



## *Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Ojai, California*

Krotona is an international center inspired by a vision of the oneness of all life and dedicated to the spiritual awakening of the human family.

## Restoring Our Historical Treasures

Elena Dovalsantos

Krotona has entered its 100th year in Ojai and our historical buildings—true treasures—have started getting some much-needed restoration.

Last winter's El Niño rains underscored the great need to address our aging infrastructure. Many leaks, unseen in previous years of drought, suddenly sprang up in many of our buildings, including those best known to our visitors: the hall, library, and bookshop. Repairs have therefore been keeping roofers busy as we race to protect the buildings before the projected El Niño rains return this winter. Fixes to the ceilings of the affected buildings still wait to be addressed as our workers are perennially inundated with the many demands of keeping our campus buildings in working order.



One piece of good news is that the rebuilding of part of the library veranda that was destroyed by a large fallen pine tree early this year was finally completed. It is a favorite spot for many who come to meditate, gaze at the mountains, or watch the moonrise. It is now ready to be enjoyed by visitors again.

Also getting much-needed attention is our iconic Krotona tower. The interior wood framing had deteriorated. The high roof lost some tiles and is beginning to sag, concrete carvings above the arched back entrance have collapsed, and the stucco has grown mold. The broken windows had even allowed our hardworking resident woodpeckers to stash a foot high of acorns on the upper floors of the tower.

Built soon after Krotona's move to Ojai, the tower is a three-story structure designed by famed architect Robert Stacy-Judd who also built Krotona's oldest buildings. In those days when the City of Ojai was only three years old, the tower could be seen from miles across the valley. The tower sits on the highest point of the hill, encircled by the first houses that were built from 1924 to 1927. There used to be a water tank on the third level until leaks started ruining the structure. Today it is no longer a water reservoir, but instead stands in the heart of the upper residential loop as an inspiring symbol of the aspiration and fortitude of the early Krotona settlers. We excitedly await seeing the tower shine brightly again.



*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from page 1*

The improvements to the above historic treasures have been made possible by the generosity of you, the Friends of Krotona. For you and all future seekers of truth, we hope to keep Krotona going for the next 100 years and beyond. Please continue to support us in our mission.

To this end, a \$60,000 matching grant has been offered to Krotona, so every dollar you donate will be doubled. Contributions can also be designated

for specific projects. Among these are: the roof of the Krotona tower, improvements to the audio system in Krotona Hall, updating our accommodation units for those who come for classes and personal retreats, and improving the gardens for those who come to seek peace and renewal from the busy world outside.

We hope to see more of each of you in the next year as we celebrate our centennial in Ojai. ■

---

## Krotona Welcomes John Beers

Sue Prescott

John Beers moved to Krotona in May 2023 with his beloved cat, Tiger. Originally from Pennsylvania, John moved to Denver, Colorado after accepting a job there as a computer programmer. At present, two of his three children live in Denver, and one lives in Dallas. John's interest in spirituality started as a teenager after reading about Edgar Cayce.

John enjoys hiking and on one occasion he was mulling over a problem he was having. As he found a solution to his issue, a meteor passed across the sky. At that moment, John realized he was about to find a new spiritual path, which turned out to be Theosophy. Shortly after, he came across the book *Thought Forms*, by Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater, in a metaphysical bookstore. This led him to discover the Theosophical Society and its wealth of information about spirituality.

John found the TS study group in Denver and participated in the small group's book studies and meditations. Often, he heard Kathy Gann and

fellow Krotonian, Randall Bush, speak highly about the retreats held at a place called Krotona. This piqued John's interest, so he decided to attend one. Upon doing so, he fell in love with the surroundings and Krotona's emphasis on spiritual reflection and meditation.

For the last twenty years John sold books on Amazon. As he was sorting through books he planned to resell, he found many theosophical books that he saved to read during his retirement. Finding plenty of books to resell in his business, John felt inclined to put some of the unused books to good use. To help out his community, he decided to donate non-fiction coffee table books to the local food banks, where people could take as many as they wanted for free. His contributions averaged about ten boxes every week (mostly cookbooks) for folks.

John's personal goal is to learn more about the Mahatma letters and H. P. Blavatsky's magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*. ■



# Ushering in the Next 100 Years Carol Nicholson

In June 2022, the Krotona Board of Directors commissioned a centennial committee to plan for Krotona's 100-year anniversary in Ojai in April 2024. The committee consists of L. - R. Susan Johnson, Ananya Sri Ram Rajan, Michele Sender, Carol Nicholson (Chairperson), pictured below.



The committee, in conjunction with the Krotona School, has several events and displays planned as we celebrate a century in Ojai and usher in our next 100 years.

