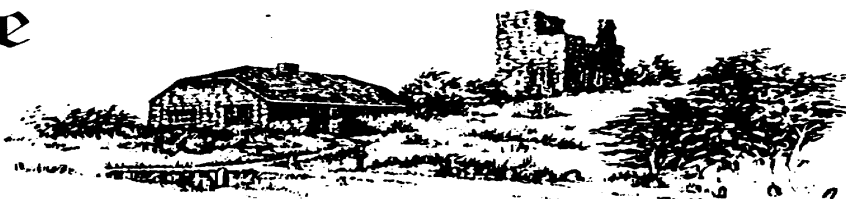


Tor House Newsletter



Spring 2023

*Live Music
Refreshments
Entertainment*

**T
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H
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E**

ROBINSON JEFFERS
GARDEN PARTY
SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2023
2-5 PM



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Explore & Photograph
Jeffers' Hand-built Home,
Hawk Tower & Gardens
26304 Ocean View Ave
Carmel CA 831.624.1813
General Admission \$25
Student Admission \$10
Please No children under 10

design and illustration by deborah russell



Illustration by Deborah Russell at www.PeridotFineArt.com

Updates from the Foundation President

Monterey County Gives! In last year's MCGives! fundraising campaign which ended on December 31, 2022, ninety-seven donors contributed \$32,501 to the Foundation. \$13,000 came as a matching grant from the Foundation's Trustees. Donations varied from \$4,000 to \$5. Added to this was an overall match to the campaign from the Community Foundation for Monterey County of 11.2% or \$3,641.69. A fee of 3.02% or \$982.17 for administrative expenses was charged on total gifts. The total raised was \$35,160.52.

I want to thank the Tor House community for your generous support, a community which reaches far beyond Monterey County. While there were donors from Aromas, Carmel, Carmel Valley, Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, Pacific Grove and Seaside, there were also donors from elsewhere in California and beyond.

We received donations from Tor House community members living in Bolinas, Chico, Lockwood, Los Angeles, Los Altos, Mountain View, Napa, Oakland, Palo Alto, Running Springs, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Santa Monica, Sherman Oaks, Stanford and Woodside. And from those living in Bainbridge Island, WA, Bend, OR, McLean, VA, Minneapolis, MN, Roseberg, OR, Tenafly, N.J., Trinity, FL, and Winchester, VA.

Many thanks also to the three sponsors of MCGives!--The Community Foundation for Monterey County, the Monterey County Weekly and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation--and their staff members who provided incredible support.

End-of-the-Year Donations: While the MCGives fundraising campaign has formally replaced our annual end-of-the-year fundraising drive, a number of community members made significant and much appreciated end-of-the-year donations: \$2,000 in support of the music program and for maintenance of the 1904 Steinway Model O Grand Piano; \$6,500 for maintenance of the gardens; and \$500 in support of the Prize for Poetry, a total of \$9,000.

On behalf of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, I want to express our profound gratitude for the support we received

during this fund-raising period. We are also deeply indebted to those others who support the Foundation through your membership dues and through donations made during the year. Because of your support, we are able to fulfill our mission, most importantly, the preservation of Tor House and Hawk Tower and their collections, a responsibility severely tested these past few months.

Winter Storms: When Robinson Jeffers planted some 2,000 cypress and eucalyptus trees on the property, he probably did not think what effect storms a hundred years later would have on the property. Yes, "fire and the axe are devils," he commented in the poem "Tor House," lamenting their eventual loss; and, yes, the "coast cypress" would be "haggard/With storm drift," but he did not talk about limbs the size of small trees being torn from the trunks by eighty-mile-an-hour winds or whole trees being uprooted.

Fortunately, this series of winter storms had only torn limbs at Tor House, not uprooted trees as happened at the entrance to Point Lobos State Reserve down the coast. Fortunately, the heaviest of the limbs either fell on the driveway or against Hawk Tower.

What was it Jeffers wrote about the Tower? "I built it well,/Thick walls and Portland cement and grey granite." That, and the sage advice and expert work of the tree trimming crew, limited damage primarily to some of the wooden fences. The crew spent hours trimming the massive eucalyptus that stands just feet from the East Wing and the cypresses throughout the property. The cost of this tree work was significant.



Photo by Melinda Bowman

One Saturday, several of our intrepid docents cleared the driveway so guests could come on tours; another time, a THF Fellow, working on site, had to clear the platform on the third level of the Tower from snapped off cypress limbs. Another docent cleared the drains of the Tower's gargoyles, clogged by the needle-like foliage of the cypress, to keep the platform and turret floors of the Tower from flooding.

