

Rocking out, with Jan Berry, TBI Survivor

by Kate Vincent

"Surf City -- here I come!" Thirty years ago, my New York radio station rocked with these Jan and Dean's California surfing Lyrics.

As a teenager, when I heard these songs, I wished I could have convinced my family to move right at that time out to California and see that "Little Old Lady from Pasadena."

But we stayed in New York. Then in 1992, I eventually drifted out to San Diego in an unplanned way--via my own brain injury recovery.

Now, thirty years later, my brain injury landed me in San Diego for rehab services. For almost a year now, I've been Listening to oldies music on radio. Every now and then, my daughter, Amanda, 12 years of age and I play a Jan and Dean tape to speed up my attempts at housework. When I hear Jan and Dean songs, I try to sing along. As I do, my memory begins to reconnect through those 1960's songs.

Imagine my delight --when Jan and Dean, the cool singers from the sixties, came to our own Poway Center for the Performing Arts. I wanted to go to their concert to relive my teenage years by rocking out again with this joyous surfing music.



Brain Injury survivor, Jan Berry, of Jan & Dean, stands in the center of a group of San Diego Brain Injury Foundation survivors at a reception especially for SDBIF in May

Their concert worked on several levels for us on a Saturday night in May in Poway. Despite his own brain injury in 1966, Jan rocked out leading his band in a high speed concert that had many of us old timers singing along. When Dean invited us to dance in the aisles, several people from the ABI Program, YESS and SDBIF got out into the aisles and danced.

As the band played their hit songs, Jan kept up with this rocking pace and when he got tired, he just sat on a chair on stage, while band members filled in. The way their band compensated for Jan's stamina challenges inspired me to salute all of our caregivers, family and friends-- who help us with our own TBI glitches, when they arise. Jan's example of getting up there on stage, to share his still vibrant musical talents fired me up-- to try to reclaim my own skills as much as I can.