

AWARE ONES OF THE TREASURE COAST

BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

"We are Progressive Humanists
We are the Soul of the Coffee House
We are Love and Laughter"

Vol.1 No.3

September 2016

John M. Lynch

"Age 75, of Stuart, FL, passed away on August 5, 2016."

Obituary, TC Palm News

A DEDICATION

PREFATORY NOTE

Ed Zillioux

On August 23 we received the sad news that our friend, John Lynch, had died. We actually lost him on August 5, but he was not found for 18 days.

This issue is dedicated to John and to all the members of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast who feel the pain of losing one of their own.

We begin, therefore, with a tribute to John. Our regular newsletter content follows.

AN AWARE ONES' TRIBUTE TO JOHN LYNCH

Questions

by Gloria Cosgrove

John's death left some of us
Buried in an avalanche of questions.
Questions to dig our way out of
Or more importantly to dig our way into.
Questions not so much to be answered
But questions to be pondered.

Questions that we might have asked.
Questions we perhaps should have asked

To bring him closer
To know him better.

And yet we cannot help but wonder
If such questions might have
Pushed a man as reticent as he
Further yet away from us
How much would he have wanted to share?
How much would we have wanted to know?

How much would he
Or we, for that matter,
Have unearthed
About ourselves?

John Lynch

by Ed Zillioux, 8/23/16

John Lynch is dead.
Just heard today, August 23rd.
First there was Bob, now John.
Who's next? Pick a number.
How did he die? Don't know yet.
John was an advocate of personal choice.
Did he choose his time?

At our last Writers' meeting we spoke of John.
Of how we each chose our particular place at the table.
And John, someone said, always sits here.
Where is he? Has anyone seen him?
That was on August 11th.
John, we are told, died on August 5th.
His sister found him at his home, today.

John was an on-again/off-again writer.
We knew he had talent but he needed encouragement.
Then at his last attendance on July 28th,
he read a really funny piece he called "The Duffers."
By common consensus, it was published
in the second issue of the AOTC Newsletter.
He was just warming up.
Who knew it would be his last?

John also had a talent for insightful comments.
After he got those hearing aids tuned up he was
a vocal participant at Sunday Coffees, quick to speak out
whenever he thought our banter was biased.

John was a smoker. But he bought his cigarettes one at a time,
a ploy to ensure the habit would not get out of his control.

John was many things, but mostly he was a friend.
Once, when he said he wouldn't be at our Writers meeting,
thinking he had nothing to offer, I told him, "That doesn't matter,
you'd be missed if you didn't show, so just come and hang out."
He responded, "Ok, having with a beer with my friends would be
a good way to spend the evening."

He was frequently self-deprecating, once refusing to read the piece
he had brought to the Writers meeting because he said he couldn't read well.
When we pushed him he consented but asked Bert to do the reading.
He didn't need to do that; he later read his own stuff and read it well.
He was just warming up.

John's wry sense of humor will be missed. He never pushed himself.
Even when our politics got crosswise, he was always a gentleman.
He's left a great big hole, but it will heal in time because the Aware Ones
are better and stronger for having had John Lynch as one of us.

Our Friend, John Lynch

By Bert Mautz, 8/28/16

When we engaged to argue about religious mythologies, Hillary's candor, or
differences between Humanists and Atheists it was clear John Lynch was a bright
guy with an arid sense of humor who read a lot. He asked about Jim's writers'
group, what we did together, could non-writers attend?

He joined us on a Thursday evening in the back of the bar. He knew all of us, not a stranger, but protested he was not a writer. "John, none of us are, that's why it's so much fun, so many laughs. Try it. Bring something. It won't hurt, promise." He joined us. Ordered a beer. Got a feel for how we are.

Sure enough at our next meeting, John pulled a piece of paper folded into a small square out of his shirt pocket, but he didn't want to read it, because it wasn't good enough, but we persuaded him, he read it aloud, and it contained an interesting perspective, the guy is a thinker. The newness of this self-expression and John's haunting inferiority complex, aggravated by hearing deficiency made his creative outlet doubly difficult.

This went on for several months. At least once Dan flashed a critical insight and John would be crushed and stay away for a couple weeks, but we would see him at Sunday Coffee, "We miss you. Join us this Thursday," and he did.

