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Interview with Carroll Leslie

CCQAP

Narrator: Carroll Leslie [CL]

Interviewers: Michael Morris [MM], David Weisman [DW]

Interview Date: April 4, 2021

Location: Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, Los Osos, California

Length: Approximately 1 hour and 31 minutes. Interview starts at 0:00:11.0.

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0:00:11.0 Carroll Leslie: Alright, good morning, we're gathered on April 25th. That's 2021 now. Carol, thank you for... This is Carol. Leslie, thanks for being here. We're here for the Central Coast Queer Archive Project. Carol, we did... Well, there was an interview with you back in 2006. But maybe let's start with you just introducing yourself again.

0:00:41.0 Michael Morris: My name is Carroll Leslie, and Barbara and I moved here to the Central Coast 30 years ago, and we had the gay and lesbian feminist book store in Laguna Beach, and were very active in the gay and lesbian community, all during the AIDS crisis, and we needed to escape to a saner environment and less people... And this is the smallest town either Barbara have ever lived in. So it was quite an adjustment.

0:01:13.1 CL: Okay, well, it's actually... Let's maybe start with... So you spend a lot of your life in Southern California, more urban places. What made you and Barbara wants to move here, and what were the pros and cons? What were the things you liked? What were some of the challenges or things you didn't like as much here.

0:01:32.8 MM: Okay, well, we... Excuse me, Barbara lived in Orange County when I met her, I lived in San Gabriel County, and I had a bookstore, gift shop, luncheon place. And we used to clear out the luncheon part and have Barbara come up and give lectures because she taught metaphysical and comparative religion, that kind of thing. So once a month, you come up for lectures, and we talked and talked on the phone, and we decided we were madly in love and that we should be a couple, took me a while, and we decided we both had fallen in love with Laguna Beach as younger people and we decided that's what we had to be. So we moved to Laguna Beach. We showed up at a

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gay-lesbian group because Laguna Beach is about one-third gay and lesbian, and so we thought that's a good environs for us, and we showed up at what was called Laguna Outreach, which was a gay and lesbian activity group, and we didn't know anybody that was about 300 people there and they wanted to introduce this as new, and he said, and we're thinking about opening a gay and lesbian bookstore here, and it was so right timing because everybody just plotted and cheered, so we knew we had picked the right thing to do and the right place to move.

0:03:10.1 MM: We lived there all during the AIDS crisis, and we're very active in supporting our gay brothers, and then one day at the bookstore, Barbara called me and said, Caroll, it took me a half hour to drive four miles to go to the grocery store. We really must think about leaving here, and so that started our search for... And we love San Francisco. We'd often pop up to San Francisco a... It was too far. So we were always split and spend a night in Morro Bay, and we thought what's that across the bay... Oh, it's Los Osos... So let's see what's there... So that's how we found it, and that's how we decided to move.

0:03:50.0 CL: So you say it was mainly the draw of less people and a more calm place to live.

0:03:57.0 MM: The traffic is horrendous. I don't know if any of you been to Laguna Beach, but it's like gridlock in the summer, and it was a beautiful community. And people would often say, Why did you move here? Laguna is so beautiful. And I said, It's beautiful, but Montana de Oro, I said picture, Laguna Beach without any houses, that's what Montana de Oro looks like. So is there any reason why we wouldn't wanna live here?

0:04:25.3 CL: I'm just curious, did you do any research on what the gay and lesbian life was a like

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in San Luis before you made the move? And you can answer to Michael.

0:04:33.9 MM: Oh no. We don't do research, we just do whims. So we decided that we needed to leave the area and of course it was closest to our... We're closer to our favorite city, San Francisco, and when we got here, we... And I worked at the county for a couple of years, and he certainly didn't need another book store, because when we moved here in 1990, they were like 15 independent book stores spread throughout the county, and we certainly didn't need another bookstore. So I worked for the county for a couple of years, and then this store became available. The people weren't doing a good job and we're depressed, etcetera, and so Barbara stopped in and said, "You know, I think Carroll's tired of working at the county. If you ever think about selling, let us know." And the woman right away said, "How about now..." So that's how we acquired the store and we transfigured it into what you see today, because they had probably 2% of the stock that we have, and we got shelving, and so we put our imprint on it.

0:05:54.5 CL: When was that? When did you guys get the book store?

0:05:55.3 MM: 92, 1992, just a couple of years of her... Just a couple of years, I worked at the court for a couple of years, and quite frankly, financially, we've been better off because there's more security, etcetera, etcetera. But I love books, Barbara loves books, Barbara love teaching. I love reaching out to people, handing them just the right book that feels the need that they have for that day, and it makes me feel fulfilled as it did her. So that's why we're still here. And unfortunately, Barbara died a few years ago, and Barbarar and I had thought about selling the store, um doing something else, and I am so glad that I didn't because it forced me to get up, shower, get out every day, and... I still miss her. I don't think one ever totally recovers from that kind of a loss, we'd been

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together 35 years, but I have established a new normal and I'm surrounded by friends and the community, our community here in Los Osos, we couldn't have picked a better community. When they heard that Barbara died, people would come in and just give me a long hug and write me cards, and it was because we were very out and they knew we were a couple, and they really reached out so I couldn't have...

0:07:22.2 MM: We couldn't have moved to a better, more responsive, loving community than Los Osos.

0:07:28.6 CL: Could you talk a little bit more about what you mean by having just a really supportive community here; has it was... It always like that when you first moved here, so I guess what was it kind of like when you first moved here, and then we can maybe get later on later.

0:07:47.5 MM: When we first moved here, my dear uncle, who I lived with part of the time I was growing up and in college, said I'm familiar with San Luis Obispo, and he says, It's not likely Laguna Beach, Caroll. You have to be more circumspect about being out and what bumper strips you put on your car, etcetera, etcetera. And I think I mentioned in the interview 15 years ago, the next year after we had the store, George Hobbs, who was the mayor of Santa Maria, said that they had a Mexican problem in Santa Maria, and that was... Fall, and then the following year, he made a statement saying that we had a gay and lesbian problem in Santa Maria, and so my uncle gets the feed from Santa Maria because he's in Ventura. So we went down and I spoke at the City Council, and I got a note from him [my uncle] "so much for being circumspect about being out out there," so it was kind of our little inside joke.

0:09:01.5 CL: So.

