

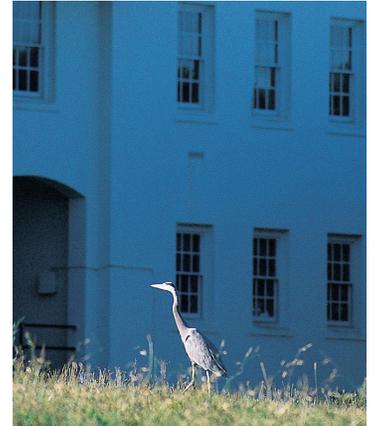
PRESIDIO POST

Protecting Biodiversity: Birds in the Presidio

Viewed from a distance, the Presidio looks to human observers like an oasis of green amid a sprawling urban landscape. And seen from the air by overflying birds, the impression is the same. Because it is one of the few large native and naturalized open spaces in the Bay area's urban landscape, with plentiful sources of food and water, the Presidio is a refuge for many species of birds seeking either a permanent home, nesting site, or a safe resting place on a migratory journey.

Most of the wildlife regularly seen in the Presidio are birds. At least 224 different types of birds have been seen in the Presidio. Some birds, called "neotropical migrants," travel from as far as Mexico, Central America and even South America to nest at the Presidio. Others use it as a rest stop on their long journey.

"The Presidio has a combination of varied vegetative cover, abundant food sources, and fresh water," said Terri Thomas, natural resources program manager for the Presidio Trust. "For this reason, the Presidio supports a high number of bird species. As other habitats vanish, refuge areas like the



See **BIRDS IN THE PRESIDIO**, 5

Great Blue Heron

The Presidio Trust Implementation Plan: A Framework for the Future

In 1994, the General Management Plan Amendment was the guidebook used to manage and shape planning policy at the Presidio. But since then, there have been some significant changes in the makeup of the Presidio, such as the departure of the Sixth Army and the birth of the Presidio Trust. These changes have driven a new analysis of how the Presidio should be planned for the first part of the 21st century.

Public workshops held during the last six months asked for the public's ideas on bringing the Presidio plan up to date. More than 600 suggestions were offered by

neighbors and others in the Presidio community, and have been assembled in an organized document; they include a wide range of planning ideas.

A draft Presidio Trust Implementation Plan (PTIP), intended to set a policy framework to guide decisions in the park, will be released for public review this summer. A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will accompany this document. The draft PTIP aims at achieving the general objectives of the National Park Service's 1994 General Management Plan Amendment for the area of the Presidio managed by the



Trust. The draft EIS analyzes potential impacts of the draft plan and five possible alternatives.

"Our goal is to make the Presidio a more valuable resource for the nation, the region and the city," said Hillary Gitelman, deputy director for planning at the Presidio Trust. "Ultimately we would like to expand open space areas, and increase the resources devoted to cultural and educational programs, without any increase in building square footage within the park."

Following release of the

documents, the public process will continue. The public will have 60 days to review the materials and provide further comments to the Trust. This public review will help shape the Trust's decisions regarding the plan.

On July 25, a public presentation will be held at the Golden Gate Club from 6 to 9 p.m. to preview the draft plan/DEIS. A summary of the plan will be available at that meeting, as will information on how to receive complete copies of the draft plan and environmental impact

"Ultimately, we would like to expand open space areas, and increase the resources devoted to cultural and educational programs," said Hillary Gitelman, deputy director for planning at the Presidio Trust. "Our goal is to make the Presidio a more valuable resource for the nation, the region and the city."

Presidio Pasados: Celebrate San Francisco's 225th Birthday!

A week of special events running from June 27th through June 30th will commemorate the 225th birthday of San Francisco and recall the early history of the area.

June 27, 11 a.m. to 12 noon: Los Californios honor their ancestors and descendants at their annual celebration of San Francisco's

See **FRAMEWORK**, 5

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This newsletter is printed on 100% tree-free paper that contains 90% post-consumer waste.

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News Briefs

The Owl Clover Returns

A new population of the San Francisco Owl Clover (*Triphysaria floribunda*) containing approximately 500 plants was found recently in the Fort Scott area by Presidio Trust Stewardship Program staff. There are no more known populations of the plant left in San Francisco. This significant botanical find will be documented with the California Academy of Science, Jepson Herbarium, and the U.C. Botanical Garden.