Not that long ago he showed up with several typed pages. Protested he wasn't a good reader, and would someone read this for him. Bert did the favor. It was a rich dialogue among a few of his teenage buddies. With nominal conversation punctuation, reading aloud was a challenge. But the subject matter was hilarious and fascinating at the same time. In John's piece these young teenage boys were comparing notes on techniques to cage a couple cigarettes from their big brothers. The piece was wonderful, laugh out loud funny, and Bert was trying to keep his composure together through the performance.

We all were learning something about our dear friend; self-effacing humor, keen eye for human dynamics, and many laughs. And he did this again. Ed published it in our Newsletter, "Duffers," an accounting of a round of golf, by a foursome who, near as I could tell, didn't like golf. Several outside Writers' Group expressed amazement, but we had known he was up to this sort of humorous and creative expression. Just another reason to miss John Lynch, 1941-2016.

John Lynch

Dymphna Staunton Coover, 9/1/16

One of the most gentle of people I have ever met was John Lynch. I did not know him well, only that he was Irish and so am I. As an Irish person, I recognized so many of his traits. I might be right if I say his family was from Galway. His family would have been Victorians where children were seen and not heard - hence his quietness and inhibitions.

Had I known him longer, we would have been friends and when I go to Galway again, I will place a rose in his honor on the grounds of Lynch Castle.

John Lynch

Dan Vignau, 8/31/16

We will all miss John Lynch. His wit and charm helped him express his atheism and disdain for current politicians. We have lost a friend, a confidant, a fellow writer and pool player, as well as an active member of our sister organization, The Treasure Coast Atheists, with which he recently went to Washington D.C. for the Reason Rally.

He had wanted to discuss end-of-life issues and how we should choose to die. We never quite got around to it, and I wish we had.

After losing his wife, John could become quite depressed and a bit paranoid about his future. That mindset after such a loss could not be more natural.

Maybe now that the horse has run off, we can leave open the barn door or a continuation of the thoughts he presented to us individually. We let him down in a time of need.

Maybe we can learn from his example and have another issue of this newsletter to honor him with submissions on this topic.

If we appoint a committee (As If!), we might avoid the premature exit of another friend. Since he said this topic was important to him, we should have listened.

We may not be totally responsible, because he was an irregular attendee, but some of us were open to the idea, and still continued to stall due not only to our rampant and selfish procrastination, but also out of consideration with others' current feelings on the subject.

I really believe we failed John. He wanted to talk about end-of-life issues and put the carrot before us by saying so several times. Let us gather together the meat, potatoes, as well as the celery and spices to put together an end-of-life issue to honor him with a stew pot of ideas on how we want to leave this life, at least given the fact that we are going whether we want to or not.

John, we all miss you and your wit. I wish this had been more apparent.

We could even name our committee (LOL?) after him for our choice of weapons with which to exit, and call ourselves The Lynch Mob... but that has bad connotations. To Lynch or not to Lynch, that is the question. Dammit, that's just as bad, but he would have appreciated either.

I know John can't hear me, but I do realize why he and my Mom preferred being cremated to having surviving loved ones talk to a stone, but let's pay attention and try to listen to what others want to discuss, trying not to avoid topics due to emotional responses. Anyone under duress on the issue can opt out, and we might just add a few productive years to each others' lives.

Good Bye John.

NEWSLETTER CONTINUED

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* No Submissions

-- Produced by the TC Secular Writers --

INTRODUCTION

Ed Zillioux

Our third issue of the AOTC Newsletter carries on. As I am sure John would have said, "Life goes on."

I am excited about a new section, *The Way We Were*, which had its genesis in response to a discussion in July, I believe initiated by Gloria, on ways we might get to know each other better. This issue includes pieces by Ivy and Sandra. I have held back on including ones that I judged too long for this already lengthy issue, but stand by for our next issue come November.

MEMBER LIST

This section is password protected. Access limited to AOTC members only.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Every Sunday, Stuart Coffee Company, 10 a.m.

TC Secular Writers – Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 p.m.;
September 8, 22, October 6, 20.

Events

The Potluck Socials continue for the next two months on Saturdays, September 17
and October 15 at 4:30 p.m.

MEMBER NEWS

This section is password protected. Access limited to AOTC members only.

