

## Interview with Ray Hatler and Jamie Mae Hatler

### GALA Interviews

**Narrators:** Ray Hatler [RH] and Jamie Mae Hatler [JMH]

**Interviewer:** Katrina Maksimuk [I]

**Videographer:** Sara Goener

**Location:** Los Osos, California

**Length:** Approximately 01:39:29

Interview begins at 00:04:19

**Transcript prepared by:** Steven Ruszczycky, Elias Simons, Kailyn Pope

[00:04:19] I: All right. So you're talking about David, meeting David, when did you each--. Well, how about start out, introduce yourselves and maybe say a... Something, an unknown fact about you, like maybe a hobby that you do or something that's personal. So introduce yourself. If you want to say your age, if you want to say--.

[00:04:38] JMH: Oh, no way!

[00:04:44] I: So maybe introduce your name and something exciting, something you collect or something that you're... Something like that.

[00:04:54] RH: Hi, I'm Ray Hatler. I was an attorney, but retired after I got illness. And the thing we do mainly today is to go on cruises. We go on all gay cruises. We've gone on about twelve of them in the last three years. So, we enjoy that very much. And... [JMH blows kiss at RH] Your turn [directed at JMH].

[00:05:21] JMH: My turn. I'm Jamie. Actually, Jamie Mae officially to the courts. As Ray mentioned we've been on many cruises. I think we've been on thirty or twenty-nine altogether. One thing we do on our cruises is collect items. One cruise we collected...

[00:05:45] RH: Mugs.

[00:05:46] JMH: Mugs from each town we were in. Another cruise we collected plates from each town we were in, and so forth. It's something we enjoy doing.

[00:06:02] I: Great. So, maybe you could each share when you decided to move to San Luis Obispo County or your origin here and kind of tell the story of how it happened.

[00:06:13] RH: Okay.

[00:06:14] JMH: Who's gonna tell it? There's only one story.

[00:06:17] RH: In 1981, Jamie bought a new car. So late Friday, we brought it home late Friday afternoon. So I said, "Let's go to Carmel or Monterey or somewhere, and take 1 up. Highway 1 up." He says "Okay. Sounds like fun." So we threw a suitcase together, jumped in the car and drove and got as far as San Luis Obispo, where we saw Howard Johnson. We pulled off at this off ramp. And I got to look at a map and I says, "Well, look here. If we take this highway, we can go down the valley and then go over to Highway 1." "Okay, we'll try that." So we went tooling down Los Osos Valley Road. I think it was in February. So everything was green and beautiful. And we said, "We're going to retire here. This is for us."

[00:07:12] JMH: We started coming back the next year and three or four times in a row, looking at property and trying to look at houses. We fell out of three escrows and--. We didn't fall out, they did. Finally our broker, said, "Why don't you buy a piece of land and build?" So we bought the land you're now standing over and built two houses. Built the first one as a weekender. We were gonna use it for every other weekend for 10 years 'til we could afford to retire. And after our third time up, we said "This is silly. Let's sell the house we're living in in Los Angeles, move into the weekender, and start building the big house." So we did.

[00:08:13] I: And what... Did you guys have... Since you weren't ready to retire, were you still having your career jobs down there at the time?

[00:08:18] JMH: Ray was a lawyer and could move his practice wherever he wanted to. He actually opened his first office in San Luis and so after a few years he moved it here to Los Osos. I

worked for a large aerospace company. I was the first, only, and last person allowed to not work at the company. They did not want me to leave. They got a computer and a phone in the house and let me work from here. They never did that before, never done it since. It broke numerous rules. They did not want me to leave. So I did that until I reached retirement age, at which time I said, “Bye bye!” Give me my money and let me go.

[00:09:26] I: So you described why you moved to San Luis Obispo County. The greenery, the beauty, and I feel the same addiction for this area myself. Did you know anyone when you moved here?

[00:09:40] RH: No.

[00:9:41] JMH: No.

[00:09:42] RH: We didn't know we were moving.

[00:09:43] I: Could you talk about maybe how it felt to move or what you experienced moving here without knowing anyone?

[00:09:47] RH: Ok, we moved up not knowing anybody and we didn't know if it was Bakersfield by the Bay or what we were getting ourselves into. But before we built the house, we were out in front looking at the property with our builder. And this woman comes from across the street walking three dogs and said, “My friend and I have been up here a number of years.” So radar started going around and the gaydar, she kicked in. And so we became friends with them and they threw a party for us before we even moved up here to introduce us to the menfolk in the area. So we met all the people that we should in Los Osos and from there it just grew.

[00:10:29] JMH: Yeah, we have a personal phone list of over 200 people. People we really know. When I say personal, I mean, they've all been in the house. We've been in their houses. It's a fantastic area. When we moved, as you asked, as far as we knew, we'd be the only two gays in the area. Untrue! Untrue!

[00:11:02] I: Yeah, It's-

[00:11:03] I: So-

[00:11:04] I: Go ahead, no, go ahead.

[00:11:05] I: Who was it that came over then?

[00:11:06] RH: That was Nan and Barb. The two ladies.

[00:11:11] JMH: Just passed away.

[00:11:12] I: Oh, I know. They're who got Sarah and I inspired to do this, as we read. David Kilburn called me and said, "You look at the newspaper today." I read it and I just thought, "My goodness," you know, "We're in, we're in the land of, you know, Tortilla Flats on Wednesday night and drama and all that stuff. If I find love like that, it's all I need. It's beautiful."

[00:11:36] JMH: They made our lives. In more ways than one! Careful, I'm gonna cry. You don't want that on film.

[00:11:48] I: I'm getting teary eyed, too, okay. So you met a lot of really good people. So when did you get together, though? Back in Los Angeles? Can you tell the story, maybe?

[00:11:59] RH: Ask me, ask me.

[00:12:00] I: How many years have you been together? Rephrase it in a sentence form.

[00:12:03] RH: Okay. We've been together about thirty-four and a half years. We met in Los Angeles at a gay bar. He comes walking in with the big phallic symbol, his cane. I said, "I've got to get to know that guy." We talked that night, went home together, and have been together ever since.

[00:12:28] JMH: It was also Friday the thirteenth so we have about four anniversaries every year. We always August the thirteenth. But we always celebrate Friday the thirteenth. So when August the thirteenth is not a Friday, there are three other Friday the thirteenth. So we have a... We have a lot of anniversaries.

[00:12:55] I: So when you guys met at a gay bar down there that was, let's see, thirty-four, five years ago would be--.

[00:13:03] RH: 1971.

[00:13:05] I: So what was that like in Los Angeles at the time?

[00:13:09] JMH: Much different than it is now! We... I had gone to gay bars earlier, he had been in the service. And earlier than that, you snuck in the back door and prayed no one saw you. By the time we got together, it was a nice looking bar on La Cienega. You walked right in the front door and no one gave a diddly. It was just fine. When we did walk in that day, it was a piano bar. Over at the piano was full, around one side was a little tiny bench that held three people. One, two, three. Well, Ray was at one end. I was at the other end. This third gentleman was in the center. We both proceeded to cruise him. He got up and left! So we decided “that’s ridiculous, let’s go home and do our thing.” We went home and that was it. And we’ve been together, except for a couple business trips, we’ve been together since that night. Not a weekday or a day later. The next day he did go home and emptied his apartment and get his cat and brought that back to my apartment. Other than that, we’ve been together.

[00:14:51] I: That sounds like the lesbian U-Haul relationships. Have you heard the joke “What do lesbians bring on the second date?”

[00:14:57] RH: U-Haul, yeah.

[00:14:58] JMH: A U-Haul. Yeah, but we never got another one!

[00:15:05] I: So, so--.

[00:15:05] RH: On a recent cruise I was talking to somebody about how long we've been together and how we met. I told him and said we met at a gay bar and this little twinkie was there--.

[00:15:16] JMH: In 1971.

[00:15:18] RH: There was a little twinkie there and he said “ There were gay bars in Los Angeles that long ago?”

