

# **TIBBEN Transcript**

## **Interview With Rick Tibben**

### **CCQAP**

**Narrator:** Rick Tibben [RT]

**Interviewers:** Dylan Michael Canterbury Baker [DMCB], Steven Ruszczycky [SR] and David Weisman [DW]

**Interview Date:** June 27, 2021

**Location:** The home of Rick Tibben, Nipomo CA

**Length:** Approximately 1 hour, 26 minutes. Interview starts at 0:10.

**Transcript prepared by:** Dylan Michael Canterbury Baker

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[00:00:09] Interviewer Dylan Michael Canterbury Baker: We're here today on the, June 27th, 2021, and we're interviewing Rick Tibben. Thank you very much for letting us interview you.

[00:00:20] Narrator Rick Tibben: You're welcome.

[00:00:22] DMCB: And to start things off, can you tell me about where you're from and how you grew up.

[00:00:27] RT: What I like to say I was born on the sand. Actually, I almost was right across the beach from Hermosa Beach, California, and they didn't, I guess they didn't have a whole lot of hospitals back then, so some of the homes were made maternity homes, and that's where I was born and raised at the beach almost all my life. Back then, Redondo Beach, you could throw a rock as far as you could and you couldn't hit your neighbor's house, much different now, but it was a lot of fun growing up because you could run around in the fields and just have a ball. And I remember one time, I was born with misshapen feet. And so they put casts on my feet to straighten my feet, and I came in one time and all these Fox tails were in my cast, and my mother said You gotta pick all those out before you come in. So it was different back then because of all the fields, um I don't know anything about being gay way back then in the 40s and even the 50s, because you didn't talk about it. Nobody talked about it back then.

[00:01:35] RT: A matter of fact, I don't think parents really talked to their kids about sex, it was sort of such a puritanical time, I guess, in our history.

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[00:01:46] DMCB: When were you a child growing up, like exactly, mid-50s here when exactly were you born.

[01:53.06] RT: Ya well I was born in 43. So, you know, I was a mid Word War II baby and my dad was off fighting the war, so it was just my mom and my older brother, and then I had another brother come about a year and a half later, so.

[00:02:15] DMCB: Do you think just growing up in a more like open or physically open and also growing up in a lovely place like California, essentially made you also think that or did it give you more of an open impression of this area or what kind of impression did California have on you as a kid?

[00:02:38] RT: Well, I learned to hate development because they ruined the beach communities that I lived in by building these monstrosity right on the beach, and they tear down these lovely The old homes and put up these monstrosity, and so I kept moving to places where that wasn't happening, but I kept getting kicked out, if you will, so I ended up here in Nipomo, and I have my little over an acre here, so I'm kind of away from neighbors and whatever.

[00:03:09] DMCB: And getting back to your childhood, what kind of religious background you come from, it any, and did that affect you as a kid.

[00:03:16] RT: Oh yeah my grandmother was insistent and she was hyper-religious, she insisted that we go to church and be part of the Nazarene Church, which back then was a very holy roller,

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I mean they even spoken tongues, which I'll never understand, but Yeah, and they had rules. You couldn't go to movies. You couldn't go to dances, there's a lot of stuff I missed out on just because of religion.

[00:03:46] DMCB: So getting a little further in your time, how did you get sent to Vietnam? How did that come about?

[00:03:54] RT: I was at UCLA at the time, I was in a fraternity, a religious fraternity by the way, but it was a safe place to be and um they were on trimesters. The economic downturn at the time cost me my job during the summer, my construction job, so I had to stay out for one trimester and I don't know how the heck they found out about it, but I got drafted. So

[00:04:23] DMCB: So when you were in the military, did you see anything like gay at all, was there any talking of it 'cause I think there'd have to be some gay people getting drafted was that.

[00:04:33] RT: The only thing I remember gay was one of the kids, and he was very cute, by the way, his name was Paul and had gotten caught, I think in a motel, and he got 86d, and then it was the big talk of the town after that, so I realized even though I wasn't sure that I was gay at the time, I realize you keep your mouth shut about that kind of stuff, and I remember the less than macho guys, if you will, they were getting abused by guys trying to see if they could score and it was really awful and I hated that, but because they knew better than to screw with me, but.

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[00:05:25] David Weisman: I'm curious about that, they knew better to screw with you, so how had you developed yourself into at that time and creating that persona because they weren't screwing with the less than the macho guys. You care to share a little about what kind of a person you develop into through your college, and by the time the military service came about.

[00:05:47] RT: Well I started playing Little League at five years old, with the assistance of my dad, but I wanted to anyway, and so I grew up through Little League and I grew up through Pony League and then Babe Ruth league, matter of fact that bat and glove over there is from my Babe Ruth days, where I hit a 455 foot home run. And um of course, I was a four-sport letterman in high school, I wrestled in college, so it was just someone you didn't mess with because of that background, and I'm a very independent person. I don't like people to tell me what to do.

[00:06:31] DMCB: Okay, when you got back to California, what was the feel? I know automatically, most people are not gonna like you 'cause you're a Vietnam veteran, but also essentially a feel towards gay people when you got back to California.

[00:06:46] RT: Yeah, when I came back, it was April of Late April of 1968. And I realized very quickly that you're not popular if you're a Vietnam veteran because you're a baby killer. So I hid that, I didn't want anybody to know that, and I wasn't welcome back anyway by anybody, not even my family, and then by that time I was, I knew I was gay, 'cause I had my first gay experience in the military, because it seems like people pick on military guys as somebody to score with. I think the Flower Power thing was coming about, and so it was all peace and love, and gays were a little bit more welcome, but still it was a very, very hard time for gay people.

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Um, I remember an incident at the black cat, I only was told about that 'cause I was in Vietnam at the time, and then later there was an incident at the patch, and it was either Wilmington, San Pedro, and both of those were where the police where hassling has the bars, and the customers decided to reject that, and then of course, in 69 there was stone wall, which precipitated a lot of things going on from their positive for gay people, and some not so positive, but.

[00:08:25] DMCB: If you don't mind me asking to what we're the events in your life that facilitated the realization that you're gay?

[00:08:35] RT: I would say the one that when I came home from Vietnam, I decided man, I am so glad to be home, I bought a station wagon, and do they even have those anymore? And I decided to tour the country, so I started down South through Texas and whatever ended up, and I made a lot of side trips, but I ended up in New Orleans and I saw this young man there, and somehow we went to a motel and hooked up I don't do that kind of stuff. So that was weird, especially since I wasn't really sure, but I realized after that that even though I've been with the girls this is really me. And if I'm not me, I'm gonna kill me. So I have to be me, and so no one's gonna tell me that there's something wrong with me for being gay, and that's when I started my activism and started writing letters to the editor about anti-gay legislation that would come up in California and yeah, so.