COMMENTARY

Comment on an interview of atheist Dominic Johnson regarding his book, *God is Watching You* (aired 3 April 2016 on the ABC program, *The Spirit of Things*).

By John Lynch, 5 April 2016

Is it morality when you do things from fear of punishments? Religion, of course has an upside as far as altruism but again the fear factor indicates coercion. The down

side, depending the God you choose to follow may negate the "good side." I would say if people realized that they can be good without God, religion would not have the impact on society it now has. The author neglects to demonstrate the negative effects of God belief such as obeying without question your God commands. God seems to be an abstract until religion is attached. Bigotry of all types and much killing and injustice result in particular God beliefs. God belief, without religion cannot inspire fear or goodness. This is my ever so humble opinion.

THE WAY WE WERE

Martini Memories

Ivy Zillioux

Dinner the other night on the patio at the marina, sipping a martini and watching the sunset over sailboats glowing pink and blue; as the sun disappeared, light faded and stars twinkled, a memory of my 20 year-old self crept into my mind: I was going home, sailing on the Queen Mary to Southampton, England. I had come to New York in 1955 and I was now, two years later, returning to London to visit family.

The night before my departure, my roommates and other friends had thrown a "bon voyage" party, and needless to say, with lots of drinking. I seem to remember at least 5 to 8 martinis. The next morning is still somewhat of a blur, but my roommates got me up and dressed and down to the dock. I do recall diving into my bed and falling into blessed oblivion. When I came to, I went into my bathroom and poured cold water on my face. It was then that I noticed the flowers - flowers of every hue were stuffed into the toilet tank. Wondering who had put them there, I pressed the steward's button. Soon a good-looking young blond man was standing at my cabin door, "Feeling any better now?" he asked.

"A little," I answered, "Do you know why there are flowers in my toilet?"

He answered, "I put them there."

"Okay, but where did you get them from?"

"Oh, here and there, I just thought that they would cheer you up." This is how I met Chris ("but please, call me Chrissie").

It all turned out to be one of my favorite crossings. Chrissie and I became the best of playmates. He loved trying on my lingerie and makeup. He would supervise my getting dressed for dinner and he did a great job with my hair. He was better than having a personal maid – rather like a very special friend. When we arrived at Southampton, Chrissie and I said our goodbyes with hugs and kisses and tears. I gave him some of my favorite lingerie and a ring he had admired. We never saw one another again. I do, however, still have one thing from that trip.

I had left a pale yellow nightgown and matching robe at my sister's home in London. She moved with her family to Australia in 1959, taking that nightgown with her. Then in 1988, my sister came to visit us in South Carolina and brought that well-traveled nightgown back to me. So, when we moved back to Florida in 1990, the yellow nightgown came along. It hangs today in the back of my closet in our Fort Pierce home.

Adventures of OutRageous

Sandra Burkhart

When we were 56 years old, my husband Rick came home from work one day and said "That's it, I quit! We're retiring!" I sputtered for a minute, then prepared Motions to Withdraw in all my cases and closed my law office.

We had to figure out how to get 4 cars and a U-Haul to Ohio, where Rick's father had given us a chunk of land near a storage facility. The last trip, we took a Greyhound bus back to Chicago, then a train up the north shore, and we walked the last mile to our sailboat OutRageous in Winthrop Harbor.

We sailed up through Lake Michigan and spent a month in the North Channel, where it can be a foot deep on one side of the boat and 70 feet deep on the other. Navigating was interesting! We anchored off slabs of rock with wild blueberry patches and collected the fruit for breakfast each day, fortunately never running into the bears whose terrain we were invading

One day Sandra was paddling around our anchorage on an inflated raft when Rick asked who her friend was. A water moccasin had settled behind her back for the warmth. She thrashed him off promptly and didn't paddle there again.

We passed through Lake Huron and Lake Erie, then had to take down the mast at Tonowanda to go through the Erie Canal. The marina let you build your own "crutch" to support your mast, from the debris of prior crutches. We motored

through a dozen locks and learned that you need to carry rubber gloves to grab the slimy green lines to stabilize your boat as it moves up and down in each lock.

We spent a night tied off West Point, where the seven-foot tidal change required very long lines. Then we anchored at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, which you can no longer do, after 9-11.