[00:15:25] I: Were they still being raided there? Was it safe?

[00:15:27] JMH: No this was after the raids.

[00:15:30] I: Ok, so it was--.

[00:15:31] JMH: I was going to the gay bars when they were being raided. In fact, the one that I went to most frequently was directly across the street from another gay bar which was raided one night when I was in my bar. The other bar was raided. Thank heavens!

[00:15:51] I: Yeah, that's something that I think the younger generation just doesn't even understand at all. That you would be in trouble for going dancing, or having a cocktail.

[00:16:01] JMH: Oh, can I do my dancing? Oh, no, no. I don't mean that. When I was still underage, maybe eighteen or nineteen - not twelve - I met a friend who belonged to a very private gay club way up in the mountains. He used to take me there and they had... You could not get to the club without your vehicle being seen. It was virtually impossible. And they had a system of flashing lights and the underage, like myself, went to the back room if the cops would come in and raid, went to the back room. The lesbians and homosexuals all switched partners. When the police came in, it looked like any other dance club in the world. So that was fun.

[00:17:13] I: I just read about that in the book *Stone Butch Blues*, have you heard about that book before?

[00:17:20] RH: No

[00:17:21] JMH: No

[00:17:21] I: It described that bit that people would switch partners. She even said like her--. The woman in the story is, like, butch and she said her perfect person for her to dance with was one of the queens. So I thought that was really cute. So you guys have been together a really long time. How, how do you--? What do you attribute to the longevity of your relationship? What has made--.

[00:17:42] JMH: Love. It's simple. [Turns to RH] You agree?

[00:17:50] RH: Yeah!

[00:17:51] JMH: Yeah.

[00:17:53] I: Can you restate that in the form of a--?

[00:17:55] JMH: We've been together forever. Thirty-four years. Thirty-four and a half.

Because our love has sustained us.

[00:18:11] I: And what--? Is love what makes the relationship work too or...?

[00:18:16] RH: Basically.

[00:18:16] JMH: Basically, yup. Ray became quite ill four years ago. Can I tell this? Sure.

Doctors gave him a month or two to live and they don't know why he's alive. I know why. Because we love each other.

[00:18:44] I: [Cell phone rings] Ugh! I turn it off every time and it always does this.

[00:18:54] I: Take the batteries out.

[00:18:55] I: Yeah, I'm gonna take the batteries out.

[00:18:56] JMH: Do you edit that out or do we get that music?

[00:19:01] I: [Laughs] The music in there!

[00:19:04] I: I'm gonna take my SIM card out.

[00:19:06] I: Jamie, I have kleenex here for you. Just in case.

[00:19:13] RH: Crochet?

[00:19:16] I: It's just tissue.

[00:19:20] JMH: From the other room or--? Oh, okay. It looked just like ours. I didn't know if--. I didn't know if you had me bring the same one or not. Your little red light is on. You know you're still filming? Okay.

[00:19:38] I: Yeah. So I have a question. Because he's been ill a lot recently and something that I think the general population--. Because we're kind of keeping this like an archive, like it's an educational tool, I think a lot of people who--. There's a lot of people there who are on the fence of different sorts of rights for partners to have. And I think there's a lot of people that are like right on that fence. And they're like, "Well, my mom would have said-" and they're just like, "I'm just not used to that concept," is what most people on the fence say versus the people who are, like, way

anti, against and then there's the people who are supportive. But for those people who are kind of, "Eh," or even the people that are way against, can you maybe explain--. Because for me if my partner was ill, I would really worry about how the government would protect us after that many years of us making a dedication to our community and stuff like that. So can you maybe describe concerns you have or things that you've dealt with or things that you might worry about dealing with?

[00:20:40] JMH: You want to do that? It's gonna be different.

[00:20:46] RH: Yeah, I'll do it.

[00:20:48] JMH: Do it.

[00:20:51] RH: Okay. When I got ill, which, the illness is prostate cancer, it was a difficult transition. I said that, you know, I'm going to close my office because no one's ever said that "I wish I spent more time at the office while I was alive." So, I decided to close it, take care of myself, do what the doctors say and see what happens. And travel as much as we can. As long as our...

[00:21:27] JMH: Bodies.

[00:21:28] RH: Bodies held out and... I'm not sure what else to say. You want to say something?

[00:21:39] JMH: No, that's pretty much it. I reached retirement age a year before he got sick. He was never going to reach retirement age, he would just keep going. We used to travel on a cruise ship once or twice a year. It's now increased to about four or five times a year. Just came back two weeks ago. We have another one scheduled for...

[00:22:12] RH: October.

[00:22:13] JMH: October. We're debating one they want us to take on February. The October one, after thirty cruises or twenty-nine, whatever it is, it's the first one we've taken insurance on. You pay a hundred dollars, so if you cancel, you just lose your hundred dollars. Well, we finally did it. We've said for years, "it's not worth it." We've finally decided it's time to start taking insurance.



[00:22:55] I: So, when did you come out to family and friends? Did you want to maybe, or have--? Do you want to maybe describe as much as you want to or can on that?

[00:23:03] JMH: [To RH] You do the Hatlers.

[00:23:05] RH: I never sat down with the folks and said "I'm gay." They were very conservative, Southern Baptist, Repub--. No, they were Democrats, but they were Southern Baptists to the core. And as long as they were nice to Jamie and invited him to family gatherings, I didn't care. And they didn't care and they didn't want to talk about it. And so we never talked about it. But they knew. They knew Jamie and he was invited to all the family gatherings and everything was fine.

[00:23:41] JMH: He was invited to my family gatherings. There was no question in their minds that we were a couple. We never sat down and talked about it. I did one time late, late, late, late in our relationship, sit down and talk to my mother. She said, "I know it." So that was about the summary of that conversation. There was no questions.

[00:24:10] I: How many years after you've been together did you talk to her about it?

[00:24:13] JMH: I have no idea. She was living up north. Ray--.

[00:24:17] RH: Yeah.

[00:24:17] JMH: So when would that be?

[00:24:18] RH: They moved into that house in '79.

[00:24:21] JMH: So probably '80 or '81.

[00:24:26] RH: Shirley, that was his mother's name. Actually, she became a widow. She did some traveling and she came up here because she loved us and loved the people we met and just had a great time with everybody. And one time she came home from one of the parties and she says, "You know, I bet if I was gay and lived up here, I'd have no trouble getting dates."

[00:24:52] JMH: She had no idea. The older ladies she was dancing with, were in happily long term relationships. They would never--. and they knew who she was. So no, she would not have a lot of dates up here! Just a whole different situation.

[00:25:17] I: That's cute, though. So, your friends and family--. I mean, your friends up here, they sound like they've been an inspiration to you through the years.

[00:25:26] RH: Oh, yeah. They've been great.

[00:25:29] I: Can you maybe describe people that have inspired you in your life?

[00:25:31] JMH: Nan and Barb, of course. But one of my biggest inspirations is we now live in a community that we did not know it, but we probably have one of the highest percentage of gay populations of anywhere. Most all of whom are couples, both of whom have been together longer than we have. Thirty-four years, we are the newlyweds. 'Course, then, there's Dave and David.

[00:26:12] I: They're on their honeymoon still, right?

[00:26:14] JMH: More or less. You caught us in bed today [Laughter]..

[00:26:29] I: We weren't filming yet, don't worry. Came up with the camera running. And did you ever come out to any of your friends, though? It sounds like your family was just kind of a known thing.

[00:26:41] RH: A few friends came out to.

[00:26:45] JMH: I worked for a large aerospace company for years and years and years. And my best straight male friend, who I used to go out with to lunch about once a week, decided to get married and made me his best man. And he asked me if I give him a bachelor party. By this time, few people at work knew I was gay. Not many. But when I invite half the what then called the department to my house, which is filled with pictures of Ray and I and everything else, I would say that's when I most came out. 'Cause there was no question in anyone's mind who Ray was.

