

## **James Paul "Jim Ron" and Marla Roncaglione**

Jim Ron became a member of Tired Iron in 2011, even before he and Marla moved permanently from Ohio to Northwest Arkansas. They had "discovered" Tired Iron when making a casual drive around Benton County... just looking. They saw the club's sign in the curve on Highway 12 in Gentry and followed the arrows to the club location. Jim Ron soon joined and has been an active member ever since and Marla joined later. As an explanation for his being called "Jim Ron," it was a matter of convenience and perhaps even necessity. Anytime he met someone new, there seemed to be some difficulty for most to handle his decidedly Italian sounding last name, Roncaglione (Note: the final "e" is more or less silent). Over the years the Jim Ron appellation has become almost the only name he answers to.

To get to the beginning of Jim Ron's story, he was born April 25, 1948, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, to Irl and Shirley Watson Roncaglione of nearby Linesville, Pennsylvania. He states that he was a "shoe box" baby since he weighed in at two pounds thirteen ounces at birth. This early approach to life earned him two months in an incubator, but he overcame all the difficulties associated with such a beginning and proved to be a very active child and youth. He said he is blessed to be alive.

Both Jim's parents were from families with nine children, large families being somewhat typical in the earlier years of the 1900s. Jim Ron's folks stopped with four. He is an older brother to three sisters, who incidentally live in Ohio. Obviously, from the family name, Jim's dad was of Italian descent but with some German thrown in. His mother had an Irish background. His dad was a construction contractor with skills in handling big machinery, especially bulldozers. His mom was a school cheerleader, who attracted his dad's eye.

Jim Ron had the good fortune to do much of his growing up on his uncle's nearby farm. His uncle raised row crops and hay and had a seventy-five cow dairy farm along with a beef cattle herd. At a very early age, one of Jim's first farming chores involved the hay crop. One of his grandfathers taught him to cut, rake, and haul hay. He said they did raise some square bales, but much of the hay was chopped and blown into the barn's hay loft. He has fond memories of his many hours driving his uncle's Massy Harris 30. In his late teens, his grandfather helped him get a twenty-six acre farm where he managed thirty-five cows of his own.

In his youth, Jim Ron's willingness for hard work and tendency toward entrepreneurial efforts, which followed him in much of his life, were evident. From the age of fourteen to sixteen, he also managed the two largest paper routes in the area. That not being enough, he also ran a lawn mower business.

Jim Ron graduated from the Linesville Conneaut Summit High School in 1966. He next attended trade school in Linesville the rest of 1966 and the first half of 1967. He learned welding and auto body work, skills that would prove beneficial to him in his work career.

His education was interrupted when he was drafted into the army in July 1967. He had a desire to become a pilot, but an eye problem prevented him from following that path. During his army training, he did become a parachutist. In his regular training he earned a marksman rating. From Fort Knox, Kentucky, he was sent to Vietnam into some of the worst fighting of the war. His time there was not long because he was soon wounded with shrapnel in his arms and back. After a time of recovery, he left the military in June 1969.

Upon returning to Linesville, Jim began work at the Telepost Company, a plant that manufactured adjustable steel jack posts or "teleposts," which are used to support main beams in a building's

basement. These posts transfer a building's weight to the foundation of the structure. Jim soon left that job, but he did note that later on Telepost went out of business when foreign competition became too great.

His next job was at the Andover Plastic Company in Andover, Ohio, which was only about twenty miles from Linesville, PA. This plant manufactured such items as car parts, refrigerator emblems, and rubber parts for numerous uses. Jim Ron, with his desire for precision in all his work, became an expert at making die setups for the plastic injection presses, which led to him becoming the main instructor for new employees. He also gained lots of experience as a material handler, which meant he kept a continuous flow of raw materials available for the machining processes. He worked there seventeen years, part of the time as a reluctant foreman.