[00:09:42] DMCB: What kind of anti-gay legislation, 'cause I think other than more major things like The Briggs Initiative, most people aren't too acquainted with the myriad of anti-gay legislation, that has existed in the state.

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[00:09:55] RT: You know, that was so long ago. I don't know that I could really answer that question. All I know is, I remember there would be Senate bills or whatever that would come up and it would be like this maybe discrimination and housing or anything like that, and I would write a letter to the editor, tell him where they were wrong, and also to the Congress people.

[00:10:23] DMCB: After your trip around the nation, you, you either went back to LA or OC? right.

[00:10:31] RT: "RT" Well what happened was, my job was in Orange County, so I moved to a duplex in Orange County, and that's where I had my first partner, and some funny stories about that. I was outside gardening one time, and I saw the young man across the street looking under his legs at me and I'm going, What was he doing? It turns out he was gay. It turns out the neighbor next door was gay, and I went, Oh my god, they're everywhere. So a matter of fact, one time we caught the guy next door peaking in our window, and he wanted to see which one was Mary or no, what did he say? He didn't use the word Mary, he's another woman's name, and I said I think it's Mary but Chris, stay off my property.

[00:11:19] DMCB: So you're talking about how there are a lot of gay people in Orange County, but what was the overall feel towards gay people in Orange County, considering it's considered one of the more religiously active parts of coastal California.

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[00:11:36] RT: Ya it was extremely conservative at the time, and I'm sure there were enclaves, matter-effect I found one later when they moved to Huntington Beach, but they were. as you well know, with conservatives, they're very much against gay people, especially because a lot of them are hyper-religious and religion as was treated almost actually like it's a sin, even though the Bible never says anywhere in the original Bible that is a sin, but that's what they say. When they moved to Huntington Beach in 77, I was amazed how many gay people were right near me.

[00:12:26] DMCB: So that sounds like a fun place to be living.

[00:12:30] RT: It was cool and the neighbors were really cool you know, matter of fact, my neighbor when there was a kid down the street, he was 18, he apparently, I was a talk of Orange County at the time of City of Orange, where he lived in the duplex, and he wanted to know what it was all about, so I should have some pictures or whatever. He went back and told his mother, and I'm going oh God, you know, he was legally, we didn't do anything, but I guess she made a big stink and then my neighbor in the duplex, who actually owned the duplex came to my rescue, and so did a couple of other people in neighborhoods. So that was really cool. I thought that was really cool that they stood up for me, you know what.

[00:13:17] DMCB: What made you wanna get involved in activism or what drove you to get involved with it in the California as a whole, but also in your particular region?

[00:13:29] RT: Well, like I told you, I don't like people who tell me what to do, and if you're telling me I'm a bad person, you're totally wrong, and I'm gonna, I'm gonna fight you tooth and



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nail on that, so when we started some of the organizations, I was a little bit in the background because you could still be fired and you could still be kicked out of your rental unit, so I was very careful about not coming out, out but I did a lot of things a little more covertly if you will.

[00:14:07] DMCB: Do you know when essentially those laws were repealed regarding, you can just get rid of a gay person, evict or fire, or was that. I think people would be involved with that, 'cause it's a pretty visible discriminatory law.

[00:14:27] RT: I don't know that I can answer that exactly, but I know, I think it was 1973, early 74, that they took homosexuality off of the mental illness list, and I think that helped a lot, and you know it was just a struggle for years. I don't know exactly when. I do know that LA was a little more liberal about their um. The way they looked at gay people, as well as San Francisco, but other parts of the state. It was just localized either acceptance or non-acceptance.

[00:15:15] DMCB: In the 70s, in the LA and Orange County areas, we're there besides like hole in the wall style bars, we're there spaces for LGBTQ people, or what was the scene of spaces for people like in that time?

[00:15:32] RT: Well, early on, the only thing they had were the gay bars, some of these organizations never existed, like the gay softball leagues, and like some of the stuff I did with the challenge in 1981-83, which was a big thing in Orange County, and it was basically patterned off of the obstacle course for the stars that you saw on TV. So I made all the props and everything,

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and we went to all the bars, invited people to come and participate, and I think in 83, we had 1200 people there at the Orange County Fair Grounds at the place where we held the event.

[00:16:21] DMCB: Speaking of softball, could you tell us a bit about the LA gay softball league? And how all that got started?

[00:16:32] RT: Well it was in the 70s. I know that I know that, 'cause when I was looking through stuff, I found an indication that I won the Golden Gloves Award in the Seattle tournament in 1979. But we were doing it before then, I think probably they didn't start until the mid-70s, something like that. And I originally was part of the LA league. I was in the Hayloft, which was a bar that sponsored our team, and then later I got tired of going to LA all the time, and we started the Orange County Long Beach League, and the Silver Fox was our sponsor. And that guy had a big ego, he like trophies on his bar, so he would send us throughout the United States, we ended up in, like I said, Seattle and Milwaukee and Houston, and all over the place on the weekends playing soft ball tournament, we bring back trophies for his bar. Funny thing though is we were, there was quite a number of gay teams, but we wanted to get a team together on Tuesday nights for practice, and so we joined the LA straight LA leagues, and we just creamed those guys and you know what, the guys weren't too bad, but their wives were awful, in the stands, 'cause they realized that they were getting beat by gay guys, I had the same effect with the Sheriff's Department, they wouldn't place anymore, 'cause we would beat them.

[00:18:18] RT: So that was kind of interesting. But we just had a ball. This is one of my team, This is a silver fox team, and I don't know if you can see it, but this is me, and that really cute

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guy below me when I have my hand on, That's my late partner, Ricky Valdez. So a matter of fact, if you look at this, I think 11 of those guys came down with AIDS and passed away, really sad, as was a horrible part of my growing up gay.

[00:18:56] DW: So before we get to that part, while we're still on the baseball thing, you said I didn't realize they flew you to these other cities, they payed for the plane tickets and everything?

[00:19:07] RT: No, but they did arrange for housing, usually, usually the housing was with some of the gay people that were in the community, like when I went to the Gay Games, I would stay with people's houses that house, I think we would overwhelm the hotels and motels there, but... Yeah.