[00:27:45] I: That's great. Yeah, I've thrown bachelorette parties for some of my straight friends. It's interesting. I always want to call it a bachelor party, though. So coming out in your career, did you--? How was practicing law here? Did you--?

[00:28:03] RH: Well, I had a large practice in Los Angeles in probate and estate planning. So I moved that up here and networked the gay community to get business and most of my business was from the gay community. I had a few straight people come in for wills and trust. Mainly it was a practice of same-sex couples who felt better going to a gay attorney and talking about it than to a non-gay attorney. And I was the only open gay attorney in the county that I know of. There was one woman who was a public defender and that was about it. So, I had free range on the community.

[00:29:01] JMH: Living in a huge retirement area, they all needed wills or whatever, so they just flocked into his office.

[00:29:13] RH: It wasn't a flock, but it was all a good set up. A nice practice.

[00:29:19] I: You must have some really interesting stories from doing that. Different experiences. Are there any stories that have stuck with your mind through time? Just as far--. You know, I don't know how much legal confidentiality stuff there is. But maybe even in a general sense, because I don't think people realize that the protections haven't been there in the past and what people have had to go through to protect their relationships maybe.

[00:29:45] RH: Yeah. I guess there were a few of my clients who are still very closeted. They were gay and with somebody for forty years, but they still wouldn't say anything publicly because somebody might find out they're gay. Well, everybody knew they were gay.

[00:30:07] JMH: It's great to gauge who are gay, but they would not admit it. One couple's deal, who's been together probably forty years.

[00:30:20] RH: Forty-seven.

[00:30:21] JMH: Forty-seven, who insist, in public, “We’re not gay.” Yeah, right. Their neighbors know it, we know it, the whole gay community knows it, most of the straight community knows it. They go shopping together. It's just... Okay, right. If you say you're not? Fine.

[00:30:47] I: We're very lucky these days. Most of us have a few pinpricks when we come out to our family and then it kind of mellows out. I'm from a Mormon family and she's from a really conservative Catholic family. So, we’ve had fun.

[00:31:02] JMH: Well, when you've grown up in the old life, it's hard to break loose yourself.

[00:31:13] I: Yeah, that's what I've noticed, is that people are just still holding on to those fears. They've been through so much more trauma from their own communities that they just have--. There's still that wall, you know? Like, I don't blame anyone for not wanting to come out.

[00:31:27] JMH: No.

[00:31:28] I: I've not had to endure any of that.

[00:31:30] JMH: No, the older couples are still... Many of them are still in the closet. They cannot emotionally come out. They've lived with it all of their lives. And they’re stuck with it.

[00:31:53] I: Yeah, definitely, I've seen that happen. So, have you been involved in any sort of particular communities here, like artists or it seems like you’ve done cruises and traveling. Have you done any, like, jogging, hiking, running, choir, square dancing, politics, anything like that?

[00:32:15] RH: Well, anything physical is difficult for Jamie because of his disability.

[00:32:21] JMH: And he's not allowed to do it more.

[00:32:25] RH: I don't have the time to do it with doctors appointments.

[00:32:30] JMH: But, for years, until four or five years ago, we rode our bicycles all over the place. Two, three times a week. When I say all over the place, I mean from Los Osos here, up into Cambria, and you name it, we were on our bicycles moving.

[00:32:55] RH: But I'm under doctor's orders not to break any legs, so I thought, "Better get rid of the bicycle." Now I can't ride it anymore.

[00:33:05] JMH: Now my handicap [ ]. I'll explain that in a minute. But I'm getting to the point I really can't ride the bike. So, we finally gave our bikes away. My handicap, I was told when I was four years old, will never get better, never get worse. You've got it. You're stuck with it. There it is. Well, they failed to add on the possibility that at sixty, you start getting arthritis, and these pains, and these pains, and put that on top of the handicap. Whoops! It feels like the handicap got worse. It doesn't really, but it--. We all get these types of pains after we're fifty or sixty. But when you add them onto the existing disability, yeah, it gets worse. I don't care what the doctors say. They're wrong.

[00:34:11] I: How do you feel San Luis Obispo has treated you accessibility-wise, and stuff like that, having a disability here? Have you seen it change? Having access through time?

[00:34:22] JMH: It's getting better. It's getting better. The old courthouse never had a ramp at the Palm Street entrance. It does now. So things of that type. Not a lot of them, but things have improved.

[00:34:47] I: And what are some of your favorite memories about San Luis Obispo? For me, I love Bike Night. Have you guys ever been to Bike Night downtown? Do you know what that is?

[00:34:56] JMH: No, no.

[00:34:57] I: On the first Thursday of the month, people ride downtown in a circle. Probably about two 200 people, maybe? And they go [Mimics bicycle bell] with their bikes and they just ride around in a circle. They have bike sumo wrestling, so they go around, they try to push each other off. So, yeah. So things like that. San Luis Obispo is very unique and bizarre. Is there any sort of memories that you have here that have been your favorite parties or things like that?

[00:35:19] RH: Well, I think one thing they made nice in San Luis Obispo is the Palm Theater. And Jim Dee is really great. He's married with kids. But, he'll help us do a fundraiser at the theater.

[00:35:37] JMH: He gets access to a, quote, "new gay oriented film." He calls us right away and says, "Would you like the first night?" And he gives it to us.

[00:35:53] I: How nice. Yeah, I've heard a lot of good things about him. But I've never met him yet.

[00:35:56] JMH: Yeah, he's a wonderful gentleman.

[00:35:59] I: Yeah, Palm Theater's been one of my favorites, too.

[00:36:02] JMH: One of my favorite activities, even though I don't really participate... Well, I do, but I don't. In the AIDS walk every year. Ray and I take my truck and deliver water around to each of the water stations. So we don't do the walk ourselves. But we're constantly running from one water station to another to say, "Okay, you're done, give me your extra water. We'll take it to the next station." That's a very important part. We feel participatory.

[00:36:46] I: Yeah, that was the first place I helped out at when I moved here. I fell in love with the staff and the people there. It's like nothing I've ever experienced. It's like a family there.

[00:36:57] JMH: It is. Tell them about BAPA [Business and Professional Association] and GALA [Gay and Lesbian Alliance].

[00:37:01] RH: After I moved up here, we were networking the gay community. And we decided to form a business community. Sort of Chamber of Commerce for the gay community. And we sent flyers out for the first one. We got about twenty-seven responses. We met in my office, talked a little bit, and went up to San Luis Obispo... SLO Brewing, and then had more meetings and talked to people. Art Borden was there.

[00:37:44] JMH: We grew into a group of well over 100. All business professionals. BAPA stands for Business and...

[00:37:52] RH: Professional.

[00:37:53] JMH: Professional Association. He had been a member of BAPA in Los Angeles. That's what made us want to start it. He was president for the first two years. I was secretary of the group the first 10 years. No one wanted that job. Then GALA, which already existed, decided to start charging dues. Which we always did, but they never did. So after a couple of meetings with the GALA board, we decided to incorporate the two groups into one because we did not feel two groups, both charging membership, could exist. So we just merged them.

[00:38:54] I: You said there was many, many businesses. People that were trying to get businesses started, or already had started, or what type of group was it?

[00:39:02] RH: Let's see, it was...

[00:39:04] JMH: A large range.

[00:39:06] RH: I'm trying to think of things that we did.

[00:39:10] JMH: Well, there were accountants, doctors. I'm picturing individuals, but not saying what their names are. Doctors, lawyers, educators, a number of educators. Just everyone. It was just like our gay community up here. We are everywhere! And they came to join the group.

[00:39:41] I: What a nice support. Probably a lot of people who were scared to participate in things, allowed them that professional environment to get to meet people.

[00:39:49] RH: Yeah, one guy who owned a restaurant. And he came to a meeting. We used to meet at--. The first place we started meeting was at the Motel Inn.

[00:40:02] JMH: The first permanent place.

[00:40:03] RH: The first permanent place was the Motel Inn. And he said he's been up outside the door shaking for forty-five minutes trying to get the nerve to come into the meeting. So, you know, there's always people like that all the time.

