ILAN-LAEL
FOUNDATION
CONNECTING PEOPLE, ART & NATURE

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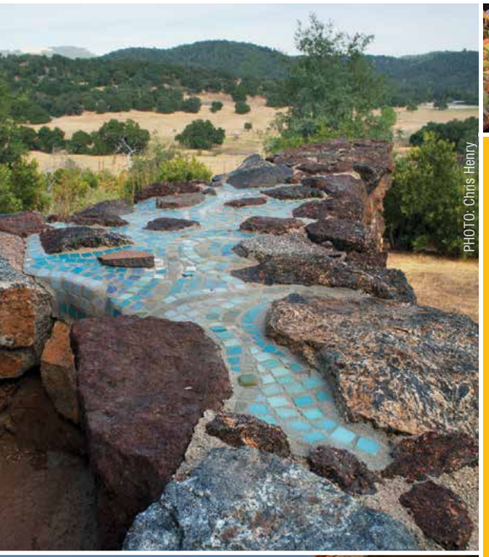
PHOTO: Chris Henry

PHOTO: Laurie Dietter

STUDIO & HOME TOURS 2022

Visit Ilan-Lael!

Explore James and Anne Hubbell's acclaimed family home and studios! Our Spring/Early Summer tour season is here, and instead of our large, traditional Open House, we're offering many docent-led visits! Tours are limited in size to enhance your experience!

Visit ilanlaelfoundation.org to purchase tickets, or use the QR code to the right.

PHOTO: John Durant

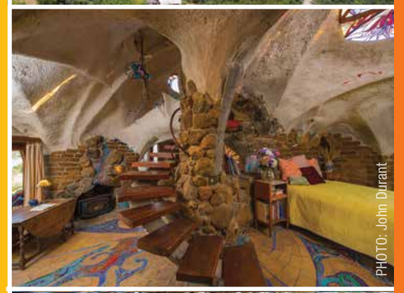
PHOTO: John Durant

PHOTO: Chris Henry

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connecting people, art & nature

HIDDEN LEAVES

VOL 9 - ISSUE 1

SPRING
2022

A publication of Ilan-Lael Foundation

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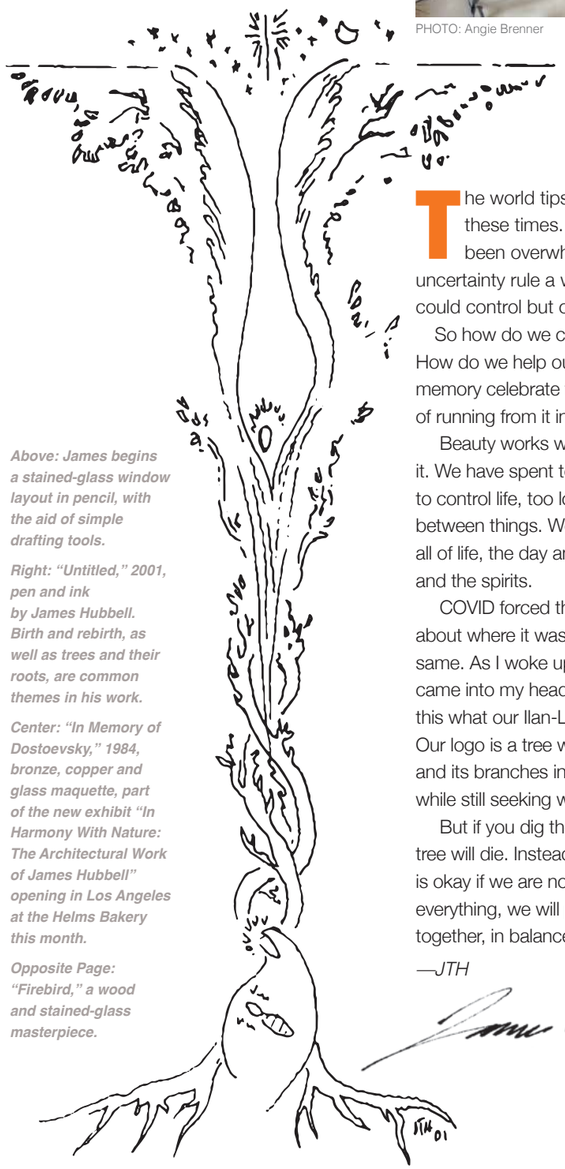
The Sea Ranch Chapel

Read these stories online at: ilanlaelfoundation.org/NEWS

Seeking Balance in a Troubled World

PHOTO: Angie Brenner



Above: James begins a stained-glass window layout in pencil, with the aid of simple drafting tools.

