

C3 VIEWS

Summer 2004

\$3.00

TRANSLATING VISION INTO ACTION



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www.the-donaldson-family.com/scottshana/2003/october.html

Two articles on the aftermath of the Fires of October:
 First, an Opinion/Editorial reprint from the Union Tribune prepared by C-3 Board Member, Lawrence A. Herzog.

Second, a reprint from the Union Tribune of the personal and positive reaction of someone who is dealing with the destruction of their property - Jim and Anne Hubbell.

(Continued on page 6)

AFTER THE FIRES

FIRE

EARTH

WATER

AIR

ON THE WATERFRONT(S)



www.sdms.com/view/bay-overview.phtml

Lynch & Appleyard's 1974 "Temporary Paradise" warned that we should resist the tendency to privatize the coastline and thus restrict public access to our ocean and bays. "Control the height and bulk of waterfront development," it said, "and encourage housing of mixed prices and types in existing coastal communities. In the long term, remove all uses from the shore that are not residential, recreational or water-

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DAMAGED ARCHITECTURAL TREASURE TO BE RESTORED

BY: TANYA RODRIGUES—UNION TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER
SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2003

Local architect and artist James Hubbell doesn't use the past tense when talking about his hand-built, sculptural home, which was devastated by the Cedar fire. Instead, as he walks through gutted rooms, the soft-spoken Hubbell uses words like "will," as in "the kitchen will be here, again." His plans to rebuild the adobe structures are taking shape.

The fire, which devoured 280,278 acres in San Diego County, took four of the eight buildings in the 10-acre compound that Hubbell, 72, shares with his wife, Anne. The property, considered one of the region's architectural treasures, was uninsured.

The buildings, with their stained glass windows and mosaic work, were crafted one-by-one over decades.

The couple bought the property for \$350 an acre in 1958, and Hubbell designed the buildings so no trees would have to be cleared. "I think the land is like a gift," he explained. "It's like if you have a good egg, and you don't want to put something in it so you don't taste the egg."

The flames consumed a large studio Hubbell used for most of his metal, iron, stained glass and sculpture work; a kitchen, dining room and living room; a bedroom and adjoining office; and a separate office that was the first building they put on the property. The latter began as the sole house for the couple and their young children.



Another painful loss was storage lockers full of countless artworks and precious items.

Hubbell's son and business partner, Drew, a San Diego-based architect, estimated the losses at more than \$1.3 million. The property has never been formally appraised. The property's location in the brush-covered hills of Santa Ysabel made it so costly to insure that the Hubbells decided the money was better spent on peace and education-focused projects of the Ilan-Lael Foundation, which they founded 20 years ago.

Among the buildings that survived were a small studio and separate living quarters Hubbell built for his four now-grown sons. Later the living quarters became a guest cottage, and that building is now a temporary home for Hubbell and his wife.

A small but devoted crew working on the property last weekend showed Hubbell's intent to rebuild.

Young people from Urban Corps San Diego, a job-training program involving conservation and community work, made the Hubbell property their volunteer project on Saturday. They secured walkways, cleared rubble and chopped damaged wood. Hubbell asked them to save part of a tree trunk for him. "That stump might make something interesting," he said.

Meanwhile on Saturday, local sculptor John Warren and Ramona contractor Mark Tighe, both of whom have worked with Hubbell on other projects, turned their attention to threading pipes and other tasks to bring back pressurized water to the buildings. Power and gravity-fed water have already been restored.

The rebuilding project may hasten a change that had long been in the works—Hubbell plans to turn
(Continued on page 9)

his home over to his foundation. Ilan-Lael, which has federal nonprofit status, will own the property and be the financial connection for donations. Hubbell will become the foundation's artist-in-residence and live on the property for free. "When this happened," he said, referring to the Cedar fire, "it said, 'Well, you have to do this. Don't put it off.'" His lawyers have begun the process, Hubbell said.

Skip Pahl, executive director of the Oceanside Museum of Art, applauds the idea, saying that it has been a positive move for other artists in the past. "That's wonderful because (the property) becomes part of the patrimony of the people and allows us to help and keep it for generations to come," he said.

During a lunch break Saturday with family and friends, Anne Hubbell marveled over what was lost and what survived. A full water tank was destroyed but less than 30 feet away, a stained-glass piece placed over a gazebo still shines its spring greens, darker pine shades and vibrant purples. Some of the five-cent ceramic mugs the couple bought in Mexico that seemed so delicate for decades persevered through the flames. One of the larger brown mugs, used as a gravy boat, turned a bronze-like silver. Atop the rubble in their kitchen, the family found the music sheet of a song called "Fire Dance." "You think 'is there some kind of fire goblin running around and playing jokes on people or what?'" Anne Hubbell said, a smile on her face.

Although she says she does miss some of her belongings, like tablecloths she avoided using to keep them in good condition, Anne Hubbell, who is in her early 70s, stays upbeat. "I was oppressed," she said good-naturedly. "We had too much of everything. ... That's my lesson, how to live a simpler life." She never got around to really clearing out the files that filled the small office that adjoined her bedroom. Now, she doesn't have to worry about it, she said.

A writer and poet who has been a schoolteacher and also taught folk dance, Anne Hubbell said the fire inspires her work. "You're stirred to the roots of your being to deal with these things," she said. "It makes you feel your whole person."

People throughout the art community have said they plan to help the Hubbells rebuild their home and studio. "There's no question about it," said Pahl, of the Oceanside museum, calling Hubbell's place "a very important part of the San Diego art scene and part of our cultural heritage." Santa Ysabel artist Annie Dover said many artists in nearby communities have lost their homes and the arts community is rallying behind them to replenish their art supplies and funding.

Annie Rowley, an artist who owns Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, said Hubbell's projects around the world have involved him in training thousands of people. "I think there are some 'Hubbell Corps' who will come back and help," Rowley said.

James Hubbell said that thinking about others' losses makes his seem far smaller. Other people who lost their homes still have children to support or mortgages to pay on homes that are no longer standing, and may not have friends that will back them up, he said. Still, he said, "It's not easy."

As he faced west, the Pacific Ocean not quite visible that day, the starting point of the San Diego River in the ravine below, and the ruins of his storage lockers behind him, Hubbell spoke of how he keeps his loss in perspective. He knows that the trees will grow back, that more children will be born, he said.

Hubbell said he thinks of what the Chinese used to do when the Mongols routinely invaded and occupied their land. They compared the heinous disruptions to changes in the waterways they built their homes around. "In a way, that is what the fire is. It's a rock in the river," he said. "It changed the pattern, but the river is the same river."

For more information on how to help rebuild the Hubbell compound, call (619) 231-0446 or visit www.hubbellandhubbell.com. Contact staff writer Tanya Rodrigues at (760) 740-5420 or trodrigues@nctimes.com.

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