0:09:02.0 MM: I think you said when you first moved here, some of the organizations you got involved with were... [Caroll] already in existence was a group started by David Kilburn, and David Perez is called GALA, and I think there was one other guy involved whose name is escaping me, we ended up buying his parents house here, so I should remember, but... That was already in existence, and they were sending fliers out and they were having meetings, and they had a little newsletter, etcetera, and shortly after we moved here, a couple of guys said we should find a business and professional group as an outgrowth of GALA, and we called it, The Central Coast Business and Professional Association. It was a loose organization, one didn't have to be in business or have a profession to belong, but we met every month, and because Barbara and I were so well connected with the gay and lesbian community in Southern California, we were able to bring up a lot of talent from the gay and lesbian community here. For example, one of the guys we brought up was a guy by the name of Cary C. Who was gay, and he was the foremost earthquake expert, and he'd been on television and things, so we had...

0:10:20.0 MM: And then we had Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who were the Mothers of the original lesbian movement, they're both passed on now, but we had them up two or three times and people really... because this hadn't been done here, and people were so enthusiastic and so supportive, so it worked out really well. The BAPA group just doesn't meet anymore, but we had a good time all the time, we got together in dinner and had entertainment was great.

0:10:51.5 CL: So when you said it really hadn't been done before, do you just mean like... What do you mean by that? Like bringing up speakers or just having a group where you meet every month?

0:11:03.0 MM: Yeah, mainly before, it was they had a newsletter of support, but they hadn't brought up... To my best of my knowledge, I hadn't brought up speakers, and so we were able to help with that because of our contacts down south, so once a month we would get together and have great meals and great comradeship, and then have a speaker to enlighten us about... Whatever the topic was.

0:11:34.3 CL: There any particular meeting that stands out?

0:11:47.9 MM: Well, having Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin up, they were the fore-mothers of the lesbian community, and they were so well received, I think back in the 80s, there was... And in the 70s, there was certain amount of separation in the gay and lesbian community, gay guys here and the lesbians were here, and I think it was the AIDS crisis that brought us more together, and so the Laguna Outreach was very active in protesting, I belonged to ACT UP, where that was the group where you laid on the cement and drew lines around you and... Another good thing that we did is we raised money to bring the AIDS Quilt for the first time, and we had it at Cal Poly, and it was very expensive. The first time he brought it, it was 10,000 dollars, and nobody was going to pay for it, so we raised every single penny to bring it by having an option at The Grange in Morro Bay... I will share this with you because I think... Um, because I was so active, Barbara said, "Carol's out on her begging tour," so I begged a lot of stuff from the community, and so I was picked to unfold portion of the quilt, and I don't know if any of you have ever unfolded the quilt or felt but you have such...

0:13:26.7 MM: Or I had such a visceral effect of feeling the energy of the one that created it and

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also the loss of the energy of the one who is no longer here, so that was... I think that was one of our more impressive endeavors and contribution to the community.

0:13:46.3 CL: What was it like when you were able to get the AIDS quilt here, and it was displayed at Cal Poly?

0:13:53.8 MM: Yeah, in the big... I don't know the name of it, was the big gym. And it covered the whole... And names were read, very solemn. I still attribute the wonderful-ness of the hospice movement, because I believe that the hospice movement is gay and lesbians gift to the community because it was... There was no hospice movement prior to that, and it was an outgrowth of gay and lesbian people caring for their brothers during this process. I'll never forget at one meeting, we said, "Well, enough of this gay people and lesbian people... Let's just all be gay," and so we went through that transition, this was before the broader LGBTQ. So, uh, it was very heart-warming. And we were at a meeting and the lights were dull and we were meditating at this Laguna Outreach, and one of the young men, there must've been two-three hundred people got up and said, "I want to thank my lesbian sisters" because he said, "we couldn't have made it through this without you," and I am haunted by the fact that if it's something that happened in the lesbian community; I'm haunted by the fact that we might not have been as supportive, so...

0:15:18.4 MM: It was a beautiful moment. Very touching. Sorry, I got a side track there.

0:15:24.9 CL: No, the side tracks are actually the best track to be on, so don't feel any hesitation to side track any time you want. Okay.

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What about the broader outreach of San Louis, how the press responded to the AIDS quilt, the outside community from outside of the LGBTQ community?

0:15:44.9 MM: Well, as far as the larger community responding, that's who... I mean, the gay lesbian community turned out to see it, but the larger community was incredibly supportive and came and there was nothing but positivity expressed, the early on, and then we went through a rough patch when the City of San Luis Obispo introduced a measure for non-discrimination in housing and jobs, and I'm sure you know about that one. The meeting was supposed to be at the San Luis Obispo chamber, and in the city council meeting, and they heard word that there would be way too many people, and by then Barbara and I had started a group called PFLAG, which is Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, because we were very big in southern California on it, trying to help other gay and lesbian people who didn't have as accepting people in our lives as we did, and... So I don't know where I was going...

0:17:04.7 CL: Meeting that was being held at the chamber...

0:17:07.4 MM: Oh, the meeting that was being held at the City Council, they decided that the rumblings were heard that the fundamentalist right-wing would be there and present. And so they had it at the Vets Hall, and all of you are familiar with the Vets Hall. There must have been well over 1000 people. Some people were outside and had to listen, but they bussed all kinds of people in from Orange County, which was a hotbed of conservatism and- except for Laguna Beach- and so I think they had their signs, we had our signs, the meeting started at 7:00. I didn't get home till 1 o'clock. So it was a long meeting, and I think about 70 people spoke in favor of passing this non-discrimination and a handful, so it was overwhelmingly supportive because we were noisier, I

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guess, and still the City Council met and turned us down, so it was a big defeat but I think it also brought light to what was going on, and eventually it passed, but it was tough. One Black woman, oddly enough, one Black woman followed me into the bathroom with her anti-gay sign and says, "Listen, sister, I'm going to pray for you."

0:18:39.4 MM: And I said, "No, please don't." I said, "You take care of yourself, and I'll take care of myself. And that's the way we need to be." Anyway, so that was that.

0:18:55.7 CL: Okay, yeah, I'm curious, what was it like to be at that City Council meeting? Because that was, I mean, obviously there was still the bill in place that was really discriminatory. Were there are a lot of people there speaking publicly for the first time about their sexuality and discrimination, was it still a fear that people would lose their jobs if somebody saw them because there were a lot of people there and having a lot of opposition there... Right. What was that like?

0:19:36.0 MM: Right, it was, it felt creepy that so many people were so ignorant and adamant about something that is a promise to all of us with the constitution and the great liberty, equality, fraternity, kind of the nobility upon which this country was founded, and to see it being repressed... It was hard, and I was so impressed with the gay community and parents of gay people showing up, the PFLAG people, speaking their hearts and well-spoken, and of course, it was my prejudice, but I didn't think the other side did a very good job, and I was speaking with one of the City Council members after who would normally support us and I said, "What were you thinking?" Oh, well, we'll handle it in another way, I thought... Hmm, okay, so it was disheartening, but it also boiled us up to realize that we had a lot of work to do.

