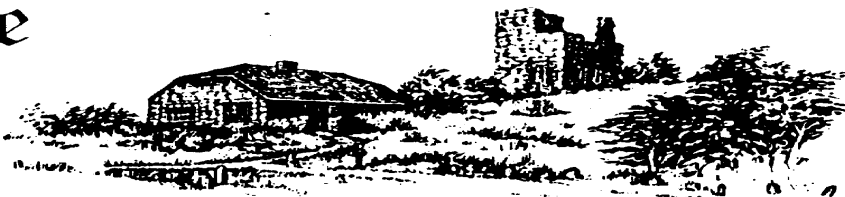


Tor House Newsletter



Spring 2021

A Letter to the Tor House Community from Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, President

One year ago, writing to you in the Spring *Newsletter*, I looked “forward to the time when we can gather once again in the gardens of Tor House, experience the beauty of ‘rock, wind and sea,’ stand at the top of Hawk Tower, ‘gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray, the established sea mark. . . .’ and experiencing ‘the immense beauty of the world.’”

Now, sadly, our gathering together at the Garden Party on the first Sunday in May is put off for yet another year. The decision comes at a time when there is concern over yet another spike in Covid-19 infections and when the medical community is asking us to continue to follow health protocols for large gatherings for a bit longer. Our concern for the health of both the Tor House community and the larger community is at the heart of this decision.

We are hopeful that, with a successful nationwide inoculation program, we will be able to gather together in the garden at Tor House for the Sunset Celebration, the opening event for our annual Fall Festival, tentatively scheduled for the first weekend in October. At their May meeting, the Foundation Trustees will decide whether to move ahead with this event.

Fortunately, the beauty of rock, wind and sea, the granite and ocean spray, the sea marks, the immense beauty remain. Here at Tor House, from the second story window of my office, I see them each day I am here. They will, I am certain, greet us when we return and will greet those in the generations that follow us.

We have been able, given the current situation in Monterey County, to resume our outdoor tours. Currently, they are held on Saturdays only, following the California Department of Public Health’s Covid-19 protocols for outdoor museums with four one-hour tours, each limited to a single household. As a result, almost all tours have two people; some have only one person; others, the limit of six.

We will also be able to host arborist Peter Quintanilla’s Monterey Peninsula College horticulture class, each of whose students will, as Peter explained, “design a garden for the property taking into account the history, its current use, the buildings and its unique location. All of which I think are one of a kind on the peninsula.” The students will also attend, via Zoom, a talk on the history of Tor House, the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, and a history of the gardens.

Two other significant events are described in greater detail elsewhere in this *Newsletter*: the installation of three bronze sculptural plaques in honor of Robinson Jeffers in the Monterey Conference Center’s Jeffers Plaza, the plaques made by local artists Will Pettee and Carol Matranga Courtney; and the week-long visit to Tor House by artist Enrique Martínez Celaya. Trustee Amy Essick was the driving force behind both events—her professional experience and acumen, her sensitivity and dedication were at the heart of their success.

In reflecting on this past year, the closing lines of Jeffers’ “It is a pity the shock-waves” keep coming to mind:

. . . It is curious that flower-soft verse

Is sometimes harder than granite, tougher than steel-cable, more alive than life.

It is curious, I think, that, essentially closed to the public for this past year, Tor House remains such a vital cultural force, has such resiliency and life, that due in large part to our engaged and dedicated Trustees and Docents and to the support we have received from each of you, valued members of the Tor House community. Thank you.

Inaugural Fellow of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation

“...a definite marker in my life-path.” ~Enrique Martínez Celaya

As the inaugural Fellow of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, artist, author and former scientist Enrique Martínez Celaya, accompanied by his cinematographer daughter Gabriela, spent the week of March 7th visiting Tor House: watching a sunset from the top of Hawk Tower, arriving each morning to plumb the spirit of Tor House, and experiencing, on the day of his departure, a dawn from the garden, where two crows created a racket from the limbs of a eucalyptus tree and a hawk, hidden in the limbs of a cypress, called out.

“Over the course of the week,” Celaya writes in describing his experience, “my daughter and I, ducking under transoms and looking at the world through the low-level windows, began to feel we were living with Una, Robinson, and the twins—the people, not the myth. We touched the dog scratches on the doors, saw the writing on the ceiling beams, and stepped on the worn wood stairs to the attic. Freezing in what seems like an especially icy March, I wrote on Jeffers's desk in Hawk Tower, and she played the piano late in the afternoon when the light coming through the window dissolves the furniture in the room. We walked to the beach and climbed on many boulders that looked like the ones at the house. I spent time painting in the dining room, doing watercolors in the yard, and writing in the tower.”