Presidio Performing Arts Foundation Brings International Culture to Local Children



The Presidio Performing Arts Foundation (PPAF) was founded in 1998 with the goal of creating a world-class international performing arts center for children at the Presidio. Talented children are recruited from throughout the Bay Area, and given scholarships to further their artistic education and performance experience.

The non-profit coalition offers dance, music and theater training on school sites. PPAF's Children's Dance Ensemble, with artistic direction and choreography by Vassilii Mountian, recently performed at the Presidio Community Night at Unseen Treasures, and will perform on June 30 as part of Presidio Pasados. The group has also been invited to represent San Francisco at the 300th Anniversary celebration of the city of St. Petersburg, Russia in 2003. For more information, call (415) 561-3997.

Trust Employees Honored for Environmental Protection Efforts

Environmental protection is at the core of our mission as stewards of the Presidio. The Presidio Trust uses environmentally sustainable practices across all aspects of park management, and we promote sustainability to our tenants and residents. In addition, Trust personnel are establishing themselves not only as effective environmental advocates, but also as leaders and innovators in the field of sustainable practices.

Every year, the Environmental Protection Agency hosts a Green Government Workshop where federal agencies share information about their environmental programs. At the 2001 Workshop for EPA's Region 9 held in April, Trust employees Dave Seabury, Marney Blair, and Jennifer Stone, with Jeremy Kaller from the San Francisco Conservation Corps, delivered a presentation about the Presidio Waste Reduction Program.

The workshop also included the presentation of "Champions of Green Government" awards honoring outstanding accomplishments in environmental protection.



Jim Meadows
Executive Director

The Presidio Trust was honored for four of its environmental programs. Our winners include:

- The Trust's Green Building Program, including Steven Todorov and Eric Stewart were honored for championing the use of environmentally preferable materials in construction.
- Jenny McIlvaine and Damien Raffa were recognized for developing the 2001 Presidio Sustainability Calendar, a first-of-its-kind public education tool.
- The Trust's Waste Reduction Program was recognized for its comprehensive efforts including composting, salvage, and green purchasing.
- The Trust's Transportation Department was honored for its innovative programs to move people around the Presidio without harming the environment.

Environmental protection is everyone's responsibility. For information on how to improve your environmental awareness and practices, visit the EPA's regional website at www.epa.gov/Region9

Presidio Golf Course Controls Pests the Natural Way



Operating a golf course in a national park poses some unique challenges. The smooth, silky fairways and greens so critical to the game can be severely damaged by many types of pests. However, pesticides and fertilizers can harm the delicate ecosystems of the Presidio. To overcome these challenges, the Presidio Golf Course uses a sustainable approach to pest control that combines biological, cultural and physical tools to minimize environmental and health risks.

Maintaining the course with minimal use of pesticides and other environmentally harmful alternatives requires detailed management strategies and unwavering dedication. The Presidio Golf Course has distin-

guished itself through its Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, and so has been nominated for Cal/EPA and Department of Pesticide Regulation's IPM Innovator Award by the Presidio Trust IPM Coordinator Christa Conforti.

Trees Dedicated to MIAs at National Cemetery



Barbara Birchim, a San Diego resident whose husband was declared missing in action in Vietnam 32 years ago, undertook a personal mission to replace some of the trees in the San Francisco National Cemetery. This is a special place to Birchim: it holds a memorial plaque for her husband Captain James Birchim, and both her parents are buried here. She wanted to help maintain the beauty of the cemetery's setting, and began a campaign to raise funds for 70 trees to

be planted there.

Her vision began to take shape on April 28, when a tree dedication ceremony was held in the cemetery. The ceremony was officiated by Lt. General John Pickler, director of the Army Staff; Steve Muro, director of Memorial Services, network five, of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and Jim Meadows, executive director of the Presidio Trust, and was attended by more than 100 guests.

Celebration Draws Thousands to Crissy Opening

Tens of thousands of people celebrated the Bay Area's newly restored Crissy Field.