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0:20:50.9 CL: What did it motivate you to do?

0:20:58.5 MM: I think, well, people have the misconception in general of our population, I've had people say to me "well, I don't know any gay or lesbian people." And I said, "I'm sure you do, but they're not feeling comfortable being out." When I was working at the county, and I worked in the tax collector's office for Frank Freitis [sic], and there was 22 people in the department, and there were two lesbians that worked there, me being one, and there were two gay guys there, and I was the only one, I was a little bit older than... About my same age, I was the only one. I mean I didn't yell and scream, I'm gay, I'm gay. But when we would have potlucks, and the county is great for having potlucks at the store, I mean at the office, and they got... So they would request... They knew I didn't cook. So, they knew Barbara made great food. So they would request her chicken wings for the potluck, so it was very much... One of the Latino woman, her name is Maria Gonzales, she said, "You know, Carroll, it's really good that you have come, that you're comfortable letting us know who you are, and stuff..."

0:22:32.5 MM: Because before that, we didn't know anybody was going and you're just like us." So that's why I think it's important to be out because people... I think it's really important because they really think they don't know anyone, and I said, I bet you know, I bet you're working with somebody, I bet you... I bet... You do know people who are gay. They're just not comfortable. And then during Gay Pride in June, PBS would often have the month of June with Tales of the City or Stonewall, movies about Stonewall, etcetera, etcetera. And they play them and I tell the group, and they come back and they talk about it. And it was really... It's very affirming, and I recommend it highly.

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0:23:28.5 CL: I kinda wanna jump back to... You said you and Barbara started a PFLAG like chapter in San San Luis Obispo. Yes. Can you talk a little bit about... When was that? Was it mostly educational?

0:23:41.2 MM: Right, we had basically... PFLAG is designed to reach out to parents who are not comfortable with their gay or lesbian child, and so we had literature coming out, we would meet once a month just to support... We have a new person come... Then we'd talk... We'd show a film, maybe. We got to know, when Barbera and I lived in Southern California, a Methodist minister, his name was a Mel Wheatley, actually, he was a bishop of several states, Bishop Mel Wheatley, his wife, Lucile, and their son is gay, and they were part of the PFLAG that we belonged to in Southern California. And so I asked Mel and Lucile, because we stayed in touch with him and I said, "Would you be willing, because we want to start this group here," so we got a little publicity in the paper, and we had well over 100, 125 people, we met at the Embassy Suites. We had some little media coverage, there was a little article, and that brought people to us because prior to that, they nobody heard of PFLAG, what was it, etcetera. And so hopefully, we help people come out to their families and for their family to be more accepted, unfortunately, during the AIDS crisis, I'm reminded of something, Reagan, Just drive these heels on this issue, and I'm reminded a Mother Theresa I met with him.

0:25:22.MM: I think it was '82, and she came out of the meeting when she had an interview and she said very clearly, she spoke very little, but she said, "If you do not love... If you do not love people with AIDS, You don't love Jesus. And it was just that simple. And of course, then the ACT UP came and we made some progress, and I think 1990 for us personally, we were already here was the hardest year for us, we lost half a dozen of our gay male friends to this... One of the guys that we

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lost, the way he came out to his parents is that he said he had AIDS, which is a horrible way to come out to parents, it's very hard on parents. Anyway, he was a wonderful human being, he decided that his mission in life was to arrange gay and lesbian speakers to go to colleges to talk about human sexuality, and of course, the professors who teach humans sexutality were delighted to have... And they had other speakers talking about fetishes and things like that, and so we looked so good because we're... Yeah, we're regular people, you have relationships and people would try to peg us into doing certain things...

0:26:43.0 MM: What do you do? Are you the guy or are you the gal? But this time, Barbara, I came out later in the 70s. So I understand in the 50s, when people came out, they would go into a bar and you'd have to declare that you were a butcher or femme, otherwise you couldn't come in, so it had to be very clearly delineated, and people kept trying to delineate us, Well, who's the husband, who's the wife? I said, "No, no. We're each other's spouse. We don't have wives, and we don't have husbands. We have permanent partnerships," that was what we used those days, but people kept trying to mirror the heterosexual and I said, "No, you can't mirror... We're different." Anyway.

0:27:31.6 CL: That kind of leads little bit, doesn't it, talking about going out to bars. ____.

Well, I was curious. Okay, very quickly, and I know you talked human sexuality classes when you were still in Laguna... Oh yeah. Was that a thing that BAPA or GALA or PFLAG was doing in San Luis Obispo when you were here? Or, since you've been here?

0:28:11.6 MM: We tried to get in, I don't know really much about that, I don't... Barbara and I didn't do any speaking at Cuesta [College], Hancock [College] or Poly to human sexuality classes, so I

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don't know if that situation was to repressed for them, we had some very interesting psychologists who were teaching in Southern California were very open to this, and that's what it took them to contact us. So I don't know.

0:28:43.3 CL: In that case, yeah, so we'll jump back to what David was mentioning, did you ever... So, you said that you would have to declare butch or femme back in the 50s and what not; when you were in Laguna, or especially when you moved here, did you ever go to any gay or lesbian bars? Did you ever go to Breezes or Journey's Inn?

0:29:09.5 MM: We lived in Laguna Beach, there were some gay bars. Because if there is a third of the population is gay, and one of them was called The Little Shrimp, and I started doing line dancing with the gay and lesbian community there and have great fun, and to this day, I can recreate in my head the last time I was there watching everybody, it was so full of enthusiasm, ____ and fun, and it was a place just for us and we could be whoever we wanted to be, and there were other bars across Orange County, so things had loosened up. When he moved here, before we moved here, there was a... I think it was called Journey's Inn, which is where Shalimar was on Broad Street. But I think that was before us, and I'm not sure... We were never heavy into the bar scene, so I don't know that we ever went there, but then Breezes is opened up and it opened up there right on, well, you probably know where it is, it was on Foothill, no, on Los Osos Valley Road, close to Madonna. And again, Barbara and I were not much on bars and served in the [book] store, we had a group of lesbians that we meet with once a month, we called ourselves The Gourmet Club.

0:30:45.3 MM: Fortunately, there were people there who were gourmets, not me. And we'd pick a country and we'd get together and have dinner together and talk about the countries in the food,

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etcetera. We had a lesbian softball team as we did in Laguna Beach, we sponsored one, so I never went a lot to the bar, but supported at best we could, especially... Neither of us are much drinkers, but we loved to go there for dinner when they served dinner, and when people would come from Southern California to... First, we had a little B and B in our house, and so people would say, "Well, where are the bars?" I said, "Well, you're used to Southern California," I said, "the whole county of San Luis Obispo," which you're so spread out, doesn't even the population of the city of Anaheim. So, we don't have enough population to support it, but then we would point them to Breezes, but they would wonder why there weren't more... And we tell them about the groups, but it takes a lot of people to support a bar or a dinner house, and so it ended up closing, I think it was over for...