Right: "Untitled," 2001, pen and ink by James Hubbell. Birth and rebirth, as well as trees and their roots, are common themes in his work.

Center: "In Memory of Dostoevsky," 1984, bronze, copper and glass maquette, part of the new exhibit "In Harmony With Nature: The Architectural Work of James Hubbell" opening in Los Angeles at the Helms Bakery this month.

Opposite Page: "Firebird," a wood and stained-glass masterpiece.

The world tips out of balance during these times. Nature's rhythms have been overwhelmed. Shadows and uncertainty rule a world we thought we could control but cannot.

So how do we come back to balance? How do we help our conscience and memory celebrate the whole of life instead of running from it in fear?

Beauty works with nature, not against it. We have spent too much time trying to control life, too long building walls between things. We need to celebrate all of life, the day and night, the knowable and the spirits.

COVID forced the world to stop and think about where it was going. Now war does the same. As I woke up this morning, a thought came into my head: "Seeking balance." Isn't this what our Ilan-Lael Foundation is about? Our logo is a tree with its roots in the earth and its branches in the sky: balanced—while still seeking water and light.

But if you dig the tree up to study it, the tree will die. Instead, by accepting that it is okay if we are not able to understand everything, we will put the world back together, in balance, once again.

—JTH

HIDDEN LEAVES
VOL 9 - ISSUE 1
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Cover
The Firebird, Watercolor by James Hubbell
PHOTO: Laurel Costa

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PHOTO: Laurel Costa

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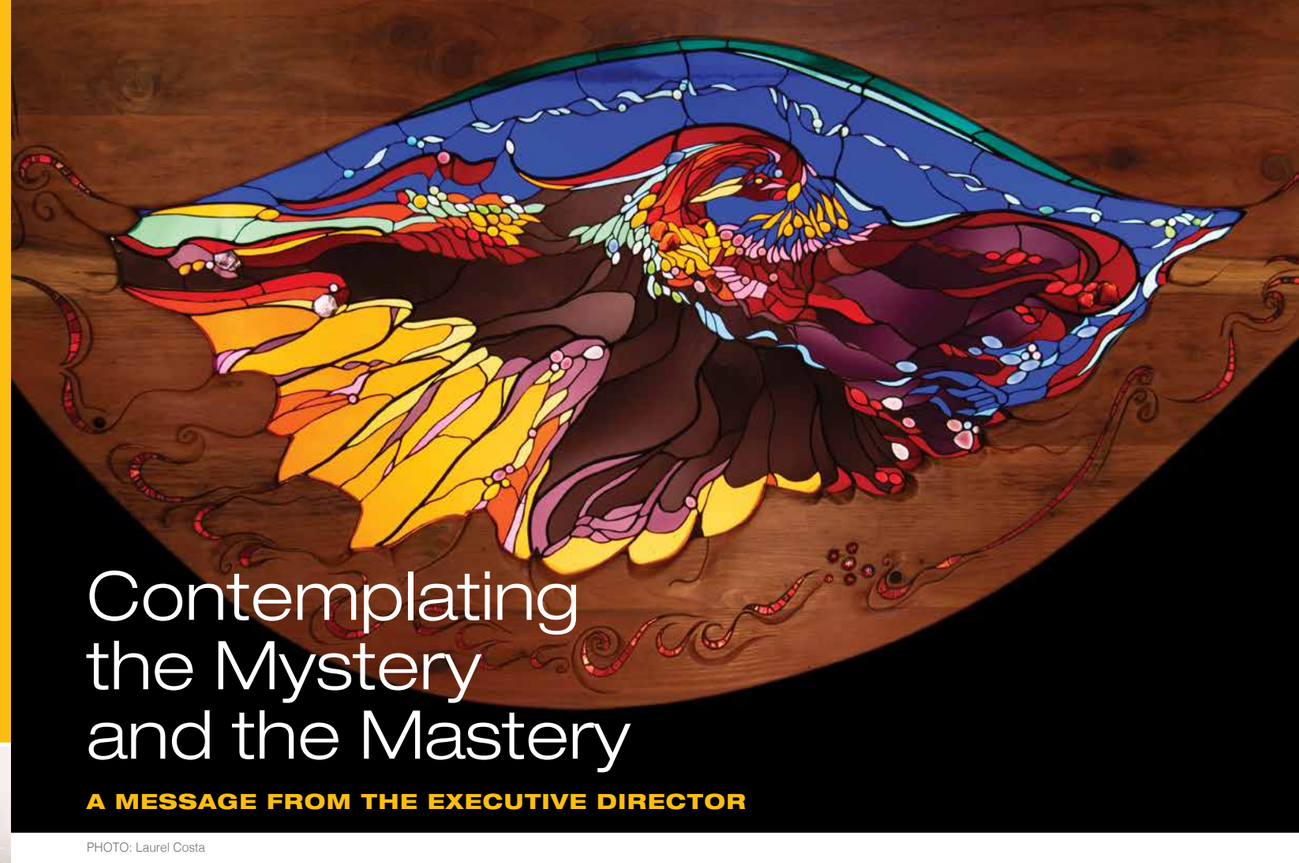