People from around the Bay Area came on foot, by bike and scooter, on rollerblades, and by transit to see the vintage air show, wing-walkers, and thousands of kites from around the world. On the ground, people enjoyed family picnics, and Ranger-led site tours. The Block Party Family Jam drew crowds to the Crissy Field Center for music and fun. For more information on how to stay involved in Crissy's continuing evolution, visit www.crissyfield.org



Make Your Event a Celebration to Remember

Plan to hold your next event at the Historic Presidio Officers' Club. With unparalleled old world charm, a glorious bay view, catering facilities, stage area, and ample adjacent parking, the "O Club" is a great venue for meetings, events or other gatherings of up to 400. To tour the club or reserve a date, contact Presidio Trust Special Events at (415) 561-5444; events@presidiotrust.gov





Calendar

WEEKLY

Presidio Chapel Concert

Tuesdays, 8 p.m.
Programs and performers vary. Call (415) 362-6080 for program information. Tickets are \$10 at the door.



11&12 JUNE

CareerSearch Live!

The San Francisco Sunday Examiner and JobsAmerica present a chance to meet in person with Bay Area employers. Come dressed to interview and bring your resume. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information, visit www.jobsamerica.com or call (800) 482-7353.

NOW THROUGH 17 JUNE

Unseen Treasures: Imperial Russia and the New World



An exhibition of over 300 art objects, costumes, maps, and native artifacts from Russia's State Historical Museum and the State Archive. Presidio Officers' Club Exhibition Hall, daily from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Tuesdays. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students. Call TicketWeb at (800) 965-4827; or visit www.atthepresidio.org

16 JUNE

Family Bridge Walk

1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Families with children ages eight and over can join Shirl Buss, architect and educator, on a walking tour of the Golden Gate Bridge. Fee: \$4 per person. For information, call Crissy Field Center at (415) 561-7690.

16 JUNE

Just Think Foundation Media Mobiles Visit Exploratorium

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Just Think Foundation's three mobile learning centers from Harlem, Hawaii and San Francisco, will all be parked at the Exploratorium for a day of creation and learning. Young people from 8 to 18 can create web sites, videos, animation and techno-art on turbo-charged iMacs and art tools in the buses. As part of the Behind the Screen Exhibition, the event is free with admission to the Exploratorium. For information, call (415) EXP-LORE

17 JUNE

Father's Day Performance: Storyteller Olga Loya tells "Stories from Latin America"

Shows at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.
Children of all ages will love Olga Loya's folktales, myths, and legends from Latin America. The event is free, and seating is on a first come, first served basis. For information, call Crissy Field Center at (415) 561-7690.

21 JUNE

Solar Eclipse 2001

4:30 a.m. for live program; Actual eclipse takes place at 6:12 a.m.
The first total solar eclipse of the new millennium, taking place in southern and central Africa, will be broadcast live from Zambia to the Bay Area via satellite and high-speed internet connection. The public can attend in person at the Exploratorium or observe at www.exploratorium.edu/eclipse.

21 JUNE

Lecture: Finding White Sharks

7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Shark expert Scot Anderson will present the latest findings on travel patterns of white sharks, their feeding strategies and adaptations. The lecture is presented by the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. Location: Bay Model, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito. Suggested donation: \$5. For information, call (415) 561-6622.



23 JUNE

Bay Scientists Youth Investigation

10 a.m. to 12 noon
Families with children ages 4 to 8 can investigate and experiment in the Crissy Center Ecology Laboratory. Learn how to conduct your own experiments to learn more about the area's estuary. The event is co-sponsored by Estuary Action Challenge. Fee: \$6 per person. Crissy Field Center. For information, visit www.crissyfield.org or call (415) 561-7690.

NOW THROUGH 24 JUNE

2001 Artspan Selections Exhibition

Wednesday through Sunday, 2-7 p.m.
Exhibit of work in a variety of mediums by Bay Area artists, who communicate their select visions of San Francisco through their work. The show is free to the public. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information or directions, call (415) 861-9838.

27-30 JUNE

Celebrate Presidio Pasados & San Francisco's 225th Birthday!

Join this week-long series of events commemorating the early history of the area - Mission San Francisco de Asis and El Presidio de San Francisco (est. 1776). All events are free and open to the public. Includes Los Californianos annual anniversary celebration on the 27th; a traditional celebration of the first Mass at Mission Dolores on the 29th; and Presidio Pasados June 30th - A festival of the Presidio's past. Includes a morning conference on Cultures of New Spain, afternoon celebration with music & dance, Spanish cuisine, iFandango!, hands-on activities, programs & archaeology field talks (see related story on page 1).

AT THE PRESIDIO



6&7 JULY

The Chronicle Marathon Health and Fitness Expo 2001

Held in conjunction with the SF Chronicle Marathon on July 8, the Expo showcases 75 to 100 health and fitness vendors, official merchandise, and t-shirts and goody bags. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information, visit www.chroniclemarathon.com or call (415) 284-9294.

