

# Jim Conrad

## Becomers Mystery Person of the week - July 15, 2007

He was born in the south (Santa Ana, on Main St)

He joined the Methodist Church when he was six because he was always awake early; there was nothing to do around the house until noon when the rest of the family would wake up.

His girlfriend, Virginia's house was on the way to church and they would walk to church together, about 1/2 mile.

Thru the years his church experiences were varied: Methodist boys choir, (the director took off with all the funds - end of choir practice!) San Luis Obispo Baptist; Lakewood Baptist; First Assembly of God and Garden Grove Community Church.

His work career began at eight years old earning 50 cents a day filling gas tanks at a Standard Oil station. He maintained yards earning \$1.00 per yard until 12 years old. He worked summers on a watermelon truck delivering to grocery stores earning \$5.00 per day. He had a 4 am milk route. He worked at dairy farms, grocery stores vegetable markets, service stations, was an assistant engineer on a commercial carrier, etc, etc and concluded his career as a test engineer for a company who manufactured and installed bar code readers.

In the early 1970's he worked as a team member with Westinghouse, designing the Polaris missile launcher for the U.S. Navy. The project concluded at San Clemente Island test facility, belonging to the Navy, where the four support craft (launcher, fishhook, translator, and monitor barge) were tested and operated.

He has met a few entertaining people:

- His wife of thirty plus years
- Leo Carrio
- John Wayne
- John Raitt
- John Madden
- Don Mooma

He and his wife became (very good) friends while traveling as part of a group. Their first date was dinner followed by a sales meeting (Shaklee). They dated for a short time, became engaged and married in December that same year.

After living in an apartment for a brief time, they bought their first home, which was much more suitable for mom, dad and a gang of kids from previous marriages.

Mom and kids were always a hoot to vacation with. Free time was always spent at the beach, traveling in his tent on wheels to a variety of destinations.

When he was about 7 years old, he met Leo Carrio in his dad's store. Shortly after that he met John Wayne the same way.

He and John Raitt met on opposite ends of a crosscut, 2-man saw in the San Bernardino Mountains (Barton Flats YMCA camp). The tree was big—8- maybe 10-foot diameter. It took them a while but the tree finally fell—the opposite direction than which intended (it was John's fault!). The tree fell across the YMCA ball diamond and hit the back stop dead center. John's father was camp director (Arch Raitt) and John came to camp to sing and entertain . He was doing Oklahoma on Broadway at the time and was getting ready to star in a movie.

Jim met John Madden on the football gridiron in college. John and he were both tackles.

He met Don Mooma in high school. He and Don were both on the swim team and football team.

His interests in swimming was just a happenstance thing. His father asked him to go boating one day and when they were out in the middle of the body of water his dad threw him in, saying, "When you get back to shore, you'll know how to swim". He made it back to shore, obviously, and 10 years later he taught survival swimming.

He tried to go to jail once. He was sighted for a traffic violation while attending college. Unlike today, the court hearing was the same day and the fine had to be paid then! The fine was 25 dollars or 24 hours in the clink. It was a small town court hearing, he, the judge and the judge's dog were the only ones in attendance. He offered, "If you let me go back to my dorm and get my books, I'll spend the 24 in jail" The Judge said "NO!" He paid the fine. Nearly starved to death that month.

He was hungry often while in college. Sundays were the leanest days. The campus cafeterias only fed once on Sunday, so if you were broke or close to it, it was necessary to find alternate sources. The First Baptist Sunday night prayer meeting was the most reliable. Wednesday night at the First Baptist wasn't too bad either. Then if it was possible to scare up a dollar, there was always Smokey's, where you could get 5 hamburgers for a dollar. There were stories about Smokey's hamburgers - he tried not to put much stock in those stories.

His dorm buddies became Baptists, hungry Baptists. Mack was LDS, Don Shintani was Buddhist. Then there was the hungry Jewish lad - who will remain nameless - the lad ate ham one Sunday night and thought it was pretty tasty.

He had a shot at school band. He played the French horn, English horn, steel guitar, Spanish guitar, saw, harmonica, bones, spoons, and could whistle in harmony. He never became accomplished in any instrument where being able to read music was a factor.

And he fished Albacore commercially for 2 years in Mexico, out of L A..

He swam in high school and college.