0:32:02.8 MM: I don't know, three or four years.

0:32:06.1 CL: Thank you. I think you're telling us what it was like to work for the county government, and if there were any other employees who were still closeted and just that overall experience. Okay.

0:32:22.9 MM: It didn't take me long to figure out that where I was one of four gay and lesbian people. There was another woman who was a lesbian, she had a female partner, and then there were two men who had different partners outside, but as I said, they were not out, I mean, they worked there and they were kind of out with me, and I didn't feel they rejected me because I was okay with it and expressed myself, but I found much more... I don't think anything officially came out, although it was whispered, but as far as I was concerned, the whole, the heterosexual people that I worked with, totally accepting, and we're glad that I talked about being gay and when was open and felt comfortable because then they felt comfortable asking questions of me, and I got them watching

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PBS specials during Gay Pride month and stuff, and they said, "We never would have done this if you hadn't been here," so... It was really a very good experience. I've always had my own business, so it lacks something that I liked, but it was a positive experience, very accepting. It was good.

0:33:49.0 CL: Just kind of going off of that, have you always felt that the overall San Luis Obispo community was relatively accepting?

0:34:50.8 MM: I did, as I said, my uncle, who partly raised me, admonished me, he said, "You know, I'm familiar with SLO County, it's not Laguna Beach... You really have to be careful." And I've always had, I'm a 60s person as far as bumper strips. So I've always had some kind of bumper strips, my car is kind of embarrassing now, there's too many, but there's so much to protest, that's why... Nothing untoward happened. Nobody keyed my car, I had a couple of people in the parking structure leave a note "great for you, good bumpers strips," kind of thing. So it was really very, very positive for me.

0:34:48.0 CL: Alright, and just to jump back to an even earlier point, you're talking about how did you raise all the money to get the AIDS quilt to come to SLO... Okay.

0:34:58.4 MM: 1000. Let's see, we moved here, we bought... 189 moved here in February of 90, and we connected right away with a game lesbian group, because as I said, we bought a guy's parents house, and so when we went through the final walk-through, we both said, Oh, I said It's so Barbara, I said, no wonder you didn't have an antipathy towards the league, your son's gay, so it was very sweet to be joined GALA. We decided we should bring the quilt, and we had these meetings, etcetera, and I said, Well, we can go and beg the community and raise the money that we need, and

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they said, Okay, good. Well, you're not working right now, so we're putting you in charge of it. So I was in charge of it, I had some help from other people going, so we went to businesses, said, Here's what we're doing, we had a little thing showing the quilt, and I swear I did not have anybody turn me down... I don't know about the others. Who participated? I probably got 80% of things don't... They got paintings. We got goods and services... Yeah, and then we found an auctioneer who was willing to do it for us, and we met at the Grange because that only cost 50, so our overhead was really low, and we got together and brought food and stuff, and we raised every penny that it cost to turn it over and brought the quilt, so it took a few months to do this, but we did it.

0:36:52.3 CL: That's pretty impressive. Were there any other... So you've touched on the city council meeting in San Luis about the Equal Rights Policy, and then bringing the AIDS quotes is SLO. Were there obviously--that's super big--were there any other really stand out kind of things put on by GALA or anything else you guys organized or protested.

0:37:26.1 MM: There must have been or my memory is fading me. I am older you know. As far as the community, we just continued to persist and to have meetings and to bring speakers, and sometimes we were able to get articles in the San Luis Obispo Tribune, and when we brought the AIDS quilt, there was a big article in the New Times. They're very supportive. As far as activities here at the store, we do two big events every year. When Barbara and I were in San Francisco one time at a trade show, we were walking around Chinatown and we saw the lion dance team blessing, etcetera, etcetera. And Barbara said--we knew about it because we knew-- Anyway, she said, Why don't we bring this to Los Osos? I bet they've never seen anything like this. So she did the research and she contacted the Chinese--the dragon team who practiced at Cal Poly, and they were more than delighted to come and so we bring them every year in Chinese New Year, we mark off the parking

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lot, they come with their drums and symbols and I think the largest-- it built-- first, it was just a couple hundred, but it built to... One time we had over 350 people and half of them were under 10. And so we give out fortune cookies and after we'd been through... In the Chinese astrology, there's 12 animals. And after we went through all of the animals, I announced to our community, well, we've gone through all 12. Now, we don't need to do it anymore. And they say, Are you kidding? This has become tradition. You have to continue. So we had it last year, and we were not able to this year, but we're going to resume it again, it would be our eighteenth year of doing it, and it's so warmly received by the community, I guess we're just going to continue. And then we do a Day of the Dead thing, at the end of October, 1st of November.

0:39:51.7 CL: So beyond-- Who comes? What exactly happens? And so the team from Cal Poly does...

0:40:01.4 MM: They come with their two lion dragon outfits. I could show you pictures. I could... We have pictures of them. Okay. Okay, it's not a lot. We tell everybody, come on time, we always have it at three because it doesn't last long, and the lion dance team from Cal Poly love coming here, they say, "Wow, this Los Osos really response to us, we don't usually have that big a reception," and they were very very pleased. So it fed them too, and they said, "Well, you have the best venue." Well, part of it is that, because we love different cultural things, and we think the more varied cultural things, the more rich we are, and so the community agrees, and they come with their big drums and the cymbals, and these two great big--, and they come in they bless the community, they do a dance out front and we mark off parking places. We do it Saturday afternoon because there's-- the parking lot empty, and we've rarely been rained out when year it was drizzle, but they continued to do it, and then they come in and walk through the store banging their things and

blessing the community, come back out.

The tradition is that we pay them by burying their money in a lettuce, bury it in in a red envelope and you hang it off the eave of the porch, and the dragons pretend to fight for it, then get it down and then they pretend to chew it and share it with the others, and this whole thing, and they're very generous with their time after the dance is officially over and their scroll out [sounds like gung he phat coi?] and Cal Poly lion dance team, then they stick around and have... Let the kids have their pictures taken with them, and then some of the people give them extra money. We pay them officially, but then other people, they enjoy putting it in the pretend mouths of the lion, and the cutest thing happened last year. We were able to do it, this little boy who was more than four, couldn't have been more than four, who had red hair, and he wanted to do it, so I gave him a dollar and he got close to the thing, and then he threw it down and says to the lion, "you pick it up." Which was kind of cute. So that's been a real positive for us.

0:42:48.2 CL: And what about Dios de las Muertos?