Tune in next month for the Further Adventures of OutRageous, our sailboat!

ARTICLES

Conflict

Jim Longo

"Conflict, sounds like a hand job on an unwilling female partner," Joe said, reaching under the sheets to touch his wife of twenty-something years.

"The basis of most fiction, not the hand job, is conflict," Bonnie said, slapping his hand away.

"Then again if you read Freud, aren't most internal conflicts sexual?" Joe said reeling from the slap.

"Without conflict, you can't have growth," She said with a smile returning to her book.

"Without desire, you can't have conflict," He said, returning to his own book, as if indifferent to her rebuff.

A few minutes went by, she reading her nutrition book, he reading his science-fiction.

"I disagree, most fiction is about a journey either internal or external, and solving the problems that arise as the protagonists reaches for his goal," as he dropped his book and tried to grope her with both hands.

She quick as lightening rebuffed the full on attack grabbing his hands keeping him from touching her womanly flesh, "It's just smaller conflicts, that need

to be overcome preparing the hero for ultimate prize," She said with great emphasis battling his roaming hands and rushing fingers.

Joe would get free for a moment, and touch a breast here or a leg there only to have Bonnie tie him up again. Eventually he tired of the hand wrestling, and returning to his book. She rolled back over picking up her own.

"What the hell are you reading over there porn queens in space?" She said.

"No a stupid little space opera, "The Rise and Fall of the Gibbonian Empire," He said.

"Sounds very Freudian to me,"

"And you?"

"How Not to Die from Your Diet"

"Sounds about as interesting as paint drying," Joe said.

"I see it as a tale between hope and fear," Bonnie said.

"You're going have to explain that one to me."

"Hope my diet won't kill me, and fear it already has."

"Hope and fear, the two most powerful emotions that make the world go round," Joe said, as once again he casually slipped a hand toward the feminine form across the middle of the king size bed.

But Bonnie had tucked the sheets and comforter under her. So even as he reached her. He was caressing her through four inches of cloth and matting. He went to dig the bed clothes out from under her, but noticed her side long glance and moved his hand back to his side of the bed as her hand bounced off the mattress, missing him.

He smiled. She giggled. They continued reading.

"What do you think is the greater emotion, hope or fear?" Joe asked.

"Hope is slow and is built like a house, fear is like fire that can destroy all hope in an instant, but without one you can't have the other, because fear without hope is despair, and hope without fear is mania," Bonnie said reaching over and took Joe's hand.

Joe smiled, placed his book on the night stand and turned off the light. Bonnie did the same. She scooted over and laid her head on his shoulder and caressed him. A couple of minutes went by. Joe started to snore.

Under her breath, she whispered, "Bastard," and scooted back over to her side of the bed.

In the dark Bonnie couldn't see it, but as Joe stopped snoring just a hint of a smirk crossed his lips.

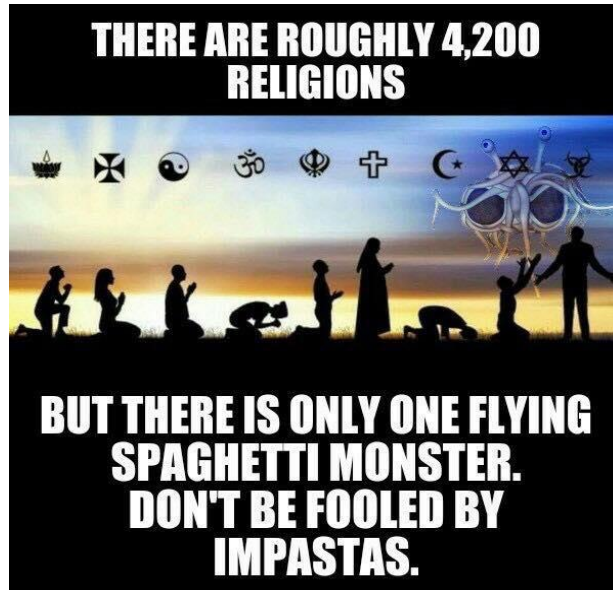
POETRY

A Gardener's Lament

Gloria Cosgrove

Late summer
the season when
perfectly good tomato stakes
are deliberately defaced
by anxious political
candidates.

COMEDIC CORNER



Contributed by Dan Vignau