

Oral History Center  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert  
*Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert: The California Firefighters Oral History Project*

Interviews conducted by  
Sarah Wheelock  
In 2008

Copyright © 2017 by The Regents of the University of California

Since 1954 the Oral History Center of the Bancroft Library, formerly the Regional Oral History Office, has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

\*\*\*\*\*

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between The Regents of the University of California and Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert dated July 29, 2008. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Excerpts up to 1000 words from this interview may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to The Bancroft Library, Head of Public Services, Mail Code 6000, University of California, Berkeley, 94720-6000, and should follow instructions available online at <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/cite.html>

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert, "Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert: The California Firefighters Oral History Project" conducted by interviewer Sarah Wheelock in 2008, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2017.

## Table of Contents—Dave A. Hubert and Barbara L. Hubert

### Interview 1: July 29, 2008

#### Audio File 1

1

Introduction to Blaze, California’s official fire dog — Dave Hubert’s childhood inspiration: LA City Fire Station Number 64 — Testing for work as a firefighter — Employment in the Orange County (California Division of Forestry) — Taking a pay cut to work as a firefighter — Barbara Hubert’s support for that decision — Fighting for better pay and benefits — Lobbying for the passage of AB2975 — County- and city-level fire departments — State budgets — Incident Command System — California Division of Forestry Employees Association and structural change — Devotion to the profession — Societal change (gender role) — Post-incident analysis after deaths of firefighters — Grief — Negotiating the work week, and changes for the Orange County Fire Department — Growth and challenges — Hazing — “Girls” in the fire service — Gender, and changes in testing — Physical realities, tactics, strategies — Paramedics, search and rescue, hazardous materials handling, changes in scope of fire services — A mid-life crisis — Return to racecar driving — An accident, and the purchase of an old fire engine, a steamer — Restoring Reno Number 1 — Sudden involuntary retirement for health reasons — Trains — Purchasing a pump from the California Railroad Museum — Partnership with the California State Firefighters Association — Thirteen years of touring the restored steamer — Teamwork and excursions — Public safety education

#### Audio File 2

19

Serendipitous encounters with elders who remember the steamer when it was housed in Reno fire station — Firefighting in days of yore — Centennial reenactment of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake — Commemorating the 343 firefighters lost on 9/11 — Other excursions with the steamer and horses — Dalmatians — Fire service heritage — Higher education among applicants for fire departments these days — Practical skills — Fire Chief Larry Webb — Basics of firefighting — Development of the Incident Command System — Disciplinary processing and resource status — Massive fire in San Diego, 1969 — Harbison Canyon-Boulder — Safety gear — More about the Incident Command System and Incident Action Plans — On-site graphics and mapping — Dave’s cartooning — Incident Command at Campbell Complex, Anderson, California — 1993 Laguna fire — And the Malibu fire — *Hubie and the Fire Service* — “The secret of life” — The California Railroad Museum

[End of Interview]

**Interview 1: July 29, 2008**

[Begin Audiofile 1]

Wheelock: All right, this is July 29, 2008. I'm Sarah Wheelock and I am doing this interview as part of the California Firefighters History project, and I'm here with Dave and Barbara Hubert—if I got that right.

01-00:00:16

Barbara Hubert: Yes.

Dave Hubert: That's correct, yeah.

Wheelock: And—

01-00:00:19

Dave Hubert: We have Blaze here. Blaze is California's official fire dog. She was given that designation by the California State Firefighters' Association, and she's known as our PR dog. She does about fifty programs a year and she's been doing it for the last ten years. She's the absolute star of our steamer program, and she's not at all spoiled. So Blaze, can you say hello to folks? Say hello. [dog barks] Woof, that's good.

Barbara Hubert: Blaze does fire prevention tricks for children, like stop, drop and roll and things that hopefully will cause them to remember a message. And she has her toenails painted red, which also causes them to remember her.

Dave Hubert: And she's on her way for her nap, under the steamer . . .

Wheelock: I wanted to start out with asking you, Dave, about your career in the fire service, before we start talking about the steamers.

01-00:01:29

Dave Hubert: Okay. Well, my career, realistically, started when I was thirteen years old. I lived next door to L.A. City Fire Station number 64. I spent a great deal of time there and became their fire station mascot. And they truly inspired me about this profession. They were a great group of guys that not only inspired me academically, but practically. There wasn't anything that those fire guys couldn't do, and they really established my goal to become a firefighter. Well, I took a whole bunch of tests and I finally made it on with the County of Orange, which was then the California Division of Forestry. Started there in 1968, after I met my supporting other half here, the co-producer of the Huberts, Barbara. I'll never forget the statement she made to me when I— At the time we were married, I drove a tank truck for Atlantic Richfield, and I brought home a big check and I worked a forty-hour workweek. When I told her I wanted to become a fireman, she was quite thrilled, until I told her that I'd work a ninety-six-hour workweek and the pay was about \$326—a month, not a week. Well, I was making \$500 a week at Richfield, driving a tank truck.

Barbara Hubert: With a lot of overtime, too.

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Wheelock: You must've been just fabulously excited.

01-00:03:09

Barbara Hubert: [laughs] Well, when you add all the challenge of what a— It's an exciting job, but it's also a dangerous job. And then out of that salary came all of the clothing, uniforms, and all of their food had to be deducted. So by the time it came home, it was pretty small. But that's all right. He loved it, he wanted to do it his whole life, and that's a big thing.

Dave Hubert: Turned out to be exactly everything I was looking for. I was there at Fire Station 27, at the Orange County airport. A great group of guys. We really had a lot of profession orientation, a lot of good training, a lot of personal texture, a lot of devotion to the community. The only thing wrong with it were the hours away from home, and the pay. After a year—I don't know why she put up with it as long as she did, but after a year— I only received one raise, and I think it was 4 percent. Literally, my take-home pay was around \$300 a month. And I had two children, so obviously, she had to go to work. We qualified for—

Barbara Hubert: We qualified for food stamps.

Dave Hubert: —food stamps and welfare.

Barbara Hubert: We didn't pursue them, but we qualified for them. Because we used that as leverage when we were going for raises.

Dave Hubert: Yeah. And especially when you looked at the surrounding fire departments— Anaheim, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa—those guys were working a fifty-six-hour workweek and they were making twice the money. So we decided, a small group of us, to do what we could to see if we can improve the situation. Well, because we were California Division of Forestry employees, working for the County of Orange as their fire department, it's a very difficult political thing. There was a lot of separation there and there was no strong direction to go in. Finally, we found out that you really had to go through the state system to get better benefits. So like I say, I started in '68; it wasn't till 1972 that we were able to be heard through our association, to try to cure these deficiencies. And by that time, we were *way* behind.

Wheelock: So how did that come about, that you were finally able to be heard?

01-00:05:47

Dave Hubert: Well, because we got a couple of senators and we got the California State Firefighters' Association behind us. Yeah. I think [a guy] by the name of Schmidt that carried a bill for— AB 2975.

Barbara Hubert: Dave and I actually traveled to Sacramento to visit with some of the legislators, and one of the things that we used as, there again, leverage, was we were explaining that all the training, all the monies that were spent for all the training— And then when the firefighters achieved all that training, they'd move as soon as possible, to another entity, because they couldn't afford to stay at CDF, California Division of Forestry.

Wheelock: Now, was that sort of a CDF-wide level? Or did it vary?

01-00:06:43

Dave Hubert: No, you're right, that's a good point, because statewide, CDF was the lowest paid fire department in the state. That's why many of the counties— Of California's fifty-eight counties, about forty-four of them had CDF— Matter of fact, about fifty of them had CDF fire protection, because it was a cheap fire protection.

Wheelock: They had CDF as the county fire department?

01-00:07:09

Dave Hubert: That's correct.

Wheelock: Okay, just to clarify that.

01-00:07:11

Dave Hubert: Yeah. CDF is still in San Diego, Riverside, all except San Bernardino, down south here. L.A. County had their own fire department, Santa Barbara had their own county fire department. But it's our typical capitalistic way of life; we always look for the best deal. Many of the counties and many of the cities, still today, are hurting financially. And fire and police are still the biggest expenditure for any government agency to provide for their constituency. There really isn't anything that says that they have to provide fire protection for the constituency.

Wheelock: At the county level.

01-00:07:55

Dave Hubert: At the county level. Look at what's happening in San Diego County right now. They're still struggling with trying to form a county fire department. Just because many politicians don't feel that providing fire protection is an economical way to protect the citizens. As odd as it sounds, that's the condition that exists today. It's sad. But it's also an expensive service to provide, because now you don't just provide fire protection; you find medical aid, your hazardous materials, fire suppression. When you look at the character and quality and size of the fires we're getting today, and the number of homes we are losing because of the environmental changes and the people building in wildlands— They're not paying enough attention to the fire service, as a rule, in my opinion.

Wheelock: So you were talking about when you had Schmidt on your side.

01-00:09:03

Dave Hubert: Yeah, then 1970, we introduced AB 2975. We got the whole guys behind this bill. It was a seventy-two-hour workweek bill. Each year, we received probably a 2.5 or a 3 percent raise. So by 1972, we had a little bit more money, but we were still working a hellacious workweek of ninety-six hours a week, on a two-platoon system, while 90 percent of the other fire departments had a three-platoon system and worked a fifty-six-hour workweek.

Barbara Hubert: And some years, we didn't receive any raise at all.

Dave Hubert: Yeah. Well, it's just like what's going on today. They haven't got the budget.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, right. That's happening right now, where Arnold [Schwarzenegger], the governor is— They're all trying to figure out what to do. Usually the budget doesn't come through on time. So what happens is you don't get paid for X amount of time. Then eventually, whatever kicks in, kicks in; and then they give you retroactive back.

Dave Hubert: Sometimes. [chuckles]

Barbara Hubert: It was typical in the June-July timeframe to not have a clue when you were going to be next paid. That did happen.

Dave Hubert: And that condition still exists today. It's a shame that our politicians, who have our future, cannot run an organization. Now, it's about time maybe we stop taking a look at politicians and start putting businessmen in a position of—

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, of economic—

Dave Hubert: —decision making and economic, for our state. You sit here day after day, as an old citizen, and you look at it and it's just hectic and hellacious, the way our politicians are running this state. But we're not here for that, so—

Wheelock: That's a different interview.

01-00:10:51

Dave Hubert: Yeah, that's a different interview.