21&22 JULY

San Francisco Antiques and Collectibles Market

This event will feature a wide selection of both investment-quality antiques, and inexpensive collectibles from approximately 75 vendors. Available items will include textiles, decorative arts, jewelry and vintage fashions. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information, call (707) 578-7772.

26-29 JULY

Photo San Francisco

The Stephen Cohen Gallery of Los Angeles hosts this second annual exposition of photographs from private dealers and galleries. Works date from the 19th century through the present, and include legendary photographers Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and Diane Arbus. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information visit www.photosanfrancisco.net or call (323) 937-5525.



8-12 AUGUST

ACC Craft Show San Francisco

Craft artists from fields including furniture, ceramics, jewelry, glass, and wearable art will show their wares at this 25th annual event. More than 350 artisans will be on hand to show their creations. Herbst Exhibition Hall on the Presidio (Building 385). For information, visit www.craftcouncil.org or call (415) 896-5060.



Red, White, and Green:

The Presidio of San Francisco as an American Landscape – Part 1

by *Randolph Delehanty, Ph.D.*
Presidio Trust Historian

The Presidio of San Francisco, a National Historic Landmark District, is a fascinating fusion of the unique and the national. In its dramatic location on the Golden Gate, in its long military history under three flags, in its privileged role as the most prestigious U.S. Army post on the West Coast, and in its special architectural imagery and landscape history, the Presidio stands alone. But seen in another way, the Presidio is a mirror of national developments in architecture, landscape design, and ecological values.

**The Presidio is a mirror
of national developments
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TWO DIMENSIONS: THE UNIQUE AND THE NATIONAL

Passing from the dense City of San Francisco through the carved sandstone gates and into this verdant, 1,480 acre oasis, it is obvious that the Presidio is a separate world. The park is a distinct landscape of old forests, spacious greenswards, and rigorous arrays of trim buildings set around parade grounds or strung out along serpentine residential streets.

Exploring further, the visitor suddenly comes across dramatic vistas of the rugged Golden Gate and then high, windy bluffs with sweeping views of the Pacific. Also particular to this place are the white fogs that drift in through the Gate, hang in the dark green trees, and eventually dissolve the post in milky oblivion. One wounded soldier returning from Vietnam remembered his first impression of the Presidio as “palm trees in the fog.”

Looking more closely, the Presidio reveals itself to be a quintessentially American landscape. Most of the American-era buildings on the post were designed by the Office of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C. The designers followed national trends, but with a distinctly conservative approach. Army structures were usually solidly constructed and sparing in their use of ornament.

There is a New England-like sobriety to many Presidio buildings. Contrasting the Victorian red-brick barracks along Montgomery Street, or the later Mission style buildings such as Buildings 38 and 39, with their contemporaries in San Francisco underscores the difference between fashion-driven civilian architecture and the Army's more conservative designs.

These Fort Scott Officers' quarters on Kobbe Avenue were built in 1910 and epitomize the Presidio's landscape of red, white and green.

CONTINUITY IN LAND PLANNING

An interesting characteristic of the Presidio is the long continuity and coherence of its land planning. The siting of the Castillo de San Joaquin at the entrance to the Golden Gate was dictated by geography. But that windy site was not a place for habitation, and so the Spanish fell back to the closest sheltered valley near a spring for the Presidio itself.

The streets in front of the historic Officers' Club, Moraga Avenue, Mesa Street, Pena Street, and Graham Street, preserve the approximate outline of the El Presidio quadrangle established in 1776. Under the streets and parking lot here lie the archeological remains of the seed from which the Main Post grew.

The U.S. Army first expanded the Main Post in the 1860s with a larger parade ground bounded by Moraga Avenue, Mesa Street, Lincoln Boulevard, and Graham Street. A subsequent major expansion to the west in 1893 included a vast new parade ground bounded by Sheridan Avenue, Anza Avenue, Lincoln Boulevard, and Montgomery Street. The original El Presidio location was embedded in the southeast corner of the expanded post.