0:42:52.2 MM: Dios de las Muertos, we have put... It's not such a big event, but we ask people if they want to-- we put a window in the front of the door, memorializing people who have passed, their loved ones, and we ask for people to come in and sometimes we have a musical group. I can't remember the name of the instrument. It's Indonesian. I can't remember it. But we have that, but we don't always do that. We didn't do it last year because of covid, too.

0:43:27.4 David Weisman: You were discussing public events in SLO County, now these fellows are newer to San Luis in some ways, I'm here 20 years, and a big event that they wouldn't know

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about because it's been gone for half a decade now, was, of course, San Luis was was famous, infamously so, so for its mardi gras, which no longer help because it got out of control, theoretically. And what I'm wondering is, did the LGBTQ community have a float... It would seem to me like as much as Pride goes, that would be the kind of thing-- do you recall anything about that?

0:44:02.8 MM: I don't... The Pride celebration in the Plaza, I don't know if it predates our attendance, but we showed up there a couple of times, took a booth, etcetera. I'm not aware of any official participation in the mardi gras from the gay and lesbian community, so I don't know.

0:44:34.2 DW: I just, just a thought.

0:44:36.6 MM: Right, yeah, yeah. We've been here 30 years. The one I look forward to, and it was pre-dating or being here, was a big celebration of Cinco de Mio in the Mission Plaza, and they would put on a big breakfast and they have mariachi bands, and then I have buttons from other years attending, but that fell by the wayside too, which I often thought that was sad because it was an attempt to expose people to another Latin thing to celebrate.

0:45:21.4 CL: I kinda wanna get back to the bookstore a little bit. Thanks for having us here again. I'm curious, so in Laguna Beach, your bookstore was entirely dedicated-- it was a gay and lesbian bookstore, and then here it's just... It's more--

0:45:42.0 MM: --general--

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0:45:42.3 CL: It's more of a general bookstore. You have your section. Are there a lot of LGBTQ people who come in looking for literature?

0:45:53.9 MM: I think our bookstore Laguna Beach was called A Different Drummer, a bookstore for women and other thinkers. It was just gay and lesbian people. The most famous person we had come and give talks, we had talk once a month of lesbian or gay authors, and it was great fun, and I have scrapbooks full of all the different people, but the most famous one we had was Armistead Maupin, who did Tales of the City... And I don't know, you're too young, but those Tales of the City were... How it happened is there was a Harper and Row rep who came to San Francisco every year, and he would read Armistead Maupin's column in the San Francisco paper, and that was called Tales of the City, and he read it. And then he contacted Armistead Maupin and said we want to do a book, and so I think Armistead, now has I think 10 of them, but it was Tales of the City, More Tales of the City, and we had him come down, we put on a luncheon spread with him and he spent the afternoon. It was a lot of fun. Here, we have not, because we don't have the population. And we also found that Los Osos is kind of a bedroom community for San Luis, and the streets kind of disappear after six or seven at night, so the only... One of the celebrations we put on when a lesbian poet, she was a famous in the straight community too, her name is May Sarton, she wrote memoirs and poetry, and when she passed, we had a big celebration and people brought their favorite pieces from her work and we read them to each other. So we did some things like that, but we found author appearances just don't work here, and the other thing we found is we made our section for, again, lesbian people to be quite smaller. The other bookstore had-- it was a small bookstore, so we could be at-- in Laguna Beach, but here, we have just a small section, and I think two things happen. One, as the gay and lesbian community perceived of our acceptance, it didn't seem as important for them to read about our history and... So I think that's part of it. Although in Laguna Beach, we put on

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this... We participated in... It was an event called "Celebrate Our Founding Fathers." And we got the idea, I had this purple dune buggy was a bed in it, and we decorated it, called it "Knowledge Equals Power," and we submitted it to the parade officials.

0:49:00.7 MM: And they said, Fine. And one of them was, "What About Our Four Mothers?"

Which was left out. And then the second year we did it, we talked the gay and lesbian Laguna outreach people into making signs for famous gay and lesbian people, Oscar Wilde, Michelangelo, Willa Cather. And so we helped educate... That really helped educate people, because people were standing and-- it was a big deal in Laguna because people were standing on the sidelines and we could hear people saying, Well, I didn't know so and so was gay. Do you know so and so was gay? It was very broadening, and I think I've often thought we should do something like that here, but I'm older now, so I don't organize. Except I'd still do protests, my man, I don't miss a protest about something. I think you were going to ask a... Go ahead.

0:50:06.4 CL: Did you wanna continue...

0:50:07.4 MM: I think you were going to ask about... Didn't you have something down about get alcoholism...

0:50:17.7 CL: I was curious, because-- I'm curious about, do you think that since acceptance has increased for LGBTQ--

0:50:27.2 MM: --the perception of acceptance has increased... Yeah, there's still that resistance there, but the perception amongst us is--

0:50:34.5 CL: So then people are less inclined to learn about their history. Right, okay. Yeah, so then, yeah, that does lead in... because in your last interview, you said your view of the two biggest problems in the LGBTQ community were internalized homophobia and alcoholism, and you said you weren't big on the bars, personally.

0:51:01.3 MM: But its a way to meet people and it was a way to find community. So I don't have anything against--

0:51:07.4 CL: But... Do you still hold those views? Do you think things have changed?

0:51:11.1 MM: I think the internalized homophobia is better. I think people who were victims of growing up in a very conservative fundamentalist home have a certain amount of homophobia internalized. I think... I don't know if I mentioned it when we were interviewed before, but the most graphic example of internalized homophobia that I ever experienced was from a gay guy who shopped at our store, and he and I were talking about growing up, and he said... I talked about internalized homophobia. And he said, I'll give you an example of it. So I was raised a real fundamentalist home, and he said I was up in Lake Arrowhead with my lover, and we were embracing and I saw a reflection of us in the mirror and I threw up, and I thought that's internalized homophobia. And so that's always been a concern. So I think the more we know about our forefathers and foremothers in the gay community, the more we can hold ourselves high and stand tall, and... I was raised by a very liberal Christian group, so I never had a problem about God hating me because I was gay, and I think those people who had that raising belonged to the Metropolitan Community Church, and they needed that as a buffer or a step to get more well on this issue of

hating themselves because they were gay.

0:52:57.6 CL: I wanna come back to the Metropole Metropolitan Community Church in a minute.

But what about alcoholism?