Contemplating the Mystery and the Mastery

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PHOTO: Laurel Costa

My phone has been ringing a lot lately and, more often than not, Jim Hubbell is on the other end of the line. He's determined to share his ideas, and to explore how provocative it is that just as Hubbell Studios completed rebuilding the Firebird Window, Putin invaded Ukraine and turned the world upside down.

The legend of the Firebird is a fateful tale of Slavic and Russian origin, where youth and beauty are overtaken by the forces of greed and fear. The Firebird's beautiful feathers disappear beneath the fallen leaves in the forest, waiting to be re-discovered by those who seek beauty. What an amazing metaphor for current events. Hope is a choice, not easily extinguished. And Jim is anxious to remind us that in moments like these, our art and our stories can help us balance the joys and sorrows of life.

The completed Firebird currently hangs in the Ilan-Lael Center. It is a masterpiece! Laurel Costa's photo is a wonderful tribute. But to truly feel its magnificence you must experience it in person. Massive in scale by Hubbell standards, its color, complexity, and mercurial beauty have brought a few of us to tears. Even the Hubbell artists who worked on it—Cindy Mushet-Shriver, Dan Thoner, John Wheelock, Aliese Hewitt and Mary Ann Prue—seem a little in awe of the piece in its totality.

We all will be sad yet excited to let it go to Los Angeles for an exhibition called *In Harmony With Nature, the Architectural Design of James Hubbell.* This is James's first solo show in L.A. and it's packed full of his best architectural design moments, including The Sea Ranch Chapel, the Doors of Abu Dhabi, Pacific Rim Park, and of course, Ilan-Lael. The exhibition at the Helm's Bakery Design District is up through the end of June. I encourage you to make the trip to see it.

I accompanied James and Anne to The Sea Ranch Chapel's 30th anniversary celebration in 2015. My husband Michael and I filmed Jim returning to this incredible space after many years. It was my first time visiting the Chapel and the impact of that moment was potent. From the outside, the tiny building looks like a ship afloat. On the inside, it's grounded by stone floors and low stone walls, and warmed by silky-smooth redwood benches and columns. Vertical redwood slats lift your eyes toward colorful stained glass and white plaster sculptural elements on the ceiling. It's a harbor of peace and tranquility, color and craftsmanship, beauty and intention. "I look and I can't believe I did it." Jim whispers humbly. "I'm not sure I did."

Yes, Jim, you *did* do it, and so much more. I've had the privilege to see your genius manifested in your architecture and your art, side by side along with your generosity of spirit. These experiences come from your mind and hands and heart, but you've also helped me understand that contemplating the sheer mystery of creativity is as important as being in awe of the mastery of the tools and materials needed to create it.

"The Firebird's beautiful feathers disappear beneath the fallen leaves in the forest, waiting to be re-discovered"

—Marianne Gerdes

Donaldson Futuro Has Landed!

By the time this issue is in your hands, *Donaldson Futuro* will have been designated California Registered Historical Landmark No. 1062. Now nestled in the San Jacinto Mountains near Idyllwild, California, the portable reinforced polyester-plastic home has been restored to like-new condition, with some necessary modifications, after years of work by the Donaldsons.

