

Toasting Our Annisquam Postman, Jim Patrick

The Village Hall Portrait

Memory of Jim:

Several years ago, Deb Marston asked me whether I would do a portrait of Jim, our mailman, who had indicated his intention to retire. I said I would do it, and, to that end, told Jim that the community cared deeply for him and wanted his portrait as a remembrance. I asked Jim whether he would sit for me to facilitate the process, to which he replied that he would not and wanted no part of a portrait. He made it clear that he did not want to be celebrated, as he tends to get emotional. So, Jim's wife provided Deb with several pictures of him that I could use for the painting.

Over the winter of 2019-20, I painted Jim's portrait, with Jim on Leonard Street and the village buildings in the background. That portrait was the only painting I worked on during the winter months. I was told that after the portrait was hung in the second-floor stairway of the Village Hall, Jim and his wife had occasion to go past the painting on the way to the auditorium. On his way out, he could not help but see the painting, but did not give it more than a quick glance. Months later, when Jim was delivering the mail to our house, I said I owed him an apology if I had painted the portrait against his wishes, but repeated that the community cared deeply for him and wanted his image to join that of the other postmen on the wall of the Village Hall. Jim told me not to give it a second [thought]. We did not discuss the subject again.

Peter Herbert

Sunny Jim

Jim Patrick was our international agent for cards, letters and parcels! Many of our friends in New Zealand can't get some North American companies to directly ship them items so we were the local depot. If something strange arrived for an unknown Annisquam resident—and I remember that motorcycle parts were in one such parcel—Jim knew to ask us if we were expecting a package or box to come our way.

At one time, a QR code was put on our door —we assume that others were put along the delivery route as an effort to measure “efficiency”. What an insult when the village had more than “postal service” from Jim. He knew everyone he “served”, helped many, and never betrayed a confidence.

We only saw Jim in the warm weather, as we fled from the New England winter for many years. During summer, there were occasions when I was working in the front garden while he was delivering mail. The conversation often revolved around the plants (and weeds) and we shared a similar respect for the showy hibiscus at our front gate. A hundred years ago, the village postman was known as “Sunny Jim”. We were fortunate to have our own “Sunny Jim” in the village and will miss his wry smile very much.

Rita and David Teele

To the Rescue

One early April day a few years ago I went up to our house in Annisquam (we live in Bedford) to do some pre-season cleaning up. As I recall, it was a sunny day but still rather cold, so not too many people about. Our house (4 Bridgewater Street) is quite old and, as is often case with old houses, the floors are uneven in spots. I was working away in one of the second-floor bedrooms and somehow managed to close the door behind me. The door handles are the old “colonial style” – not a knob but a flat piece that moves up and down and hooks behind a catch; wrought-iron, I think.

When I went to open the door, it wouldn’t budge. At all. At first, I found this humorous – after all, who could imagine getting locked into one of your own rooms? But as five, ten, fifteen minutes passed and I was unable to make any progress, humor receded and a vague sense of panic began to creep in. I didn’t have my cell phone and in fact no one even in my own family knew I had gone up to Annisquam. I began to perspire as visions of my skeletal remains, finally being discovered by the Gloucester Police after my disappearance, became more and more vivid.

In vain, I looked out the window for a passerby...no one. I did try to open the window so I could lean out, but the storm windows – like everything else in the house – are ancient and I was only able to raise it about eight inches. Clearly, I was doomed. But...wait! I see Jim pull up to the mailbox in front of Village Hall and start to remove the mail from the box.

I stick my arm out the window as far as it would go (not very) and wave it up down (difficult, because I couldn’t get the window open very far.) No point in yelling, I must rely on my arm waving and pray that Jim sees it. *Oh no, he is driving away!* Just

as I am about to write out my last will and testament in the dust on the floor, I see that the mail truck is slowly backing up as if the driver wants to confirm what he thinks he may have seen. It's Jim!!

He gets out and walks into the yard beneath the window and in a confused tone of voice hollers up and asks if I was trying to get his attention.

"YES!!" I shout from the opening (I am by this time kneeling next to the sill so only my head can be seen through the opening.) "I know this sounds crazy, but I am locked in a bedroom on the second floor. Could you come in and come upstairs and get me out?"

Jim had a rather cautious look on his face. (I imagine he has seen a lot of interesting things over the years as he had hustled about Annisquam, but that didn't occur to me until later.)

I tried to address his concerns. "I know it looks strange, but really, I was cleaning, of all things, and I managed to lock myself in." I laughed a little manically and my voice was high-pitched due to the fact that I had begun to believe that I wasn't getting enough oxygen. I think this had the effect of adding to his sense of caution rather than allaying any concerns.

But...after a few seconds he decided in my favor and followed my shouted instructions about how to get into the house and then followed my voice to the room in which I was imprisoned. He applied some force on the door and it popped open and I practically fell into his arms – which looking back may have scared him more than it relieved me!

We laughed about this many times over the following years – it was our bonding moment. Saved by Jim Patrick, agent of the United States Post Office!