Barbara Hubert: That's budget. That's a whole budget—Well, after 1972, we really didn't get anywhere, and it was 1973 and then 1974. It wasn't till 1980 that anything happened to change, and it was because of the help, with outside influence, such as Al Whitehead, from Local 1014 in the IAFF [International Association of Fire Fighters] and the California State Firefighters' Association, that helped us establish a county fire department in Orange County. Everything just seemed to change overnight. We went from a two-

platoon system with very low pay, the same job, to within a year, a fifty-six-hour workweek, better pay, blue uniforms. It was just a true, not only change in the profession status, but the attitude of the guys. Now we felt that we were on a parity with the average fire department, on pay and hour-wise. We always have been with them and ahead of them, on number of calls and fires, because it was always the CDF, it was the Orange County fire department, that always handled the biggest, most complex fires throughout Southern California, whether it was in county or out of county. We had a knowledge base within our department, of true professional, practical, academic guys that could handle that fire scene situation. Not only that, but we were part of the original ICS [Incident Command System] system establishment committee that implemented the ICS system. I didn't have a lot to do with it, but I was part of the initial group. I did a lot with the display processor and the resource status officer for the large fires. And guys like Ronnie Coleman and Bill Teie and Don Forsyth and Larry Holmes all had a lot to do with the implementation of that system. A lot of state people up in Sacramento. Their names escape me right now.

But that was one of the key elements of our profession that really got us talking on the same level, about the same things, and creating a statewide network that really has helped the fire service, in my opinion. And I'm proud to be part of that. But the fire service has just progressed because of guys like that. The guys took an interest in the profession and saw the future of many fires that we would be fighting. You look at them today and they were right on, because of the size of the fires, the number of the fires. They're getting worse each year. The thing that is saving us is not only did we take a look at the potential for the fire happening; we were also smart enough to take a look at what it meant to the community. We developed a interface fire plan. When I was fire defense coordinator for Orange County for about seven years, we'd literally sit right down on the ground, and along with the help from the state people, Public Resources Code 4291, we established safe distances, types of construction, access, building code requirements, to help reduce the structural fire loss in Southern California and in Northern California. And Northern California's been a little bit behind us, with regard to implementing a lot of these rules, because the constituency and the political body hasn't really accepted it, to a certain point. But here in L.A. and Orange County, we've made some tremendous progress. And we're proud of that.

Wheelock: Going back to what you'd mentioned before, I was wondering if you could tell me sort of the backstory of how the Orange County fire department actually kind of came together. Because you had mentioned something in passing, that certain people had helped out and then—

01-00:15:00

Dave Hubert: Yeah. That's a fun story. We talk about it a lot, about the old days and how things happened. There were a lot of instrumental people in that changeover, and part of CDFEA, California Division of Forestry Employees Association,



California State Firefighters, tried to put together a program where the county would create their own fire department. Of course, because of economics, the county didn't want to do it.

Wheelock: Right.

01-00:15:34

Dave Hubert:

And the state still wanted to be involved. Well, two things really came to focus when we tried that. The CDF people didn't want to lose Orange County, because their people were being trained in the Schedule A program, which is a structural fire program, and they were getting a lot of good training for their people to go statewide and create other Schedule A programs, which is the structural firefighting of the fire department. Schedule B program was the wildland firefighting. So there was opposition from the state. Of course, there was opposition from the county people, because they didn't want to pay the higher bill for the fire department. And when I started in 1968, we had twelve fire stations. Interesting point. When I retired in 1991, we had sixty-seven fire stations. So that gives you some idea of the growth we went through. And it was neat to be at the fire department at that time, because of the growth. You had many opportunities to serve in many— I was a dispatcher, I was warehouseman, I was in training, I was in fire prevention, I was on a truck company, on a rescue squad, on an engine company, on an ambulance for a short period of time. My favorite job always is on the truck company, which we put into service in 1972. Of my thirty years, I spent eighteen years there. And visiting other cities, like L.A. city and L.A. County, to see how their truck company operations worked. When I talked to those firemen about the Orange County fire department, they couldn't believe that we were doing the same job they were, but the hours were way up and the salary was—

So we really had a cause. An interesting point about the guys that I started with, we always had a cause to try to make things better, during my time period at the fire service. We always wanted to be with the higher-paid guys and get the respect. Although we did as much, fought as much fire and we did everything else just like they did, we just felt that we weren't respected, because we had long hours and low pay. Now today, you look back at the people in the fire service today and they have the low hours and the high pay. Yet in my opinion, there seems to be some lack of— Gosh, I can't think of a word for it now.

Wheelock: Maybe a disconnect?

01-00:18:21

Dave Hubert:

Devotion. Yeah, a disconnect to the fire service today, from the community and what they're— I would've done the job free. And here recently, at a little training seminar, I heard a young fireman say to me that he can't wait till he sees the fire station in his rearview mirror. Meaning he can't wait till he goes home. Now, something's wrong with the profession. Number one, we should

never have hired a guy like that, to begin with. We want guys that want to be fire people. I never experienced that attitude when I was a firefighter. Everyone was devoted, not only to the profession, but to the community. We were always involved in programs—self-betterment and we always had a community barbeque twice a year and we had the pancake breakfasts. We never, ever asked for anything extra. And we always went to training on our own, to better ourselves. Now it's a different story. A lot of guys don't go to training unless the agency pays for the training. My philosophy is that you better yourself. You need to make an investment in yourself. So things are definitely different nowadays. And it's not all bad. The world is changing.

Barbara Hubert: Times are different, right.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, times are different.

Barbara Hubert: Everything.

Dave Hubert: Even Barbara had said, "Hey, listen, we've got the same problem," in her profession.

Barbara Hubert: In industry, right. It's all where the focus is. I think society in general has changed, in that the younger people— It just seems like, first of all, they have a lot more family involvement, which is a very positive thing. Many, many years ago, the men went off and worked and there wasn't as much bonding with all the children. Now you see dads at the plays and— So I see a whole difference in society. And a lot of that's very, very good. But it takes some of the focus away from being at the fire station all the time. It might be a good shift; you never can tell.

01-00:20:31

Dave Hubert: Yeah. In that, I'm not criticizing any of it; I just recognize that we're into a—

Barbara Hubert: Just notice the difference, yeah.

Dave Hubert: —different time. But with regard to the fire service, it's the frontline community troops. And the cops, too. In my opinion, the cops are the real heroes of today. Everyone says the fire guys are. But you know what? We're in a safe society because the cops are out there. We spend a lot of time, as a firefighter, working side by side with the police department. I don't know how they handle it. I could never have been a policeman—although I wanted to be. I wanted to be a Highway Patrolman, to begin with. They're the ones that turned me on to the fire department, one of the things. What those guys have to put up with, what they have to do, in my opinion, they're really the unsung heroes of the world. They're the ones that keep us safe. Sure, we do our job when it comes to the big fires; but that's all routine for us. We're trained. We've spent a lot of time knowing how to handle this thing. Everyone says, well, gosh, here you're running into a building, when everyone else is running

out. Well, I know what to look for. I know how to handle it, because of the excellent training. That's one thing I have to say about the fire service; it is one of the best training grounds and they provide some of the best training that I've ever seen in my life. It's just a great profession. And still today. And another thing that I like about today's fire service, versus my career, when I was a younger— Every time we'd have a tragedy—a death or a serious injury or a terrible accident—some of the stuff used to be hidden. We really didn't be truthful; we really didn't really tell the true story about firefighters' deaths.

Wheelock: You didn't examine what happened.

01-00:22:22

Dave Hubert: Yeah, correct. Well, we did examine what happened, but we never put it out to press. Today it's a different story. Boy, we have a team that goes in there and takes— And they're just as open as you would want [them] to be. Hey, this is what was wrong; they didn't follow the eighteen rules situation and shout watch out, the ten firefighting orders. We have all that criteria now. Here are the kind of rules, here's what you have to watch out for. And by gosh, every time there's been a fatality or death, one of those rules have been violated, because someone wasn't paying attention. Normally, the company officer, whose job it is to pay attention to that stuff. But the evaluation team, it's now very truthful and very open, and that's a real step forward for the fire service. I'm very happy about that. A lot of progress, I've seen. Again, it's been in training, it's been in post-incident analysis, it's been with the people. It has a lot of human texture to it now. I remember a couple incidents where we had terrible fatalities.

Airplane crashes are terrible. Car crashes are bad, especially when you see a young child. Fires, where the people have been burnt up. Guys would come back to the fire station and there was a *verboden* sense about it. No one talked for a couple hours. We normally just kept that all in. We got into this job and we have to put up with that, was our thought. Now they actually have post-incident analysis, where, if guys feel disturbed, they can go talk to a professional person and get it out, get it off their chest. I never really talked about it a lot, especially to the family, because there's no sense bringing the gruesome thing home. I don't want them to— But a lot of this stuff bothered me at time. But today, the fire guys have a way of getting rid of it and they can talk to a professional person. That's another asset to today's fire service.

Barbara Hubert: There's more acceptance, is what you mean. It wasn't really accepted to talk about it, was it?

01-00:24:40

Dave Hubert: Yeah, well, you're a dude, you're hired to honor this job; you're needed to expect that and you need to put up with it. Well, yeah, okay. Guys like me can put up with it because I understand it. Other people don't have as easy of a time as I did, to take something like that, do your job and then to let it go. We

always think about it. Memories come back. When you see certain situations, you remember the tragedies, and you've been there and you couldn't help them, because they're gone. I guess the biggest thing is the numbers of people that die in an airplane crash. That's always been the hardest thing to put up with, for me. It's such a violent death that I don't think anyone will ever get used to, whether you're a fire guy or not.

[asides deleted]

Wheelock: Well, I was going to ask. You had said something else in passing, about there was a good story about how the Orange County fire department, the county fire department, kind of came together, and we didn't go back to that.

01-00:26:56

Dave Hubert: Okay, well anyway, the Orange County fire department came together because we had a lot of support and a lot of grassroots support, that we convinced the majority of the official people that it needed to happen. But the reason that it happened is because at the time, Jerry Brown was governor and he felt, for some odd reason—and through the work with Al Whitehead at Local 1014, from L.A. County, and the CSFA—that we were trying to get that seventy-two-hour workweek bill passed. Well, if the guys at Orange County got a seventy-two-hour workweek for the CDF, that meant that the rest of the state CDF were going to get a seventy-two-hour workweek bill. It wasn't just Orange County.

Barbara Hubert: The impact would be huge.

Dave Hubert: So through some negotiations and things of all kinds of different stories we were able to get the governor to buy into it. I'll never forget. Al Whitehead gave me a call about midnight one night. He says, "Hey, I've got good news and bad news for you." I said, "What's that, Al?" He says, "Well, you're not going to get your seventy-two-hour workweek bill, but by 1980, you'll have a county fire department and everything will start coming together." That was Jerry Brown's decision, that instead of giving the CDF the seventy-two-hour workweek bill, he was just going to pull the CDF contract from Orange County and it became a county fire department.