0:53:05.4 MM: Alcoholism? Well, I think because everyone in the gay and-- when you're rejected by a larger society, you seek out others, and the way to seek out others is in the bars, and it makes you feel at home, it makes you feel accepted. And also, if you don't like yourself, you can numb your feelings with alcohol, and so I think... I'm guessing that alcoholism, I don't see as much in our community, I don't see as much internalized homophobia. I think the older-- it was told to Barbara and me that there were some older lesbians living in Los Osos because the nickname for Los Osos was Los Lesbos and a nickname for Baywood Park was Gaywood Park. So it seemed to be an area where people settled, more gay people settled, and amongst some of the older people, they wouldn't come in to our store because they might be perceived as gay because we were gay, but that has pretty much gone by the by because we've had the store 28 years. And we still maintain a section, and I still want people to participate and learn about our history and hold our heads higher because that's who we are all down through history. We've contributed to the larger society, and there's so many movies out now, I mean, there was always an undercurrent of movies that gay and lesbian people could have, but we're out in the mainstream now, we're in movies, the general movies, were on sitcoms on television. I mean, we're really well represented. So we suffer from all other minority things.

0:55:24.2 DW: Before we leave the book topic on that. I'm curious about that. You have the smaller section in the back, it was your LGBTQ section, and I'm just wondering the role it plays now. I will

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confess something here, let's say I'm-- just imagine hypothetically, I'm 15 years old and we live in the suburbs and there's a Walden's Bookstore and I kinda go in and you pick a time a day when there aren't many people, and you make your way to the back, there is one copy of *The Joy of Gay Sex*, like on a shelf, and you have to make sure that no one is around or looking, when you slowly maybe lift it very quickly, the hardcover coffee table-sized book to see what's in it. Bookstore has had that kind of position for persons like myself 40 years ago, because that's the only place I could catch a glimpse of that. I'm wondering how you're seeing young people who would not be... Who had been in my place now, don't need to come to your section anymore, because they can just find it all for free on the internet, what you've seen as the switch or transition over the decades in that...

0:56:27.0 MM: Yeah, when we first took over the store, once in a while, we would find it... It wouldn't necessarily... It wouldn't have anything to do with sexuality. because we have a human sexuality section and we'd find a kid coming in, and he'd sit down in a corner and look through books and then he put it behind a shelf or something like that, so we would find these books secreted in places where they shouldn't be... So not so much now as human sexuality classes are more open. I think it concerns me so much information being in social network because so much of it is vulnerable to falseness... And I have a hard time with that, but it's the way of the flesh now, as far as communication.

0:57:39.2 CL: In your last interview, you also talked about... because it was 2006, and you were talking about how it was getting maybe a little harder to compete with Borders and Barnes and Noble, having, I don't know, big stores with a little coffee shop in it, and then... But now even you can get books off Amazon, you can just read a lot for free online, how have you changed or not changed to compete or keep up with that ever-changing interface?

0:58:17.9 MM: I think that the selection of what we have is smaller than what we used to have because of the prevalence of finding these things everywhere. As far as the larger population, we do have young people coming in and... There is a book, *The Front Runner*, that was like a classic one for young men to read, and there was a family and his name... He came in and I knew he was gay, and so he needed help coming out, so I sold him two or three, four books, there's still some need, but not nearly as much, and what I found in the general population is that people... Well, first of all, you see by the store that we sell a lot more than books, candles, incense, jewelry, gay and lesbian paraphernalia, posters, yard signs, journals, because we can't make it as just a bookstore anymore due to the erosion of Amazon and Barnes and Noble, etcetera. I think during the late 80s and early 90s, a third of the independent book store closed. I think half of the bookstores who focus... Like we did in Laguna on gay and lesbian issues, half of them closed, because again, the perception, you feel good if you can go into a mainstream, like a big store. You don't have to seek out some off-the-wall places. So, I think that's eroded.

1:00:12.7 MM: But as far as the general population, e-books, there's a certain number of people who read e-books on vacation, but when people... When push comes to shove, and despite the horrible price of books nowadays, people still want to hold the book and the visceral connection with a book and it is really important, and I think studies will show that the retention from books on tape is less than actually reading a book. It's hard to highlight books on tape and you can't go back. So I don't know, It's still in transition and we'll see where it ends up, but in our community here, people really support us, and when we shut down for a couple of months during the early part of covid, I think we did some steps to offset and applied for the PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] loan, and we got a small business administration loan, but the community just rallied around us so

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incredibly, I mean, when we were finally able to re-open, the people just shopped and shopped and shopped every day, they'd say, We don't want you to go away, we don't want you to go away. We love the store, etcetera. So we have survived that, whereas a lot of businesses haven't, and I think people are... They're very committed to books, as are we.

1:01:52.8 DW: When you speak of these books, and I just confessed to my looking at the Joy of Gay Sex back in 1975. When we go back in another decade or so for you, thinking back to your adolescence, were there any of the classic books that-- were there and did they have an influence on you? The Well of Loneliness... What influenced you, if it might at that time?

1:02:24.8 MM: Well, my coming out, I came out as a young person in the 60s, and I guess I came out to my... I fell madly in love with a woman who was older, twenty years older and had two children, so that up ended any seeking out of alternative gay and lesbian things because we were very focused on earning a living, buying a house and supporting these two kids, so it wasn't until... I really didn't do much reading at that point, I mean, of our literature until she and I split up. We were together about 13 years, and she and I split up. So my coming out was in the 30s, in 1930-- I mean in my 30s, age group. And Barbara too because she had been-- she had gone to seminary and been a celibate, so she and I came out together at 33 and 35, and so we were all fully formed people, and she was on a spiritual quest as so was I, so we had gotten... We had relieved ourselves of any inhibitions about being gay, and then I think she and I got the idea to do this bookstore, and then it was a revelatory for us too, because we learned just how many of us there were in history, how much we contributed both to art, literature, everything.

1:04:18.7 CL: Okay, I'm curious, you mentioned your first relationship and when you were still

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younger, could you talk a little bit more about what that was like?

1:04:34.8 MM: Well, I didn't know I was a lesbian until I fell madly in love with a woman. I mean I tried to fit into-- I dated when I was in college, and it just didn't feel right. I just was crazy about her, and she brought a whole new world of... She was an avid reader of everything, and so she brought a whole new world to my doorstep and it just... It was probably good hiding out. All the friends that we had were more her age group, the music we listened to was more her age group... We have a gay guy working here at the bookstore, and, Dot I were together for about thirteen years, and during that period, he called that my dark period, because I know nothing about the music of my generation during that period, so he said, "Oh yeah, there's your dark period again, Carol." So it wasn't until Barbara and I came out and together and that we started doing an awful lot of reading and research and just gobbled up what was there and then wanted to share it, and that's how we did the bookstore in Laguna.

1:06:10.7 CL: Going back just a little bit, we were talking a little bit about the struggles of having a business in covid during this pandemic, but one of the things we were curious about is this is sort of like a second pandemic that you've been through. If you're considering the AIDS epidemic, another one, would you... You talked a little bit about what it was like to live through the AIDS epidemic. You talked about how it brought the gay and lesbian communities together, you said... Are there any... Can you just talk a little bit about how the AIDS epidemic compares to living through covid or... Just speaking a little bit about both individually.

