

John Capindale, 1928-2007

John Capindale died in December at the age of 79.

As a member of the *Chem 13 News* Editorial Board for nearly 30 years, John was a good friend of the chemical education community. During this time he wrote many articles on topics of biochemistry and food chemistry. He loved limericks, and wrote some that found their way into *Chem 13 News*.



John was a regular at the ChemEd and BCCE conferences during the 1980s and '90s. He travelled with us (some or all of Reg Friesen, Gerry Toogood and myself) to the conference location, carting boxes of back issues for giving away, often in his van. But by 2001 his interest in music took him with a local choir to sing in some of England's major cathedrals during the summer, and those trips conflicted with the conference dates.

Together with Reg Friesen, John formed the Chemsmiles company. One of their major products was a series of bumper stickers. Among John's favourites were "Eschew obfuscation" and "Old chemists never die, they just fail to react". These are still available through S17 Science (see <http://www.s17science.com/>).

John enjoyed putting his knowledge of chemistry to work. At the memorial service, his daughter Karen recalled the insect repellent John made. "It did an excellent job of keeping away insects . . . but it also attracted dogs and took the colour out of the car's vinyl seat coverings!"

John grew up in Yorkshire in England, earning a DPhil in chemistry at the University of Oxford. There followed short periods at universities in California and northern Ontario. In 1961, he joined the Chemistry Department at the University of Waterloo where his arrival was reported this way in the student newspaper: "Something new has been added to the Chemistry Department this year. In some circles it is known as an Apathy Eradicator. There seem to be very few of them in existence. This one is an English model with a shock of red hair, wild yellow and red plaid ties and a grin nobody can resist returning. . . There is a tendency to take good lecturers for granted. But the devilment and downright good humour so characteristic of Dr. Capindale will be more and more appreciated as he becomes better known. He is a living example that the weight of the world does not compile a crushing load on every pair of academic shoulders." John's devotion to teaching continued for the next 30 years until his retirement in 1991.

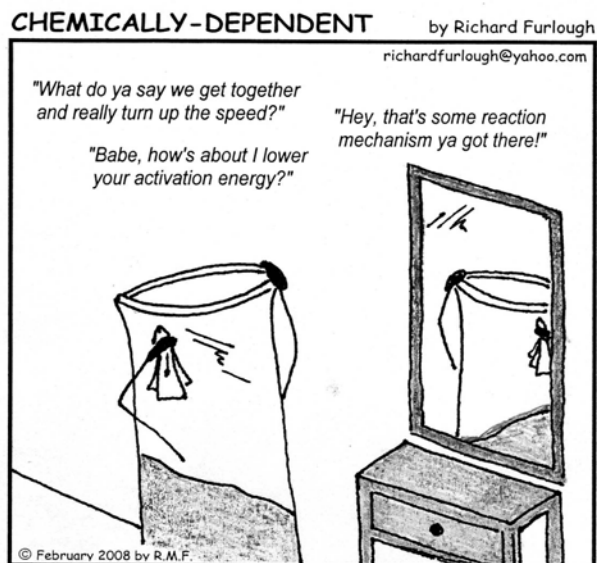
As a child, John discovered his lifelong interest in music. In Waterloo he was for many years the choir director at his home

congregation, Church of the Holy Saviour (Anglican). He also composed some liturgical music. He was comfortable in any singing range, from bass to counter tenor. In his memory at the cremation service, the family sang a favourite song, *On Illkley Moor Baht 'At*, (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Illkley_Moor_Baht'at).

John enjoyed sports and the outdoors: During his six years at Oxford University his Jesus College rowing team regularly bumped (pushed down in the standings) other college teams; he and his family built a cottage in northern Ontario on a peninsula that was accessible only by boat; and it was John who helped maintain the outdoor ice rink on the elementary school grounds just across the street from his house — and occasionally refereed disputes on the ice.

John died suddenly, of a heart attack, while enjoying a beer and watching the evening television news on December 3, 2007. Surviving are his wife, Olive, five children, and nine grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to Church of the Holy Saviour, Food Bank of Waterloo Region, or Out of the Cold Program through the Erb/Good Funeral home at www.erbgood.com, or by calling 519-745-8445. Alternatively, contributions in John's memory may be made to the Science Memorial Scholarship Fund, either by mail to Rosie Triebner, Development Officer, Faculty of Science, University of Waterloo, Waterloo ON N2L 3G1, or securely on-line at: <https://alumni.uwaterloo.ca/alumni/forms/secure/pledge/>.

Lew Brubacher, Past Editor ■



Catalyst practices his pick-up lines before going out for the evening.