July 28, 1973, Jim met a girl at one of his sister's wedding. He had noticed her at her job as a waitress but had not paid too much attention, but on this day the girl was wearing an eye-catching white dress with pink polka dots. They started dating and April 27, 1974, Jim and Marla Jones were married in Andover. Her parents were Keith and Ila Jones. She grew up with two brothers who still live in Ohio.

Marla's father just happened to be Jim's boss at the plastic company. For a few years Jim, Marla, and her father worked together in the business. Marla continued to work there for thirty-three years, missing only five days of work. When the business began cutting back in preparation for closing, again because of foreign competition, her hard work and reliability paid off as she became one of the last few to walk out of the plant for the last time.

Jim left the plastics business and opened Jim's Auto Repair and Paint business in Andover, Ohio. This was a fulfillment of his interests when he took the mechanics courses at the trade school in Pennsylvania earlier in his life. After twelve years he expanded the business to become Camaro Parts with new and used parts and for restoration for the Chevrolet Camaro.

After five years with Camaro Parts, Jim took a new direction. In 1991 he went to work with Uncle Harry's Garage Door business. He soon bought the business and established Ronco Doors. He installed and repaired garage doors in homes, businesses, and large commercial warehouses. He also installed fire doors. He retired from that business in 2014 but still installs and repairs doors on a job to job basis.

Jim and Marla have a son, John, and a daughter, Jessica. John and his wife Valerie have twins, a girl named Lola and a son named Owen, who were born August 21, 2015. They live in Akron, Ohio, where John is a computer programmer and Valerie is a school teacher.

Their daughter Jessica is married to Russell Shaffer. They have two children, a daughter Sophia and a son Brady. Jessica and Russell both work at the Walmart corporate headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. The Shaffers came to Arkansas in 2005 when Jessica accepted a position at Corporate. Russell was employed in a couple of management positions until he became a Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs – Constituent Relations for Walmart. This is significant because Russell is blind. He began losing his sight by the time he was ten years old, but he was told he would not be blind for thirty or forty years. That was wrong because, by the time he was in his twenties, he no longer drove a car and by his late twenties he was declared legally blind. A big part of his job is to give lectures to encourage people with hardships.

To be close to the grandchildren and to help out in general is the reason that, by 2010, Marla was spending most of her time in Arkansas. Last year she and Jim Ron sold their property in Ohio and moved permanently to Arkansas. They have purchased a new home, importantly with a big shop for Jim Ron's tractor interests. By the way, Marla worked first as a nurse's aide at a retirement home and

now works in that capacity at Northwest Medical Center in the cardiac unit in Bentonville.

Jim Ron began his involvement in collecting tractors and attending tractor shows when, in 1988, he helped Karl Hoffackor, a friend and neighbor who was a Minneapolis Moline collector, haul tractors to the Saegertown, Pennsylvania, club. Karl helped Jim Ron collect Allis Chalmers, beginning with a 1940 Allis B. Eventually, Jim Ron would own the complete AC letter series, but he has now reduced his ACs to seven, which include Bs, Cs, and CAs. Today, along with the Allis Chalmers, he has an extensive collection of garden tractors, which include Wheel Horse, International, Speed X, Bantam, Porter-Cable, and Bolen brands.

Jim Ron has been active in tractor clubs ever since his first interest. After Saegertown, the next club was the Trumbull County Tractor Club in Vienna, Ohio. In 1995 he and four friends met and organized the club. 2016 will see the club host its 22nd annual show. He also was very involved with the Ashtabula County Antique Tractor Club ([ashtabulaantiqueengineclub.com/](http://ashtabulaantiqueengineclub.com/)) located at Wayne, Ohio. Another club was the Historical Engine Society of Burton, Ohio. Jim always proves to be a valuable club member. He often provided hats, shirts, buttons, etc. for sale with the profits benefiting the respective clubs. In the short time he and Marla have been members of Tired Iron, Jim Ron has taken on the chore of providing Farm Collector show guides and is presently working on a member-based calendar for sale for 2017. We are fortunate that Jim Ron and Marla are members of Tired Iron of the Ozarks.