Wheelock: Wow. Yeah. So instead of having to change the workweek for everybody—

01-00:28:44

Dave Hubert: Right.

Wheelock: I know you just said this, but instead of having to change the workweek for everyone and causing a huge increase in cost—

01-00:28:50

Dave Hubert: Yeah, state cost.

Wheelock: Yeah. They said, okay, you can—

01-00:28:54

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Wheelock: Now, do you know anything about how that came about? Or it just was something you were told?

01-00:29:01

Dave Hubert: Yeah, obviously, it came about because of negotiation; it came about because of his economic committee taking a look at the bigger impact on working what the story was all about. Admittedly, the Orange County fire department, which was part of the CDF, was way ahead of the average CDF firefighter, with regard to equipment, training, all that. The Orange County fire department is a sleeping giant. In other words, they are so far ahead of many fire departments, still today, because of their young leadership style, because of the way that they do things, and because they face the problems forthwith. It's always been an aggressive fire department with good leadership and a good attitude about the service we provide for the community. And it's been neat to be part of that because from the chief down, that's— They had little internal problems once in a while—and they'd cure them—like any other big organization. Like I said, when I started, we had twelve fire stations. When I left in 1991, we had sixty-seven fire stations. All that comes about through growth and through problems you handle. You look at L.A. City right now. They've got a tremendous problem with harassment and hazing that goes on. L.A. County Fire Department, same issues. But those are things you just fix, because you're dealing with people. It's a human nature job. It just gets fixed. And the fire service approaches things like that head on. They find out what the issue is and they— You see, that's what I like about the profession. And that's why it's so close. It's a tight-knit group, it's a good network, because we're all the same character and quality of people. We're practical people.

Wheelock: Were you hazed when you first started?

01-00:31:10

Dave Hubert: Oh, boy. [whistles] I'll tell you about hazing. The humoristic part of our profession— And as you know, I'm a cartoonist. I'm Hubie for the cartoon series in the California State Firefighters, and I developed a book. Well, I didn't. My sweet wife here produced a book called *Hubie and the Fire Service*. There was so much of that stuff. Sometimes when you're the butt of a joke, it's hard to laugh. But for the most part, my year and a half as a rookie in the fire station was very rewarding; I learned a lot of things. Then after my year and a half, then I got to do it to someone else. Those kinds of things kept us together, because we consider it attitude adjustment. It was harmless. It was fun. It was something that brought us together as a team. It was what guys do. They do it in the army, they do it in the police department, they do it in the fire service, they do it in a gas company, they do it in a water company. Everyone does it—until recently, when the girls came. Now, don't get me

wrong; I'm not a sexist in any way, but the girls added another dimension to our fire service. And it was a positive dimension; but it certainly changed our outlook, with regard to attitude adjustments and how we reacted. Now we find that what you did to a guy in good fun, you couldn't do to a girl, because if you did it to the girl, you'd have a case on your back. I was involved in hiring four of the first girls that came to work for us, because I was in training at the time. I'll never forget the personnel clerk for the County of Orange—this is when we were still CDF—said to me, "We're going to change these tests, so that we have females [who] can come to work for us." Well, we changed the ladder evolution from a thirty-five foot ladder to a fourteen-foot, lighter ladder. We took a hundred pounds off the dummy that you carry up the stairway. Instead of pulling a hundred feet of two-and-a-half-inch hose, you only had to pull fifty feet of inch-and-a-half. So we lessened a lot of the physical requirements. Of course, our thought, well, hey, we're not lessening it in the field; why do we have to do it here? Well, the objective is to get the girls to come to work for the fire department, so let's do it. Well, we had a mandate, so we did it. I think eight girls applied and four made it, just barely. We had to make some concessions for them.

Wheelock: They made it through the testing, or they made it through the academy?

01-00:34:04

Dave Hubert: They made it through the academy, because we looked the other way on some of the things. And that's the realities of what happened. Many people will go right along with me and tell you, Hubert's right; this is how it happened. But we got the girls. They're all retired now, just like I am. But two of the girls went onto Workman's Comp, because they had a back injury. First off, we were able to face the fact that men and women are different. They could be just as strong as we are for a few minutes, but their ability wasn't quite there. They're much better medical aides, in my opinion. But being on a truck company, raising a ladder and ventilating a— You could see their shortcomings. But we made concessions for them. We supported them. They were part of the team and the captain, if he was smart, just didn't give them the strenuous jobs. That's the realities of what it was all about. You put them on a turntable and they'd operate the turntable, rather than put them on the roof with the axes and the breathers to open up the— Every job we gave them, they were good at. As long as you know where to place them. Still today, the L.A. city guys talk about the same thing and the L.A. County guys. They have a place. And they've added a greater dimension to the fire service and they'll be there. On the same token, we've noticed that we've changed a lot of our tactics and strategies over the past— It was routine for us to run inside of a house with a hose line, one guy, and put the fire out and save the house. Now we're a little bit more discriminatory about that. They're going to have to replace the end of the house anyway, so why not— Don't endanger the people. We use a different strategy and a different tactic now, to get things handled.

Barbara Hubert: You go inside if there're people in there.

Dave Hubert: Well, yeah. But there's always people in there. There's always something. So I went through that part and that was a very interesting part of the fire service, seeing the ladies come aboard. And then all the new programs. The paramedic program, I was there when that was established, the hazmat people. There's a lot of newer programs. We don't just fight fires today. We have hazardous materials, we have urban search and rescue, the paramedic program. It's just a wide scope of services we provide for the community. And Orange has kept up with that, like L.A. City and L.A. County.

Wheelock: So how did you start to get interested in the steamer? How did that come about?

01-00:37:00

Dave Hubert: Oh, boy. Well, in 1991—well, actually, in 1988—we started racing cars. I went through, like every male—

Barbara Hubert: You mean your mid-life—

Dave Hubert: My mid-life crisis. Before I met Barbara, I was a racecar driver, and then I became a fireman. I was very successful. I was a young kid and I made Rookie of the Year, and we were driving stock cars. On television with Dick Lane. That'll show you how long ago—

Barbara Hubert: This was a long time ago.

Dave Hubert: A long time ago, in 19—

Barbara Hubert: Would've been 19—

Dave Hubert: '57 to 1964 or '5. Absolutely loved it. You could sit there and work on your racecar and build it. Anyway, so then I became a fireman and loved it. Met sweet Barbara. Then in 1988, I went through a midlife— Said, "I need something." She said, "Well, what do you want?" I said, "I'd like to get back into auto racing." So she agreed with it.

Wheelock: Was it that easy?

01-00:38:07

Barbara Hubert: Oh, *no*! Well, first of all, I wasn't familiar with auto racing, so it wasn't till after we were in a little while that I thought, oh, my goodness, this is loud and it's dirty. It's really fun for the driver; but as a spectator, it was a challenge for me. But we had a wonderful time. He's always good at everything he's done. And I got to go down to the pits and stuff and learn things that I knew nothing about at all. So I think it was really important for him to return to that and have some fun at it, though.

Dave Hubert: She said it was like taking thousand-dollar bills—

Barbara Hubert: Oh, yeah, very expensive.

Dave Hubert: —and putting them in the carburetor and watching it come out as smoke. So we did it for about three years, and the last race of the season, we ruined the racecar. We had a terrible accident.

Barbara Hubert: Somebody ruined it for you. Somebody ran into him. It was pretty bad.

Dave Hubert: That was on a Friday. Saturday night you show, and then Sunday I heard of another racecar for sale, down in Fallbrook. So I piled her in the car and we went down to the Fallbrook Car Show.

Wheelock: You sure are a patient woman.

01-00:39:16

Dave Hubert: Well, yeah!

Barbara Hubert: Thank you. Thank you. Well, he's a very good husband.

Wheelock: Oh, good. I'm sorry, you were saying?

01-00:39:24

Dave Hubert: We went to this car show, and looking at this other race car— I knew she was just— Here we were. And the old gentleman saw my fireman's hat and he said, "Are you really a fireman?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "We're going to buy another racecar." He says, "Boy," he says, "I've got an old fire engine down in this barn, you ought to come take a look at." That's how the steamer came into our life. We went down. His name was Bobby Babcock. We were at the Fallbrook Car Show, at Fallbrook High School, and we drove down the street to this beautiful ranch.

Barbara Hubert: Gorgeous.

Dave Hubert: Gorgeous ranch. In the back, was this barn. Trees all around it, nice white barn with red trim. We opened up the door of this barn, and there in the back, in the shadow, was this black boiler thing.

Barbara Hubert: Piece of junk! [laughs] I didn't recognize it as a steamer.

Dave Hubert: I knew what she was thinking, because the place was full of old steam parts and so on and so forth. We went in there and lo and behold, it was an old steam fire engine.

Wheelock: You knew what it was.



01-00:40:35

Dave Hubert: I knew what it was.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, he knew right away, yeah. It was just it was pretty disheveled and it was rusty and almost all the parts were gone. So I didn't pick up on it right away. I could see the form of it, but I didn't— Of course, he told me right away what it was.

Dave Hubert: It was a horse-drawn steam fire [engine]. An interesting sidebar to this whole situation is about three years prior to finding this steamer, we were at the San Juan parade, in San Juan Capistrano, and happened to see the Budweiser Clydesdales.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, the Clydesdales.

Dave Hubert: If you've ever seen that show, those eight big, massive horses pulling that wagon— We were there watching them hook up the horses. Man, I was so interested and so blown away by the character and quality of this Budweiser hitch that I said to her— Remember what I said?

Barbara Hubert: Right. You said you wished you could do something like that for the fire service.

Dave Hubert: For the fire service.

Wheelock: Ask and ye shall receive.

01-00:41:39

Dave Hubert: Yeah. That's how it came about. So at the time, he wanted about \$30,000 for this thing. We couldn't afford this.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, that was way beyond. Well, I couldn't see the value in it.

Dave Hubert: Neither could I. But anyway, a couple weeks later, I go out to get the newspaper, on my twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, May the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1991, and there, sitting in my driveway, is the steamer. She had bought it for me for my twenty-fifth wedding anniversary present.

Wheelock: Oh, my gosh!

01-00:42:13

Barbara Hubert: But I didn't pay that much for it. [laughs] We did a few negotiations.

Wheelock: Excellent.

01-00:42:18

Dave Hubert: Yeah, I still wonder how she paid for the steamer!

Barbara Hubert: I cannot believe what he did. You almost had to see it to appreciate the poor quality it was in. Thank heavens the gentleman left it inside of a barn for twenty-one years.

Dave Hubert: Twenty-one years, yeah.