The only damage to the Tower was minor but significant from a historical perspective. High on the chimney at the southeast corner of the platform was a small, round ceramic piece, held in place by a bolt screwed into one of the granite rocks. When one of the limbs fell on the Tower, it sheared the ceramic piece and the bolt off. I found the rusted bolt, bent out of shape, and a portion of the ceramic piece. If one looks carefully, one can see that the rock on the chimney has a small part chipped off.

For years, I looked at that ceramic piece and wondered about its provenance. The ceramic piece was like the ones used to hold electric wires in place...but there has never been electricity in Hawk Tower.

One day I remembered that Jeffers had a short-wave radio during World War II so he could get news. "This morning Hitler spoke in Danzig, we heard his voice," Jeffers writes in "The Day Is a Poem (September 19, 1939)." I surmised that the wire antenna to the short-wave radio was held in place at the top of the Tower by this ceramic piece.

Looking Ahead: I hope this series of atmospheric rivers is finished for the season. Tor House gardens will be filled with flowers for the Garden Party. I hope you will be able to join us for this annual event when we gather to celebrate all the gifts we have been given: Tor House and Hawk Tower, Jeffers's poetry, wonderful music, good food and the community which sustains.

- Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts

**Robinson Jeffers Tor House
2023 Garden Party
A Celebration of Spring and the Arts**

Sunday, May 7, 2-5 p.m.
at Tor House, 26304 Ocean View Avenue

Admission: \$25 adults \$10 students Please no children under 10

Enjoy strolls in the gardens among spring flowers, poetry read by Tor House docents, walks through Tor House, climbing Hawk Tower, musical performances, a spinning demonstration, artists at work, fine food and drink.

~~~~~

This year's Garden Party will celebrate spring and the arts. Guests will be greeted by bagpiper Ed Jarvis playing tunes from the top of Hawk Tower and, during the course of the afternoon, will enjoy listening to Una Jeffers' fully restored 1904 Steinway Model O Grand Piano played by Melinda Coffey Armstead and Barbara Rudzicka, and to the Celtic trio John Weed & Sons (Tyler and Evan). Artists from Monterey Bay Plein Air Painters Association will have plein air paintings of Tor House and Hawk Tower for sale, a percent of the sales going to Tor House. Santa Cruz weaver Kris Nardello will give a demonstration of spinning using the spinning wheel brought from County Down, Northern Ireland, by Una Jeffers' grandmother, Elizabeth Donnan Lindsay, in 1841. Master printers Peter and Donna Thomas and artist Tom Killion will be present to celebrate their limited-edition broadside--hand-printed on hand-made paper--featuring Jeffers' poem "the polar ice-caps" and Killion's single block relief print of Hawk Tower. There will be a limited number of broadsides available for sale with all proceeds going to Tor House. There will be food and drink, with Sweet Elena's Bakery providing tasty treats. Masks will be required while visiting indoors.

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS** falling between December 2022 and March 2023.

**LIFETIME**

Gere DiZerega

**PATRON MEMBERSHIPS**

Dominick & Evelyn Maio

Alan Stacy & Deborah Russell

**SPONSOR MEMBERSHIPS**

Janet Bohannon

Eric Bolt & Georgia Hughes

Douglas Ferguson/Nancie Brown

George Galakatos

Conell & Nancy Gallagher

Albert & Barbara Gelpi

Christine Hunsley

Carolyn Kleefeld

Tracy Krauter

Ann McLaughlin

Robert & Diane Reid

Robert & Charlotte Sawyer

Peter & Michele Serchuk

**INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, SENIOR, STUDENT AND DOCENT MEMBERSHIPS**

Robert & Melinda Armstead

John & June Armstrong

Barbara Babcock

Barbara Bullock-Wilson

Michael & Patricia Busk

Nancy Collins

Alan & Sherry Cosseboom

Dale Ditsler

Thomas Doerk

Michael & Ann Draper

Diana Dunn

Deanne Edwards

Carole Erickson

Jan C Fernandez

Charlotte Flanagan

Lynn Geison

Charles/Allison Hicks Greifenstein

Susan Groff

Julius & Peggy Guccione

Bernice Hearn

Neale Inglenook

Lindsay Jeffers

Robert Keats

Frank Keith

Suzanne LaHaye

Edward Lesnick/Merilyn Ferrara

Gordon & Molly McCall

Tim & Kirststen McCarthy

Thomas McGovern

Joal Miller

Reb Monaco

Francis Olson

Vito & Deirdre Palmieri

James & Linda Paul

Arthur Paull

Charles Rodewald

Rags Rosenberg

Lawrence Ruth

Patricia Sanders

Peggy Schmidt

Flo Speck

Maria Jose H. Spencer

Alan Stacy

Richard Stanley

Peter & Donna Thomas

Bradley J. Vogel

Carol Young

William & Jan Zeigler