The long history and phots of the *Donaldson Futuro's* original design by Finnish architect Matti Suuronen, its fabrication in 1969 in Philadelphia, the journey to San Diego, and ultimate home in Idyllwild can be viewed online at *ilanlaelfoundation.org/NEWS.*

See more photos and read "Donaldson Futuro" by Milford Wayne Donaldson, XNGH edited by historian Eileen Magno online.

Below: Donaldson Futuro.

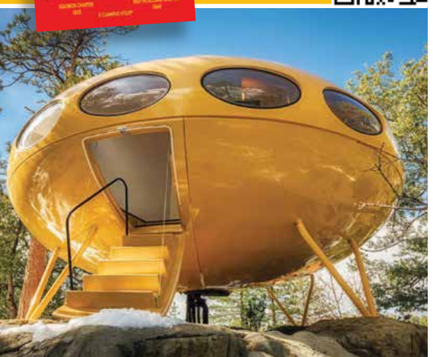


PHOTO: Paul Kozal

CAPTIVATED BY HISTORY

While Envisioning Ilan-Lael's Future

PHOTO: Nancy Donaldson

Wayne soars over the cliffs of Torrey Pines, flying the Icarus II hang glider he built in 1974.

An interview with Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA

Architect, builder, and renowned preservation expert Milford Wayne Donaldson has known the Hubbell family since the late 1970s. Soon after Jim and Anne Hubbell created the Ilan-Lael Foundation, Wayne invited James Hubbell, Kay Kaiser, and other members of a nascent board of directors to meet regularly in his architecture firm's offices, located on the third floor above San Diego Hardware in the Gaslamp Quarter.

It was a storied time in the Gaslamp and downtown San Diego in general: Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) was clearing the way for Horton Plaza and other projects, Gaslamp was emerging from years of decay and outright depravity, and a few visionaries like James Hubbell, Kay, and Wayne were talking about "what this city can be." Enthusiasm fairly gusted out of the skylit room and into downtown's awakening avenues.

Our conversation with Wayne in March 2022 [excerpts follow], was as much a look forward as a look back on the journey called Ilan-Lael (Hebrew for "a tree that unites the physical and the spiritual") and the key role preservation plays in Ilan-Lael's mission. We were prompted not only by Wayne's contributions to the foundation's success, but the arrival of an invitation to an event honoring the unveiling of a historic-structure plaque at Wayne's and his wife Laurie's restored — and still quite astonishing — "Donaldson Futuro," a prefab conceptual house they spent years restoring.

—Peter Jensen

How did you meet James Hubbell?
At the School of Architecture Design Gallery at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where my friend, J. Spencer Lake, and I hosted an exhibition featuring San Diego architect Bruce Richards, ceramicist Rhoda Lopez, architect Ken Kellogg, and artist Jim Hubbell. It was an instant success. Sim was a little aloof, Ken very talkative — I immediately wanted to work for him — Rhoda was very intriguing (I did some work for her later on) ... and then there was Jim. So impressive. He and I spoke for a long time. His architecture was very earthy, very Antonio Gaudi. As a new architect, I was fascinated by Jim's holistic approach to design.

What brought you to San Diego?
I grew up there and wanted to return. I went to work for Mosher Drew Watson architects in 1972. The same year, I saw a Richards house under construction, and Jim had just done a stained-glass light sculpture next to the stairs. It was living art! I admired his romantic view of life, and the way he celebrated the mystery of life. He also dwelled in the Craftsman Movement, where architects designed everything, from the house to the furniture and light fixtures ... everything.

Who were some of your contemporaries at the time? Young architects or future builders like yourself?
Spencer Lake and Robert Thiele in particular. Spencer was promoting all things Frank Lloyd Wright and was even hooking his own rugs. Robert wasn't an architect yet, but already a great contractor. We started a partnership: Lake, Donaldson + Thiele. After only a year they were going their own way, and I was on my own. The Gaslamp Quarter was taking off and I had an office first in the Marston Building, then the Keating Building, where our turret window looked down on Fifth Avenue, then the George Hill Building, and finally the San Diego Hardware Building.

PHOTO: Eileen Magno

When did Hubbell fit into your career arc?
Spencer and I would go up and talk to Jim. We were super-impressed with his work. I remember him building "The Barn," the big studio. It fascinated me, especially Jim's building techniques. He bent rebar around a tree with a tractor. You could drive a herd of elephants over his buildings, they were so strong.

