



"The titular head of any sizable volunteer organization quickly learns which members are just dues-paying members and which willingly volunteer their services and time. Jim, in the Cobblestone Society, has been one of those who gives himself and his talents and not just yearly dues. Both as an officer and as a director, Jim has been an active participant in Board of Directors discussions, often adding a touch of humor to lighten the moment. He is more than generous in offering his talents ... always with such a cheerful disposition. It is a distinct pleasure to have Jim Orr as a dedicated cohort and as a warm-hearted friend. Such people make the world a better place to be in. We salute you, Jim!

William B. Nestle, Pres.
The Cobblestone Society

"I consider Jim Orr to be a dear friend who has always been supportive of me. I have always found Jim's humor refreshing, even through his recent troubles. With the exception of a few canines, everyone who meets Jim becomes fond of him. I have shared experiences with Jim on the Arts Council and in our current artist group and have always found him extremely supportive and generous with his time, talents and knowledge. I believe the community has benefitted from Jim's presence. I know I sure have. I love the guy."

Arthur Barnes, Artist &
Former Exec. Sec. Orleans
County Council on the Arts

"Jim might not be comfortable with the term, but I believe he represents the epitome of the "religious" person. It's not that he cares much for ceremony or dogma - he does not - but rather how he lives his life.

"He takes his community seriously; he feels "called" to serve. If there is a cause to help others in Albion, Jim is involved. In his often off-handed manner, he cares very deeply. He works quietly without notoriety. His good deeds are often invisible.

"Jim's "religion" also is reflected by his genuine stands on social issues he feels important. He's not afraid to stand up for his beliefs and sometimes endures the slings and arrows of others. Jim believes ideas are important.

"Religion" is really how we live, not what we believe."

Rev. Richard E. Hood, Pastor
Pullman Memorial Church

For those of you who have not had the privilege of knowing Jim Orr, here is his background. He was born in 1922 at Yonkers, N.Y. to Hazel Earhart and William Anderson Orr, City Editor of the N.Y. Herald, Secretary to Gov. Whitman, Sup't. of N.Y.S. Prisons and later, an executive of Metro Goldwyn Mayer Pictures. Jim attended Scarborough Preparatory School and Columbia University. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Feb. 1943 and served until Feb. 1946. He had training in underwater demolition and served on Guam and the Marianas Islands. Following military service, he attended Albany Medical College from which he graduated in 1952. Following an internship at the Albany Medical Center, he had a private practice in Columbia County followed by one year as Senior Medical Officer at Hospital Albert Schweitzer, Des. Chappelles, Haiti. It was here that his first wife died in 1961. He then had a private practice at Cape Vincent, N.Y. and became Medical Director of Planned Parenthood of Northern N.Y. After this, he became Medical Director of the State University Health Service at SUNY Brockport from where he retired in 1987.

In 1981 he married his present wife, Janice Jurgens and they moved to Albion in 1985. He has five children and one step son.

His hobbies include photography, Chinese philosophy, travel, sailing and archeology. He has also been a ham radio operator. He has served on the following boards: Swan Library, Pullman Memorial Universalist Church, Cobblestone Society, Orleans County Council on the Arts and the Western N.Y. Association of Historical Agencies. He has been involved with Hospice, the Flight of Fancy Theatre and the Artists Group.

His photos and photo copies have frequently appeared in this column at no cost to the county. He volunteered all the photography for Luminaries In the Firmament, A guide to Stained Glass Windows in Orleans County, N.Y. Indeed, Jim Orr has been an indelible part of history in the making to which we have benefitted and for which we are grateful.

On the evening of June 7 the Swan Library Board of Trustees tendered Jim Orr a reception which over sixty people attended. This included representatives from many organizations and a number of friends. It was an informal gathering arranged to pay tribute to a man who has so unselfishly given of himself to his community without fanfare.

Story teller, Gretchen Murray Sepik has simply penned "Jim-Physician, Photographer, Philosopher, Friend. An Orriginal." I note Gretchen has cleverly spelled original with two Rs. Anyone who knows Jim Orr recognizes him for his ORRiginality and Friendship. To this I would add that Jim Orr is a great man. Real greatness does not come by fame or by fortune, but by how we conduct ourselves. Truly, the great person is unassuming and filled with goodness.

Jim has endeared himself to many different organizations and people while living in Orleans County. We all deeply regret the fact that he has been diagnosed with cancer. Because of this he has resigned from board positions and duties leaving a void in his absence. Eulogies come too late! Hence, Jim, a few of your peers have written some words which give testimony to you and your works which will long be appreciated.

"There are people who really commit themselves to improving the quality of others' lives, who give not only things, and acts, and words but of themselves. They give not what is extraneous to self, but what is deeply personally themselves, giving of what they are. These are, in Emerson's terms, profoundly self-reliant men: Whole, principled, at peace with themselves. Jim Orr is one of these rare people, whether he is calling a TV channel to keep a library open or asking how one's bones have healed. He is also a man of common sense, humor and great grace."

Virginia Weis
Dep't. of English SUNY Brockport

"Dr. Orr came to Swan Library, filling a vacancy on the Board of Trustees in 1988, and assumed the Presidency of the Board in 1991. With him he brought unusual breadth of experience and intelligence, mixed with grace, humor, and the almost unnoticed ability to encourage harmony of best effort among workers serving patron needs, and those who guided the work. His generosity was equally low key. From time to time unrequested, but much needed equipment appeared in place, and fruits of his photographic hobby often filled the lobby exhibit case, Librarian's office and news articles, with duplicates for archives and gifts to subjects of the photos.

"Jim Orr made his part in all our lives at Swan Library an era of warm and quiet growth. Thanks, Jim."

Evelyn Lyman, Director