughts as you takes steps to a future without your dad. Pam & wayne*

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**pam frizzell** - December 29, 2022 at 05:25 PM

CL

“ *A great loss. Hugs to the family.*

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**Carmen Lamontagne** - December 29, 2022 at 03:23 PM

NF

“ My deepest sympathies to the Harrigan family. So many fond memories and John’s spirited way of life come to mind, yet I am at a loss for words about John’s passing. Working from ‘92-‘99 at The Coos County Democrat with him and the great “Croo” we had will always be in my heart. John was truly the quintessence of NH woods, water & wildlife and if there was a “State man” category in state symbols, he would be it.

Nancy Caton Flynn - December 29, 2022 at 02:18 PM

RW

“ As a teenager and a member of the New Chester Fyfe and Drum I was involved in the march to Bennington , VT in August 1977. This was for the Bicentennial of the battle. I met John there for the first time. Later in our lives , mid 90's, I was president of the Bristol Lions Club. John joined us along with our local CO for a dinner meeting. I occasionally would email John and he would always respond. I am an occasional visitor to "above the notches". I will miss his stories of rural New England. RIP John. Bob Watson, Bristol



Robert Watson - December 29, 2022 at 01:15 PM

LK

“ John was an integral part of the north country. He will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Pat and Les Klinefelter

Leslie R Klinefelter - December 29, 2022 at 10:19 AM

SG

“ Susan Gaudette purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of John D. Harrigan.



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**Susan Gaudette** - December 29, 2022 at 09:03 AM

JD

“ John Harrigan lived for many years in Jefferson, and kept us all up to date each week with his wit and wisdom in our local paper. I counted him among my first friends in Lancaster, and will miss his column and presence. John seldom said goodbye...just “see you later,” so I’ll do the same until we meet again.

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**Jon Dugan-Henriksen** - December 29, 2022 at 07:52 AM

LS

“ John was a good neighbor and friend. I remember his Christmas party many years ago, and his oyster stew that my husband loved

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**Linda A. Staines** - December 28, 2022 at 11:14 PM

MN

“ My condolences to the family! He will always be remembered for his excellent articles! He was a fine writer!

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**Marie Noyes** - December 28, 2022 at 09:36 PM

CC

“ Deepest condolences to the kids and sisters Mary and Susan and all the family and friends of this man. He will be greatly missed. Johns passing stirs so many memories of the years at the shop. A little hunting a little fishing a lot of printing of things and moving of huge printing presses. He loved to tell the story of having me spend the night after a late night pressrun. After a couple beers and conversation he would set me up for the night and there was this hamster next to where I was sleeping. I think that animal went on a walking trip to California that night on the treadmill it had in the cage. John got the biggest laugh out of that one. RIP Friend.

Calvin Crawford - December 28, 2022 at 09:19 PM

RD

“ So sorry for your loss

Richard A Dagesse - December 28, 2022 at 05:32 PM

EG

“ ELIZABETH GUERIN lit a candle in memory of John D. Harrigan



ELIZABETH GUERIN - December 28, 2022 at 02:15 PM

EG

John was such a warm, intelligent and engaging person. Always a smile and an amazing story to tell. The North Country has lost a beloved and well-respected member of the community. Gods speed John.

ELIZABETH GUERIN - December 28, 2022 at 02:18 PM

GJ

“ *Jphn was one of the 1st local folks we got to meet and he was a good friend from then on. He covered our sled dog events and was just a good friend. He will be missed.*

*Ginger Jannenga*

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**Ginger Jannenga** - December 28, 2022 at 01:36 PM

JZ

“ *Jana And Zaya lit a candle in memory of John D. Harrigan*



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**Jana and Zaya** - December 28, 2022 at 09:50 AM

JZ

“ *Our deepest sympathy to the entire family. I have no words. My heart breaks for you all. Keeping you all in our thoughts and prayers.*

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**Jana and Zaya** - December 28, 2022 at 09:49 AM

EB

“ *Eric Brungot lit a candle in memory of John D. Harrigan*



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**Eric Brungot** - December 28, 2022 at 08:20 AM

JM

“ RIP John, you were a true North Country person.

John Morrissey - December 28, 2022 at 06:02 AM

DD

“ My condolences to the family. My first contact with John was when I joined the newsroom staff of The Telegraph of Nashua, as a reporter/photographer in 1970. I succeeded John as police and court reporter when left The Telegraph several years later.

Donald Dillaby - December 27, 2022 at 09:54 PM

BB

“ To the family, my thoughts are with you as you grieve. Mr. Harrigan provided us with a good read for many years and was a friendly face in the Connecticut River Valley. I've never been so careful in checking for punctuation when writing a short note (slight grin). I'm sure he'll be well remembered and missed.

Ben Burns  
Georgia, Vermont.

Benjamin S Burns - December 27, 2022 at 07:59 PM

HH

JD, you were the absolute best. As an employer, a great cook, and, most of all, a dear friend, (notice the proper use of apostrophes, you always said to insert one when a breath would be taken), I learned much about grammar (especially “it’s”, only used in place of “it is”). Resquiescat in pace, my good friend.  
Harry “Bud” Hikel

Harry Hikel - December 28, 2022 at 12:37 PM

JF

“ *Time to take the wristwatch off, and hang it on the nail at camp.  
Rest In Peace.*

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**Jon Frizzell** - December 27, 2022 at 06:39 PM

RB

*To the Harrigan family; our deepest sympathy on the passing of your father. He was a good friend and neighbor. RIP John your work is done time to be with your parents.  
Ron and Linda Beloin*

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**Ron and Linda Beloin** - December 28, 2022 at 11:25 AM

JH

*To my long-standing friend John, who I enjoyed so much with his wisdom and support of the New England Press Association. And, of course, his visits in the Christmas season to Woburn, Mass. when he and his father brought Christmas trees (balsams) down to Harvard University, (the school of his father's choice) to the Houses at Harvard and they stayed in Woburn. And my visits with him to the Balsam Hotel, balsams etc. He was great.*

*-Jim Haggerty, Editor, Daily Times Chronicle, Woburn and past president of the New England Press Association.*

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**James Haggerty** - January 04, 2023 at 10:45 AM