A distinctly hierarchical “city plan” unfolded. The strategic coastal areas were reserved for harbor fortifications including, after 1921, Crissy Army Airfield. Venues for the post's prestigious functions, such as the Officers' Club, the old Chapel, and the Library, were placed at the head of the Main Post at the crest of the slope that looks north toward the bay. To the east of the parade ground along Funston Avenue, officers' quarters were built in the 1860s. To the west of the parade ground were the larger barracks. At the north (lower) end of the post were placed the guardhouse (jail) and support operations like warehouses. The clarity of this arrangement of functions and ranks was rarely blurred over nearly 150 years of Army expansion.

THE PRESIDIO AS A “SUPERPOST”

Over time, the Presidio became a “superpost” with five sub posts: the historic Main Post, Fort Point on the Golden Gate, Letterman Hospital, Fort Scott, and Crissy Airfield. The U.S. Coast Guard Life Saving Station and the U.S. Public Health Service also built separate compounds within the spacious federal reservation.

At the heart of the post is the San Francisco National Cemetery, dedicated in 1884 and separately administered by the Veterans Administration. Modest white marble stones, weathered to a powered sugar surface, march in military precision across the slope. “Galleher, Louisiana,” “Chaddock, Michigan,” “Tobin, California,” “Holliday, Kansas” – the names and places of a nation stand here in eternal assembly. After the Indian Wars, the stones stop listing battles and record only wars: “Spanish-American War,” “Philippine Islands,” “World War I,” “World War II,” “Korea,” “Vietnam” – the record of the conquest of the West and America's subsequent imperial reach across the Pacific.

Part 2 will look at changes at the Presidio in the twentieth century and today.



Birds in the Presidio continued from P. 1

Presidio and neighboring parklands are becoming increasingly important to migrant and resident bird populations."

Year-Round Residents



White-crowned Sparrow

The Presidio is a year-round home and nesting ground for many bird species. Among these is the California Quail, our state bird, identifiable by its head plume and feather patterns. The California Quail is a ground-dweller, and therefore highly vulnerable to threats that include

decreasing habitat, predators and automobiles.

The Presidio's Quail population grew from 18 to 25 individuals over the last year. Within the park, Quail find sheltered areas in which they can build nests, and the plants that provide their food. A joint program of the Presidio Trust and the Audubon Society is now underway to raise public awareness of the Quails' needs, and help assure their survival in the Park.

Other rare species making their homes in the Presidio include the Western Screech Owl, Wrentit, Hooded Oriole, and Hutton's Vireo. Results of surveys by the Audubon Society and other agencies suggest that the Lobos Creek and Mountain Lake areas are especially important resources for a variety of riparian and forest-breeding birds. In the park's wetland areas, observers can find water birds such as herons, egrets, loons and cormorants.

As unusual and surprising as the Presidio itself are its most vibrant aviary visitors, a flock of Cherry-Headed Conure Parrots. The parrots, with their brilliant green plumage and red heads, are threatened in their native Ecuador. San Francisco is home to several flocks of wild parrots. One flock of 15 to 50 birds stays predominantly between Telegraph Hill and the Presidio, and seems to thrive in the combination of urban and wild environments.

The parrots are probably descendants of domestic pets who found themselves in the wild and managed to survive. They follow a consistent annual cycle, laying eggs early in summer. The birds soar regularly over the Presidio, and have been known to nest in the still-standing palm trees near the former Letterman Hospital.



Cherry-Headed Conure Parrots



Killdeer

Ongoing Conservation

"With the continual urban growth we have seen around San Francisco, there are simply fewer areas suited to birds' living and nesting needs," said Thomas. "At the Presidio and across the Golden Gate National

Recreation Area, foresters are

extremely cautious about trimming plants and trees between the months of March and August because of bird nesting season. This helps assure that no nests are disturbed by removal of branches, or even hedges from which birds may take nesting materials."

Park residents and visitors are reminded that all migratory birds, including nests and eggs, are protected. Everyone in the park is asked to respect the privacy of nests, and to keep their pets away from adult and young birds. "Places like the Presidio are important to protecting the biodiversity of bird populations in the area," said Thomas. "They also provide areas for visitors and students to learn more about the ecology of birds."

Transportation Update

Bike to Work Day a Success



On May 17, more than 160 members of the Presidio community participated in Bike to Work Day 2001, a substantial increase from the 75 individuals participating last year. The Presidio-based

organization with the highest percentage of riders was the National Park Service, with 17 employees participating. Bikers refueled at the Presidio Trust's Energizer Station, where giveaways and information were also available.