[00:40:18] Yeah, it's so important to have stuff like that. So even though they've merged, is there still activities that BAPA does, or is it kind of dissolved?

[00:40:28] JMH: I think there's one party they give every year that they credit to BAPA. But that BAPA basically vanished. It's just GALA now.

[00:40:39] RH: It was the only game in town. It was the place to be, to go to. But after GALA started and all the peripheral organizations were doing other things, the BAPA just decided to call it even and go on from there.

[00:41:03] JMH: We had a meeting of the two boards and said, "We've got to merge. We can't both exist." And after some talk, we decided it would be under the name GALA with a business group within GALA called BAPA. Well, GALA has since more or less evaporated.

[00:41:31] I: And are you guys still involved in GALA activities?

[00:41:34] RH: Oh, yeah. We go to the dances a couple of times a year, go to functions. We're members. We just don't hold offices anymore.

[00:41:45] JMH: They give a drag party. I go. He may or may not come, and he won't be in drag. But they give a drag party. I go.

[00:41:57] I: Yeah, I think they're gonna have a really fun one this year for Pride. I was talking to someone about that the other day

[00:42:03] RH: There was some talk about reviving BAPA, but the guy who was doing it says, "All these youngsters are saying everybody's so old in BAPA."

[00:42:15] I: I think the hard thing, though, is there's people like Sarah and I who want to stay and live in this community. And the dynamics have changed so much from when people were here, you know, 20 years ago. You could afford to buy housing and afford that stuff. But for people like us, who this is our lifestyle that we want for mental health or spiritual health and our emotional health. It's hard to get support from other people that don't want to just run to the biggest city and make enough money to be able to buy a house.



[00:42:43] JMH: We're having real trouble--. Not we, but the Los Osos area. And not the older gays, but the older straight couples in Los Osos. If they put our sewer in, which they've talked about for forty years, and they'll still be talking forty years from now. These older straight couples are going to be forced to move out. 'Cause it'll be over... I think it's up to 150. It'll be \$150 a month, and they have no money.

[00:43:22] RH: I think it's over 200 now.

[00:43:24] JMH: It's over 200?

[00:43:26] RH: A lot. And these people on fixed incomes, what are they gonna do?

[00:43:30] JMH: They spend all their money on food. You take another \$200 a month away, they can't live here.

[00:43:43] I: Sara just moved to Los Osos three weeks ago. She's right, like, four blocks away. On 13th Street and Santa Ysabel.

[00:43:55] JMH: Oh, right.

[00:43:57] I: So let me think about Los Osos. Because you guys have been particularly in Los Osos this whole time, how have you seen Los Osos change, or do you have a favorite spot out at Montaña de Oro?

[00:44:15] JMH: I have a restaurant which I've gone to for thirteen, fourteen years, who has changed ownership and type of restaurant four times during that period. And it is now one of our favorite lunch spots. It's not extremely fancy and we'd rather go fancier for dinner, but it's one of our favorite lunch spots.

[00:44:50] I: Where is that, out of curiosity?

[00:44:51] JMH: Distasio's. On 9th, almost at Los Osos Valley Road. There's a small, open wall. Distasio's.

[00:45:03] I: We'll have to go eat there.

[00:45:05] JMH: They're extremely nice, the food is good, the people are friendly. It's just the ambiance isn't what we like for dinner. So we go there for lunch.

[00:45:22] I: So what have been--. When you guys have done dinner parties with friends and stuff like that, have you listened to music? Or, I'm just kind of curious, like if you guys have a particular music taste or have a song, that remind you--.

[00:45:36] RH: We have a stereo that is tuned to KMozart out of Los Angeles, which plays classical music, and it's in the cupboard.

[00:45:46] JMH: It plays in every room of the house when it's on. Those two little speakers. So we listen to a lot of classical. Yes, we do have a favorite song. It's a downer. It's not a good song, but the piano player will remit we played it when we met, so it's become our song. It's "Cottage for Sale." Which is a real downer of a song.

[00:46:22] I: How does that song go again?

[00:46:24] JMH: The keys in the mailbox, the same as before.

[00:46:27] RH: But there's nobody waiting for me at the door.

[00:46:33] I: I have heard that song.

[00:46:35] JMH: Yeah. We frequently--. There's always a piano player on the cruise. And on the cruises we take, the piano player's always gay. So is everyone else on the ship! So we've requested that on a number of ships, and the piano players just don't know that. Never heard it, don't know it, can't play it. Finally, about four cruises ago, asked one of the piano players to play it. "I don't know that, can't do that." "Are you going to be on a cruise next September?" "Yeah." We said yes, he asked the question. And he said, "I will have the music." And he did! And he gave us a copy of it. So we now carry it with us on all the cruises.

[00:47:45] I: What are the cruises like?

[00:47:48] RH: They're a lot of fun. There's no rules. Do anything you want.

[00:47:54] JMH: They don't have any guide.

[00:47:55] RH: One of the big parties on almost all the cruises is the White Party. And you show up in your underwear or whatever else you want to wear.

[00:48:04] JMH: As long as it's white.

[00:48:06] RH: And that usually ends... It starts at eleven o'clock p.m. on the pool deck and it usually ends about ten a.m.

[00:48:17] JMH: It's the longest-running party there is. They have an eleven o'clock party every night that ends two, three in the morning. But the White Party does not end. On one cruise, we were going down to breakfast in the morning about nine o'clock or so. Met this one guy who looked totally dragged. Not drag in the sense of clothes, just dead. We said, "How late did you stay up?" He said, "Well, I'm going to bed now." He said, "When the sun came out, I figured I either had to go get my sunblock or go to bed."

[00:49:09] I: That's great. Yeah, there's a White Party in Palm Springs every year, too. For Dinah Shore.

[00:49:15] JMH: Right.

[00:49:16] I: 'Cause there's like--. The guys kind of go one way and the girls go the other. That's something that's interesting I think about this community is that it seems like a lot of lesbian couples and gay men couples intermingle here. Can you maybe talk about that a little bit?

[00:49:30] RH: Yeah, that's one of the great things up here. If somebody gives a big party, it's almost fifty-fifty men, women, which I think is great. I enjoy being around the women. And they enjoy being around us for the most part.

[00:49:47] JMH: Down in L.A. [Los Angeles], it was two separate communities, who just plain did not talk to each other. Up here, it's all one, big community and we love it. We love it.

[00:50:03] RH: On the cruises, there's about three thousand men and thirty women.

[00:50:09] JMH: I think there were 110 this year. There's a lot of women who prefer our cruises to their cruises because ours are more fun. We have not every night, but almost every night,

there are two parties. One's the tea dance, which runs from five to seven. The other, the big dance, starts at eleven. Gives you time to have dinner. But that's almost every night on the cruise. And the, what's it called? The ladies' cruise. Olivia doesn't do that. So our female population on our cruises is slowly enlarging as they find out it's a better cruise!

[00:51:13] I: That's awesome. What was I gonna ask? Oh, about friends. Do you mind maybe sharing how you met Barb and Nan, or is that too emotional?

[00:51:24] JMH: He already told you.

[00:51:25] I: That was them who were across the street?

[00:51:28] JMH: Yeah, that's their house right there.

[00:51:29] I: Oh, you guys were neighbors?

[00:51:31] JMH: We were very close neighbors.

[00:51:34] I: Can you maybe describe their personalities a little bit? Because I think at some point in the documentary, we want to acknowledge that that was inspired.

[00:51:43] JMH: Let's put it this way. When Barbara, the younger one, was in her seventies, I almost panicked because she was up on the roof sweeping it. So that gives you some idea of their personalities. They were both extremely active. Nan, who was ninety-something, was as active as Barb. If I ever saw Nan on that roof, I'd go and take her down. And I don't like heights.

[00:52:23] RH: We have pictures of them, would you like to see them?

[00:52:28] JMH: Yeah, we have a lot of pictures. Love you more.