Barbara Hubert: Because, although we never realized it when we purchased it—and I don't think Bobby, the steamer owner, knew it either, the gentleman we bought it from—throughout the restoration, eventually we learned that the boiler was not rusted out, and it works perfectly.

Wheelock: Oh, nice.

01-00:42:52

Barbara Hubert: So it still pumps a thousand gallons of water a minute—which none of us anticipated in the beginning. We were just going to restore it to its original glory and have it look pretty. Actually, I didn't go any farther than that. I thought, well, we'll have this nice unit that just sits there—never realizing we'd be traveling all over with it, *and* it would function. It's spectacular to see it pumping.

Dave Hubert: Yeah. Well, so there it was. Luckily, we had a garage big enough to hold it. Of course, I had to give her a couple of hugs and kisses, because she surprised me with it. But for the first year, all I ended up doing was research. There were so many missing parts. Everywhere I turned, I received negative feedback from everyone. You're never going to be able to do this; you can't do it; no more parts available.

Barbara Hubert: Too much was missing.

Dave Hubert: Too much was missing, this and that. But I kept chipping away and found out it was Reno Number 1 and it was a 1902 American. The American is the predecessor to the American LaFrance Fire Engine Company, and this was Reno Number 1, and it was pulled by three horses at headquarters. The more I researched, the more interesting things I found out about it. Well, I've always wanted an old-time fire engine to have something to play with, but a steamer? They built 700 of these steam fire engines, and there's only eight of them left today. One of them is in the Berkeley museum; the other one's L.A. County; and then I have the only one that travels and is still functional. Boy you talk about a fun time. So we messed around with it. All of a sudden, in 1997, I go to work one day and go for my physical. Go to work at eight o'clock and did my physical at ten o'clock, and eleven o'clock, they retired me.

Wheelock: Oh!

01-00:44:41

Dave Hubert: It was a surprise retirement, with a health reason—which I tried to argue with them, but they say you can't argue with him. But I had my thirty years in.

They said, “Hey, take your retirement and go.” Didn’t want to do it. I still wanted the job and wanted to be part of it. It’s a neat profession and it’s a neat group to be involved with. Then the steamer really started to get restored. Then another interesting point about it was my son, a teenager at the time I got the steamer. We were able to work on it together, and it inspired him; now he’s a fireman. So there were some times when, of course, fathers and sons have a way of not getting along; but this thing brought us together. It was quite a thrill to see how it worked out between he and I. Well, we got the thing finished in 1996, after all my son and daughter’s education money.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, it was very expensive to restore, a little bit at a time.

Wheelock: And special parts had to be fabricated for it.

01-00:46:08

Barbara Hubert: Right. I think we should share the story. The biggest part of all that was missing, which is lethal that it was missing—and that’s why everyone said you’ll never be able to do this—was the pump itself, which is the midsection. It’s a huge, huge pump. And that’s what makes it work. So we were on a private vacation—now we’re going to go back in time a little, because this was way before ’97.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, ’94.

Barbara Hubert: Dave loves railroads. Anything big. I told him, I said, “I wonder what year is going to come where we can buy something small.”

Wheelock: He has to have big shiny things.

01-00:46:50

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Barbara Hubert: He has to have big things. I’m lucky he didn’t buy a locomotive. So he *loves* trains, and we went to the *magnificent* California railroad museum [California State Railroad Museum], which is one of the most beautiful museums I’ve ever seen.

Wheelock: I’ve been there.

01-00:47:02

Barbara Hubert: We walk inside, and encased in glass— Dave says to me, “That’s what I need to restore my steamer.” I said, “Gosh, are you sure? Well, so what, honey? It’s in a museum.” Because to me, a museum is so sacred. It wouldn’t even dawn on me that he’d think of getting it. However, he did. He went to the curator, and through a long process—I think it took about two years—

Dave Hubert: Three and a half.

Barbara Hubert: —and a substantial donation to the museum—they understood the magnitude of what we were trying to restore and what that would bring to people, to see it restored, and they were good enough to let us take that pump and use it for the steamer. Now, the reason that the California Railroad [Museum] had a pump was because they used to take the pumps off the steamers and use them to fight fires on the show sheds for the railroad.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, along Donner Summit, for example.

Barbara Hubert: The Sierra. So the significance to that being in the California Railroad Museum was that they removed those pumps on a regular basis.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, when the steamer left service in Reno, Reno was served by Southern Pacific Railroad, so the Southern Pacific Railroad bought the steamer from Reno. And they dismantled it and they put the motor and the pump on a locomotive, and they used it as a firefighting train along the Donner Summit snow sheds. It had the same builder number, which is 2823, which is our builder number on the steamer. So when I got into the California Railroad Museum, I saw that pump and I said, “Son of a gun.” Went over and looked at it, and there, standing right in front of me, on the builder’s plate, was the pump that they used for firefighting, and it had 2823 on it.

Barbara Hubert: Which is unbelievable.

Whelock: So it was the actual pump from—

01-00:48:55

Dave Hubert: It was the actual pump. To have that happen, yeah. I think it’s—right—beyond.

Whelock: Fell from heaven?

01-00:49:07

Barbara Hubert: I don’t think there’s another story that matches that. That is phenomenal, to find that pump in that museum.

Dave Hubert: And then another interesting [thing] was when, then we approached CSFA, California State Firefighters, for a sponsorship, because we didn’t have the money to buy the pump and the motor. Through some negotiations, we got them to sponsor us. They paid for the pump. That was the beginning of a great—

Barbara Hubert: Relationship, sure.

Dave Hubert: —partnership with CSFA. And that steamer team, now this is our thirteenth year of touring. It’s been a great partnership. We do about fifty shows a year, all over the state of California, just in the interest of the fire service. The whole objective is fire prevention, of course. It’s just been a very rewarding

experience—thanks to them. And of course, I couldn't have done it without the gal here, who is now my administrative assistant.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, boy! You know that means, Sarah. That means work! [laughs] No, that works fine. We have a good time. We're very blessed. I think that it keeps us both young and active. And then we've grown. It used to be just Dave and I. And of course, we weren't blessed enough to have Blaze yet, in the beginning. So we were pretty alone, going throughout the state with all this heavy equipment and everything. Although that was thirteen years ago and he was a lot younger, it was, even then, I think, a very heavy— Everything's heavy and *everything* was on him. I couldn't even lift a single steamer part. So slowly but surely, we have formed a steamer team. We have six retired firefighters and their wives, who travel throughout the state with us. It works just perfectly. Some can go some times; some can go other times. So usually, we'll typically have at least three—

Dave Hubert: Yeah, three or four guys.

Barbara Hubert: —three or four guys with us, and their wives. And it also makes it fun for all of us, because now you have all the networking that goes around. We do campsite cooking and—

Wheelock: Oh, gosh.

01-00:51:18

Barbara Hubert: So it's become a really fun— We go to Mule Days and we stay there for like four days. We just have wonderful places. We go up in gold country and camp.

Dave Hubert: The Rose Parade.

Barbara Hubert: The Rose Parade. We stay for almost a week there.

Wheelock: Gosh.

01-00:51:33

Barbara Hubert: So it has gone from, actually, to be blunt, a lot of really hard work, for just Dave doing— Then of course, we found Blaze. We rescued her when she was eleven months old. It's just become a fabulous program, outreach program. It's everything from parades to community events, to fire department open houses, to charity. Lots of charity functions. Cancer Society—just all the different charities. Often, actually, nowadays, through the car shows, you'll see a lot of— Like Concours d'Elegance shows and all. And they'll be for cancer or for heart disease or for whatever. So it's a give-back program, with a lot of joy, though. Lots of smiles. You're bringing somebody a good day. They get to visit with the dog. And hopefully, the children remember. We have different questions that we ask children, depending on their age. If it's a very, very young child, it might be so simple as— Well, it ranges; everything

from knowing to call 911 to maybe— One of the new phrases, which I actually just recently learned, is know, K-N-O-W, two ways out. They're teaching the children to know two exit ways out of their home. So the older children, we can share that type of thing with them. And of course, Blaze does stop, drop and roll, should, heaven forbid, anybody get their clothes on fire.

Dave Hubert: And the smoke detector. A big one is changing smoke detector [batteries].

Barbara Hubert: Right, have mom and dad check the smoke detector batteries.

Dave Hubert: And what do you do when you hear it go off? It's neat because all you really have to do— You look, still today, in our neat society, you hear every day of a child or a mother—

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, tragedies. Also, as much as you think the children are taught, a lot of them don't know. That surprised me. I was very surprised by, when we asked the questions, how many children didn't know. Because I always assume, and I know they *are*, taught in school, a lot of things and there are a lot of wonderful programs. But a lot of them don't know.

Dave Hubert: You ask, what do you do when you hear the smoke detector? Hide.

Barbara Hubert: Right.

Dave Hubert: Hide.

Wheelock: I know, that's where they find the kids, hiding under the bed.

01-00:53:50

Dave Hubert: I'll tell you what.

Wheelock: I'm sure you've seen that.

01-00:53:53

Dave Hubert: Oh, yeah.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, sure.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, we have.

[asides deleted]

[Begin Audiofile 2]

Wheelock: We're rolling.

02-00:00:00

Barbara Hubert: Okay. Well, there have been some phenomenal things that have happened to us, during the thirteen years that we've been on the road. Two that come to my mind, that are just astounding, is one time we were at Coalinga, which has the most charming community event. It's a horned toad race and contest. So of course, I'm in there, I'm betting on the horned toad and everything. It was really fun, because they have this race and these are pretty funny little creatures. What happened was, then we had a static display after that, where we just display. Then everybody was enjoying it, and then we steamed up, right?

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Barbara Hubert: So during a steam-up, I am the photographer for the steamer team and I really enjoy that. So I'm taking all these pictures, and in doing that, I was looking at the crowd.

So I looked over, under a tree, and there was this just delightful lady. She had to be way up in her nineties. And it was obvious, the joy that was on her face, so I went over to her and I said, "You look like you're really having a fun time." She said, "You don't know what this means to me." She said, "When I was a little girl, I lived alongside of a fire station and I saw a steamer similar to yours. I used to visit those horses all the time." I said, "No kidding." I said, "Well, may I ask where you were living when you were a little girl?" And she said, "Reno, Nevada." And our steamer is the only steamer, it's steamer number 1, that Reno had. I just got chills, because that means that she lived alongside of our fire steamer and that was the steamer she remembered. She was so thrilled. So when I told her the story, we became fast friends and we wrote for years after. Then we eventually lost her, because she was already pretty up there then. But I couldn't believe that we met someone that actually lived alongside of the steamer.

So then it happened, believe it or not, again. There was a lady from Fullerton. Her name is Florence Arnold, and she's also gone by now. But we actually interviewed her. We brought her down to see the steamer and she, too saw our steamer when she was very, very young. So the likelihood of that happening, I thought, was just incredible. And I've never, never forgotten it.