[00:19:29] DW: And so my follow-up question would be, some of those cities sound like they're in the Midwest, they're in the rustbelt. How did you find the attitudes, the people in the stands, you're coming from your little enclave of large county to these other sometimes more... Less open places, I imagine at the time. What type of reactions did you get? If any, in these other cities.

[00:19:54] RT: I don't ever remember having any problems mainly because I don't think the community knew what was going on, it wasn't advertised, other than in gay publication. So I remember there was a kid that was in Milwaukee that was just all inspired by us playing there and ended up giving him my hat and he was just thrilled, so although if his parents ever knew

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what the hat was, they might not be so thrilled, but no, we didn't have any problems that I ever encountered.

[00:20:34] DMCB: So speaking of gay publications, can you tell us a bit about what essentially like the gay public, I guess, books, magazines, that sort of thing was going on in the later 70s and 80s.

[00:20:50] RT: Well, actually, I started taking the *Advocate* in, I think, 1969. I had about 25 years worth of the advocate that I gave to the Gay Community Center in Orange County, so I could do historical research later. And I went back and they were all gone. But one of the very first issues had the actor Don Johnson in there, and he was naked and prone, and he got the “most beautiful butt” award, I think, or something like that. I wish I still had that particular one, but later, I don't remember exactly when it started, it was in the mid-70s maybe, that they had the *Orange County/Long Beach Blade*, which was like the *Advocate*, which is kind of a news magazine... Not a pornographic magazine. And so I had the entire collection of that 280 copies, and I gave that collection to the special library at UC Santa Barbara, but there were a number of other magazines that were... Well, there were pornographic magazines too, but there were also some magazines like the ones I have here, which if we get into the Gay Games one.

[00:22:11] DMCB: We're gonna get to that in a minute, getting back to the sports, could you also tell us a bit about... I know, I think we can't legally call it gay Olympics, I know it got taken out, Can you tell us about the Gay Games?

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[00:22:27] RT: Yeah the first game games is 1982, and because I was a wrestler in high school and college, I decided to wrestle. And I think I was 38 at the time, and I was one big bruise though, oh my God, I don't think I bruised like that when I was a kid, but I did pretty well, I was the only one, the entire wrestling program at the time there in the Wrestle-Off, that did a grand amplitude, and I didn't even know I did it because I wasn't familiar with that style of wrestling, I did collegiate style, and they're doing freestyle, so that's what cost me probably... You know, doing better, I think I came in fourth place.

[00:23:19] DMCB: When did the first Gay Games happen? In California?

[00:23:25] RT: Yeah, I was in California. Yeah, it was San Francisco in 1982, and I remember Tina Turner was the premier entertainer there, and they were started by a couple of people, but Dr. Tom Waddell was the mean when he was a real Olympic decathlete. So it had some real, real Olympic background and why they didn't allow us to use the word Olympics, I don't know, other than their own... Thinking about gays, I guess.

[00:24:09] DMCB: There is even a dog Olympics. Now do you think the Gay Games also created a larger awareness for gay people essentially throughout the country, around the world, actually, as

[00:24:21] RT: Around the world, actually, as a matter of fact, I think in 1986, the second Gay Games where I did track and field, and won some metals... I think there were about 15,000 participants, which was more than the real Olympics, so that was eye-opening to people and we

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set world records, so to say that gay people can't be athletic is totally stupid. I don't know if you wanna see some of this, but that would be wonderful. This is a friend of mine, his name is Paul, he was from New Zealand, and he was a shot putter in 1986, and I thought he was so cool with all of his tattoos and whatever... And he was a very nice looking guy. So this is *Pink Triangle Magazine* from New Zealand, and I found a copy of this with him on the front, so I thought that was pretty cool. And let's see, this is the official program for the 1986 Gay Games I keep trying to say Olympics, but Gay Games can't say Olympics, but this... I was in two magazines after the 82 Olympics that showed me wrestling. See if I can find it here. But these were not pornographic magazines, but they did show naked guys.

[00:26:11] RT: But I see that's a whole page of me, right here where my finger is, and I was wrestling a 19-year-old kid called named Jay, I remember he was half my age, and he beat me and then same thing, and that was *In Touch* magazine. This is *Blue Boy* magazine, and the same thing, they had a picture of me wrestling J right there on the top, and one of those shots ended up being the poster, that's the 1982 game Gay Games and being the poster for the 1986 Gay Games. And when my partner and I, he was playing racket ball and I was doing track and field, we were walking along and here was this big huge poster advertising the 86 Gay Games, and I did a double take and found out that was me wrestling with the wrestling picture there.

[00:27:17] DMCB: So did you know if you were in any of the magazines at all?

[00:27:21] RT: I did not, I actually learned that from a co-worker and he said, Were you in... I think he said, Were you in Blue Boy? I said, What? He wasn't gay, but I don't know why he

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would read those magazines, but I went and bought the copy and I wanna god yeah, I am. So this is a story of the Gay Games, one of the magazines they put out think that's Richard, he was a really good swimmer. On the LA swim team at that time.

[00:28:09] DMCB: I actually wanted to ask you something in regards to the Briggs Initiative, what kind of response, how are the responses for average Californian gay people, gay groups did this... I mean, it seems to me that it brought to gay people to the forefront both negatively, but what was the response is to all this in your neck of the woods.

[00:28:39] RT: Well, of course, we had to change a lot of minds to get it defeated.

[00:28:46] DW: For an audience that may not be, Younger people, maybe give a little background on what the actual initiative was. Thank you so much.

[00:28:55] RT Well, basically, the Briggs Initiative was going to fire all gay teachers and the teachers and workers in the school that supported them, and actually, it had a lot of good traction at first, but John Briggs, in my opinion, was kind of an idiot, he just got nailed to the wall, in so many of those interviews to the point he kept changing what he was saying about the initiative, umm, fortunately in 1977 in San Francisco, Harvey Milk was the first elected official that was an out-gay person in the country, he stood up against the Briggs Initiative, as well as a number of other people, and through a grass roots campaign, we soundly defeated it and actually, Governor Reagan, Ronald Reagan spoke against it too, so we had a lot of traction at first, it just totally went off the rails and was very handily defeated.

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[00:30:05] DMCB: Did it also essentially facilitate more awareness for average people that, Hey, there are a lot of gay people, our friends, our neighbors, our fellow Californians, our fellow Americans.

[00:30:16] RT: A lot of people came out because of that, actually, I did find my No on six button. I don't know if you can see that, but I barely apparently they weren't too proud. Does a tiny little button. But got the point across.