Jim wanted a presence downtown. He felt it was undergoing a new Renaissance. We both felt that the Gaslamp needed to be saved from Ernie Hahn (the developer of Horton Plaza). I told Jim, 'Come on down. I have a whole third floor above San Diego Hardware. We can meet there.'

Early on, Jim didn't know what he wanted to do outside of his own art, quite frankly. We did a lot of searching, but that's how Jim does things. He knew he wanted to get art 'in the streets' — bring it to the people. Jim felt art should be more of a visual key to a cultural stream of awareness, and I understood that. He was not obsessed with order and control. He let them run their course. He wanted, in my opinion, to see a major rebirth of the Romantic Period, to integrate everything into his work, his philosophy of being, an entire city's philosophy of being.

Hidden Leaves was created during those third-floor meetings, and it became a way for Jim and others to express their views on San Diego's possibilities. And about this time Drew Hubbell came to work for me. It felt right, although Drew went out on his own soon, a well-deserved move.

And then came the fire ...
Yes, the fire. The devastation was incredible. I thought it was the end of everything for the Hubbells' dreams and wasn't sure they could rebuild. Jim was sad but came up with the concept for Ilan-Lael Foundation. Soon the amount of time and money donated by people for the rebuilding of Ilan-Lael was amazing. Flabbergasting! I didn't expect it, but Jim was asking me how to rebuild Ilan-Lael, the houses and studios, and true enough, I was specializing in preservation architecture. Jim said, 'I want to restore it back to the way it was.' I told him he was being romantic about 'period of significance' — a term we use in preservation work. 'Instead,' I said, 'you should do what you want to do with it now.'

What was it like, experiencing the Hubbells' determination?
A developer once told me, "If you never quit, you never give up." Jim and Anne never quit. It's THE philosophy about Jim and Anne I most admire. They come from a generation of challenging moments, but also happy times.

Jim takes on causes, but makes sure other people are there with him. He plants thoughts like seeds. He's a lot like the late David Gebhard of U.C. Santa Barbara, the expert on California architecture. He would let everyone talk first, listen carefully, take in what everyone said, and then put it all into a nutshell. Everyone would nod their heads at that point in agreement. Jim is an incredible teacher, but not in a mentor way. He wants others to find their way.

Looking down the road for the Ilan-Lael Foundation, what do you see?
There are other properties like this that have been saved: not only for posterity but as living organizations that keep going. We have much to offer. Jim's work has all the acceptance of life with its ambiguity and wonder. Ilan-Lael strengthens people to live their lives, to accept and understand what they're going through. Here we see the way a true artist searches, draws a line, and then another, and another — never precise, but ultimately satisfied all the same. Ilan-Lael invites people to put their own soul into their experiences here.

What amazes me is that Jim's body of actual works is quite limited in terms of large works, buildings, and houses — they occupy about a half-page of a master list, but the next six pages are what Jim is about: his awards, lectures, forums, special events, documentaries, publications, poetry, workshops, studios, the foundation. Jim is about the message that art and nature, considered together, can influence thousands and thousands of lives, especially lives at any kind of crossroad. Inspiring those lives are what the foundation needs to focus on.

PHOTO: Jim King

Above: A hands-on preservationist all his career, Wayne sanded Futuro for many days.
Left: Early meeting of Ilan-Lael's board.

SEE, LEARN, PLAY *and* CREATE

The many ways Ilan-Lael forges partnerships in the community...and with you!

PHOTO: Leana Bulay

Welcome, Watershed Explorers!