First, a Krotona video is in the works. In March of this year, A/V staff members from the Theosophical Society in America, Steve Schweizer, along with his wife Karen, and Chris Bolger, came to film various parts of the campus and to interview residents, workers, and those who have supported Krotona over the years. Numerous photos from the archives were unearthed, showing a very different Ojai than the one today. Krotona hill then was just a vast ground of bare land. The video will highlight Krotona then and now, as well as its mission in today's world.

Visting our website, you may have noticed that we have a new logo, created specifically for our centennial celebration. This logo will be found on several items of memorabilia—bookmarks, canvas bags, water bottles, and notebooks. Many of these items will be available at our Bookshop. Sometime during the year, a Krotona Centennial Edition of *The Voice of the Silence* will also be released.

*Krotona Happenings*, Krotona's e-newsletter, was launched earlier this year to keep you informed about past and upcoming events here at Krotona. As we are continually updating our email list, please make sure we have yours! If you are not getting the e-newsletter, please either email [schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org) or call the School at (805) 646-1139 to make sure we have your correct email. We also recommend that you add **[schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org)** and **[ananya@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:ananya@krotonainstitute.org)** in your contacts and check your spam or promotions file.

During the week of our actual anniversary, April 22, a street banner will be displayed across Ojai Avenue in downtown Ojai. We will also have an outdoor display in the courtyard of the library on Krotona's history and purpose.

Tentative activities for centennial week include:

**April 15-18:** Classes on *The Voice of the Silence*, with Linda Oliveira, President of Krotona, and husband Pedro Oliveira.

**April 20:** A talk by Peter Russel, author of *The Global Brain and Letting Go of Nothing*.

**April 21:** A public day with a Chumash blessing, Ojai's Mayor Betsy Stix, a short talk by TS International President Tim Boyd, unveiling of the centennial video, and an educational walk around Krotona's campus led by native plant specialist, Lanny Kaufer.

**April 23-26:** Interactive programs on the theme "From Inner to Outer Transformation."

Details on the above are forthcoming. Throughout the year, other programs will be planned. Keep updated through our e-newsletter and check our website for more information as the dates get closer.

Stay connected ...

We look forward to celebrating with you! ■

# Krotona School of Theosophy

Maria Parisen

The third biennial *Secret Doctrine* forum was held October 26 -29. The program titled "One and Many: Celestial Hierarchies, the Wonders of Awakening" focused on Stanzas IV and V. Morning and afternoon programs were given by Pablo and Michele Sender, Pierre Wouters, Gerry Kiffe, Martin Leiderman and Eneida Carbonnell. We had 26 students attend onsite and 36 on Zoom. Registrants outside of the US came from Chile, Russia, Ukraine, Belgium, and the Dominican Republic. The discussions were lively and created a strong feeling of unity among all who attended.

## Upcoming Classes for the Winter-Spring 2024

Catherine Ann Jones, **Resolutions for the Soul**,  
January 6

Pablo Sender, with Partners in Theosophy faculty,  
**Learning Theosophy: Ways and Means**

**Practicum**, January 26 – February 2 (TS  
Members Annual Intensive).

Caroline Horton, **Journaling as a Way to  
Process Grief**, February 5 - March 4 and March  
9. Five weekly Monday morning sessions and one  
Saturday.

Ravi Ravindra, **Love and Death in the Great  
Spiritual Traditions**, March 5 – 21. Eleven  
weekday morning sessions over three weeks,  
onsite and Zoom.

Krotona Institute Centennial Celebration **From  
Inner to Outer Transformation**, April 15 – 26.  
Faculty include Linda and Pedro Oliveira on *The  
Voice of the Silence*, plus Tim Boyd, Doug Keene,  
Peter Russell and others.

Please see **[www.krotonainstitute.org](http://www.krotonainstitute.org)** for  
program descriptions, additions and updates!



## Stay Connected with Us!

**\*Stay updated ...** Sign up for our e-News letter and other School Program announcements.  
If you aren't receiving them, check your promotions box or junk mail and be sure to put  
**[schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:schoolservices@krotonainstitute.org)** and **[ananya@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:ananya@krotonainstitute.org)** into your contacts.

**\*Support our work ...** become a Friend of Krotona.

**\*Get inspired ...** Follow, Like, and Share our Facebook pages, there is a little something for everyone:

Krotona Institute of Theosophy: [www.facebook.com/KrotonaInstituteofTheosophy/](https://www.facebook.com/KrotonaInstituteofTheosophy/)

Krotona School: <https://www.facebook.com/KrotonaSchool/>

Instituto Teosofico Krotona en Espanol

Krotona Library: <https://www.facebook.com/KrotonaLibrary/>

Krotona Quest Bookshop: <https://www.facebook.com/Krotonabookshop/>



**\*Make it easy ...** Follow us for the combined postings from all the FB pages on Instagram  
<https://www.instagram.com/krotonainstitute/>

**The Krotonian:** 2 Krotona Street, Ojai, CA 93023-3901 805.646.2653 [info@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:info@krotonainstitute.org).