[00:30:33] DMCB: So when do you think also, essentially like more acceptance for gay people in California or the shift for the positive?

[00:30:46] RT: Well, I think it started with the flower power thing in the late 60s through the 70s, because it's all about peace and love, and it was also against the Vietnam War, but people started coming together and people were just more accepting of one another in... Of course, the older people still had their deals, but I think that it was a youth movement, if you will, that... That's still going on today, because I think the youth of today, and not that long ago, we're much more accepting of gay people then back in the time I grew up, which you didn't even talk about it, then.

[00:31:31] DMCB: Another thing I wanted to ask you that many of the people we have interviewed have brought up is, Are you acquainted with the Metropolitan Community Church at all, or did you ever hear about it when you were in Orange County or LA?



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[00:31:45] RT: I know actually Troy Perry. So he was born to do that by the way, he's a real hellfire and brimstone preacher, but it started. I don't remember exactly when it started, I remember it was near LA, and they were they were having meetings in his home, I think it was like 1970 or something, and then they outgrew that very quickly, and so they rented a place, or I don't know if they rented it, but they got a place, and the neighbors didn't want all those gay people around, so they were kicked out of that place as I recall, and then they finally, I think in 1971 got their own first building, and unfortunately in 73 they were burned out. But yeah, it was a church that started very simply and then just grew throughout the nation, a matter of fact, we had one here in Santa Maria Reverend Don Neil was our pastor here locally, until he passed away, and the church just went defunct after that, our local church.

[00:33:02] DMCB: Another thing I wanted to ask you is, are you familiar with the Orange Gay Community Center? Or not familiar, but were you involved with that?

[00:33:16] RT: I helped start it, Matter of fact, that's what that scrapbook is, there is all of the original by-laws and everything else from 1979. Of course, I'm also responsible for getting burned out, what happened was most of the membership wanted us to put up a sign, and we were on an old real estate property that... That was a real estate office. And they wanted to put up a sign. So I said, Okay, I'll make up a sign, there was a huge sign board in the front, and so I made a sign that said Gay Community Center of Orange County and fitted it into the frame of the sign board and... Boy, wrong thing to do in Orange County at that time. That was 1981 or 82 somewhere in Garden Grove It was on Euclid and Lamson, the building. there were dead animal

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parts thrown on our porch, they tried to burn us out and failed, they shot through the windows, and honestly, the sheriff's department and the Garden Grove police did absolutely nothing, and finally one time they succeeded in burning place, not completely down and burned us out, and it was years before the new building would ever put up a sign indicating that it was the Gay Community Center of Orange County.

[00:34:52] DMCB: That also connects recently, the Gala Pride and Diversity Center sign was stolen.

[00:34:59] RT: Yeah Still going on. Well I was part of the group that was because of my background in psychology, I was doing under the auspices of Gary Lane, who was licensed, I don't know if he was a psychologist or a marriage and family counselor, but anyway, I was doing hotline calls and I was doing peer calls where people would actually come in, but basically it was a place for refuge, it was a place where meetings, it was a place to get information and just like PFLAG was a place for information and advocacy.

[00:35:45] DW: I heard you mentioned psychology in your background, I don't think we got into your specialization, would you mind sharing what was your professional career and what did you, what did you settle?

[00:35:56] RT: Well, I have degrees from UCLA and psychology and biological sciences. I have a degree in physical education from Cal State Fullerton, and I have degrees in Occupational Safety and Health from Orange Coast College and UCI. And my profession was as a safety

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manager and I returned as a safety manager for the City of Los Angeles, and then after that, I worked with the California at Department of Health Services, and I was investigating fatalities only fatalities still, I couldn't take that anymore or that... Kind of bizarre.

[00:36:44] DMCB: The next question I had for you What was it like being an employee of LA County. Did they accept gay employees, did they fire them? What was the field towards gay government employees there.

[00:36:59] RT: Well it was LA city I don't remember anybody coming out, if you will, it was still pretty hidden 'cause I started in 1964 and retired in 95, but we did start a gay group, oh boy, I'm trying to think of what the deep might have been when we started to gain support in the Department of Water Power, which was the agency that I worked in with LA city, maybe in the mid-80s when we finally got brave enough and the Assistant General Manager, he came to our meeting one time and he was amazed by all of the managers that were there, they were doing good jobs for him, so after that we actually got domestic partnership and we got, We were able to put our partners on our insurance, so I made a huge difference.

[00:38:03] DMCB: How did that come about, with the domestic partnerships and being able to list your partner on insurance.

[00:38:09] RT: It's just that as we got together as a group and we had some pretty high level managers, we just started pressuring them and they caved.

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[00:38:22] DMCB: It's very interesting. We've interviewed a few other people, have been county employees of California counties and kind of a mix for acceptance and whatnot. Let's see. So another number of the things I wanted to ask you is. When you were in LA, or Orange County or either part. You were kind of a bit of a place that a lot of people viewed as a refuge or a place you go to if you're gay, did you experience a lot of people from the Midwest, Dixie, and the Northeast. Did you have that where you were in, or was it more so just California-based people?

[00:39:03] RT: Were a lot of people I think most of the people in California, from some place else. I worked in a small power station in Hollywood on Hawthorn Avenue or Street right below Hollywood Boulevard, and I've discovered it was one block from where the kids hustled, and there were kids out there as young as 12 years old, and... Because they could see through the gate door where I worked, and it was like Frankenstein's place, 'cause it was built in the 1920s, and I talked to a lot of the kids that were gay and not gay But they would come to Hollywood and think that because they were very popular where they came from, or they came out and things weren't good for them and where they were, and they would come to LA and they would unfortunately end up on the street hustling. And I was able to send a few of them back and I said, I'll tell you what, I won't give you money, but I'll take you to the airport and buy you a ticket and see that you get back home and get off the street, 'cause there was no place back then, like now, in LA for those kids to go, but unfortunately, most of them wouldn't go back as it was so bad for them there.

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[00:40:25] DMCB: Something else I wanted to ask you was is in our community, a big problem tends to be drugs and alcohol, connected to depression, non-acceptance, was that a big problem in your life or people you knew?

[00:40:42] RT: No, Some of my family has issues with alcohol and drugs, but I never did I know gay people who did. As a matter of fact, there was a doctor named Max Schneider in Orange County that started an organization for people who were... I don't know if it was drugs, but at least it was alcohol, and I didn't look at it as a disease, and I popped off to him one time about, you know, they just need to stop that, and he got on my case about how it's an actual disease that needs treatment and I got a lesson in that.