[00:52:32] I: Is that okay, Sara?

[00:52:34] JMH: We have a lot of pictures. You said you wanted to see?

[00:52:35] I: Yeah, that'd be wonderful.

[00:52:36] JMH: We have more pictures than you'd want to see. [Interview audio cuts out; RH has walked away with the microphone] Ray keeps a diary on every trip.

[00:53:37] I: Oh, really?

[00:53:38] JMH: And it intermingles with the pictures so that it tells the whole story. Which one is that?

[00:53:52] RH: [Returning with a photo album] This is the one with Nan and Barb.

[00:54:02] I: So you know what would be good? Because we'll scan these pictures. But maybe you can kind of go through and say, like, kind of describe the picture, when it was, and then when we're showing the pictures, it'll be your voices. You don't need to worry about anything like that. You don't need to worry about showing it, because we'll show the scanned picture. Can you just kind of describe what's going on here? [RH and JMH begin flipping through photo album]

[00:54:28] RH: In the top picture is a picture of the four of us taken in this room.

[00:54:39] JMH: This is Nan and Barb in Reno on Nan's birthday. This is Nan and Barb by themselves. This is Nan by herself.

[00:54:55] I: I'm going to check these out with you because I'm excited. They look so young! Wait, they're ninety? Is that what you said?

[00:55:04] JMH: This was her ninetieth birthday.

[00:55:07] I: Wow, she looks great. What did you do for her ninetieth birthday party?

[00:55:13] JMH: We had a large party at the house.

[00:55:15] RH: Had about seventy-five to a hundred people.

[00:55:20] JMH: We gave parties here at the house for anywhere from two other couples, sometimes one other, up to over a hundred. It just varies on what we do. This was about seventy of us. This was a bus tour of the wine country. Ray and I were the only two guys on the bus.

[00:55:48] I: We liked your mat out front.

[00:55:50] RH: Oh, I have a very cute story to tell about Nan and Barb. Right next to us was a guy who owned the place on the Embarcadero in Morro Bay. And he saw Nan out in the street one day. So he went out and talked to them. He said, "You know, I don't know about that Ray and Jamie. I think they might be lesbians." [Laughter]

[00:56:17] JMH: He understood the fact we were a couple, but he had no idea what the appropriate terminology was.

[00:56:25] RH: So we're honorary lesbians.

[00:56:29] I: As long as they think you're hot, right?

[00:56:31] JMH: Right. You don't want that picture. Well, here's me in my favorite evening gown with Ray in his cowboy outfit.

[00:56:42] RH: There's usually a masquerade party on every ship, one night on every ship.

[00:56:47] JMH: Well, this is Halloween 2003. This is West Hollywood.

[00:56:53] I: Wow, you look gorgeous. Oh, my goodness. You look better than I do in girl drag.

[00:57:05] JMH: Just a couple of years ago, I found out what drag stood for. Do you know? Shakespeare.

[00:57:14] I: Oh, no, it's from Shakespeare?

[00:57:16] JMH: Yeah.

[00:57:17] I: Oh, someone told me it stood for "dressed as a girl."

[00:57:23] JMH: Yes, but back when Shakespeare wrote, it was only males. So on the notes, on the edge of his sheet, he would write "drag."

[00:57:34] Oh, I didn't know that. That's so cool.

[00:57:39] JMH: So I made up a new term this year.

[00:57:41] I: What's that?

[00:57:42] JMH: Drab. 'Cause now and then, I'm dressed as a boy.

[00:57:51] I: Although that sounds not as fun. It sounds drab. [Mimics rim shot]

[00:58:05] JMH: [To someone off camera] On your fiftieth.

[00:58:09] I: So did you throw a fiftieth for Dave?

[00:58:11] RH: No, David did.

[00:58:14] JMH: The other David threw a party for this David.

[00:58:20] I: What are all the cars, though, down at the bottom?

[00:58:21] RH: Oh, well David said he had never had a parade for him. And so we gave him a parade.

[00:58:32] JMH: We have a weird group.

[00:58:35] I: Can you describe where the parade was and how this came about?

[00:58:38] JMH: Out in front of their house.

[00:58:40] RH: We met at a church down the block, about two blocks away from this house.

All got lined up, and started out with the noisemakers and mariachis and went up--.

[00:58:57] JMH: In the lead car, that's me standing up, waving my magic wand.

[00:59:04] I: That's wonderful.

[00:59:11] JMH: That's one of the few times I got this guy [RH] in drag.

[00:59:15] I: Oh, really? Let me see.

[00:59:17] JMH: He won't do it.

[00:59:18] I: Oh, my goodness. You kind of look like a naughty Marilyn Monroe. Kind of on the studious side.

[00:59:29] JMH: When I show you the house a little later, you see a better picture of that same thing. That's all in this book.

END OF VIDEO 1

Interview resumes at 00:00:42.

## BEGIN VIDEO 2

[00:00:42] JMH: I'm gonna go through these real quick. Not even talk about them unless you say, "What's that?"

[00:00:49] I: Okay, sure!

[00:00:52] JMH: These are trips we've been on from 1980 through 2003. So, there's a lot of pictures. If you say, "Wait a minute, what's that?" we'll stop and tell you. Otherwise it's gonna be flip, flip, flip.

[00:01:07] I: Okay, so--.

[00:01:08] RH: I keep a diary on all the cruises. So nightly, I write in the book what we had done and what happened. Then I come back, put that in the computer, then we print it out.

[00:01:21] I: So you go back and read it then, right, yeah? That's so good.

[00:01:25] I: Oh, I just went on the Panama Canal one.

[00:01:29] I: Yeah, she just went to Panama Canal, her and her partner.

[00:01:33] RH: Yeah, I tell people who want to do the Panama Canal: do it. It's great. Never be anything like it, but I won't go.

[00:01:42] JMH: We did it once and it's just too hot.

[00:01:46] I: Was it really hot? They went in December, though.

[00:01:51] JMH: So did we. What's our favorite cruise? You pick one, I'll pick one.

[00:02:01] RH: Probably the barge trip.

[00:02:04] JMH: Yeah. The barge trip is Dijon, France. Just fantastic. The barge went so slow, it also went through numerous locks. At any lock, you could get off the barge with a bike and go do your own little tour and meet downstream at the next lock, then get back on.

[00:02:39] I: How fun! How far did that go?

[00:02:41] RH: Not very far.



[00:02:42] Not very far. It travels so slow, I think after seven days we were ten miles away from Dijon. It just didn't go anywhere.

[00:02:53] I: I've always wanted to go on one of those. The locks are the gates that open and close, right?

[00:02:57] RH: Yeah, right.

[00:02:59] I: I saw one of those when I was in England and I thought it'd be so fun to travel on one.

[00:03:03] JMH: Each of these books starts the same way. Different words, but this is the trips that are in the book.

[00:03:11] I: Oh, cool. My goodness. Can I see that real quick, the front page? I'm just curious. Central Coast. Eastern Caribbean, Europe, Puerto Rico. Wow. You guys like to travel as much as I do.

[00:03:30] JMH: Lately it's been more and more since we are now both retired.

[00:03:36] RH: This is our drive up Highway 1, and we decided this is the place for us.

[00:03:42] I: [Points to a picture] Wait, is that you?

[00:03:45] JMH: Yeah, that's him.

[00:03:47] I: Look at that! Tall, dark, and handsome, huh?

[00:03:51] JMH: He still is if you squint. That's me. [Flips page] This was an Eastern Caribbean cruise we took.

[00:04:06] RH: This was our first cruise.

[00:04:09] JMH: One of the ladies at the table, back then, you sat at the same table every night with the same people. One of the ladies informed us that we chose the wrong cruise for our first cruise. 'Cause she said she'd been on many, and it's the best cruise she'd ever been on, and you should start with the best cruise! Well, she did not know how much better they were going to get. Some of these write-ups, as you can tell, are pre-printed. Others Ray wrote.