**Editorial Committee:** Idarmis Rodríguez (editor), Ananya Sri Ram Rajan (editor), Ann Hermosa, Michele Sender, Rochelle Voirol.

**Krotona Institute of Theosophy:** Linda Oliveira, President; Elena Doval Santos, Vice President

Library: 805.646.2653  
[library@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:library@krotonainstitute.org)

Quest Bookshop: 805.646.0873  
[bookshop@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:bookshop@krotonainstitute.org)

School: 805.646.1139  
[schoolinfo@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:schoolinfo@krotonainstitute.org)

The administrative center for the Esoteric School of Theosophy (EST) in North America is located at Krotona.

For information about the EST, contact 805.646.3021 or email [essecretary@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:essecretary@krotonainstitute.org)

If you no longer wish to receive *The Krotonian*, please email [schoolinfo@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:schoolinfo@krotonainstitute.org) or call Anne Johnstone (805.646.1139). All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this publication or portions thereof in any form without written permission from the Editor, *The Krotonian*, [info@krotonainstitute.org](mailto:info@krotonainstitute.org)



# Of Note

Krotona has had some new faces working in both its Library and Bookshop. One of them works in both places, so we are bringing you up to date by including all the staff members as follows:

## In the Bookshop

Carol Nicholson has been the Bookshop Manager for almost ten years and works alongside Mihaela Wachsman, a long-term resident and volunteer. New to the bookshop are Randall Bush, who became a resident in 2018 and John Beers.



*L.- R.: Randall, Mihaela, Carol, John.*

## In the Library

The Krotona library staff now consists of John Beers, who joined this past May, Rebecca Ketner who started volunteering in July; Susan Johnson, the Library Manager, who has been residing at Krotona since January 2021; and Idarmis Rodríguez who has been working in the library since June 2018.



*L.- R.: Rebecca, John, Idarmis, Susan ( seated).*

# Become a Friend of Krotona

Rarely is one unchanged by a visit to Krotona. The experience of being cocooned by Mother Nature in the quiet valley of Ojai, refreshed by the flowing waters of the Cascade Gardens under the canopy of old Coast Live Oak trees, and the heartwarming wildlife, provides renewal to visitors from all walks of life. Such an ideal setting provides mental space and quiet for meditating and contemplating the deeper truths of life.

The Krotona School, which offers classes to stimulate and broaden the mind, is a perfect complement to this setting, allowing students a chance to exchange ideas with other seekers, build lifelong friendships, and deeply explore the universal principles of Theosophy. The Krotona Library and Bookshop help enhance one's study by offering students and visitors guidance on books to read and the various avenues to follow for further research.

In April 2024, Krotona will be celebrating 100 years in the Ojai Valley. Many things have changed in Ojai over the last century, but the mission of Krotona has remained the same through the years:

- To nurture being in harmony and compassion with self, others, and nature;
- To inspire spiritual transformation through an earnest quest for Truth and living the Ageless Wisdom, Theosophy;
- To offer a peaceful, welcoming environment to encourage a life of self-inquiry, study, meditation, and selfless service.

Krotona has been made possible due to the immense generosity of those who have walked before us. We would like to continue that offering for years to come. Becoming a Friend of Krotona helps cover many of the major expenses of our estate, such as our buildings and grounds. It also helps pay for the staff who caretake and maintain our estate so others may enjoy it.

Please consider making either a one-time or monthly donation on our website: **krotona institute.org**. You may also send a check made out to: Krotona Institute of Theosophy, 2 Krotona St, Ojai, CA 93023.

We thank you in advance for your generosity. ■

# Krotona's New Residents: Jorge and Ann Hermosa

This past August Krotona welcomed Jorge and Ann Hermosa into the community. Both of them joined the Theosophical Society in 1994, assisting a study center in Colorado for many years. They came to Theosophy through their participation in a Co-Masonic Order and remained Co-Masons for over twenty years, serving in many different capacities. Jorge will be taking on the management of Krotona's water system after having become certified as a Water Distribution Operator by the State of California's Water Resources Control Board. He will also assist with managing the maintenance department. Ann, an experienced gardener, will be volunteering in the Sanctuary of Connections garden as well as with *The Krotonian*.

Jorge was born in Lima, Perú. He grew up in a family spiritually rooted in the Roman Catholic Church. He studied in Jesuit run schools throughout elementary and high school, and at one time intended to join the priesthood. Jorge came to the United States in 1970 to study Engineering, continuing his spiritual search through participation in many different traditions before finding his home in Theosophy and Masonry.