1:07:00.0 MM: During the AIDS epidemic, our country was polarized, but not like it has become now, and it's so much more palpable, and of course, the basis of it, both times I think are fear, and

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fear... You know what to do with fear, it becomes anger and people, of course, lashed out during the AIDS epidemic and were awful, and people have done the same with this as far as denial. Yeah, there's the polarization based on fear has nothing to do with science, as it didn't have anything to do with science during-- so there are some correlations, and every day back then and every day, now, I just thank God for Dr. Fauci, because he was incredible. I know Larry Kramer, who was adamant, and he was a force to be reckoned with, and he and Fauci loggerheads, but they finally met and they finally coalesced, and Fauci became as much of an advocate for our community as Kramer and he's continued to be level-headed, kind thoughtful scientific, refusing to let go of anything except that it's based on science. He's like a broken record on this issue, and thank God he is. So he's my hero.

1:08:53.5 CL: Yeah. We were kind of the struggles you faced during covid more recently, and then AIDS in the 80s.

1:09:12.3 MM: Struggles. During covid, it was... The struggle was... Well, again, I was frightened because I thought, I'm going to lose this business, and as I said, after Barb died, this business became a focal point for me and a very important one, and just like now, we're like a community center where more than a bookstore we're a community center. I'll never forget the day after the election in 2016, when we couldn't believe our years, people just came, came in droves to the store just to be here to shed some tears, to get hugs, and basically, we're experiencing the same thing with covid, we all feel very cut off from one another because of the masks and no touching and things like that, and so we've become a little center, we haven't had... The community has been incredibly supportive. We've had a few negative comments. Christine, who works for me, asked somebody to leave last week because they came in without a mask, and although all of us have had both our shots and were-- but we still wear masks to mirror good behavior. And he said, What do you mean I

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can't come in? You have to wear a mask.

1:10:55.4 MM: Well, I'm not going to wear a mask. Well, you guys are suffering, so I just came in to buy some books and Christine says, No, we're actually doing very well, the community has really rallied around us, they want us to stay, so, we're doing fine, thank you. And then he said, Well, I guess I'll have to go to Amazon, and she said, Well, I guess you have to do what you have to do, and you can't come in unless you're masked. He's the longest interaction person we've had some people just turn on their heel and say, go away or something, and when we had the Black Lives Matter, we took some knocks from people, "All Lives Matter," and we said, yeah, all lives matter. They never said, "only Black Lives Matter," they said Black Lives Matter. What people read into this, this ignorant... It's just pathetic. Anyway, I'm embarrassed-- you know, I wasn't born in this country, but I'm very much an American, steeped in American history and blessings for this country and what it could be, and what it's become sometimes breaks my heart, but we're still here, still trying to bring truth.

1:12:11.2 CL: And what about during AIDS epidemic?

1:12:15.2 MM: The AIDS epidemic, you mean as far as influence on business?

1:12:19.2 CL: Some of the struggles that were faced throughout that time.

1:12:25.5 MM: Well, it was a constant battle to support our gay brothers and to try to undermine the falseness around AIDS and from a business standpoint, we were okay, but I think it was really helped that we were in Laguna Beach where there were so many gay people. We weren't out in the

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hinterlands of Lancaster, Palmdale. Anyway, the garden spot, I always called them the garden spot of Southern California. I have relatives who live there, so I pick on it.

1:13:19.5 CL: So during kinda tough times, one thing that people turn to is spirituality in some cases. I was wondering, first of all, if you could talk about the role that spirituality has played in your life. You've mentioned, obviously Barbara used to teach about spirituality, but you haven't really... I guess, what exactly were your beliefs, what did you...

1:13:48.4 MM: Well, Barbara and I were very eclectic in our spirituality in that--you'll get a kick out of this--when we do panels in Laguna, there was a Jewish lawyer guy, his name is Werner Kune, and we also lost him in '80, but I loved doing panels with him because, especially at the fundamentalist Orange County classes, because he would always get people's attention by saying, when religion would come up, that it says in the Bible, blah, blah, blah... And he would say, "Well, you know what? You're really missing something. You need to get hold of this book." Theyd listen up. "And the title of the book is What Jesus Had to Say About Homosexuality," and they say, "Oh!" and he said "Yes, all the pages are blank." And I just loved it that he would spring this on them. Hopefully, when you do things like that, it gets people thinking. I'm not sure it always does, but Barbara had, since she went to seminary, she had a deep and abiding faith in the goodness of life, and she embraced Paramahansa Yogananda, self-realization fellowship. She embraced Buddhism as did we, an outgrowth of us being together. We think our true religion is kindness to one another, and that there are no separations between us. There's no categorization of humans. We are all human, and we have a deep and abiding faith and a desire to protect and be with humans.

1:15:43.0 MM: And I don't believe that there is any race. I read a book-- I took a class from Ashley

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Montague years ago. I'm dating myself, but this was way back, and he wrote a book called The Greatest Myth There Is, and it's about race, and really what it boils down to... You might have a little bit different Melanin in your skin, but there's no such thing as race. There's only the human race, and that's been our philosophy for our entire life...

1:16:23.8 DW: Just one thing that-- before it gets too far away, you had mentioned in the section before about the time you spent with your original partner raising her kids in the 60s, I'm guessing or 70s.

1:16:39.8 MM: This was in the 60s.

1:16:42.0 DW: That sounds kind of pioneering: Two women. I mean now LGBTQ parenting is this issue, was that kind of pioneering at the time, and how did that work for you if you care to share that.

1:16:53.6 MM: Because I was so much younger than Dot; there were twenty years separation. We never dealt with the perception of our friends that we were a couple. They thought we were just deep friends who live together... I don't know, I really didn't query them after the fact, what they actually thought was going on, but I mean, we shared a bed because it was a boy and a girl and they had to have their own room, but we were very, very careful because it was the 60s. And we were careful.

1:17:41.8 DW: And I'm just curious if you would care to share and the children themselves eventually grow up and move way, and how does the family unit...

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1:18:01.9 MM: This is a hard subject for me, I was very close to the daughter's oldest son. I was there when he was born, and I really bonded with him. But when we split up, and then she died a number of years later, the son became very homophobic and "she's a lesbian" kind of a thing, and... So there was some acrimony. So it wasn't the most positive.