Wheelock: And twice.

02-00:02:42

Barbara Hubert: Twice.

Wheelock: It's like being struck by lightning.

02-00:02:43

Barbara Hubert: Right. They were spaced quite a few years apart, but it did happen and it was just unbelievable.

Dave Hubert: The interesting thing about the Coalinga one is— She brought her over and introduced her to me, after we steamed up.

Barbara Hubert: And we took photos. I have photos.

Dave Hubert: And her biggest thing was she remembered Bud, one of the horses.

Barbara Hubert: Oh.

Dave Hubert: As she'd go to school, mom would always pack an apple or something, and they'd run off to school and she'd always run in the fire station and give Bud a piece of apple. Bud would smile for her, she said. He'd lift up his lips and he'd smile. The fireman taught the horse to smile if he got a treat. When I think about it and I look back, the horses used to live in the fire stations with the guys. The horses were an integral part of the fire department. So many heroic stories about the horses that someone needs to do either a documentary or a book about the old fire horses, because there truly is some historical relevance there about, really, what the horses have done. The bottom line is that they provided protection for the community. If you look at our early community, everything was built out of wood, everything was close together. They had no fire hydrants.

Wheelock: And open flame everywhere.

02-00:04:14

Dave Hubert: Open flame. Good girl.

Barbara Hubert: Right. Candles—

Dave Hubert: Heating, lighting and cooking was open flame, and our country suffered a great deal from fires, throughout our nation. Of course, the interesting story about Reno Number 1 is that after the fourth time downtown burned down, the community got together and bought this steam engine. They all got together and had cake sales and things like that. Took them a year. Cost them \$5300 to buy that steam fire engine.

Barbara Hubert: In 1902.

Dave Hubert: Bought it in 1901, delivered in 1902. It's a second-size steam engine. Pumps about a thousand gallons of water a minute, and it takes three horses to get it. But there's a community involvement. There was no taxes in the community in 1902, no fire hydrants. We had a hose wagon with it. So there's a lot of texture to the story, when you look at the early fire service. The average fireman in Reno made \$53 a month. And he worked seven days a week. He got off, either on a Monday or a Tuesday, to go home with the family, to do whatever they needed; but he worked seven days a week, with a half a day off, either on a Monday or a Tuesday.



Wheelock: Sounds almost like your schedule. [they laugh]

Barbara Hubert: Ah-ha, there you go. Now, the other story that's really exciting is to tell about when we reenacted the earthquake.

Dave Hubert: Oh, the San Francisco earthquake.

Barbara Hubert: Which is perfect for today.

Wheelock: Yeah, we had an earthquake.

02-00:05:47

Dave Hubert: April 18th? What was the—

Barbara Hubert: I think it was—

Dave Hubert: 1906, April 18th, San Francisco had their big earthquake. Well, April 18th, 2006 was their hundredth anniversary, and they invited our steamer to participate in their show, because our steamer is what's known as the metropolitan. And L.A. city and San Francisco used that particular brand of steam fire engine to protect their city. Well, we were thrilled to be able to go up to San Francisco and do this reenactment of the great [earthquake]. So we went up there a couple days ahead of time and we did a few shows. Two of the things that stand out the most is, prior to the actual date when we were going to do the reenactment, they invited us up to the theater. I don't remember the name of the theater. So we hooked the horses up there at Candlestick Park and we took the horses out with the steamer, up through the city streets, up Market Street, up the hills, with a police escort. They gave us eight cops on motorcycles to escort us up through San Francisco.

Barbara Hubert: So you can imagine the constituency, trying to drive down the street, seeing a steamer.

Dave Hubert: A steamer, yeah. So the sergeant, the policeman, he comes over to me and he says, "We're ready to go." About six o'clock, we were going up to this grand hotel and everyone was going— There's a costume party and everyone is going to be dressed in 1906 criteria, big hats, and we were going to be right at the beginning of this thing. We had our uniforms on. The cop comes up to me and he says, "Now, I want you to know that this is San Francisco and people don't follow the rules up here." I said, "What do you mean by that?" He says, "Well, although we're going to escort you, people are still going to run the red lights and drive past us, so you just have to be careful." So here we're taking this horse-drawn steam fire engine through the center of San Francisco, at seven o'clock on a Saturday night, with eight cops escorting us, and I'm telling you right now. So we lit off the smoke and we rang the bell.

And we went up the street and it was the damnedest thing. Sure enough, just like the policeman said, the guys would come up to the signal, they'd see us and they'd drive right through the signal. They'd drive around the cops who were trying to stop them. Well, somehow we finally made it to the hotel.

Wheelock: Without the horses freaking out.

02-00:08:20

Dave Hubert: Yeah. Blaze was with us and we were right in front of that hotel, where all these people were coming in their Cadillacs and limousines.

Barbara Hubert: Actually, we ended up greeting them.

Dave Hubert: Greeting them.

Barbara Hubert: We ended up lining the stairway and greeting them. It was really fun.

Dave Hubert: It was a high-dollar big deal. They had 500 or 600 people dressed in costume, to do this celebration. Then the next day, at 5:08, I guess—

Barbara Hubert: 5:13.

Dave Hubert: —5:13, we were all staged and we got to run down through Lotta's Fountain, through Market Street. They said they expected a crowd, about 2- or 3,000 people. Well, about 100,000 people showed up.

Barbara Hubert: It was incredible.

Dave Hubert: Incredible.

Barbara Hubert: At that time in the morning, to have that many people come— And the Goodyear blimp was overhead, doing all the filming.

Dave Hubert: Yeah. We lit off the boiler, and right precisely at 5:13, they gave the signal and we charged, with the horses running and the smoke coming out.

Wheelock: Oh, gosh.

02-00:09:21

Dave Hubert: Every flashbulb in the audience went off.

Barbara Hubert: It was fabulous.

Dave Hubert: Blaze up on the seat barking and taking this horse-drawn steamer down Market Street, at precisely the time of the Great Earthquake, was kind of a thrill.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, it really was.

Wheelock: Kind of, yeah.

02-00:09:43

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah. It was spectacular. Well, the hundredth year doesn't come around very often. They had a big firefighters ball and everything. It was just the memory of a lifetime. To have the folks come out, legions of people, at that time of the morning, was phenomenal. The other thing they did that was so fabulous is they had X amount of people there who actually were alive during the earthquake, and they honored all of them. They were between a hundred and—I think the oldest one was like 110. That was very special. That's got to be rough, getting up at 110, to be ready for a party.

Wheelock: Yeah. You know what? I think if you reach 110, you should *never* have to get up in the morning.

02-00:10:32

Barbara Hubert: [Dave laughs] There you go.

Wheelock: You can just do whatever you want.

02-00:10:34

Dave Hubert: I agree with you. Every event we go on, though, is kind of special.

Barbara Hubert: Right.

Dave Hubert: We have all the three elements—the kids fall in love with the dog; the gals love the horses—ladies, I'm sorry; and the guys love the steam fire engine, the mechanism. It's interesting.

When you look at this steam fire engine that our grandfathers engineered and built, it's truly remarkable. Still today, the thing works, and all we do is clean it and maintain it, and we change the pistons, the leather pistons inside the pump, each year. That thing still keeps going.

Barbara Hubert: And it has to be certified annually. The State of California actually comes to our home and certifies—

Dave Hubert: The boiler.

Barbara Hubert: —the boiler, to ensure that it's safe for the public to be watching a steamer.

Wheelock: Oh, yeah, that would be bad.

02-00:11:31

Barbara Hubert: Yeah.

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, for everyone.

Wheelock: That would be a bad PR thing to have happen.

02-00:11:35

Barbara Hubert: Then some other very exciting things that have happened, some sad. But right after 9/11, Huntington Beach has a spectacular Fourth of July parade and they decided to honor the 343 firefighters that we lost in the towers. They had a full-sized flag—you might want to get that for her—a full-sized flag, 343 uniformed firefighters in this parade, and each flag pole—and it gives me chills, still—had the name of the individual firefighters. We had the extreme honor of having one of the flags. So the gentleman that we lost—

Dave Hubert: Donald Cassoria, Engine 22, FDNY [Fire Department of New York].

Barbara Hubert: And that was certainly a memory of a lifetime, for a very sad reason.

Dave Hubert: Oh, absolutely.

Barbara Hubert: The other thing that comes to my mind after 9/11 was that—certainly was unusual—we were able to take the steamer on the baseball field of Qualcomm Stadium for the opening ceremonies, as a tribute to firefighters. To take a unit like that out on a baseball field, first of all, is a major accomplishment. I could just see the players thinking, oh, my gosh, they're going to ruin the field, because it weighs ten ton. I mean 10,000 pounds, five ton, excuse me. So that was very, very exciting. And of course, the crowd, that was a really big treat for them. And we've gotten to go to a lot of the movie studios. There are a lot of burn runs or charity runs, and a lot of the major Hollywood studios support them, like Warner Bros, Fox Studios. So we've had a lot of fun doing that, and there again, getting a lot of funds for charity. So can you think of other things, honey, that stand out?

Dave Hubert: The horses have been very interesting to deal with. We have about five teams throughout the state, and wherever we go—

Barbara Hubert: So that the horses don't have to travel so far.

Dave Hubert: —we lease them. It takes three abreast, which is a unique arrangement. Then the harnesses specialize in driving the horses. The breed of choice, in the early days, was a Morgan-Percheron, a Morgan being a fast horse and a Percheron being a draft horse. They raise them with the big hooves, so that the hooves would not fall into the railroad tracks or the trolley tracks throughout the cities. They were a strong horse and an easy-to-train horse and a fast horse. When you look at 10,000 pounds, not only do they have to pull this fire engine, but they have to stop it. There's a lot to that. I can imagine these horses living in the fire station, because you really get attached to them. It's like Blaze. By the way, the dog, many people don't know this, but the

Dalmatian known as a coach dog used to live at the stables with the horses. Because a Dalmatian is a hound, it's a predator and it would eat a lot of the varmints and keep the mice population down and the rat population down. It also protected the horses from a lot of other wild dogs. In the early days, a lot of wild dogs used to nip at horses' feet to get food. So the Dalmatian literally would protect the fire horses from other wild dogs, and that's kind of the bottom line, why the Dalmatian came into the fire service.

Barbara Hubert: Well, they're such excellent runners; they would run with the horses. Horses have to be detached from the steamers, because they're so frightened of fire. So the Dalmatian would also protect the horses, as they were staging. There again, we don't think of it today. We don't have wild dogs today.

Wheelock: Right.