[00:41:30] DMCB: I was wondering too, if you could tell us a bit about what Jack and Jills was and what y'all did.

[00:41:37] RT: Jacks and Jills was an organization of gays lesbians that basically, it was a social group, but one of the things we did, is we did events to raise money, and that money would go to charity. Eventually, I think, because these were all straight charities that some of us got a little bit irritated. That the straight charities don't realize this is a gay Money, they're accepting. And I think that was part of the problems and why it broke up, but one of the things we did was... Started in 1981 was what I spoke about earlier. was the Jacks and Jills did was The Challenge, and that wait jacket back, there is the challenge jacket, and there's a couple of medals that I won, but it was like an obstacle course type of thing with running, whatever I made... Big, huge things they had to claim over and all that stuff I made in my garage. I remember the one

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mistake I made though is I made sleds that they could pull and then turn around and somebody else would pull back, they pull the ropes right off of them, so we had to quit that particular event, but they had a lot of fun.

[00:43:04] RT: And there were big crowds from the bars every year, so when I'm surprised he let us do it at Orange County Fair Grounds, but they did.

[00:43:16] DMCB: So going back to the 80s in LA, what was the AIDS crises like In both LA and Orange County.

[00:43:27] RT: Well, of course, at first there was a disbelief that anything like that could happen to the gay community, but it became apparent that it was really a serious problem and... I lost a lot of my friends to the AIDS crisis. It was just so unfair and I don't think kids nowadays realize how bad it was, but I helped with, oh God what was the name of that place, Annie's House in Found Valley, which was right next to where I lived in Huntington Beach. And it was a place where people with AIDS came to be, and I helped support that. We did a food pantry, and a friend of mine, Merv Jacka was in charge of the food pantry for the AIDS Services Network, I think it was called... I think that was what the name was, but they established that in the 80s at some point, I'm not sure when in Orange County to help with those who were ill and to also do education about what to do and what not to do. But like I said, I think 11 people on my old softball team passed away because of AIDS.

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[00:45:04] DMCB: Yeah, how did most people cope with the realities of it. We're just knowing that it was out there.

[00:45:16] RT: I don't think even I knew the reality of it until one day they decided to bring a big part of the quilt... Well, actually it wasn't a big part to Cal State University, Fullerton, and then went out to look at it, and I ended up with tears in my eyes because there were people on there that I knew that I did not know passed away, a matter of fact, one person that I had dated for a year, he was just such an amazing human being, uh, I learned that he passed away from aids well... From the complications of AIDS, nobody passes away from AIDS, they pass away from the optimistic diseases associated to that, but yeah, that was... I broke down and cried because that was... He didn't deserve that. He was amazing human being that helped me with all kinds of stuff. One day when I bought my new home and Fullerton across from the university, because I was working in LA and going to school at Fullerton, I needed to be close to something, so I got a new home that had just been built and we were doing some landscaping, and I figured out mathematically what I needed to do the landscaping, and I said, I need 30 yards of soil.

[00:46:39] RT: I had no idea how much 30 yards was. Saturday morning, three dump trucks come and pile these mountains in my driveway, a three-car driveway, and he and I worked all day and spread that all out and it was perfect. That's the kind of guy he was.

[00:46:56] DMCB: And for those who are not acquainted it, could you tell us a bit about what the AIDS Quilt was and what it meant?

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[00:47:04] RT: Oh God, I don't remember if it was Cleave or somebody else that started the AIDS Quilt that... It was a Memorial to, It was a panel, I think they were 3 x 6 or 4 x 6. There were specifications you had to meet, that they were panels that were made to memorialize somebody who had passed away of AIDS. And it just grew and grew and grew. And I remember one time I saw the pictures, I wasn't there in Washington DC, they had the entire quilt there, and you couldn't even see the end of it. It was so large. It was amazing.

[00:47:54] DMCB: Now, as the 80s went on and you were in LA, what made you start... What made you learn about the Central Coast area? How did you come to beautiful, How did you come to this beautiful part of the state?

[00:48:11] RT: Well, my relatives and my two brothers and my mom were all up here already, my dad had already passed away, and when Huntington Beach got so overbuilt, I couldn't even get out of my alley, all the garages were on allies, 'cause of the traffic, I said I can't take this anymore. And the other thing was, my partner had something called Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura which was a type of blood cancer, and finally got him cured that, and so I said, You know, it's about time to move, and so we moved up here and... Actually, I found this house the day that he came on the market, and at that time things were going really quickly, and it was 1999, and so they bought it. And I called him and he said babe, we have a new home. I know you're gonna like it. And when we finally got up here, we didn't do anything really gay, we just... We're having a great time planting flowers and just going every place and exploring this area, which is a magnificent area. And he just said, You know, you're... Since you're retired



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and he came up here like a different person, it was always like to be in a more open place, I could never live in a city...

[00:49:40] RT: It's just like New York City, just I've been there but I could never live there.

[00:49:47] Steven Ruszczycky: Rick you said your partner's name was Ricky I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about him, maybe how you two met?

[00:50:04] RT: Well, Ricky Valdez and I met when, as I mentioned, we were doing... We were in the straight league and we had some combined people from other Gay league softball teams, and one time after the game, we all went out to a picnic bench and everybody was sitting on the bench and on the top of the table, and he was the last one to show up. And he said, I don't have any place to sit and they said, You could sit on my lap. And he did, and that's how we met, and we were together for 20 years.

[00:50:45] DMCB: When you were looking at leaving the hustle and bustle of LA, OC did you know if there was any kind of gay culture places in this area at all or?

[00:51:00] RT: I did not. I know there was a bar before I came, but it was gone, people told me about it, but when I came here, and like I said, my partner and he only lasted seven months before he had a heart attack and died, what they put him through with the cancer just ruined his body, and I was really sad, and there was just lots of lingering problems, so we didn't really do much gay, and when I finally started coming around in this area, I realized that gayness, if you

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will, is hidden here, it's not really that out in the openness, as I was used to. And I do know that we had like a gay men's group that met, met every Wednesday night originally at Denny's restaurant in Santa Maria, and then that kind of went away and we started having... Right now, we have men's dinner group, the first Wednesday of every month, and different restaurants here locally, and I remember I started a bowling league, a gay bowling league Saturday morning at Rancho Bowl in Santa Maria at 10 o'clock in the morning at and that started off really good, but then people kinda gave up on it. And then Covid just ruined it, they closed down for so long, but it was kind of hidden, you just had to meet people here and there, I tried to start some athletic stuff and it just didn't work out here.