1:18:36.7 CL: Going back to your and Barbara's--

1:18:51.8 MM: Let me add something to what David asked. What was interesting about my biological family, I was raised by grandparents, a mom, not a father, and an aunt and an uncle, and I was very close to my grandparents, and my grandmother was out for her 80th birthday party, and I had this big party at my house and the kids were in the pool and blah, blah, blah. And Barbara and I were together at that point. And the phone rang and Barbara answered the phone. Barbara said, "It's Dot, and you need to take the call." And so I took the call and my grandmother who was... She was over 80, she says to Barbara, she said, "You know, we are so glad that you and Carol are together, because if she stayed with that woman would have killed her, not physically, but emotionally and stuff," so it was very sweet that she was so supportive of our relationship. It was nice. Anyway. You're going to ask something.

1:20:00.9 CL: You and Barbara had your own spirituality to draw on some of different aspects. One other-- I was curious, you were still in Laguna Beach when the Metropolitan Community Church was started in the LA area. Did you know people there who were part of that church and what role that played for them and then was it still a thing in San Luis Obispo at the point when you moved here, that you know of? It's okay, either way.

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1:20:34.6 MM: Yeah, no, Barbara, I did attend-- she liked all religious aspects and found positive in all of them. I found the Metropolitan Church was more... "Well, the rest of society doesn't love you, but you're accepted here," and I wanted... That didn't appeal to me because I knew I was a good person, but I didn't need this dispensation, so it didn't appeal to me, but I know it was a good home for people... The basic thing I got from it was that the Metropolitan Church says, "Well, these other churches don't accept you, but we will accept you despite who you are and--" That was never good enough for me. Or Barbara. We knew that it fulfilled a role for some people who needed it.

1:21:34.6 CL: Were there a lot of people you knew who partook in the services?

1:21:38.7 MM: Not really, not really, because Barbara was always teaching. Namely, her classes were... She had straight people too, people drove from Palos Verdes to Laguna to attend classes with her, but it was very much... And when she got more and more gay and lesbian people, they were totally accepting of themselves and their role in life, very affirming.

1:22:08.0 DW: By the way, have you seen the church's situation in San Luis change over the last 30 years? Even if you're not a participant, but as an observer or...

1:22:17.3 MM: One thing I think is interesting is, I'm not a regular church observer, but after Barb died, I needed like a... I mean I had the store, but I need like a little anchor, and I found this little church over in Morro Bay, and it's a Methodist church, and my family was raised in the United Church of Canada, which is a very liberal church. And so for me to go to a Metropolitan, I knew all of the songs and the songs were very nurturing to me, so I went there for a while, but what's

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interesting is all across the country, the PFLAG meetings are usually at the Methodist churches. They're on the cutting edge of the being accepting and this Lucile Wheatley, who was the bishop of the western states, we got to know him in Laguna. He has since passed, but he was gained recognition during World War II because he played a big role in maintaining Japanese properties when they were incarcerated during the war, so the Methodists have always been on the cutting edge of support of inclusivity in all ways. There's a little commercial for the Methodist church.

1:23:49.7 CL: What other ways would you say you've found support in the last couple of years? You talked about... I wonder if it's... I think you had mentioned in your last interview you had started a support group for older lesbians?

1:24:10.4 MM: Right. Barb and I started that fifteen, sixteen years ago, and we met in the back room where Barbara taught classes, and we met every month, just basically a support group and then it kind of fell by the wayside, and then we resumed a support for older gay and lesbian people, because the group we started was for lesbians fifty or thereabouts, because some people have partners who were younger, so it was kind of loose, and this one is mainly people... I'm the only non-retired person who belongs to it, and we meet once a month, and we bring our own lunch now because of the covid and we mask, and we eat outside, but it's been good because we laugh and we commiserate about current events and it's still supportive and it's made up of men and women. And I will say one thing, I think another thing that happened with the AIDS crisis, that the larger community learned from the gay lesbian population is how to die with dignity and how to support one another as they are making a transition because I was touched... After Barb died, and everybody knew we were a couple, and people would come in just to give me a hug, or write me a little note or something, so we really-- I think I want to attribute our community to this awareness... Thank you.

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I'm going to claim credit for us, but we're just doing better with death than we used to...

1:26:16.6 CL: That's interesting. What other things have you been up to in the last... Since your last interview, are there any other groups you've been a part of?

1:26:30.2 MM: Fortunately, Barbara and I took some nice vacations before she passed, so we got away, we took a cruise to Alaska, we did a whole month off and took-- did the Pacific Northwest. After Barb died, my life changed drastically, and so I began attending things at the performing art center. I'm devoted to the palm theatre, having dinner with friends. Keep hiking. That's how I got the poison oak. I'm not being careful. But it's just a different... I've established a new normal and that's it.

1:27:30.4 CL: One sort of question we had, the last interview, and then we asked-- we didn't ask, it was another... But they asked if you had any advice or thoughts that you would like to pass on to the younger generation of LGBTQ Youth, is there anything... Any new advice or wisdom you like to share?

1:28:00.4 MM: Keep reading our history. It will empower you. Love yourself, be true to yourself, and, for goodness sakes, be kind. Reach out to one another and support one another. We're all in this together, there are no separations, only what we perceive and latch on to, but... That's what I would say. Once, years ago, I think Barbara, my best friend, put on a party for my 40th birthday, and there were some lesbian separatist there and this and that, that means no guys, and she was waxing loquaciously about her opinions, and I said, You know, you're bringing this down here, this is my birthday. And I said, I have to tell you right here and now that my pecking order is this, first

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of all, I'm a human being, and I have that in common with all other human beings. Next I'm a woman and have that in common with all women, and next, I love a woman, and so I'm a lesbian, but that's the order, the human being comes first and she shut up and we had a good time, but I think we forget these. We see ourselves as these little things rather than the large.

1:29:33.3 CL: Yeah, we're set. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us or anything we didn't talk about that, or anything you wanna go back to?

1:29:44.2 MM: I think we've done a good job.

1:29:48.9 DW: You brought the picture, perhaps you could share that with us?

1:29:55.4 MM: I wanted to share this picture of-- Barbara and I were both early forties at this point, and I had this blown up to use at her memorial service along with a few others, just showing our lives and what we were up to, and, so.

1:30:12.1 CL: What's the story behind that photo?

1:30:17.4 MM: We were at her friend's house, I think Barbara... Barbara was a minister, and so she was, had the ability to marry people, and even though it may not have been recognized by the state, and so we were there with that, so that we were kind of dressed up. This is styling for the times, but I don't always stay in styling with times, but this is good. I told you when I took this over to ASAP Graphics, to have it blown up, this young guy said, I have to have this jacket, and I said, Oh my gosh, this jacket is long gone. But anyway, he was sweet.

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1:30:54.9 CL: Well, thanks so much for joining us today. Carol, you were able to make this happen.

1:31:00.7 MM: Yeah, thank you. Good questions.