[asides deleted]

02-00:16:25

Dave Hubert: I spent thirty years in the fire service and did not know a lot about our history or heritage. When the steamer came into our life, it really opened up a door. So I started paying attention about the fire service heritage. It's just truly interesting that the first organized group in any community was developed in the interest of community protection—that was the sheriff and the fire service. Everyone got together and everyone chipped in. That's the story that we've lost, to a certain degree, that the fire service is where everyone chips in and does it. So many people today belittle the volunteer firefighters, and yet that's the root of our community culture. That's where everyone got together—not interested in the pay, but interested in providing a service for the community. That's the issue that I have against the union today. The union, although I hate to badmouth anything, but they are not at all tolerant towards the volunteer firefighter. That is really the community. There are so many communities that can't afford a professional fire department. Yet you have groups like the union, who go out of their way to belittle them. I say that now because I am retired, I know the fire service. I've seen it grow, I feel it. If anything I would like to see improved in today's fire service, it's the attitude of the union, to accept and come more into the twentieth century, with regard to understanding that we're here for the community. Not for the benefit of the firefighter, but we're here for the benefit of the community. It's gotten a little out of line, in my opinion. I hope that soon, we get it straight because it's not heading good, in my opinion. Of course, I'm just one guy. I can cite many examples. We were just at a show in Reno, Nevada, of all places, and CSFA were willing to provide free training, free live fire training, to anyone who wanted to come. It's a sad story. I just hate to see it happen. But the people in Reno didn't come because CSFA sponsors and offered it to volunteer firefighters, who needed the training. The union did not broadcast, did not network or send out invitations, because it was for volunteer firefighters. And that's the sad state of the affair of today's fire service.

Wheelock: Also there's been some bad blood between different unions — You know what I'm talking about, different CSFA—

02-00:19:44

Dave Hubert: Well, sure. It could've been. There is bad blood. And that's the attitude I'm talking about. You don't find the bad blood on CSFA's part, because CSFA is a benevolent organization, made up of all firefighters and all facets of the fire service, from dispatchers to chiefs, to firefighters, to civilian firefighters, to volunteer to paid. So CSFA is really the catalyst of the California fire service. If you look at the union, they've done a lot of good; but boy, their current attitude about volunteer firefighters is not in the community interest. That's the issue that I'm trying to— I'll always have that issue, because I don't agree with it. It's just a tragedy that we have to put up with stuff like that. I guess the cure would be that the union move to the twenty-first century and accept the realities of what a community can afford. But they won't.

Barbara Hubert: Can you think of other events, though, that we've done?

Dave Hubert: [laughs] Well, okay. When we light off the boiler and do shows, to see the thing under steam is quite interesting, to see how things worked in the early days and how they put fires out. The steamer used to create as many fires as it put out. That's why it has its own fire hose.

Barbara Hubert: Because of the cinders?

Dave Hubert: Because of the cinders, yeah, and it puts out a lot of sparks. But it was an interesting time and it was an interesting period in the fire service. We've developed so much. Like why is there a red light in front of a fire station? I spent thirty years in the fire department and never knew why there was a red light in front of the fire station. Yet every time I'd go to a school program, a child would ask me, "Why do you have a red light in front of a fire station." Because a red light in front of a building has a connotation to it.

Wheelock: Right.

02-00:21:57

Dave Hubert: But no, in the late 1700s, in Philadelphia, where they used to keep the fire equipment on the street, the streetlamp was painted red. It simply meant, the fire equipment's here. So you could look down a street and see the red streetlamp, and that means—

Barbara Hubert: Because everybody was volunteer.

Dave Hubert: When the bell would go off at night, the community would turn out to go help fight the fire. Although many people had buckets and stuff with them, they used to keep the large ladders and the thatching hooks in a certain area within the community, and that was marked by the streetlamp. And that streetlamp was painted red, so you could run down the main street, look down a street

and see the red lamp, and you'd know where to go to pick up your tools. They would know where the fire is, obviously, because they could see the glow. So those are things that I learned when we got involved with the steamer program. Not only did we put together a steam component, we paid attention to the fire service heritage and history. It's enlightening to research that and to see where our profession has come from. The first groups in the community were there for protection, police and fire, the sheriff and the fire. So we need to look back at our heritage sometimes.

Barbara Hubert: Well, it was all the community leaders that were the volunteer firefighters, right?

Dave Hubert: That's right, yeah. Ben Franklin. Then you kind of went through an interesting period, if you read the book. Those magnificent old steam fire engines and the thousand years of firefighting. There's a lot of interesting books that show how the community leaders established the fire department, the volunteers. Then the volunteers kind of spread off and they used to fight amongst themselves. No firefighting would get done, but fighting would happen. So in the interest of this, the steam engine was developed, because instead of having the gross number of firefighters, they only needed a few firefighters to man the steam engine. That was 1852. Uncle Joe Ross was the first steam fire engine, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ironically, our fire engine was built in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1901. But 1852 was the first steam fire engine, and it really shook up the fire service. They went from a 300-man fire department down to a ten-man fire department—paid fire department, by the way—and two of them were steam engineers that operated the pump; the rest of them were hose men and ladder men and support people. That was the first evolution of the fire service. A paid fire service and a steam fire engine was the biggest progression of the fire department. Finally now, we were able to put fires out, big massive fires, with this steam fire engine. So that Old Rosie, our nickname for the fire engine, is really a true historical element of our profession. Neat to be part of it. Was so rewarding. A retired guy, and Barbara and I, we just have really enjoyed this. This has been a fun experience. Speaking for me; I don't know.

02-00:25:23

Barbara Hubert: Oh, it's fun, all right. Very colorful. Well, meeting with people and doing something that's creating smiles for other people is very rewarding, because it's such a happy thing.

Dave Hubert: But it's historical and nature and everyone considers the fire guys the heroes. Okay, we'll buy off on that. Cops are really the heroes, in my opinion. I've been there and have seen what they've done and I've seen what we've done. But today's fire service is still okay. Nothing wrong with it. I worry about some of the issues. Barbara always talks to me about, oh, I need to be more positive; we've got a great group of guys up there—which we do. But many of the old guys know what I'm talking about. It boils down to—and I've seen it—in my day, the firefighter was a practical person: a carpenter, a plumber,

engineer. We'd come to work and we understood the fires. We understood homes; we knew how to build them. I just saw the latest results from our latest academy here in Orange County, the Orange County Fire Authority. Every one of the applicants for a firefighter position has either a master's degree or a doctorate in some academic—

Barbara Hubert: Or a bachelor's.

Dave Hubert: Or a bachelor's. No, no, no. He said it. It was a master's or a doctorate—

Barbara Hubert: Oh.

Dave Hubert: —that they have applied to be firefighters. Well, see, that's the issue I'm trying to talk about, is that we shouldn't be hiring the academics. We don't want to hire fire chiefs now; we want to hire the practical person, and then let them—

Barbara Hubert: Go up through the ranks?

Dave Hubert: —go up through the ranks. But you don't hire a doctorate to be a hose man and to clean windows in a fire station. And I've experienced that. We've had academics come to work for me and they're not into the practical task. So that's an issue that I think the fire service of today is missing. And I have a great good friend. His name is Larry Webb. Great guy. He ended up being a fire chief; shows you how smart he was and how dumb I was. I ended up being a captain. But he, in this great little fire department down in San Diego County, every time he would do a test, he would hire his firemen off of the B list, rather than the A list. He got the best firemen, because they were practically-oriented guys. They knew building construction, they knew about cars. They did work in a fire station. He got more stuff done in the fire stations, at a practical level, and he always hired off of the B list. He's the only guy that I know that does it, and it was quite interesting when he told me that. He said that for the first two years he was there, he'd hire off the A list; he'd hire the academic. He couldn't get anything done. All those guys were studying to be a captain or a fire chief and no one would do all the basic work in a firehouse. Well, that's the point. There's basic elements in a firehouse and you've got to step up.

Another failure is they're allowing fire people to go right to captain. They're missing the most important part of being a [firefighter], fire apparatus engineer, where you learn how to drive, you learn how to pump, you learn how to take care of equipment. Yet again, it's the academics that have allowed this to happen. Well, if the guy can take the test and pass it, why can't he become a captain? Well, no problem with that. Just that he's short sheeting himself, or short sheeting the profession, in the long run. Right now, we have about thirty openings, the last I heard, twenty-five or thirty openings in the Orange County fire department, because no one is either capable or willing to



take the engineer's test. Now, that's a sad state of affairs, because an engineer, a fire apparatus engineer is a key component—like a fire captain or a battalion chief in the fire service. But again, it's moving ahead too quick and it's a failure of the fire service. In our day, as practical firemen, you wouldn't have seen that because you had to spend at least a year as a firemen, at least a two-year stint as the engineer, to take the captain's exam.

Barbara Hubert: Well, the challenge becomes—I think where you're going with that is—if you're a captain, it's hard to manage if you haven't worked through some of those positions. Sometimes you're at a disadvantage. But we're probably off track.

Dave Hubert: The story of my life.

Barbara Hubert: You need to ask Sarah what she needs.

Dave Hubert: Want to put an end to it or you want to just keep going and maybe do a synopsis? Go a little bit more?

Wheelock: It's 4:10.

02-00:30:35

Barbara Hubert: What areas did you want to cover that perhaps we haven't embellished?

Wheelock: How involved were you with ICS.

02-00:30:45

Dave Hubert: Incident Command System. Incident Command System, in about 1970, '72— We used to go out of county a lot, in Orange County fire department. California Department of Forestry, of course, they would do all of the fires in San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino. We would always be called to support those teams. Every time we would go there, there'd be a different management team. One team would do it this way; the other team would do it that way. So finally, a bunch of the good guys finally got together and said, hey, we need to establish a standard management policy for all these wildland fires. Because the whole thing is the same thing. You've got to manage resources based on this ever-changing incident that we have. So what's the bottom line? The bottom line is you get the resources, you deploy the resources, based on this strategy. That was the beginning of the Incident Command System, the ICS system. So a lot of the counties and a lot of the CDF upper management thing were asked for input and to send a representative to that thing. That's where I was involved, although my involvement was only two meetings, and then from then on— I help on the disciplinary processing and the resource status portion of it.

Wheelock: Can you explain both of those?