An outdoor classroom from sea to summit

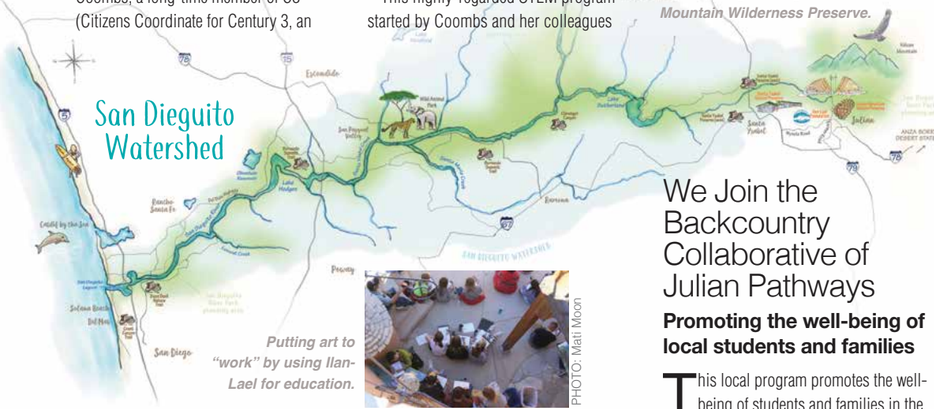
Ilan-Lael has a long history of supporting educational programs for Julian area schools dating back to when the Hubbell sons attended local schools and Anne Hubbell was a member of the Spencer Valley School board. Our educational programs feature immersive learning experiences in art, architecture, and nature.

Last month our good friend Diane Coombs, a long-time member of C3 (Citizens Coordinate for Century 3, an organization helping to preserve and improve our region's built and natural environments), visited us at Ilan-Lael with members of the Watershed Explorers Program. This coalition of environmental and cultural non-profits was established seven years ago to offer students an opportunity to travel and experience the length of the San Dieguito Watershed, which begins on Volcan Mountain.

This highly-regarded STEM program started by Coombs and her colleagues is adding an "A" (for arts) with the addition of Ilan-Lael Foundation to the coalition. We're honored to be invited into this program.

Above: Watershed Explorers instructors and students pose at the base of an oak tree.

Below: San Dieguito River Park is a regional open space greenway that stretches 55 miles from the mouth of the San Dieguito Lagoon to the Volcan Mountain Wilderness Preserve.



Putting art to "work" by using Ilan-Lael for education.

PHOTO: Mati Moon

Calling All Teachers

Bring your class to ILF!

New Ilan-Lael programs are responding to state-mandated curricula by opening our property to students grades 4 through 12 throughout San Diego County. Nature-based education is sorely lacking for most kids. Let's give the next generation a chance to learn and to love our beautiful natural environment and the art and culture it has inspired.

Teachers and educators, please contact us to find out how your class can learn at Ilan-Lael! ***Give us a call at 760-764-3427 or via info@ilanlaelfoundation.org.***

Not every school has a budget for a field trip: a donation of $60 covers the cost of an instructor, learning materials, and lunch for one student.

We Join the Backcountry Collaborative of Julian Pathways

Promoting the well-being of local students and families

This local program promotes the well-being of students and families in the Julian area. Dozens of organizations have banded together to share ideas and coordinate strategies. James and Anne Hubbell, and Ilan-Lael, have always been about community. This is a natural and exciting step forward.

Thank you Mati Moon and Tricia Elisara for inviting us to be part of this wonderful collaboration. Learn more at: *julianpathways.org/home/backcountry-collaborative.*

PHOTOS: Laurel Costa

Let's Make Art Together

Join us at the Ilan-Lael Art Center for one of our upcoming workshops and be inspired by the amazing natural beauty and artistic surroundings. *Register today at: ilanlaelfoundation.org or call us at 760-765-3427.*

SPRING CLASSES & WORKSHOPS at the ILAN-LAEL ART CENTER

Mosaic Workshops with Artist-in-residence Emilie Ledieu

Learn all about making mosaic art! Emilie teaches a variety of workshops for all skill levels.

- ***April 22 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***
- ***May 15 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***
- ***May 28 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***
- ***June 12 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***
- ***July 9 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***
- ***July 23 • 9:30am – 4:30pm***

Handwoven Necklace Making with Jean Radakovich

Get creative combining tapestry style weaving with beads and unconventional found objects.

- ***May 1 • 10am – 4pm***

Handwoven Necklace Making with Jean Radakovich

Get creative combining tapestry style weaving with beads and unconventional found objects.

- ***May 1 • 10am – 4pm***

Intro to Natural Dye with Jeanine Ertl

Create three scarves! All materials are included.

- ***May 14 • 1 – 5 pm***

Intro to Blacksmithing & Metal Arts with Brennan Hubbell

Create a forged-iron hook.

- ***May 15 • 1 – 5 pm***

Intuitive Weaving with Jeanine Ertl

Unlock your creativity for an afternoon of hands-on fiber fun, while making a one-of-a-kind, take-home woven piece.

