

Jeffrey Lawrence Belden
1945-2022

One of Jeff's favorite things to do was to travel to spectacular places, hike, and photograph the beauty before him. He was doing just this on October 19, 2022, when he tragically fell from a cliff overlooking the Colorado River in southern Utah. He was 76 years old.

Jeff was born in Orange, New Jersey. As a child he spent summers on Nantucket, and carried his love for that island and for the ocean with him the rest of his life. After graduating from Amherst College, he spent a year in Vietnam and then relocated to California, where he found a job as an insurance claims investigator and met his future wife Judy. They moved to Santa Cruz County where Jeff was able to continue his job working from home, allowing him to build and remodel several homes on the side, and, most importantly, to be home with their daughter Sarah, the joy of his life.



Jeff had many passions that developed over the years. For over three decades he went to the Strawberry Music Festival, finding a beloved multigenerational group of friends. He loved having gatherings at his house and could always be found in a pile of kids. For 25 years, he spent summer weekends as a whitewater rafting guide. He traveled to nearly every continent, scaling peaks, exploring rainforests, and rafting many rivers. He loved singing with Pacific Voices choir and playing bridge at the Santa Cruz Bridge Club. After volunteering with Save Our Shores and the Marine Mammal Center, he found a passion for elephant seals and became a docent at Año Nuevo State Park. He considered himself an elephant seal geek, and loved to mentor new docents.

Jeff was a kind, sensitive man who was always there to help whenever he saw a need. He made a deep and lasting impact on all whose lives he touched. He was devoted to his daughter and grandchildren, and in 2017 he found love with Lynne Lenger, which brought him great happiness.

Jeff is survived by his daughter Sarah, son-in-law Matt, grandchildren Theo and Asher, his partner Lynne Lenger, his former wife Judy Belden, and many treasured friends and chosen family. He will be deeply missed.

A celebration of life will be held in the spring. In lieu of flowers, know that he was deeply committed to local marine-focused organizations such as Save Our Shores.