Ginni Spencer

Jim and Barney the Puppy

One of my fondest memories of Jim happened one day when our dog, Barney, was a puppy. Barney had a special chair by a front window and liked to sit there waiting for us when we were away. Jim, who knew everything that was going on in the village, surmised that we were away one day and felt sorry for Barney sitting patiently by the window so he picked up various puppy toys on the lawn and placed them on top of a bush in front of the window so Barney could see them. I can't think of anyone else that would do such a thoughtful thing for someone else's dog. Jim was a very special man. We will miss him so much!

Lida Bernard

Looking Out for Us

Jim never walked past a newspaper or delivery left on our walkway without bringing it under cover to our front door. Jim was always looking out for us, not just looking out for our mail.

Ed & Donna Caselden

Keeping Track

Here are some thoughts about Jim Patrick:

Our friend Jim Patrick, regarded as the Honorary Mayor of Annisquam by most of us, will certainly be missed. He navigated the Village and the comings and goings between summer and winter houses by many of us with humor and ease. He kept track of our various addresses, including the very confusing numbering system of Adams Hill Road, and forwarded mail, when necessary, even without our formal help. Jim will be missed by us all and certainly never replaced.

Judy and Bob Anderson
23 Adams Hill Road

Bringing a Smile

About twenty years ago we moved to Annisquam and lived on Rockholm Road. The second year here, we had a terrific snow storm that dumped several feet of snow. We lost our electricity for a couple of days. Ever resourceful, I put a couple of bottles of wine in the drift next to our front door. Jim came to deliver our mail, knocked on the door and said "I'm glad to see you have your priorities right." That cracked me up and I always looked forward to seeing him with his wonderful smile no matter what the weather conditions. We will miss him.

Judy and Carl Gustin

A Treat for Mollie

Having lived here in Annisquam for only 27 years and enjoyed the warm smile and chat of our Postman Jim throughout those years I can truly say that Mollie our dog misses him more than anyone I know. For that matter, I believe Mollie misses him more

than any other dog. I cannot put into words the joyful greetings she gave him each day he came with our mail - Mollie knew Jim was on his way long before we did and the howling was quite intense by the time he reached #71 Leonard Street. They admired one another so very much and it had nothing to do with the wee Dog Biscuit offered on arrival!!!

Jim is a Legend in his *own time* and is greatly missed by the whole community.

Respectively submitted, Joan Collier

Missed, but not Forgotten

Jim,

The Gilman family has totally enjoyed your dry wit, warm smile, and outstanding service during your tenure here in Bayview and Annisquam. Who will I banter with now that you are enjoying your well-deserved retirement?

Thanks so much. You will be clearly missed but never forgotten.

Val and Paul Gilman
75 Revere Street

Professionalism Personified

In our opinion, Jim Patrick was the epitome of a professional postman with a dedicated working style. He was always more than affable and would go out of his way to put things in our front door, if the weather were too inclement. His sense of humor was dry, but one that made us smile. We will miss seeing Jim, but [he] surely won't be forgotten. We hope he loves his retirement years ahead.

Fondly, Tee and Michael Wall

Mom's and Dad's Mailman

While Jim was never our mailman, he was my mom's and dad's mailman. Like many in the village, they had a wonderful day-to-day relationship with Jim. Joking and humorous banter were part of their daily encounters. We lived up at the end of Dennison Street. As my parents aged, it was a huge comfort to me to know that should

something be amiss at 50 Leonard Street, Jim would let me know. He is such a kind, caring, wonderful human being. I'm sure the Village misses his presence!

Lee Cunningham

Jim! Jimmy!

Jim! Jimmy! Good for you! We so appreciate your devoted years of excellence for our community. Here is one story to prove Jim's caring beyond the norm.

We were away for a few days. When I saw Jim the next week, he said quietly, "You may want to know that there were some people out on your porch having lunch while you were gone." It happened that they were friends of mine and I had given them the go-ahead. But to think that Jim cared enough to warn me. He wasn't being nosy or intrusive. He was truly being a good friend. Best of luck to you and your family, Jim!

Leslie and Bob Dews

The Little Extras Loom Large

We were lucky enough to live on Jim's route for several years. When I was eight months pregnant with a 3-year-old and a broken leg, Jim brought the mail up the stairs and hand delivered it to make it easier for me. Every day I looked forward to his infectious smile and upbeat personality. He even picked a few weeds from the garden on his way to the house. We moved from his route and have missed him ever since. We asked him several times if he could add our new location to his route. He always smiled and said he'd ask.

Jim is one of those irreplaceable people that we will always be grateful for knowing.

Lindy and Ted Dangelmayer

Hand Delivery

For well over thirty years, Jim Patrick has taken root in our lives. Josephine Flynn would sit on her terrace waiting for the highlight of her day. That would be Jim roaring up the driveway springing from his truck, revealing those perfectly bronzed legs and flashing his 18-carat gold smile. And yes, he also hand-delivered the mail.

The driveway at 38 Norwood Hts in the early years, was unpaved and filled with protruding stones. I suspect Mom wanted it "hot-topped" to make it more convenient for Jim.

You can't hide from us; we know who you are Jimmy. You are an angel disguised in a US postal uniform – gracing our village with your warmth and kindness. If we know you, it goes without saying you know us even better!

Be well, Jim. We will try to manage without you.

Pippy Giuliano, Yuri Tuvim