[00:52:53] DMCB: I was wondering too, after the loss of your partner, what gave you the strength to go on, 'cause that's a colossal loss to anybody.

[00:53:03] RT: Well, it took a while, but I think I buried myself in work. And I got involved in PFLAG very heavily. And became a member of GALA. I wasn't real involved with GALA. I was the central coast coordinator for the gay car club, Great Autos of Yesteryear. And so I kept myself real busy and that was... I think that's how I dealt with it. And of course, if you see my property here, and if you want to, you can see it later, but it's a full-time job, 'cause I give... Almost all of the produce here goes to the food bank about 3000 pounds a year, and it's all organic. So I think I just buried myself in work, that's how, how I dealt with it, and I think people do that.

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e.g [00:54:03] DW: Just a quick question, because I'm having to deal with my recently widowed straight Father, I'm wondering, is there a scarcity of elder and widower support groups specifically for the LGBT community, but did you find there was such a one or is it all those activities mainstream together

[00:54:25] RT: There's none that I even know of now. There might be, but I'm not aware of it. So my sister was my rock, actually, but she's passed away since as well as to two of my brothers, so just me and my very youngest brother are left, so we better get this on record before I go.

[00:54:51] DMCB: So I wanted to ask you, how did you originally get involved in PFLAG, what is it, and what kind of things were y'all doing?

[00:55:03] RT: Well, the PFLAG actually started in 1977, I believe, and that's about the time that they started it Orange County, actually, maybe a little later, and they were an advocacy and education group mainly, and they would advocate for their gay sons and daughters I don't even think the LGBT acronym was even around at that time, but it was started by a lady, I think in New York, if I'm not mistaken, who wanted to start something positive for her son who was getting harassed. And then it just kind of spread throughout the country. I got involved actually in the late 70s in Orange County when we were going to the various high schools, and junior high schools, and as part of a speaker's bureau. And then when I moved up here, after I lost my partner, I realized that there was a Central Coast. This is actually an original flyer for the Central Coast chapter of PFLAG, Parents Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, that was the original name, and it says, I'll say what it says, it says, support to cope with the adverse society,

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education to enlighten and ill informed public and advocacy to in discrimination and secure equal rights.

[00:56:46] RT: That was their national and our Central Coast purpose. And one of the things we did there was probably the best thing we did was to have a booth at Farmer's Market, we also had a booth at Pride. I tell you a story about that later, but our booth, that farmers market, we would set up every Thursday night, and then we would sell buttons to help fund the booth, and we'd give away all kinds of different material, and I kept making this big huge folder of resources, so if anybody needed a resource I could go to this folder and tell them, like The Trevor Project, if there was a suicide situation or something like that, and I did that with Dr. Hervey, who was, helped start PFLAG with his wife, Rachel Hervey, and for their son Robin. And then I think I did that for about six years, and I actually bought a minivan to haul all the equipment back and forth every Thursday, so I kept it all in the back, so we didn't have to hassle with it, and then we would set it up there and then I tear it down and take it back home, but I met people from all over the world and they would tell us about how horrible it is in their country with gay rights.

[00:58:13] RT: So it was kind of eye-opening, but it was also a lot of fun to do that, but I just. Dr. Hervey, he got really bad, he was a World War II vet. So he was failing and he passed away since, I think last year, and I just, I got a little tired of it myself, 'cause it was a lot of work every week for more than six years, and nobody else wanted to do it, so.

[00:58:48] DMCB: I was wondering to what was... Like the local response to y'all being at the farmers market. Was it more positive or Negative?

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[00:58:55] RT: It was great. I do remember one time ever that somebody was so adamant about us being there that we had to call the Downtown Association, they had to have him escorted out other than that it was... We just didn't have problems, we had people coming up from Cal Poly all the time to tell us... How glad we were there? I don't know if you know what Grizzly Academy is, it's about for kids who are troubled kids, if you will, and they would come up and thank us 'cause a lot of those people were gay and lesbian I guess, so yeah.

[00:59:34] DMCB: I was wondering, do you know how PFLAG got started on the Central Coast?

[00:59:42] RT: I do not, I would have to ask Robin because Rachel and Bob Harvey are both passed away in the last year or so... I don't know when I got started, I know we were at the church on Foothill to begin with, Universal Unitarian Church, I believe it was. And that's where we met. And for our monthly meetings, but how I got started there, I don't know.

[01:00:14] DMCB: I was wondering what other LGBTQ groups or organizations were you getting involved with and volunteering at in the area?

[01:00:28] RT: Well, I wasn't doing a whole lot because I was working with kids. This is my 49th year of being a Big Brother. I also volunteered working in the before and after school programs here with hundreds of kids trying to help them with their homework and everything else that's involved in a before and after school program, so I was really busy, but I did become a

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member of GALA and did some picnics and that kind of stuff with Gala. It was a Central Coast coordinator for the gay car club. So we would have our monthly, not during the winter time, but during the summer, spring, summer and fall, we would do meets where we would go to car shows or we do the vintage trailer rally at Pismo Beach when they have it there and stuff like that. What else? PFLAG, of course I think that's about it.

[01:01:33] DW: I'm intrigued by the Big Brother's thing, because you hear stuff about activities that come out of the Salvation Army, etcetera, they're these religious and secular groups, sort of like the way gay men can donate blood, I'd always assumed that an organization like The Big Brothers or Sisters might have issues with that was being gay or LGBTQ ever a concern for an organization like Big Brothers or the parents might have concerns. We even know, it's an issue with adoption today, let alone a surrogate parenting. Were those ever concerns during your experience with big brothers and sisters, and you can answer to Dylan.

[01:02:13] RT: It might not have been. But I don't know, in Orange County where I started, I didn't come out in Orange County, so that wasn't a problem. But when I came up here and started with Big Brothers here, I told him I was gay, and they had no problem with that whatsoever, so I was really happy to learn that gay people were as welcome as anybody in the Big Brother Big Sister Organization in San Luis Obispo

[01:02:48] DMCB: Could you also talk a wee bit about the gay car club, you referenced a wee bit earlier.