[Please note, listings reflect only new and renewed memberships and contributions since the Winter Issue of the Newsletter. Generally, the Spring Issue lists memberships and contributions for December, January, February, and March. There are no listings in the Summer Issue because of space constraints (Poetry Prize winners are published in the Summer Issue). The Fall Issue contains memberships and contributions from April through September of any given year, and the Winter Issue lists October through November memberships and contributions.]

CONTRIBUTIONS (November 22, 2022– March 2023)

**Monterey County Gives! Challenge Grant**

**\$1000 to \$5000**

Captain V. J Huth  
Jill Mancina

Gregory Schopen  
John Varady

**\$100 to \$999**

Coral Amende  
Douglas Borer/Judith Stiles  
Sandie Borthwick/Gloria Souza  
Ben Boychuk  
Michael Clark  
Brian Dailey  
Susan Day  
Ingrid M Deiwiks  
Dale E. Ditsler  
Hugo & Karen Ferlito  
John Ferreira/Melinda Bowman  
Frances Gaver  
Albert & Barbara Gelpi  
Donald & Esther Goodhue

Alice Glenn  
Drew & Myra Goodman  
David & Susan Hafleigh  
Bernice Hearn  
Jonathan Horton  
Robert Kafka  
Marion Keyworth  
Dennis King / Ure Lee  
Matthew & Joan Little  
David Ligare/Gary Smith  
George Lober  
Mick & Nicki Mc Mahan  
Donald & Laura Newmark  
George Norton

Norris & Janet Pope  
Lee & Shirley Rosen  
Timothy & Jane Sanders  
Robert & Lynda Sayre  
Randall & Kristine  
Schwabacher  
Deborah Sharp  
Mary Jane Sliger  
Eric & Holly Smith  
Alan Stacy & Deborah Russell  
Jenepher Stowell  
Alice Tao  
Paul & Kristin Vais  
Fran Vardamis

**To \$99**

Laura Arnow  
Dave Awerbuck/Dave Holberg  
Emanuele & Anna Bartolini  
Kay Burbridge  
Erin Carey  
Anne Carwile  
Lorna Claerbout  
John Dotson  
Carole Erickson  
Leslie Foote  
Mary Gale

Tom Haley  
Kimbsll Hurd/Alisa Fineman  
Lindsay & Myoung Jeffers  
Wayne Marien/Eliz. Stacey  
Betty Matterson  
David Ohanesian/Susan Krivin  
Lawrence Pettinger  
Mary Pommerich  
Richard Popchak  
Michael & Mone Rubin  
Peter & Michele Serchuk

Timothy Smith/Kristin Markus  
Michael Sovereign  
Richard Stanley  
Kath Stoner/Michelle Welsh  
Anthony Tersol  
Brian Thayer  
Beatrice Thornton  
Francis & Leigh Toldi  
Barbara Bullock-Wilson  
Larry Woodfill/Susan Raycraft

**General Contributions**

**Contribution** to Garden Fund (\$7,500) Anonymous

**Contribution** to Music Program and Steinway Piano (\$2,000) Paula Karman

**General Contribution** (to \$500)

Michael & Ann Draper  
Alice Phelan Sullivan corp.  
Fran Vardamis to mailing supplies and postage.

**General Contributions** (to \$100)

AmazonSmile  
Ben Boychuk  
Frankie Del Papa

Francis Olson  
Pat Sanders  
Darryl Siems

Alan Stacy/Deborah Russell  
Carol Young

## Medea in London

*A major West End Event this winter was a new production of Jeffers' adaptation of Medea. Lindsay Jeffers, Trustee Emeritus and grandson of Jeffers, was fortunate to attend a performance of this production much praised in the British Press. Lindsay's description of the event follows. If you hurry, there is still time to book a flight.*

On February 17, 2023, a production of *Medea* using Robinson Jeffers' adaptation from Euripides opened in London's West End in a brand-new theater, @SohoPlace, where the intimate 600 seat theater-in-the-round pulls the audience into the tragic circumstances of an abandoned and exiled wife and mother. Director Dominic Cooke employs a minimalist stage and Sophie Okonedo as Medea, Marion Bailey as the Nurse and three choral women seated in the audience generate both tension and intimacy as they work through the pain, indignity and anger elicited by the male characters, all played by Ben Daniels who paces around the stage in twilight insignificance when he is not expostulating as Jason or Creon, Aegeus or the Tutor.



Sophie Okonedo as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's Medea

Sophie Okonedo visually embodies the role of disliked foreigner, making clear how she looks down on the "chattering Greeks" as they look down upon her as "barbarian witch." This tension works into the relationship between the female and male characters who casually fall into patriarchal stereotypes. In fact, Jeffers' words are employed from time to time to elicit sympathetic laughter from the audience - perhaps welcome relief from the threatening conclusion.

Invited to attend the opening night with my sister Candy Jeffers and her daughter Tamar, I found the theater full of young and enthusiastic Londoners adding their sympathy and intensity to the experience. This seems to have been reflected in the widely positive reviews of the performance in London papers and even the New York Times. This production meets its audience on a serious but not overpowering level and provides 90 minutes of artistic entertainment. It will run through April 22.