A student of classical guitar, Jorge especially enjoys playing music from Latin American composers. He has a BS in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and has completed graduate work in Software Engineering at Regis University. He also has a certificate in Biotechnology from California State

University, San Marcos. He's very much looking forward to serving Krotona, something that he has felt called to do for many years.

Ann was born in Napa, California. She inherited her love of nature, and a great passion for gardening from her maternal grandmother, great aunt, and mother. From a very early age Ann felt called to the spiritual and mystical side of life. As an only child she spent much time alone in the outdoors and soon began inquiries into various spiritual traditions. She was particularly attracted to the writings of the saints, sages, and mystics of the world's religions. Continuing her search after high school, she entered the convent of the Sisters of St. Agnes in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin as a candidate to the novitiate, absorbing this order's strong ethic of service.

Ann's formal education includes an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education, a BA in Anthropology, graduate work in Non-human Primate Behavior, and a graduate certificate in Gerontology. In addition to Theosophy, she is a student of Buddhism, particularly Zen, and of Taoist philosophy. She also studies and practices Qi Gong and various forms of Tai Chi. Currently, she is attempting to learn to play the cello, which is proving to be an incredibly fun and extremely humiliating experience. She is spiritually very much aligned with the mission of Krotona and, along with Jorge, feels that "The highest ideal of life is to serve." Ann is quite grateful to be able to live and practice with like-minded souls in this very special place. ■



---

*Trees are sanctuaries.  
Whoever knows how to speak to them,  
whoever knows how  
to listen to them, can learn the truth.*  
Hermann Hesse

# Working Towards Peace... Michele Sender

On September 21, 2023, the residents of Krotona united with the larger Ojai community to commemorate U.N. International Peace Day. Ojai is a designated International City of Peace and we were grateful to join in with other non-profit organizations at the Ojai Community Farmer's Market. According to the International Cities of Peace, peace encompasses the shared values of safety, prosperity, and overall quality of life for all members of the community. They assert that peace is not merely an aspiration—it is a fundamental right. Their mission aims to cultivate a global culture of peace, originating from grassroots initiatives within communities. We felt privileged to be part of this celebration, and to lend energy to a movement that is creating better conditions in the wider community.

Theosophy serves as a reminder that we are always interconnected with the greater whole. As individuals, our actions in the external world hold importance and can bring about positive change. However, anything we do externally has limitations and its effects tend to be of a fleeting nature. Through daily spiritual practices such as self-reflection, meditation, and selfless acts, we begin to "harmonize" our being and raise our consciousness. As a result, our influence then transcends the physical realm and extends beyond the confines of immediate proximity. This sets in motion an "inner revolution," bringing about lasting peace and harmony, and fostering a sense of universal connectedness, compassion, and interdependency.

Here at Krotona, we begin our mornings with a 20-minute meditation where we come together setting the intention to find "that center of peace within," and to radiate it outwards. The meditation was created when Shirley Nicholson was the Resident Head of Krotona and is based on a meditation by Dora Kunz. It was modified for Krotona's purpose. We warmly invite you to either connect with us at 9:00 am Pacific from the comfort of your home using the text below or join us at the Krotona Hall if you are in the area. We offer the words of the meditation below as a gift for you to modify for your groups' use.

As individuals, we possess the power to effect change, but when our powers combine, the impact grows exponentially, which then has the strength to facilitate a profound shift in the collective consciousness of our planet. Please join us when you are able.

## ***Krotona Morning Meditation:***

(Pause for meditation after each sentence.)

From that center of peace within, let us feel harmony with our group.

Let us think of all in Krotona as being in harmony with each other and with Nature.

Let us feel unity with seekers for Light throughout the world, to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity.

Let us center ourselves in stillness.

Let us open our hearts and minds to the influence of the great ones, like the Masters of Wisdom, the Christ, the Bodhisattvas of Compassion, who have dedicated themselves to the service of the world.

Let us send goodwill, peace, and healing to all beings.

Let us end by saying together, "O Hidden Life:"

"O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom,  
O Hidden Light, shining in every creature,  
O Hidden Love, embracing all in oneness,  
May all who feel themselves as one with Thee,  
Know they are therefore one with every other."



*Krotona booth at Peace Day.*

Krotona Institute of Theosophy  
*The Krotonian*  
2 Krotona Street  
Ojai, CA 93023-3901

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms,  
is conscious: i.e., endowed with a consciousness of its  
own kind and on its own plane of perception.*

H. P. Blavatsky

As a Theosophical community, Krotona:

1. Nurtures living in harmony and compassion with self, others, and nature.
2. Inspires spiritual transformation through an earnest quest for Truth and living the ageless wisdom, Theosophy.
3. Offers a peaceful, welcoming environment to encourage a life of self-inquiry, study, meditation, and selfless service.