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[01:02:55] RT: Yeah actually the Great Autos of Yesteryear get it G.A.Y, Great Autos of Yesteryear. They are a really large club, I know we had over a thousand members at one time, and it's a love of classic cars, and we do a lot of car shows, a lot of events... We've had concourse car shows at the Peterson Auto Museum in LA. A lot of members have moved to Palm Springs, I don't know why, I couldn't take the heat myself, but there's a big portion of the LA Great Autos in Palm Springs now, so it's like two big places for the club. We are very small here, the Central Coast has maybe 12 member or something like that. But also some of them are members of the Free Wheelers, which is the gay car club in San Francisco. And we have gay car clubs throughout. Ethel Forever is in Seattle. What are some of the other ones, escapes my memory right now, but they're all throughout the country, but the one that started it was in LA, and I think it's also still the biggest by far. And we just go out and enjoy our love of cars by having all these events and ya know.

[01:04:35] DW: I'm just curious, I know there's low rider clubs, there's truck enthusiasts I'm wondering, are there any common denominators among a gay Auto Club as to what constitutes a particular vintages of cars or models that are particular within the community that are much sought after? If there's anything that's unique to the, if you will, the gayness of the cars and the choices and cars and things like that, you answer to Dylan.

[01:05:07] RT: Well, actually, Great Autos of Yesteryear was started by Herb, and Ted, and they were members of Jacks and Jills, so they started that and early on, it was all about Cadillacs and Thunderbirds. The cars that I like, Chrysler product, cars were pretty much panned, but then they never drove them and they don't know about the engineering then, 'cause I'm very much on

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the mechanical side, and pretty soon, my 1961, Chrysler 300G are actually took National Best of Show at the Barrett Jackson show and also took the concourse first place in the great autos. So they began to start liking more and more models, but early on it was all about Cadillacs and Thunderbirds, and it progressed from there, and now you don't even have to have a classic car to join, it's just that we enjoy those old cars, 'cause I think a lot of those cars would have met death if it wasn't for our car club, because they're big gas hogs, and if we didn't have someone like me restoring them from next to the junk yard and we wouldn't have them, and there would be a tragedy, in my opinion.

[01:06:39] DMCB: Something that I wanted to ask you is, in the decades since you moved here, what kind of changes have you noticed? You talked about when you came here, you said that gayness was more toned down, you didn't see it as much, do you think that's changed in this area or remained the same.

[01:06:57] RT: Not a whole lot, I don't think. It's still hidden. There are still people who don't want other people to know they're gay, so there's a lot of old people here, and of course, my best friend is 90, and I have another friend that's 81, so they're actually a little older than me, and they're very closeted, if you will. So I'm not going around screaming that I'm gay, but if my neighbors haven't figured it out, something wrong with them, because they see me on Facebook, and I'm not screaming out there either, but I do have gay things posted, so... But it's still kind of hidden, you know, I mean, I don't think many people know that the first Wednesday every month, we have a gay men's dinner group that goes to various restaurants. How many people know that? I don't know. Do you guys know that? Yeah see. And then we don't have gay



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bowling anymore, unfortunately. They still don't open on Saturday early. What else? I don't know, it's just you don't have a bar. So we don't have a place to go. We don't have a Metropolitan Community Church, although Universal Unitarian is very welcoming.

[01:08:29] RT: If you wanna go to church. Gosh, I don't know what else. It's kind of under the rug here compared to a lot of places I've been so.

[01:08:45] DW: Given that, do you find yourself having lived in LA, needing to take those occasional field trips back down to LA or to San Francisco just to get a broader taste of things.

[01:08:56] RT: God, no, just the drive would piss me off. Can I say that? Yeah, I know. I probably make a good hermit, actually.

[01:09:15] DW: You'd also stopped yourself short a little while ago, but we're about to tell a story that has something to do with Gala and or farmers market, you said on that, I'll get to that later, you had mentioned you had some story and then you cut yourself off, and I went on with PFLAG. Gala, Farmer's Market PFLAG, some story.

[01:09:38] DMCB: It was at Pride.

[01:09:40] RT: Oh yeah, we had our booth at Pride and it was pretty pitiful the set up, and this guy, I don't remember his name, who gave all the money to Gala for their building there, maybe you know his name, but he was pretty well off, I guess he had taken a look at our booth and

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went, oh my God, that's horrible. They need help. And it was shortly after that that we got a check for 50,000, and we were able to buy a pop-up and some banners and stuff that we should have had all along. So that was the story. Yeah.

[01:10:22] DMCB: I wanted to get back to, you said about sweeping under the rug in this area, why do you think that is? That this area, a lot of the gay stuff is more hidden.

[01:10:34.2 S2: "RT" I think it's just because it's not a metropolitan area. When the California Aids ride came through, I made over 10,000 chocolate chip cookies for those guys, and the first time I was there, it was a... Well, I get to this, I made over 660 cookies in my double ovens, and there's a lot of people that didn't get some because they... This was 2001, the California Aids Ride, I don't know if you can see that, but this was the original booth, and there was Ricky Valdez Memorial cookie booth, and so many people were disappointed because I think there were 2500 riders and... I started with the Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group, and we were able to get the old Marie Calendars in Pismo Beach to loan us the bake shop at night, and so we would sit there all night long and we'd make 3000 cookies for the Aids Ride as they came in to Oceano airport they used to stay there, they don't need more, but... A funny story is the one time all the cameras showed up, I don't know how they learned about it, but all the TV stations had their cables running everywhere, and they wanted to see me make some cookies, so I put in five pounds of butter into the big hopper, not really realizing somebody had already done that, and we ended up with double butter cookies, which were thin little nothings.

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[01:12:28] RT: But the people, the riders loved them. One year I had, I don't know where the pictures are, but I had the kids at the local Dana elementary school make posters for the guys, and we put it up all on the fence on Oceano Airport, and it actually brought tears to the eyes of some of the riders, because the little kids making those posters... It was just amazing. One of them, I remember said, be like the Energizer bunny. Keep going and going and going. And they were just... It was great. I'm surprised a school. Let me do that. And one of the things I did... let's see if I can find it here. I wanted to do a Burma Shave sign one of the years. So this is what I did, I said, bicyclist who ride for health and pride, chocolate chip cookies wait at Oceano gate, but unfortunately, some of those signs were torn down before most of the writers came in from some idiot. But at least I tried.

[01:13:47] DW: Speaking of audio visuals, you also have seen another poster down there, you haven't shared with us yet, could you talk about that?

[01:13:53] RT: Well, this is the youth empowerment conference they had at Cal Poly. I don't know the year, I apologize for that. I do know the first youth empowerment conference was in 2005, and I suspect this one at Cal Poly was maybe 10 years ago, maybe 12 years ago, something like that, and it was to give our youth a chance to meet with other youth and just make them more comfortable about being gay and maybe being advocates for gay rights.

[01:14:35] DMCB: I wanted to ask you, were you or PFLAG or any other groups you were a part of allowed to speak at a lot of the schools around here.