02-00:32:10

Dave Hubert: Okay. Resource status is when you get all the fire engines and people and they're sent to a fire, and you track their time on the fire and their work cycle and their relief cycle and where the engine is on a specific portion of the fire, which are division or branches. That's the segments of the fire, and that's how we know, well, we'll send a strike team, 5309, to this division, which [is] in this branch. That way, we know precisely where they are and we want to work them there for twelve hours. [chuckles] Twelve? That's a joke. But we hope for twelve hours. Based on the resources that we had, we'd like to put them on there for a twelve-hour cycle, bring them back and relieve them; but that doesn't always happen. You get this many fires going on, the resources are low, you've got to have a gang up there. But you try not to work them the full twelve hours. They go up there, do your firefighting; stand by if you can, take a rest period up there, and manage your own time, but don't wear your guys out. Now, the field guys know to do that. The strike team leaders at five engine companies, and they know to take— We'll hit the fire for a couple hours, real strong, and we'll sit back. The thing about the brushfires, where they're really hard to get to, very cumbersome to work— You don't always have water, and the average person doesn't really have an understanding of how down and dirty it can really get. The incident, one thing that stands out in my mind is when we did the Boulder fire in San Diego. Everything was going wrong. We went down there in 1969. Big San Diego fire. It was Barbara's first experience with me gone for two weeks.

Barbara Hubert: Forever!

Dave Hubert: Forever.

Barbara Hubert: With no communication.

Dave Hubert: So we shot down there on Brush 7 and part of a strike team, and the first place we went to was Harbison Canyon. I'll never forget it. Big valley, houses on both sides of the street, asphalt street. Everything was burning. Telephone phones, mailboxes, the tar in the street, the houses, the trees. Everything was burning. I'm sitting in the middle of this with a little old 500-gallon-a-minute pumper, with three guys, and they want us to backfire to save the other side of the street. Well, backfire wouldn't have done any good. But I just sat there in awe. 500-gallon-a-minute pumper with an inch-and-a-half hose with an inch nozzle.

Wheelock: That's like a water pistol, basically, against a fire. There's no amount of water that can put out a fire that huge.

02-00:34:59

Dave Hubert: That intense, no. You're outdone, right from the beginning. I was just awed. Like I say, I'd been on the job now a year and a half and I knew then and there— That was my turning point about what we're up against. Luckily, I've

had a little bit of influence in the size of the fire trucks and the safety. I was on the safety committee for four and a half years and we got safety gear, we got the right kind of helmets, we got the Nomex gear. So I had a part in that protection, because I've seen the intensity of what this demon was all about. Then the very next day, they sent us from Harbison Canyon up to Boulder, to put this massive— Three engine companies, they sent up to Boulder. This is a 5,000-acre fire, on top of a hill, with three engine companies, and they said, "Well, we've got a crew up on top of the hill and we've got to get water to them. We've got to shuttle water to them." They can't fight any fire because they don't have any water. So this road that they were using to get up to this fire had all turned to powder because so many fire trucks went up it. No one could drive up it. Son of a gun. So being an old truck driver, I said, "I'll take the challenge on." And I got in the tanker, and the way I got it is I backed up this road, because the drive axel was in front, rather than in back. So I backed up this road, to where these guys were fighting the fire. Everyone else tried to drive up it. But because the drive wheels were on the back with all the weight, it just bogged down.

Wheelock: Right.

02-00:36:42

Dave Hubert: But I backed up this road, got up to the guys that were. It was hopeless. It was absolutely [hopeless]. I had a thousand gallons of water in this fire truck, to see this acres and acres of fire coming up the hill, with about seven guys and 2,000 gallons of water, I think is what I had. I said, "You know what? We don't need to be here." So things of that nature that impress you and you learn about—

Barbara Hubert: So you didn't have air, any air supply.

Dave Hubert: No air attack. When you have that many fires, the fires that have the biggest threat get the aircraft. Well, this fire burning out in Mount Boulder or wherever it was, the Boulder fire, had no exposures to the community, so it wasn't getting the resources that the fire that was exposing the community would get. It's okay; but if you're part of that low-priority fire and you're there to do what you can— So high points and low points of firefighting. And management has to pay attention to that and you have to address it. But the fire service today, although it's better—better tactics, better strategy, Incident Command System is probably the biggest and best— It's so good that the rest of the nation's looking at it. And it was developed here in California, by a lot of us young guys that put that stuff together, because someone had the forethought to put it in. Best thing that ever happened to us. Now we have standard operating practices, we have standard terminology. Everyone understands the system. It's great. We have a mutual network that works great. There are a few counties that are not really up to par. Governor—

Wheelock: Schwarzenegger.

02-00:38:41

Barbara Hubert: Schwarzenegger.

Dave Hubert: Schwarzenegger. It must be the beer. [others laugh]

Barbara Hubert: Just call him Arnold, Governor Arnold.

Dave Hubert: He's aware. He's been great. Like everything, the fire service requires so much money and so many resources. Where do you say no to the fire guys, in the interest of community? I don't think you ever say no. You try the best way you can. You try to get the best deal you can. That's the story of our capitalist system; get the best deal you can for the best protection you can.

Wheelock: So you were on the two committees?

02-00:39:20

Dave Hubert: The resource status officer.

Wheelock: Okay.

02-00:39:26

Dave Hubert: The display processor is where you take— You draw the map and then you post a status sheet. Well, how many engine companies? For the press.

Have you ever been to a big fire?

Wheelock: Uh-uh.

02-00:39:39

Dave Hubert: Okay. When you go to the big fire, you'll see at the command post, the incident command post, there'll be a PR area and there'll be a press release, or they'll have a press meeting, normally at ten and normally at six p.m., to give the press an update. This is where they photograph you for the news media. And behind them, you'll see— At the time, we did four display [maps]. One of the fire map[s], where the fire is, where the community is, where the divisions are; and that's the status map of what's happening now, and it shows the burn. The next thing over is the resource status list, and that shows you how many resources—how many engine companies, how many dozers, how many personnel—all that's on another piece of paper. The third one is the weather forecast. Shows what the weather is going to be for the burning period, which is a twelve-hour period, a.m.-p.m., for this burning period and for this— Then there's the ICP, the Incident Action Plan. IC—

Barbara Hubert: IAP.

Dave Hubert: IAP. Incident Action Plan. That's a big sheet that says who the IC is, incident commander, deputy IC, the agency liaison. We've always got about six or seven different agencies—the water company, the air company and the US

Forest Service and the CDF and the local fire service agency. There's a agency liaison. So here's this management chart that's all broken down, who's what for the a.m. and then the p.m., the different things. So that's part of it. And that's all out for everyone to see it. Then after that's done, after the big stuff is done, they do the Incident Action Plan that you give to each division commander, each IC, and each deputy IC. So all the overhead has this plan in black and white, right in front of them. Normally, it's about four to ten pages. So that's [the] display processor's job, and the wall stuff display. So you need to be in tune and have good printing; you need to be able to draw. So that's what I was part of. And it was neat, because it takes an artistic style. Then I always used to get to draw the covers.

Barbara Hubert: I was going to say, you did cartoon covers.

02-00:42:03

Dave Hubert: I did cartoons. Go get it. Where's the book. I want to get a book; I've got to show her the—

Barbara Hubert: Oh. Okay, there'll be a momentary delay.

Wheelock: That's all right.

02-00:42:13

Barbara Hubert: Let me get it for you, hon. Sorry.

Wheelock: It's all right.

02-00:42:21

Dave Hubert: And there was always funny things that happened on the fire grounds, too.

Wheelock: And you did a cartoon?

02-00:42:31

Dave Hubert: Yeah. I would do a cartoon about it. Like power lines once fell on a bulldozer. This guy's plowing away, and beside the smoke, he pushes down a telephone pole. Well, they couldn't see. And he pushes on a telephone pole, and so the community's without electricity. I was on the Campbell Complex, up in Northern California, up at Anderson. It was just one of those situations. They sent me from Orange, up to Anderson, California, to help fight this fire. Matter of fact, we're going to give you that book.

Wheelock: *Are you?*

02-00:43:19

Dave Hubert: Yes.

02-00:43:20

Wheelock: Excellent! Thank you.

02-00:43:23

Barbara Hubert: I'll get you a signed one.

Dave Hubert: We'll sign it for you.

Wheelock: Okay.

02-00:43:25

Dave Hubert: So I leave Orange—it was about a Thursday night—to go up to the Campbell Complex in Anderson, California and help these guys as resource status officer, manage this fire. Okay. So I pack up and I drive up there. It takes a day to drive up there. In a fire car. They say go code three. Well, you don't have to go code three on a freeway, you just go.

Wheelock: Just drive, yeah.

02-00:43:48

Dave Hubert: So when I get up there, they've got three fires burning. I got there at ten o'clock. I go to the morning briefing, and this old tobacco-chewing IC, the Incident Command system is up there. He says, "Well," tobacco dripping out of his mouth. He's saying, "Well, we've got three fires." Old country boy. Been there all of his life. Logger. But he was a ranger one battalion chief, and he's been a logger up there, and now he's with the Division of Forestry and he's saying about all this fire, what's going to happen. He says, "These fires are going to burn together, and we'll have one major fire. We don't really have an exposure issue, except for up here on the ridge, where we have some nice pine trees. It's probably going to be a three- or four-day event, and the weather will come in and it'll put the fire out." I remember that briefing specifically. Okay, he worked, get all the resources and we'll put it down there. So I start making sure all the resources are in there and I'm getting the twelve-hour work cycles all lined up. This is about eight o'clock. Ten o'clock, notice comes. Sacramento is here, going to reevaluate the plan, and going to be a new management meeting at ten-thirty. So I gather my stuff and go up there and sure enough, here's some gold stars that came in from Sacramento. We're [going to] reevaluate the burn. It's now going to be called the Campbell Complex. We're going to order in about ten more strike teams, ten falling crews, ten dozer crews, and we're going to put a firebreak in around this thing, and stop this fire before it gets to the pine trees.

This old fire chief's sitting over there, little guy that has now been replaced by these guys from Sacramento. Tobacco still dripping out of his mouth. I don't remember the guy's name. But I looked over at him and he's shaking his head. So here are these new guys coming in and they go to manage this fire. So I get out my list and they start ordering all these new resources to come in. Now, just kind of picture three fires burning together and you've got three different groups of guys fighting each fire. Well, they pull all the group back and they've got all these resources. They rest these guys and they just have guys up there in hotspots, protecting it. Next day, it's going to be a big suppression

day. They get all the bulldozers in there, and they made a cut around the top of this fire. Falling crews are the guys that go cut the timber. Bulldozers are the people that come over and push the timber over and make this cleaning. Just for the heck of it, to tell you where we're at, this is a logging town. Of the four mills that are up there, only one is working with lumber. So sure enough, the plan goes into effect the next morning. They start putting this big line, push all these trees over, and fire's still about a mile away, but it's burning up towards this firebreak that we're putting in. So then the next day comes along and we've got about half of the line in. Then Thursday comes along, the fire's not quite up to the thing, and it goes out. Because what this guy said: the weather came in, the fog comes in and put this fire out. It did burn together, but it never got to the firebreak.