Muni's Best-Kept Secret A Perspective from Ron Sonenshine

Now that baseball season is going strong, the best-kept secret in the Presidio may be the PacBell Express.

For a buck, SF Giants fans can ride the 82x to PacBell Park—a 35-minute ride that takes you through city congestion without the usual stress.

The Muni bus picks up

passengers at several Presidio stops including the Main Post, along Lincoln Blvd. and near the Letterman Hospital. And occasionally Muni drivers—keep this quiet—will let Giants fans off three stops before the CalTrain Station so we can make it to the "24" restaurant-bar at PacBell well before the first pitch, if you get my drift.

Getting back to the Presidio on Muni is just as easy. Two short blocks from the stadium, the number 45 Muni picks up passengers. It stops at the Lombard Gate, which is the last stop for this run. This trip may take about 45 minutes, because plenty of baseball fans in the city ride this one home.

Give this a ticket to ride.

Framework continued from P. 1

statement. The public will have several opportunities to comment on the draft plan, including:

- A formal public hearing on September 11, where the public can enter their comments into the record. This meeting will take place at the Golden Gate Club from 6 to 9 p.m.
- A public board meeting of the Presidio Trust Board of Directors will be held on September 12. At this meeting, scheduled for the Golden Gate Club from 9 a.m. to noon, the public can again enter their comments into the record.

The 60-day public comment period closes on September 25. Final versions of the EIS and Record of Decision are targeted for release in early 2002.

PTIP is a public, interactive process. The Presidio Trust Board of Directors and staff are committed to both the process and the long-term outcome of planning the future for this remarkable resource called the Presidio.

Birthday continued from P. 1

birthday on the Presidio. For information, visit www.loocalifornianos.org or call (650) 583-0424.

June 29, 10 a.m. to 12 noon: Traditional celebration of the first Mass at Mission Dolores in 1776, including wreath laying, music and Ohlone ceremonies. For information, visit www.missiondolores.citysearch.com or call (415) 621-8203.

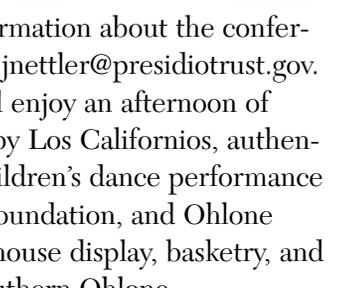
June 30, 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Presidio Pasados. Come celebrate the history, culture and archaeology of the Presidio. All activities are located on the Main Post, with free adjacent parking.

8 a.m. – noon: "Exploring the Cultures of New Spain," a conference at the Officers' Club featuring a distinguished group of presenters from around the country addressing Ohlone culture, archaeology, Presidio history, Anza's journey to California, and the history of New Spain. For information about the conference, call (415) 561-5093 or email jnettlar@presidiotrust.gov.

Noon to 5:00 p.m.: Visitors will enjoy an afternoon of early California music performed by Los Californios, authentic Spanish cuisine, a costumed children's dance performance by the Presidio Performing Arts Foundation, and Ohlone cultural activities including a tule house display, basketry, and games and traditional songs by Southern Ohlone.

2-4 p.m.: iFandango! Songs and Dances of Early California. This concert, performed in the Officers' Club, will feature Coro Hispano de San Francisco, a renowned Latino choral and instrumental ensemble. Guest artists will include Conjunto Nuevo Mundo, Cascada de Flores, and dancers from Los Lupenos de San Jose. For more information visit www.corohispano.org or call (415) 431-4234.

Come celebrate San Francisco's past at Presidio Pasados!

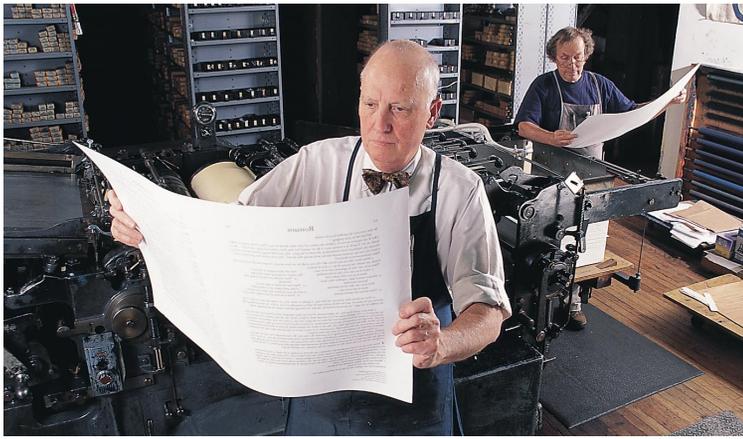


iFandango!