“This week,” he said, “has been a definite marker in my life-path.”

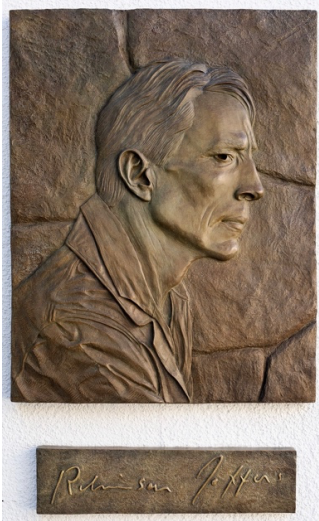
The Fellow of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation Program was established to provide professional artists with access to Tor House and Hawk Tower so they can work on site and draw inspiration and generate new perspectives from their interaction with the site and with the poetry of Robinson Jeffers.

The Fellow is required to share their work, in-progress or finished, with the Tor House Foundation community after their time at Tor House in one or more of the following ways: images of work; a written paper; a public, in-person presentation; a webinar open to the RJTHF community and the general public; a film or video; with the Foundation having the right to place the presentation on its website with the artist’s approval.

Exhibits of the work that results from Martínez Celaya’s time at Tor House have been scheduled for January 2022 in the Doheny Library of the University of Southern California and from May 12 to October 10, 2022, at the Monterey Museum of Art.

~Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts





Bronze sculptures in Jeffers Plaza at Monterey Conference Center

In honor of Robinson Jeffers, the bas-relief sculptures by Carol Matranga Courtney and Will Pettee were installed in January 2021. Doug Phillips, General Manager at the Conference Center noted, "The new bronzes at Jeffers Plaza bring life to this stark architectural setting. It gives this area a sense of place. The garden plaque, with its textured background reminds me of an old leather book, inviting the viewer in to read the poem". Courtney's plaque in the garden seating area contains a timeless phrase from Jeffers' poem "The Answer." Her naturalistic *Red-Tailed Hawk* is perched on top of the text plaque with a steady gaze on Jeffers' verse. Both artists were inspired by Edward Weston's photographic portraits of Jeffers made at Hawk Tower in 1929. Will Pettee sculpted a profile view of Jeffers in his large bronze wall plaque, capturing his contemplative mood and tactile leather jacket against the rocks of Hawk Tower. Pettee carefully followed Jeffers' actual signature from an inscribed book of his poetry to create the poet's Signature Plaque. The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation donated these tribute bronzes to the City of Monterey's Public Art Collection. The Conference Center is open Monday – Friday from 9 – 5 during the current pandemic restrictions.



NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS (December 2020 – March 2021)

PATRON MEMBERSHIPS (\$250)

Robert & Diane Reid Peter Serchuk

SPONSOR MEMBERSHIPS (\$100)

Janet Bohannon		
Eric Bolt & Georgia Hughes	Julius & Peggy Guccione	Roland & Martha Mace
Brian Dailey	Christine Hunsley	Esther Medina
Eric & Teresa Del Piero	Darrell & Elisabeth Kastin, in	Melania Onofrio
Dale Ditsler	Memory of JB Kennedy	Justin Purtill
Douglas & Nancie Ferguson	Frank & Barbara Keith	Florence Snyder-Speck
George Galakatos	Barbara Livingston	

INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, SENIOR AND DOCENT MEMBERSHIPS

Robert & Melina Armstead	Charles Greifenstein/Alison Hicks	Arthur Paull
Barbara Babcock	Susan Groff	Kismet Roberts in
Stephen & Linda Bailey	Bernice N Hearn	Honor of Allene Thompson
Lucas Blok/Barbara Ruzicka	Jerry Huling	David Rutgers
David & Carole Brooks	Neal & Ash Inglenook	Peggy Schmidt
Nancy Collins	Lindsay & Myoung Jeffers	David Stanley/Elizabeth Holliday
Ollie Collins	Robert Kaler	Richard Stanley
John & Barbara Comer	Suzanne LaHaye	Charles Stewart
Sarah Conner in	Michael Maglian	Katherine Stoner/Michelle Welsh
Honor of Randy Morgan	James & Christine Maguire	Frank Takacs/Amy Essick
Thomas Doerk	Thomas McGovern	Peter & Donna Thomas
Diana Dunn	Lisa Meckel	Bradley J. Vogel
Carole Erickson	Jeff & Marta Norment	Lynn Yaghoubian
Albert & Barbara Gelpi	Francis Olson	Carol Young
Fran Gibson	James & Linda Paul	