[00:04:52] I: Is that a picture of you guys?

[00:04:54] JMH: We're in there. That's me in the white, and Ray in the tie.

[00:04:59] I: Oh, that's a cool picture. Is that people that you met on the trip, or is that--?

[00:05:07] RH: That was the assigned table.

[00:05:08] I: Yeah, the assigned table?

[00:05:09] JMH: This is our waiter and our busboy. And these two ladies, who are straight, were traveling together as a pair. It turned out the four of us - her, her, me, and Ray - were together almost the whole trip. They were just absolutely hilarious. You would never know. It was great.

[00:05:39] I: Were most of the cruises you went on straight cruises originally?

[00:05:41] RH: Yes, originally.

[00:05:42] JMH: Originally, there were no gay cruises. There weren't even small gay groups on the cruise. One of the things we missed a little bit, not much, is the first three days of the cruise, Ray and I used to look for and find the other two couples. We knew there had to be at least two more couples on the cruise. So we looked.

[00:06:16] I: Sara, on her cruise, she came back and told us about it. She found out all the bartenders, the girls and the servers were all lesbians.

[00:06:25] I: They're all gay and they're not allowed to talk about it, they're not allowed to say anything.

[00:06:27] I: It's against the rules. They're not allowed to tell anyone.

[00:06:29] JMH: They now have a new rule on the cruise ships. Some of the cruise ships--. Depends on the captain. Some new captains tell the crew, if you're not on duty during the parties, go to the parties. Years ago, they were not allowed to go to the parties. Now, if you're not on duty, go to the party. This was a trip to...

[00:07:00] RH: Wine country.

[00:07:01] JMH: Wine country.

[00:07:01] I: In Bordeaux? Is that the Bordeaux region?

[00:07:03] JMH: No, this is France.

[00:07:06] RH: This is Bordeaux, this is Bordeaux.

[00:07:12] I: [Points to page] Yeah, Friday, September first, Bordeaux, France. I've always wanted to go there. Bordeaux is like the region of France that has the best wines. So I'm assuming you guys love wine, right?

[00:07:23] RH: Yeah.

[00:07:24] JMH: Oh, yes.

[00:07:25] I: What's your favorite wines to drink?

[00:07:29] JMH: Wet.

[00:07:30] RH: Probably red wines more than white wines. But pinot grigio, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon are some of our best...

[00:07:41] I: What was the funny story behind the mat at the front door?

[00:07:46] JMH: Just the mat itself. There's no story. We bought that in...

[00:07:53] RH: Cayucos.

[00:07:54] JMH: Cayucos.

[00:07:57] I: Oh, look, an old map of the London Underground.

[00:07:59] JMH: You know, Ray writes this in the journal every day. Then we put it in the computer.

[00:08:06] I: You guys went to gay bars when you were over there sometime?

[00:08:10] JMH: Probably.

[00:08:13] I: What does that say here?

[00:08:15] JMH: [Reading from the page] "After dinner we went to a gay disco which could have been Studio One, but was called 'Heaven' and was under the hotel." I remember that one. We met Milt, who lived way, way outside.

[00:08:36] RH: Chiddingfold.

[00:08:37] JMH: Chiddingfold. We were in London. He [ ] spent the evening with us and took us back to Chiddingfold where we stayed in his house. Well, his house was two story and not as tall as this room. As you walked up the steps, you kept kneeling and kneeling and kneeling. By the time you got to the second floor, you were crawling.

[00:09:13] RH: Fourteenth century.

[00:09:15] I: The doors there, you know, some of them--.

[00:09:16] RH: They were small people.

[00:09:18] JMH: And he was living in what was built as the groundskeeper house. So this isn't even the main house. It was really a hole in the wall. We loved it.

[00:09:36] I: Wow, what's that?

[00:09:38] RH: Puerto Rico.

[00:09:39] JMH: That's the fort in Puerto Rico.

[00:09:43] I: It's so green.

[00:09:47] JMH: This is the... In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this is the rainforest, which we drove.

[00:09:58] I: How wonderful. And you went and saw *Cats*? Oh, in New York City! I was gonna say, "Not in Puerto Rico!"

[00:10:04] RH: We had--. He traveled a lot, and you get frequent flyer--. They sent us a coupon that said it's good for the weekend, but before such-and-such, round trip on American Airlines. So we told our travel agent to get us two tickets to *Cats*, any weekend, doesn't matter when it is. I think it was about a year later. Walking the streets, we saw *La Cage aux Folles*? Yeah, *La Cage aux Folles* was playing. So we went to *Cats* and *La Cage aux Folles*, a matinee and an evening.

[00:10:45] JMH: We walked into *La Cage aux Folles*, into the entrance. Where you buy tickets.

[00:10:51] I: Which one did you like better? Did you prefer one over the other, or both in different ways?

[00:10:55] JMH: I prefer *La Cage*.

[00:10:57] RH: Yeah.

[00:10:58] JMH: But it was so funny. We walked into *La Cage*. “Can we get tickets for tonight?” Yeah, right, sure. And she said, “Well, just coincidentally, a couple just turned their tickets in five minutes ago. You can buy them.” So we did. We were at a point of, “Who cares how much money we had there?” It was at... What theater?

[00:11:33] RH: The Palace Theatre.

[00:11:34] JMH: The balcony at the Palace Theatre, on both front ends of it, are little tiny private boxes. That’s where our two tickets were.

[00:11:47] I: Amazing.

[00:11:48] JMH: Yeah, we had the best seats in the house.

[00:11:57] I: What’s that? Western Caribbean? Is this you guys here?

[00:12:02] JMH: Yeah.

[00:12:03] I: You’re matching! Did you guys ever match for fun, or was that a special picture occasion?

[00:12:10] RH: It was intentional.

[00:12:11] JMH: It was intentional, but back when we were that age, we had numerous outfits that looked similar, if not matched.

[00:12:24] I: That's so cute.

[00:12:31] RH: This was the midnight buffet. You've heard about the midnight buffet on the ships? This is one of the midnight buffets.

[00:12:38] JMH: It's in January of... [To RH] Turn back one more page. January of 1984.

[00:12:56] I: Sara, was the Cayman Islands where you just went?

[00:12:58] I: No, we went to the Caribbean.

[00:12:59] I: Look at that! All those turtles.

[00:13:04] JMH: This was a turtle farm. They were encased in... Oh, this is a leaf peeping trip we took. We started in Boston and drove all the way around Maine, up to Quebec, over to Monterey.

[00:13:26] RH: Montreal.

[00:13:29] JMH: I said--. Oh, Montreal. And then back down through...

[00:13:37] RH: New Hampshire.

[00:13:38] I: Did you get to see Niagara Falls when you were there?

[00:13:40] RH: No, we weren't that far...

[00:13:43] JMH: This was farther east than Niagara.

[00:13:45] I: Oh, that's right, that's more west, huh?

[00:13:50] JMH: And that was the same trip, Boston. Now, this... When you get to our last book, maybe I'll skip our second book, you'll find the pictures and the write-ups are totally integrated now. Here we cut and pasted and made them the right size. But later we got much fancier. This is still that same trip. We stopped for a picnic. We timed this trip perfectly. We did not mean to. We had our radio on. On the route we were taking anyway, the trees were going to change colors that day. So we saw the leaves literally changing during the whole trip.

[00:14:47] I: Oh my God. So pretty. Did you feel safe traveling through those areas, like different areas are more conservative and less conservative?

[00:14:57] RH: No, no problem.

[00:14:58] JMH: When we're on vacation, We don't give time to what other people think.

This was in Christiansted. We had a little town on St. Croix that we would do every year for one week. Well, everyone else who were there went in the same week every year.

[00:15:25] I: How cool.

[00:15:26] JMH: I had a young girl in... Well, when we first started going, she was a junior in high school. By the time we got done, she was a junior or senior in college, who I tutored in math every night at the bar.

[00:15:45] I: I have a question here. When you go back here, is this the same--? Is this Saint Croix?