- ***May 22 • 1 – 5 pm***

< Register here

NEWS *from the* HILL & BEYOND

< SEE and READ more here!

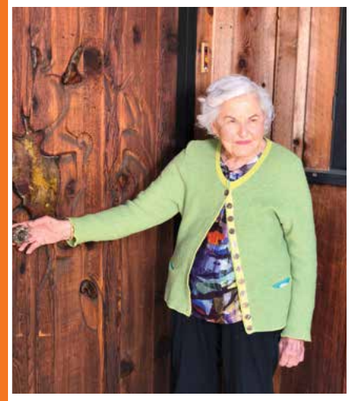


PHOTO: Michael Gerdes

Happy Birthday Deborah Szekely!

Celebrating 100 years

Deborah Szekely, one of our favorite people, a long-time friend of James and Anne Hubbell, and supporter of the Ilan-Lael Foundation, turns 100 this May! Deborah is revered as a philanthropist in the San Diego-Baja California region, and may be best known as one of the founders of Rancho La Puerta Resort & Spa in Tecate. Her long life and good health are a testament to the values embodied in healthy eating, exercise, finding meaningful work, and surrounding yourself with the beauty of nature and art. Deborah commissioned many artworks from James over the years, the most impressive being Rancho La Puerta's Front Desk area with its massive Hubbell doors and a stained glass window wall that welcomes guests with vibrant color and light that sets the tone for their stay. Deborah is a welcoming light herself, and an ardent supporter of our Hubbell Archive project.

In honor of her milestone birthday, please consider making a donation to the Hubbell Archives. We'll let her know you did! *ilanlaelfoundation.org/support-archives/*

PHOTO: Craig Tooley

Healing the Healers is Back for 2022

"As tired as we are, we all need to find spots such as this to remind us that life is beautiful."
—Annette, a HTH alumnus

Our popular program Healing The Healers (HTH) gives burned-out medical workers a chance to relax and recharge while on retreat in the outdoors amid the artful surroundings of Ilan-Lael. The ongoing pandemic and the seemingly endless sacrifice and struggle have deeply affected those in our healthcare system. Stress has been at its highest among medical assistants, social workers, in-patient workers, women, and persons of color, according to a July 2021 study by the AMA and Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis. Last year's HTH participants were 95% female, and 85% LatinX or Asian/Pacific Islander, working as ICU nurses, emergency room staff, respiratory therapists, psychologists, Covid phone bank operators, and hospital chaplains, just to name a few. Please share this program with the medical workers in your life! It is free to participants, due in part to the generosity of people like you. ***Visit our website to learn more and see how you can support or volunteer for this program. ilanlaelfoundation.org/healing-the-healers*** —MG

The Boy's House exterior (above) and bathroom (right).

James is Having a Solo Exhibit in LA

See the exhibit! The Firebird will be there.

James Hubbell's first-ever solo exhibition in Los Angeles features his iconic architectural designs.

In Harmony With Nature: The Architectural Work of James Hubbell opens Saturday, April 23 from 11:00 - 5:00 to coincide with Seeding the City, a campus-wide event. Seeding The City celebrates the 21st century garden in LA with a day-long program of talks, tours, and popups, featuring some of L.A.'s leading landscape designers and thinkers.

April 29 through June 18, 2022
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 12 - 5pm
Helm's Bakery Design District
8745 Washington Boulevard
Culver City 90232

Below, from left: The Sea Ranch Chapel, "Opus," "Underwater House" and"A Walk Within" are all part of the new Hubbell exhibit in LA.

PHOTOS (2): John Durant

Win a Magical Night for Two in the Boys' House

Our Annual Spring Raffle is Here

You've dreamed of this…spending private time inside the iconic Boys' House at Ilan-Lael, watching stained-glass reflections dance on walls, tracing mosaics from one space to the next, and counting the abalone shells in the sunken mosaic bathtub! To win a chance to spend an overnight stay at the Boys' House at Ilan-Lael, **fill out the ticket form in this newsletter and return along with payment in the enclosed envelope.** Or, call the office to purchase over the phone: 760-765-3427.

Need more tickets? Visit our website and follow directions to enter! ***ilanlaelfoundation.org/support/raffle***

All proceeds support the programs of Ilan-Lael Foundation.

PHOTOS (3): Laurel Costa