Wheelock: So he was right about that, too.

02-00:47:36

Dave Hubert: He was right about that, too. So in our post-incident analysis, we get there and we find out that the reason Sacramento came in was to cut down some wood and get the mills back online, to salvage all that wood they cut down for the firebreak. So I see, not only the impact the fire had on the community, and there were a couple environmental issues that the environmental issues were thrown out. And they put this firebreak in, which still today, serves as a community firebreak. So they took out 250 feet of trees, *bunch* of trees, put two mills back to work, a bunch of people went back to work, harvesting this— They finished the firebreak after the fire was out. So it was an interesting turn of events and an interesting way things—

Barbara Hubert: Strategy.

Dave Hubert: —went together to make this thing pay off for everyone. But the old boy that said what it was going to do— So I pay a lot of attention now to guys in the area that know the weather patterns. Again, you learn things like that. So that was a fun time. That was the biggest event that I put my— I had two pages of status resources, and the pages were about fourteen by eleven. Big numbers up there. It was a worthwhile experience. Everyone should go through it to see how the system really works. Then my most frustrating time was in 1993, when we had the Laguna fire.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, it was a terrible fire.

02-00:49:30

Dave Hubert: With big winds. We went down there and I had everything I needed. I had a brand new fire engine; I had four guys on a company; I had plenty of hose. I went down there. And structure protection. Got to the scene and they pulled me off the fire engine to become resource status officer at the camp. But the fire was moving so quick, they needed engine companies for structure protection, that they put me back on the engine company. The fire was going

so fast and the winds were blowing so bad, we lost 300-and-some-odd homes in Laguna Beach. Just absolutely burned that poor community down to the ground. They sent us up on this hill to do some structure protection. So I'm up there with my strike team and we get hooked up, because the fire's coming up the hill, and no water.

Wheelock: Oh, no.

02-00:50:35

Dave Hubert: No water. I had 500 gallons of water in the tank, and the system was out of water because everyone else was using the water system. Well, about a year before that, we had done a fire defense survey for Laguna Beach and told them they had inadequate water. This is when I was fire defense coordinator. I was going to testify in city council, Laguna Beach, and the fire chief said, "No, they don't want to hear your testimony. They know they're low on water and they're going to put another reservoir in." About a year later, we lost all those houses, and I was up there. And another interesting thing that happened to me was that I was there with the right amount of resources to do it, but we had no water. So it's the overall big picture. It takes everything to play a part in fire suppression. One of the interesting things, one of my engine crew guys was little Scott Brown. He was down at the bottom of the hill, using the water to wet down foliage. Well, you don't wet down [foliage]; you hold your water until you need to put the fire [out]. You don't wet down things. Doesn't do any good to wet things down. Here's a fireman wetting things down. The bushes. Maybe once in a while, you can wet down a house, but you don't wet down a bush. So I says, "Scott—" I says, "Don't be using the water to wet down bushes, because it's not going to work." Trying to get my people not to use the water, so we would have the water when the fire came to us. We went out and backfired, so we saved our homes, all six of them, except for one down at the top of the hill. So we fired it out, instead of using water, which is another strategy that you can use. But you do that based on your knowledge of what's going to happen—the lay of the land and what the exposures are. And ours worked. We lost one of the houses of the six. That's just a couple of stories. It's been a very rewarding career.

Wheelock: Yeah.

02-00:52:47

Barbara Hubert: The Laguna fire was also the same time as the Malibu fire.

Dave Hubert: Right, 1993. I'll never forget it.

Barbara Hubert: That's where everything was—

Dave Hubert: Look at the whole community burning, you think, good grief. Like Harbison Canyon. Harbison Canyon had no resources; had plenty of water. In Laguna Beach, they all the great resources, but no water. Either one or the other. It's frustrating, as a firefighter. And everyone has experienced that same thing I



have—L.A. city, L.A. County guys. You've been there, you've done that. You shake your head and you try to implement and answer and you try to get the community to buy off on certain things that they need. Sometimes they listen, sometimes they don't. So that book, *Hubie and the Fire Service*, she did it for me. That's thirty years of—I would do a cartoon about the fun things that happened. There's a lot of fun things that happened, because of the texture of involvement. There're a lot of tragedies, but as a safeguard, you try to bring humor into this thing. I was just drawing, and finally she came to me one day and she had compiled a whole year's worth of work that I had thrown away.

Barbara Hubert: Yeah, you'll see. Actually, I start my section where I reached into the waste basket and retrieved his art. He used to throw everything away, because it wasn't perfect. He's a perfectionist. The other thing he did was give it all away. So I took photos. I hope you enjoy it, because—

Wheelock: Oh, yes!

02-00:54:31

Barbara Hubert: —most of the artwork is photographs of his artwork, because it's all been given away, just about.

Dave Hubert: But that was my contribution to a profession that has contributed to us. Not only financially, but personally. The fire service has all the right elements for a guy. It has the team, has the excitement, it has the glory, it has the rewards, and it has the community spirit. It's like being a soldier; but you're a soldier on the home front. You're there in the interest of the community and it just feels good to pay back. So that day they told me, they said, well, sorry, Hubert, you're out, I wasn't prepared for it. I don't know how they can do it, but they did it because they said it was my health. Neurocardiac Syncope, as a result of the alarm-shock syndrome. *Wha'?* It was probably the thing that saved my life, I guess, because they said, you could have a heart attack there and you'd probably be gone. Well, sure enough, the doctors and professional people finally said, hey, you need to retire. You've probably done this too long and you need to take it easy. So thanks to her support, we were able to retire, and the steamer filled the need that I have to still be involved in the profession.

Wheelock: I like your idea of taking it easy, too. Rebuilding this enormous contraption.

02-00:56:11

Barbara Hubert: Yeah.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, well.

Barbara Hubert: And then doing fifty programs a year.

Wheelock: Yeah. No, that's not stressful. But it's not stress in the same kind of way.

02-00:56:19

Dave Hubert: Well, the whole thing about it is, I learned the secret of life. I really have. My father told me the secret to life a long time ago; paid no attention to him until recently. Secret to life, for me—and a lot of other guys—is to have something to do that you enjoy, and having someone to share it with. Man, what else could you ask for? Because you're happy doing— If you're not happy, no one else is happy. It's nice to go out of your way to make someone else happy; but if you're not happy, no one else is happy. Although there's different ways of showing it. But there's a feeling there. And he was right. So I get to play with my steam fire engine—nuts and bolts and chrome, and paint and gold leaf it—and I get to go out and show it off. I get to drive my big freightliner. But I always have her to talk to and to hold and to do things together. That's the fun about it.

Barbara Hubert: It is a good time. And then we have the team, too, which helps, too.

Dave Hubert: Yeah, the friendship. The friendship. Then when you're thanked— We get a thank-you letter every event. Someone will send us a nice thank-you letter. Either they'll pay our way or they treat us like VIPs. It's just a wonderful experience. I just love it. Although I'm getting frustrated here lately, with this trailer breakdown, a thousand dollars to service the truck. And the gas.

Barbara Hubert: That's okay, we're going to win Publisher's Clearing House.

Dave Hubert: Oh, okay.

Wheelock: And you know what? Bad things always happen in a cluster.

02-00:58:00

Barbara Hubert: There you go.

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Wheelock: They're never spaced out, so you can just tolerate having one bad thing happen.

02-00:58:07

Barbara Hubert: Right, it's a test.

Wheelock: You're going to get everything kind of pile on, and then it'll go back to just being normal again.

02-00:59:13

Dave Hubert: Yeah, that's a good point. When you look at other people's situations—either their health is failing on them or something is happening—you're just thankful that you're able to do this and you're blessed with— I really think that fire engine was sent to me by upstairs. She was sent to me by upstairs, and so was that dog down there.

Barbara Hubert: Boy, he has a lot of connections!

Dave Hubert: Where's that dog? Old Blaze.

So someone upstairs is watching out for us.

Barbara Hubert: Oh, I'm sure that's true.

Wheelock: Did we talk about, on tape—we may have done this; I'm sorry if I'm making you repeat this, but—how you found the pump in the—

02-00:58:55

Barbara Hubert: California Railroad Museum in Sacramento?

Dave Hubert: Yeah.

Barbara Hubert: Yes, we did. Yeah, that was phenomenally remarkable. That was a lightning bolt moment.

Dave Hubert: The reason we got it was it didn't belong to the museum. It belonged to the Sacramento Historical Society. I finally got to the president; he was about eighty-nine years old. He was so cute. He says, "Well," he says, "Yeah," he says, "I know about that pump. That pump has a lot of historical meaning to us. It was on a firefighting train." And he filled me in on all the details. I says, "Well, I need to get it. The museum— it doesn't belong— It belongs to you guys." "Oh," he says, "You know what? It does. So what do you think it for?" I said, "Well, I want it for the steam engine. It's got the right number. And I'll put it all together, so we can travel all over." He said, "Well, I'll tell you what." He says, "I can pull some strings and get it for you. But you need to make a contribution to our group." I said, "Well, you name it." And he says, "There's one more thing." He says, "You need to come back to our Sacramento Old Town show." Said, "When you get it finished, come back to our show." I said, "Okay."

Barbara Hubert: They do it once a year.

Dave Hubert: "What do you think for this thing?" He says, "Well, what do you think it's worth?"

Wheelock: Uh-oh.

02-01:00:14

Dave Hubert: So I was going to say \$300, but I know he wouldn't buy off on that. I says, "You know what? I think that thing's worth about a million dollars to me, because of what it's worth to my project. I can't buy something like that, because it's got the dome, it's got the steam engine, it's got the connections. All I have to do is bolt it in." This guy, eighty-nine years old, he says, "You know," he says, "I like you, Dave, because you're so honest." He says, "I

won't charge you that for it." He says, "But we really desperately need \$8,000, because we have a couple things we want to buy. So if you can give me \$8,000, I'll give you that pump." And that thing was worth at least \$50,000 to get it. So I wrote him out a check so quick I burned the end off the pen.

Barbara Hubert: Of course, the check wasn't any good. [they laugh] But it was a good moment.

Dave Hubert: We loaded up that pump and drove home in the rain. It was the key element to put that steam fire engine together. When you see it, I'll show you how important and what [an] integral part of the steamer it was. It really has the craftsmanship. The pump is solid brass. It has leather pistons in it. There's a discharge surge chamber that's handmade. It's just a phenomenal piece of equipment.

Barbara Hubert: It's remarkable.

Wheelock: Well, we are about to end the tape, so thank you.

02-01:00:54

Barbara Hubert: You're welcome.

Dave Hubert: You're welcome. That was fun.

Wheelock: Excellent.

[End of Interview]