[00:15:51] JMH: It's in Saint Croix.

[00:15:53] I: Oh, Saint Croix. And then, can you just read this entry and we can kind of see that real quick?

[00:16:00] JMH: It's not really an entry.

[00:16:01] I: But it's from that trip, though, right?

[00:16:05] RH: Yeah. It's the longhouse. Not longhouse, roundhouse.

[00:16:11] JMH: It was originally built as a grain processing plant. Then they changed all of them to what I think they called greathouse. This is the Whim Greathouse. [Reading from the entry] "Bloody Marys around the pool as it rained. Took the tour of a Whim Greathouse and museum which is a restored sugar plantation."

[00:16:43] I: That's great. Sorry, I just visualized Bloody Marys around the pool as it rained. I just got a great vivid picture.

[00:16:49] JMH: We had Bloody Marys around the pool most evenings. Some nights it rained, sometimes it didn't.

[00:17:00] RH: So this was a nice tour. There were eight of us on a tour of the wineries of Bordeaux area, and our host knew all the owners, so he was able to get us in places that no one else could go, with a Countess, and...

[00:17:19] JMH: And it was a major ship with about eight of us on this tour. And he was the son of the most famous wine makers in France. So he knew all the wine makers and took us anywhere we wanted to go. Well, he took us anyplace he wanted to go.

[00:17:45] I: That's the next place I want to go in France is the Bordeaux region. That and south to the Basque region.

[00:17:52] JMH: Well, this isn't the Bordeaux region, this is...

[00:17:55] RH: Yeah, this is Bordeaux.

[00:17:57] JMH: It is?

[00:17:58] RH: Yeah. We were on a cruise ship that was docked in Bordeaux.

[00:18:00] JMH: Oh, we went all kinds of places. [Turns the page] Ah, Prieuré-Lichine. He claims--. This is the father of the guy who was our tour guide. He claims to be the person who introduced French wine to the States.

[00:18:25] RH: "Before I came along, Americans were drinking swill."

[00:18:30] I: That's great.

[00:18:32] RH: Well, that's enough.

[00:18:39] JMH: I'm gonna do some fast flipping.

[00:18:43] RH: This is Saint Croix.

[00:18:49] I: And who's that with you in that picture there?

[00:18:51] JMH: My mother. And this is Greece.

[00:19:01] I: Did you like Greece a lot?

[00:19:02] JMH: Yeah.

[00:19:04] I: The food I heard is really good.



[00:19:10] JMH: I'm flipping three or four pages at a time. But you notice here, we kept--. Every time we put pictures in, I'd have to reprint the page so it would fit with the pictures. Well, I want to show you a little bit of our last book, because we've totally changed our techniques. That's the real *David*.

[00:19:34] I: Where is that kept at?

[00:19:37] RH: It's in Florence.

[00:19:40] JMH: And this is also Florence. It's outdoors, and it's a copy. The same size and everything. You look at this, you look at that, they're supposed to be identical. Maybe they are. There is an emotion you get when you look at *David* that you don't get when you look at the twin. It's hard to describe.

[00:20:09] I: I can't wait to see it.

[00:20:10] RH: And Leaning Tower of Pisa. We drove up and some guy says, "Okay. There's a tower, and it leans. Let's go."

[00:20:18] JMH: Yeah, that's about all there is to see. We all got out of the bus, walked around, and someone said those words. "Yup, it's a tower, and it leans. Now what's next?" [Closes the photo album] Go to 2003.

[00:20:36] I: That's one thing I didn't really realize about art until I started going to different museums was you just can't describe the colors and the size of things.

[00:20:48] JMH: Here's our new way of doing it.

[00:20:49] I: Oh, okay.

[00:20:50] JMH: We incorporate them with the write-up. So instead of putting eight things on a page, we just have the one eight-and-a-half by eleven and stick it in.

[00:21:04] I: That's really cool.

[00:21:07] JMH: This was our last cruise. No. Yeah, that was our last cruise. That's a riverboat from...

[00:21:18] RH: German riverboat.

[00:21:20] JMH: German riverboat going up to Amsterdam.

[00:21:24] I: No way!

[00:21:25] RH: From Hamburg area to Amsterdam, or from Hamburg to Budapest.

[00:21:36] JMH: The second one was on the Rhine going up to Amsterdam. The first one was the previous year, from the Hamburg area down to Budapest. As you can see, we've changed the way we do it. It makes it a heck of a lot easier.

[00:22:04] I: Who's this in the white and colored hat? Someone random?

[00:22:09] JMH: That's Ray.

[00:22:11] I: Oh, it is?

[00:22:13] RH: Oh, that's my beanie.

[00:22:15] JMH: In his white outfit. And this is a real beanie. You know, has the little spinning propeller on it.

[00:22:26] I: That's so cute. Where do you get a hat like that? I want a hat like that.

[00:22:34] JMH: On the Internet. They're called Beanies Plus.

[00:22:37] RH: Beanies Plus. Beanies dot com.

[00:22:39] JMH: Beanies dot com.

[00:22:41] I: That's awesome. I love costumes.

[00:22:44] JMH: This was for the White Parties. Here's me in Ray's maid outfit.

[00:22:55] RH: This is a White Party, too.

[00:22:58] JMH: Yeah, this was a White Party. That's a different White Party.

[00:23:09] RH: That's enough.

[00:23:10] JMH: Yeah. Oh, here's Venice and Barcelona. Oh, there's that boat. This is going the other way. No, this is Venice to Barcelona. Yes, we travel. But I love the way I'm doing the pictures now.

[00:23:30] I: Yeah, it's really cool how you have that nice and organized. Yeah, you just started--.

[00:23:33] JMH: Here's how we used to do it.

[00:23:35] I: Yeah. And now you switched it up.

[00:23:39] JMH: I decided I can merge all this.

[00:23:40] I: Oh, I like this picture of you guys. Cute.

[00:23:51] JMH: That's in...

[00:23:59] I: Out of curiosity, is it hard to travel with your disability, to get around, you don't get too tired?

[00:24:04] JMH: No. I walk with a cane and all that stuff.

[00:24:10] RH: I can't find it, I thought it was right there. The picture of the barge on the river, the one that had the lower...

[00:24:22] JMH: Still on the Danube. This is the trip when we went from... Down the river instead of up the river.

[00:24:35] RH: If you were on the upper deck, which was the sun deck, you had to make sure you kept your eye out because the bridge was coming. So you ducked down for the bridges. And the captain's cabin, where the bridge was, raised and lowered according to the need for...

[00:24:56] JMH: Going under a bridge. He would lower his cab, his..

[00:25:00] RH: His main house. No.

[00:25:06] JMH: Bridge. He lowered his bridge, which was a room, down into the boat so we could get under the real bridge.

[00:25:23] RH: I was just in London over winter break.

[00:25:25] JMH: That's enough of these, unless he wants to scan some of them. This is all 2003. This is '98 to 2002.

[00:25:40] I: That's awesome. No, thanks for sharing that. I love travel pictures, and you guys dress up fun, so that's very exciting. David, did you want to ask a few more questions, and then maybe do some scanning? [Interview pauses]

Okay, so one of the last questions that we have is kind of--. Oh, wow, I really messed the lighting up. It's kind of a project, as an archive thing as well as an education tool and stuff like that, but also to kind of bridge the gap like you're saying in BAPA. I don't know if you know, this town is very much, like, eighteen to twenty-one, and then there's no one from pretty much twenty-one up until, honestly, I would say fifties. There's very few people even in their forties here.

[00:27:22] JMH: Correct.

[00:27:24] I: So in the straight community, it's hard enough to even bridge those two generations together, but especially in the LGBT community because of that. So one of the things that Sara and I wanted to do was to kind of allow us to get a sense of history and where we're coming from, because everyone has--. Nearly everyone has a heterosexual role models or, you know, ideas and concepts of a future. But in the grocery store, like those two people that you said were closeted, we have no idea. So we wonder, what happens to us? Do we have long-lasting relationships? You know what I mean?