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[01:14:45] RT: We spoke at all of the schools, except for the Templeton school district, they were the only one that wouldn't let us in. The San Luis Obispo school district what was the name of it. It's the educational office for the whole county gave us the okay to do that, and we were able to do that at almost every school, so... I do remember speaking one time just by myself at Nipomo High School, the GSA over there, gay straight alliance, and when I asked the kids there if they felt safe, how many felt unsafe on campus and every one of them raise their hand. That was really bad. So I talked to the principal, Ms. Johnson, what was her first name on it, but anyway, I talked to the principal and let her know that I was unhappy, but PFLAG got on me for doing that, 'cause I'm not supposed to argue with the school officials, otherwise we won't be able to go there anymore, but we did have... I did speak at Paso Robles one time, and they decided to... The GSA there decided to have a pizza party, and oh my God, there were kids lining the hallways, number one, to see what a gay person looked like and hear them talk, and also maybe to get a free piece of pizza.

[01:16:16] RT: So that was probably the biggest event that I was involved with as far as speaking at the schools.

[01:16:25] DMCB: What kind of advice do you have or words of wisdom for young LGBTQ+ people nowadays?

[01:16:38] RT: Well, you know what, I would say study the history, study gay history, because you have to know where you came from, if you will, in order to go forward, and I know it's so much easier for kids nowadays, we even have same sex marriage, but it's still not easy, I mean, I

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see this stuff all the time where people are harassed for being gay, but it's so much less than it used to be, and I'm just... My advice would be to stand up for yourself, but monitor the situation that you're in, because in some situations, you need to, as a train engineer would say, tap or light a... Don't wanna do something you're planning on doing... Just be careful. We need all of you. 'cause some of the kids that I counseled, high school kids were so bullied in spite of my best efforts, they still ended up committing suicide, and to this day, I am angry about that, so...

[01:17:58] DW: Any final thoughts, any subject, any stories that we might have missed asking you about that come to mind at this time.

[01:18:18] RT: I can't think of anything. Can I get up to look at this stuff?

[01:18:22] DW: Yes

[01:18:27] DMCB: I was wondering, can you tell us a bit about, I wanna say you said Prop eight was it? Could you tell us about that?

[01:18:35] RT: Well, I was an anti-gay marriage proposition that was brought up in California, it was a little confusing because when I was at the PFLAG booth at farmers market and a lot of people, thought had to vote for it because they were for gay marriage, and so I think it was very confusing to a lot of people, I have the number of buttons here, "the Prop 8", "Vote no on Prop 8," "Vote no," "No hate," and little Prop 8 button, I think with this, but it didn't go through, but we tried to get as many buttons out as we could... So they would know that you need to vote no.

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And a matter of fact, one of the things they did in 2009 was called meet in the middle, and this is when the whole State of California was supposed to meet in Fresno, and we took a contingent from PFLAG because this was about equality and same-sex marriage. And so we met there and trying to get a little bit more information out and they were... Gosh, there were hundreds and hundreds of people there, but it was really hot. But we had a big deal at Cal Poly raising funds for “no on 8” campaign locally, and I remember going to the wineries 'cause I wanted to.

[01:20:18] RT: We were gonna give away raffle prizes to try to encourage people to come, and I twisted a lot of arms and a lot of wineries to get bottles of wine for the and ended up getting quite a bit as well as some other raffle prizes. That was my responsibility for that, but... Yeah, as I recall, we lost... Didn't we lose prop eight? But it came around, I think the Supreme Court decision in 2013 gave the ok for same-sex marriage and for California to resume their same sex marriage, which we had at first. And because it was approved by the state and then it was disapproved, matter of fact, and the early on, two of my friends from Colorado came in under my big pergola here in the backyard, got married under the Pergola, and it was heart-wrenching because they had been together for 30-some odd years already, and yeah, if you didn't tear up watching those two guys get married, there was something wrong with you, but then they stopped it in that 2013 decision by the Supreme Court gave us the okay to go ahead and started having same sex marriage, again.

[01:21:51] DW: Any of the other buttons are props spur some memories for self.

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[01:21:55] RT: Well, he did, did these... What they wanted to do was show that with same-sex marriage, these people were together, you know, forever, so they started making buttons, and here's the one that I had for myself and my partner 20 years together, and they had him for 25, 35, 40, 50, whatever. As a matter of fact, the two lesbian couples had been together for 50-plus years, I believe, uh... Sorry, the names escape me, but I knew it way back when, but... Yeah, so that was trying to let people know that oh my God, we've been together forever, anyway, so what's the big deal about getting married, but... They predicted the sky would fall. The religious right? In particular... And of course, it hasn't.

[01:22:45] DW: One more thing when you mentioned the fact that you had a bowling league here, you have your Wednesday night dinners.

“RT” Well it’s not a bowling league it is just a group of gays bowling.

“DW” And I like bowling, and I even know about that. Do you think even among the LGBT community, there's a cultural or social class, North County, South County thing going on between the SLO and then somehow Santa Maria and South County is treated as a different province, do you think they could be maybe not saying a class issue, but there's something where the two just don't connect somehow.

[01:23:32] RT: I'm not sure, but I can tell you that Nipomo is treated me being more part of Santa Maria than San Luis Obispo County, they always have been. So whether there's a disparity between the two, I'm not aware of that could be.

## TIBBEN Transcript

[01:23:56] DMCB: As a last question and final points, what are your reflections on the shift, like the colossal shifts and laws and culture and more acceptance for gays from going to imprisoning someone for being gay to legalizing same-sex marriage

[01:24:17] RT: It's a long time coming. Way longer than I thought it was going to be. It was a fight. It seemed like it was gonna take forever. The fight is not completely over, of course, because you know the gays are still harassed, but I think starting in the late 60s, early 70s with a peace of love, and taking it off the list as a mental health illness, and then when we get... In 77, Harvey Milk was elected, and then in 78 when we... This, I think this is a big thing in 78, when we soundly defeated the Brings Initiative, I think that was a big bonus for the gay community, because from there, all kinds of things started happening that were more positive and we saw domestic partner civil unions, and then same sex marriage, and then not... And then same sex marriage again. Yeah, it's come a long, long way in my lifetime.

[01:25:23] DMCB: I'm sure it will come farther in mine, I wanted to thank you very much for allowing us to interview you and us doing it in your beautiful home.

[01:25:33] RT: Thank you and it was my pleasure.

[01:25:40] Second IED.

End of Interview