Medea and Men

*Thanks to Lindsay for reviewing the return of Jeffers' adaptation of "Medea." The first production of Jeffers' adaptation opened on October 20, 1947 with Judith Anderson recreating the role. Brooks Atkinson of the NY Times noted, at the time, "As a modern-minded writer, Euripides would be the first to agree that after 2,378 years 'Medea' needs a little play-doctoring. Robinson Jeffers has performed that service with alacrity. . . his literary style is terse, idiomatic and sparing. The imagery is austere and brilliant."*

## NEWS AND NOTES

***Exciting news from docent, trustee and pianist Melinda Armstead who reports that:***

Monthly Musical Tours for up to 8 guests continue at Tor House this spring on Fridays April 14 and May 19. The cost per person is \$25, masks are still required to be worn indoors. The two-hour long tour begins at 3:00 with a 60 minute tour of the garden, tower and cottage, then from 4:00 to 5:00 visitors enjoy a concert of the music played and sung at Tor House by Una Jeffers and her famous friends and visitors such as Ansel Adams, George Gershwin, Samuel Barber and Noel Sullivan. The tour team includes docents Inge Kessler and Alyssa Dougherty, who assist with check-in, a tour of the tower, occasional readings and bookstore sales.

When the weather warms up and the tourists arrive, we will likely increase the musical tour frequency to twice a month. NEW: A new offering on the tour menu this spring are 90 minute private tours in Spanish, led by Melinda Armstead, and in German, led by Inge Kessler. These are by request for \$25 a person, subject to the availability of Melinda and Inge, and include an hour-long tour plus a short concert in the cottage to conclude. Our first Spanish visitors (four retired academics from Alicante, España, who spoke no English) enjoyed this new tour on March 10.

***Tom Rusert, Program Coordinator, besides scheduling successful school programs, reports:***

The Tor House Foundation recruiting program is pleased to welcome to its ranks three very talented tour docents. The initial training commitment typically spans 8-10 weeks. It includes extensive orientation, sample tours and books, access to the private docent library, ongoing mentoring and shadowing public tours with seasoned guides. A gift of a Tor House Membership and an opportunity to offer a unique complimentary private family and friends tour is the Foundations "thank you" gifts to new team members. Private rehearsal times at Tor House enriches the story and offer a uniquely tangible window into the

Jeffers family experience. Our new docents are welcomed from a wide range of backgrounds, and each has the opportunity to craft their own customized storytelling experience.



New Tor House Docents

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE LAST WORD FROM JEFFERS

*A taste of Medea: After Medea discovers her husband's betrayal, the Women of Corinth, her "comforters," lament that "it is a bitter thing to be a woman." Medea responds:*

A woman is weak for warfare, she must use cunning. Men boast their battles: I tell you this, and we know it:

It is easier to stand in battle three times, in the front line, in the stabbing fury, than to bear one child.

And a woman, they say, can do no good but in childbirth. It may be so. She can do evil. *She can do evil.*

From Medea, Act 1 (1946) Hunt III, 154.

(The play is also available in various editions and formats on Amazon and elsewhere)



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

**Officers: 2023**

*President: Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts  
Vice President: Norris Pope  
Vice President: Susan Shillinglaw  
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Secretary: Melinda Coffey Armstead*

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Administrative Assistant: Melinda Bowman  
Newsletter Editor: Fran Vardamis  
Program Coordinator: Tom Russert

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website: [www.torhouse.org](http://www.torhouse.org)  
Office Open Mon, Mon- Thurs: 9-2*

**Spring 2023**

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Please check one:

- Full-time student/TH Docent \$25.00
- Senior 30.00
- Individual 50.00
- Couple 70.00
- Sponsor 150.00
- Patron 350.00
- Lifetime 1000.00

My payment for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make check payable to:  
TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION  
Mail to: PO Box 2713, Carmel, CA 93921  
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  
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