[00:27:59] JMH: We have many long-lasting relationships. As I mentioned, we live in a huge community, and we're the newlyweds after thirty-four years. So, yeah, there's many long-lasting... Many of which went to Cal Poly and moved away to get a job and came back here to retire. There's been two of them. One at a time. There have been two gay bars in San Luis, neither which exist anymore because of that big gap. The more mature people stay home and give house parties. The younger, right, the ones that go to Cal Poly, go to the bar, buy one beer, sip it for five hours, and go back home. So the bars can't afford to be here because of that middle age group that you mentioned that just don't exist. That's who supports the bars. So there are no gay bars in San Luis. There's been two at different times.

[00:29:25] I: Definitely. What else was I gonna ask?

[00:29:28] JMH: Oh, you asked how we'd bridge the gap. Ray and I are among few of the people who were members of GALA, BAPA, and the older generation, so we don't see it. We don't notice the age gap because we're part of both sets of people.

[00:29:56] I: And if you had something to say, a message for someone who's recently out or either having a great time or a hard time, anyone that's young. Is there something you'd like to tell them? Message or advice, or...?

[00:30:16] JMH: I can give a very simple one. Don't be afraid and be yourself.

[00:30:25] RH: Yeah. That's good.

[00:30:28] I: And then one last question. What is your favorite thing about each other? Is there a little idiosyncrasy or a little quirk that either of you have that you find adorable on each other?

[00:30:44] RH: What's adorable after thirty-five years? I'm not sure [Laughter].

[00:30:48] JMH: Him, that's my favorite part.

[00:30:54] RH: And he's my favorite part.

[00:30:57] I: Neither of you leave the toothpaste cap off?

[00:31:00] RH: No.

[00:31:01] JMH: No.

[00:31:07] I: And if you could describe each other in one word, what would it be?

[00:31:15] RH: Creative.

[00:31:16] I: Can you repeat that back in a question?

[00:31:18] RH: Creative.

[00:31:21] JMH: I just love him. He's perfect.

[00:31:29] I: All right. Anything else that we haven't gone over that you feel like maybe you want to share?

[00:31:35] RH: When I got out of the service in 1971 and met Jamie, I wasn't sure what I was going to do with my life, what I would pursue. So after we got together, I sat him down at the bar in the living room and said, "I might go to law school." And he said fine, he would support me all the way. So using Jamie and the VA [Veterans Affairs] bill, I was able to go to law school and get my degree.

[00:32:11] JMH: Except he made it more difficult than it had to be. He thought, "I will earn some of the money myself. So he opened a beer bar. And it all just sunk. So, it would have been easy anyway, but losing money on a daily basis at the beer bar did not help!

[00:32:36] I: Was it fun, though?

[00:32:38] RH: Yeah, I enjoyed my time at the beer bar.

[00:32:41] I: Where did you do your schooling at?

[00:32:45] JMH: Where'd you go to school?

[00:32:47] RH: Southwestern in Los Angeles. I was worried because here I was, it's been about eight years since I was a student. And these kids coming out of UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] and USC [University of Southern California] who were going to be students there, they'll whoop my ass. And so I found out that they couldn't, and that they had such bad study habits, and didn't know what they were doing half the time. So I was able to get it through law school with the G.I. Bill and Jamie.

[00:33:23] JMH: You haven't asked. He has his head, he always does. But no one knows what I did. I am what he calls his retired rocket scientist. I developed guidance--. I was the lead engineer involved with guidance systems for guided missiles for the government for over thirty years. So if you want that on the film, I don't know or care, but we've not talked about that yet.

[00:34:00] I: Yeah, sometimes we allow because sometimes we don't know how much people are allowed to share in certain sorts of things. That's interesting, though. So, he's a rocket scientist?

[00:34:11] RH: Yeah, he's a rocket scientist. When we're at the dinner table and we introduce ourselves with all new guys, they say, "What do you do for a living?" And I say, "I'm a retired attorney, and he's a retired rocket scientist!" They all laugh, then he explains what he did for thirty years, and, "Oh, you really were!"

[00:34:33] JMH: I was actually a lead engineer on four different missile systems and three different radar projects. They were all me. Near the end... I'll back up. In the middle, I went so high up the ladder of my company that even though I reviewed and approved all the stuff that would be done, I didn't get to do it anymore. Near the end, I said, "This is not me. I want to get back down there and do it." So they let me, without decreasing my level of authority. They kept me, but they changed what I was doing so I could get back down and do the stuff I liked.

[00:35:34] I: That's wonderful. Is there anything else I missed? You weren't in the military, correct?

[00:35:43] JMH: No. I did not need to be. I was 4F [unfit for military service]. In fact, I once, as a teenager, tried to get into the forces, I forget which one. They saw me walk in the door, and said, "No way. Bye bye."

[00:36:11] I: You said you were in the Navy, correct?

[00:36:13] RH: I was in the Air Force, Air Force and the last year of service, the next to last year, was in Vietnam. And I've now received a full VA pension of \$2,500 a month, because there was a bill passed that if you come down with certain diseases - they had a list - and you were stationed in certain areas, it was presumed that it was caused by Agent Orange.

[00:36:42] JMH: You don't have to do a thing to prove it.

[00:36:47] RH: So \$2,500 a month will pay for a lot of cruises.

[00:36:54] I: So you fought in Vietnam? That was the only conflict you were involved in, right?

[00:37:00] RH: Yes, Vietnam for a year.

[00:37:03] JMH: Where he was a radar operator, running the radar at the same time--. We had not met. At the same time as I was building the next version of the radar he was working with.

[00:37:27] I: One thing we haven't asked, I don't know if you mind, but your disability? Did you want to state that?

[00:37:32] JMH: I have cerebral palsy. It's a birth defect. You have it all your life. You're stuck with it. It doesn't get worse or better, until you get old. And that's not the handicap, that's old age.

[00:37:51] RH: But he's game for everything. He'll go anywhere and do anything.

[00:37:56] JMH: Yeah, we have climbed mountains. Rode bikes until four years ago when he was told to stop. There's not much we haven't done together.

[00:38:27] I: Sara, did you have any questions? I know a lot of times we get home, and you're like, "Oh, I wanted to--!" Anyone else? We're good? Awesome. No, it was really wonderful, I loved the stories that you had to share.

[00:38:33] JMH: Thank you!

[00:38:34] RH: I wasn't sure what you were looking for.

[00:38:38] I: And I love seeing the love between you guys, it's really inspiring.

[00:38:43] JMH: Thank you.

[00:38:46] RH: And I apologize for not knowing today was Sunday.

[00:38:50] I: You're retired!

[00:38:56] JMH: Yeah, but we discussed it last night! You know, "What day is it?" "Today was Friday, 'cause we went out to dinner with [ ]. So tomorrow is Saturday, so we don't have a thing to do!" We literally had the discussion. It wasn't... We slept in accidentally. It was just nothing to do today.

[00:39:25] I: Surprise! Did we wake you up, too?

[00:39:27] RH: No.



[00:39:29] JMH: No. When we don't get up, we usually wake up earlier and just...

[Interview ends but camera remains rolling for twenty minutes, showing shots of the inside and outside of the house as well as RH and JMH playing backgammon]

### Meta Data

Summary: Katrina Maksimuk interviews Los Osos couple Ray Hatler and Jamie Mae Hatler about their experiences before and after retirement on the Central Coast. The Hatlers detail how they met, the gay nightlife scenes in Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo, their careers pre-retirement, their social lives since moving to Los Osos, and their involvement and founding roles in LGBTQ+ organizations on the Central Coast. Ray and Jamie Mae provide insight into their post-retirement lives as an older gay couple in San Luis Obispo County and how illness and disability have and have not affected their enjoyment of life and travel. The Hatlers share photos of their travels and recount memories of the many all-gay cruises they embarked on together after retirement.

Keyword List: San Luis Obispo, Los Osos, GALA, travel, community, retirement