CONTRIBUTIONS (December 2020– March 2021)

Contribution (To \$500)

Anonymous gift for Restoration Project

Contribution (\$250)

Jim & Paula Karman in Memory of Emily Rothman
Jim & Paula Karman in Memory of Fiona Wilson Phillips

Contributions (\$100 to \$250)

Robert & Melinda Armstead	Fran Vardamis in memory of Alex Vardamis
Jenepher Stowell	Devik Wiener
Bernice N. Hearn in Loving Memory of Henry William Ingram	

Contributions (to \$99)

Ben Boychuk
Carole Erickson
McArthur Gunter in Memory of Robinson Jeffers and his literary legacy
Douglas Weisfield
Lynn Yaghoubian

Kirk b. de Ford for a gift of historic photos taken during his 1965 visit to Tor House

Stone Poaching

by Douglas A. Borer

Stone poaching is a dying art
Like other arts the artists poaching stone are an untrustworthy lot, that is
if you are a stone owner who has not nailed down your property
when walls are back in vogue

Like other poachers
poachers of stone don't advertise
some work at night
after a long day of drinking these stone poachers
poach for the sake of it, for the thrill of it, and the fun of stumbling around
at night much like beer-soaked deer poachers - your Uncle Ray who hates the government so much he won't
buy a twenty dollar deer tag
even at half price
....making him a principled rebel in these troubled times
....god bless those poachers, role models for humanity
who cull enough of each other
to keep their species in check

Darwin never studied stone poachers
for obvious reasons
considering all the species
he poached over the years

I don't advertise....not that I *do* poach stone, mind you
but prefer (in theory) to pilfer in plain sight
Don a pair of sweat pants and collect a few with the jogging stroller
Wear a hard hat and yellow safety vest or maybe just a vicar's collar
Bend. Grasp the stone. Groan, and stagger away with authority.
Yes, my friends, why bother with beer or flashlights
when you can just pick up a stone
and take it home, but I suggest, only after thinking about what you might *do*
with it, the stone
Sounds easy, right? Do something heavy, right? But it doesn't work that way
with stone, you are waltzing with *wisdom* VERY OLD WISDOM that's been around since most of us were
exhausted fish seeking a suntan two-step or tango

Even if you can fool people about poaching their stone
you can't fool the stone
First, listen closely, then cast your query with gravity
Only then might the stone will tell you its place in your wall, and then whisper,
what you need to hear

Douglas Borer is a Tor House Tour Docent and a Lifetime Member. He lives in Pacific Grove, CA.

Three Poems from a Difficult Year
by Laura C. Newmark

Autumn Light, Carmel II

Pale autumn sunlight
arrives seasonally,
its slanting light creating
the brilliantly shining sea.

Whitewater at Point Lobos

February swells explode
against the headland's rocky shore,
erupting in white surf and spray
bordering blue Carmel Bay.

Moonlit Sea

An oval moon low in the western sky
illuminates coastal beauty on an October night –
the dark silhouette of a jagged cypress tree
seen against the silver of the softly moonlit sea.

Laura C. Newmark is a poet and Lifetime Member of the Tor House Foundation. She lives in Carmel.

* * * * *

Unfortunately, there were a great many “first time since” moments in this difficult year.

2020 saw the first weekends in 42 years when there were no tours. In 1979 the Foundation announced that “Tor House is being readied to receive visitors, by appointment, starting in late July. Mrs. Donnan Jeffers has been appointed Curator of Tor House... and she is working to develop a group of knowledgeable docents. Both Donnan and Lee are replanting parts of the gardens and helping to get the house ready for visitors.”

2020 was the first October in 42 years that there was no Fall Festival, no “seminars with famed Jeffers scholars, readings by internationally known actors and actresses, a trip to the Bir Sur locales of some of the best known poems, a reception at Tor House, and two very interesting dinners... the first of many annual festivals,” as described in 1979, with, among others, Dame Judith Anderson as after-dinner reader.