Tenant Profile

Arion Press — Masters of their Craft



Andrew Hoyem checks a page proof.

By Dianna Waggoner

When you're looking for a home that can accommodate 30 tons of printed inventory, as well as huge cast iron presses with their network of gas lines, electrical lines and compressed air machines, and a dozen employees, the classified ads probably won't be of much use. Yet this was the challenge that confronted Andrew Hoyem, owner of Arion Press, publisher and printer of limited edition, handcrafted books.

Arion is the last publisher in the U.S. to produce books from start to finish, beginning with forming molten lead into letters, and ending with binding the pages together. Arion's assemblage of vintage tools, type, and equipment, if dispersed, could never be reassembled. Yet such a tragedy seemed inevitable in 1999, when the company lost its lease in the South-of-Market area.

Further complicating the situation, the company was in the middle of its largest project ever—printing what will probably be the last lectern Bible produced using traditional methods—when relocation became necessary. This lectern edition has 18 x 13-inch pages of specially-made English paper, and weighs more than 25 pounds. Each book of the Bible begins with a red capital signature letter which, in special editions, are hand-illuminated with

abstract patterns. This was not a project to be interrupted by mundane distractions.

So, while the printers worked diligently, Hoyem looked for a suitable facility. He inspected buildings as far away as Vallejo, and even talked about merging with Stanford University or the University of California Press. Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown asked the company to relocate to the other side of the bay, but nothing worked out. Hoyem was “really panic stricken.”

Then, Hoyem came to the Presidio and looked at one floor of Building 1802 near the old Public Health Hospital. It was a solid space, with lots of windows and tall ceilings, but not big enough, he decided. As he and the realtor were leaving, Hoyem noticed a locked door and a key was eventually found. A flight of stairs descended into a labyrinth of tiny rooms, long corridors, and enough cobwebs to fill a dozen horror films—the hospital's former laundry and boiler rooms. Combined with the upper floor, it would be perfect!

The race was on to transform the space from deserted basement to working print shop. Trust contractors worked alongside Arion Press contractors, while Press employees wielded paintbrushes. In late April, five months after the packing began, the Press held a

grand opening party to celebrate this accomplishment.

Now in the spacious, white walled basement, Leif Erlandsson, a bookbinder who learned his trade in his native Sweden, bends over a wooden bench splashed with sunlight. With a small brush he deftly spreads glue onto a piece of cardboard over which he smoothes a piece of rich purple leather, the cover for the Bible. At a nearby workbench, another artisan pulls heavy cotton thread through the edges of pages, binding them together. Later, she will sew the final, visible stitches with red and purple silk thread. Cotton for strength, silk for its beautiful color, she explained. At this deliberate pace, three Bibles emerge each week from the Press.

A wide corridor lined with

hundreds of boxes of lead type stacked to the ceiling leads to the pressroom. Lewis Mitchell, who has worked in typesetting for more than 50 years, presides over the ancient machines, which smell of ink and hot lead.

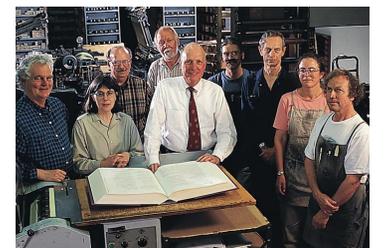
Upstairs are the offices, a conference room, and a sunny gallery. “We're still getting used to all this natural light,” Hoyem said.

Cases display copies of Arion's most notable products—Moby Dick illustrated with 100 wood engravings by Barry Moser, Wallace Stevens' Poems with a Jasper Johns frontispiece, Ulysses with 40 etchings by Robert Motherwell. Artwork by these artists and others adorns the walls.

Arion Press books have been collected by individu-

als and museums including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the British Library, and the Library of Congress. They were also featured in a 1995 exhibition titled “A Century of Artists Books” at the Museum of Modern Art. But Hoyem practices his craft out of sheer love for the printed word. “I hope our collectors are readers first, and collectors second,” he said.

For more information on the company and its efforts to preserve the historic craft of fine art printing, visit www.arionpress.com.



Staff of Arion Press.

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