2020 was the first May in 39 years that there was no Garden Party, when, as described in 1982, “The spring gardens will be open on Saturday, May 8th, from 10 AM until 4 PM – a Tor House first! Tea and sandwiches will be served throughout the day and horticulturists will answer questions about the old-world gardens. The setting is superb – flowers in spring bloom under the granite walls, the air rich with herbs, and the waters of Carmel Bay breaking against the shore.” Sadly, the 2021 Garden Party, too, will not take place.

Other celebrations have long fallen by the wayside – the January Panegyric and the “Bus Tour and Wine Tasting Picnic” of those years that, in 1979, included talks by Ansel Adams and William Everson.

But the Foundation will be back, and even better. Covid-19 permitting, October will see the Fall Festival, and with any luck, and a whole lot of vaccine jabs, the Spring Garden Party won't be far behind. In the meantime, there are the docent-led Garden Tours on Saturdays, and there are the memories of years past: the final 2009 Big Sur Bus Tour, the Garden Party preparations, and the piper, we must not forget the piper.



News and Notes

With great sadness the Foundation mourns the passing of **Barbara Livingston** on February 23, 2021 as the age of 92. The local newspaper called her “Mrs. Carmel.” She was that, and much more, for Tor House and Friends of Jeffers legacy. A four-term member of the Carmel city council, president of the Friends of the Forest and, until 2020 the president of the Carmel Resident’s Association, she served with the Tor House Board of Trustees as official representative of the City of Carmel from 1999 to 2004. During her years with Tor House, she never missed a Board meeting. After she left formal political office, she encouraged the political careers of many who now serve on the Council by opening her lovely home to political events. Over the years, she seldom missed a City Council meeting and was always ready to stand up and defend and foster her causes, whether supporting Carmel Culture, the Harrison Memorial Library or the needs and activities of the Tor House Foundation. Barbara, her presence, her voice will be sorely missed.

* * * * *

The Central California Coast and American Literature lost, in February at the age of 99, **Lawrence Ferlinghetti**. Ferlinghetti needs no introduction. A distinguished poet and icon of the San Francisco counter culture, he was instrumental in introducing William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and other members of the Beat Generation. Ferlinghetti’s bookstore, City Lights, is a must-visit destination in the City by the Bay.



Then-President Alex Vardamis, and Lindsay Jeffers were honored to offer Ferlinghetti a tour of Tor House in 2004.

* * * * *

For those interested in visiting the Jeffers Plaza installation at the Monterey Conference Center (see page 3), it is suggested that one can enter through the main entrance to the Conference Center or by walking into the Plaza from Pacific Street in downtown Monterey. Word has it that the hawk sculpture is visible from the street.

For all the latest on the Foundation, scheduling and events, visit Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation on Facebook, the robinsonjeffersassociation.org or torhouse.org on the web.

* * * * *

Though the Garden Party must wait another year, to enjoy the garden in spring bloom (thought with a distinctly Jeffersian twist), one can do no better than turn to:

The Last Word from Robinson Jeffers

THE SHEARS

A great dawn-color rose widening the petals around her gold eye
Peers day and night in the window. She watches us
Lighting lamps, talking, reading, and the children playing, and the dogs by the fire,
She watches earnestly, uncomprehending,
As we stare into the world of trees and roses uncomprehending,
There is a great gulf fixed. But even while
I gaze, and the rose at me, my little flower-greedy daughter-in-law
Walks with shears, very blonde and housewifely,
Through the small garden, and suddenly the rose finds herself rootless in-doors.
Now she is part of the life she watched.
So we: death comes and plucks us: we become part of the living earth
And wind and water we so loved. We are they.

from *The Beginning and the End* (1963) Hunt III, 412



**Robinson Jeffers
Tor House Foundation**
P.O. Box 2713 • CARMEL, CA 93921

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Spring 2021

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please check one:

- Full-time student/TH Docent \$15.00
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- Couple 50.00
- Sponsor 100.00
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Please make check payable to:
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Consult Website for on-line payment

Your contribution assists in the preservation of the unique home of the poet, Robinson Jeffers and in community outreach programs.

Membership benefits include:

- ◆ Free tours of Tor House
- ◆ 10% discount on merchandise
- ◆ Advance invitations to coming events
- ◆ Quarterly newsletter

**ROBINSON JEFFERS
TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION**

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