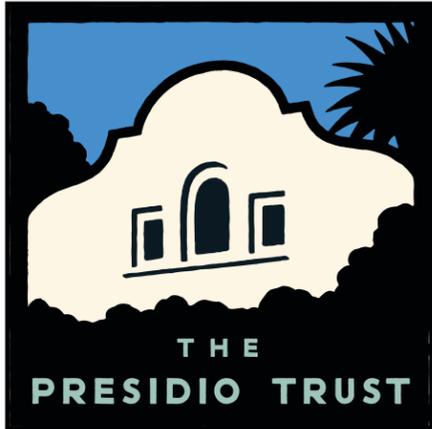
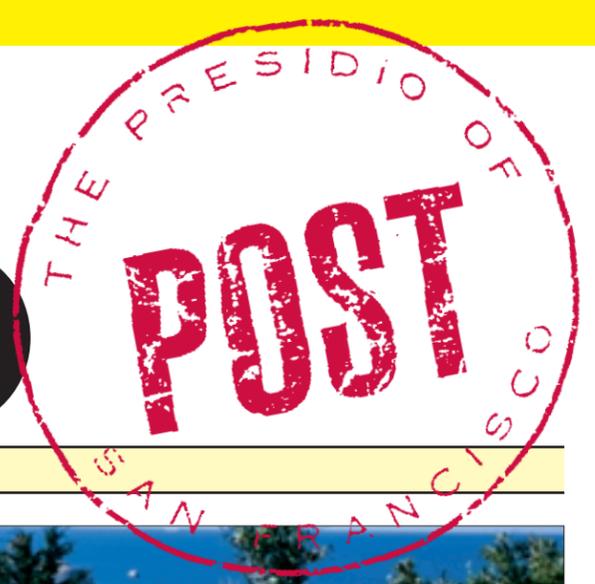


# Presidio

A Monthly Publication of the Presidio Trust

Volume 3 Issue 12 December 2000



*Preserving the Presidio  
as a Sustainable  
National Park*

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## News Briefs

### Chairman Rosenblatt Receives Conservation Service Award

In recognition of his contribution to the conservation and public enjoyment of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), Presidio Trust Board of Directors Chairman Toby Rosenblatt has been awarded the Conservation Service Award, the U.S. Department of the Interior's highest citizen honor. Toby was recognized for his decade of service (1990 to 2000) as Board Chair of the Golden Gate National Parks Association, the non-profit support group for the GGNRA. Under his stewardship, the Parks Association became the national leader among "friends" groups working on behalf of national parks, raising over \$50 million for GGNRA programs and projects.

### Summer 2001 Internships

The Presidio Trust is seeking students from across the nation to participate in our 2001 Summer Internship Program! Interns will work in fields including planning, information systems, communications, environmental sustainability and facilities management, among others. Participants will be paid \$12/hour, with shared housing available. The length of employment is 10 to 12 weeks, at 40 hours per week, starting June 4, 2001. Get more information and download an application at [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov) or call 415.561.5300.



In coming months, Presidio neighbors, residents and visitors will notice gradual changes in the park's landscape as small-scale pilot restoration and revitalization projects get underway.

## THE PRESIDIO'S CYCLES OF LIFE

A seedling sprouts into a healthy plant. A dormant bulb explodes into bloom in springtime. A century-old cypress succumbs to a winter storm.

Like all living things, the Presidio's stately trees, vibrant plants, and complex landscapes experience the inevitable cycle of life.

Though the process is a natural one, the landscape of the Presidio could change dramatically over the next several years, in part because the park's legions of pine, cypress and eucalyptus are nearing the end of their life spans.

To protect the character and ambiance that is synonymous with the Presidio, the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service are undertaking a range of pilot projects for environmental restoration, revegetation, and forest preservation in 2001. These projects are designed to test approaches for preserving the park's open space mosaic for decades to come.

These pilot programs will be presented for comment at the first Public Planning Workshop of the year, to be held on January 10.

### PILOT PROJECTS

The planned pilot projects, each encompassing approximately one-half to two acres, will be used to test the effectiveness of a variety of reforestation and revegetation methods.

The small-scale projects will also "showcase" restoration efforts in a true-to-life setting so people can see and understand how an area might be changed by a restoration activity.

A dozen pilot projects are planned next year at sites including Mountain Lake, Inspiration Point and Rob Hill.

### PRESERVE AND ENHANCE

The pilot efforts are getting underway as the public process to create an overarching and systematic approach for preserving and enhancing the Presidio's historic forest, native plant communities and landscaped areas draws to a close.

That strategy – known as the Vegetation Management Plan – proposes a flexible framework approach for revitalizing the aging forest, regaining historic views, combating soil erosion, enhancing wildlife and native plant habitat and creating a healthy park landscape well into the future.

Changes would happen gradually over a period of decades and would be accompanied by ongoing public involvement.

### PILOT PROGRAM WORKSHOP

Wednesday, January 10, 6 to 9 p.m.  
Golden Gate Club

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Though the Presidio hosts approximately 250 native plant species, including some that have otherwise disappeared from the region, many species have been lost over the past two centuries. This is significant because vegetation is an important building block upon which other life forms such as insects and animals depend and also creates a variety of environments for Presidio visitors to experience.

"From the dunes at Crissy Field to the bluffs south of the Golden Gate to the grasslands at Inspiration Point, each setting provides a different enjoyment for people as well as a different type of habitat," said Sharon Farrell, Presidio Trust Natural Resource Planner.



An effort is underway to extend the life of existing trees and plan for a diverse and revitalized forest.

Additionally, the Presidio's historic forest, planted beginning in the 1880s, is in an advanced stage of maturity and is susceptible to disease, decay and collapse.

"The park's trees are gradually reaching the end of the line. We need to act now to extend their lives and plan for the forest's future" said Peter Ehrlich, Head Forester with the Presidio Trust. Ehrlich recently joined the Trust's staff after overseeing a major reforestation effort at Golden Gate Park.

An active program is now underway to extend the life of the Presidio's existing trees through pruning, thinning and other methods.

### GET INVOLVED

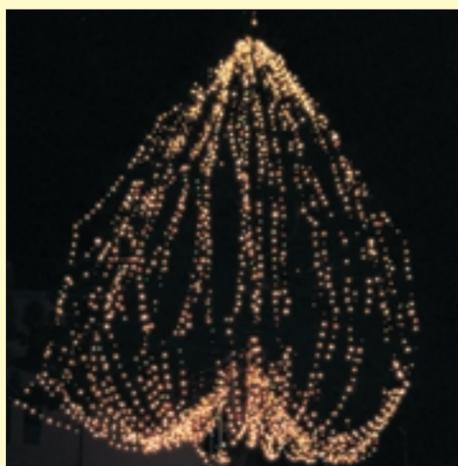
The January workshop is the first in a series of planned annual meetings at which upcoming projects for the year will be presented for the community's review and comment. Additionally, an active volunteer stewardship program for forested areas – like the one now in place at the Native Plant Nursery – is currently under development. To get more information about volunteer opportunities, please call the Native Plant Nursery at 415.561.4830 or the Presidio Trust at 415.561.5418.

## Sustainability Spotlight

# Have A "Green" Holiday

According to the Center For A New American Dream, five extra tons of trash are produced in the United States every year between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Here are some tips for making your holiday celebrations kinder to the earth.

- Save paper and money by sending electronic holiday cards. There are several websites from which you can send electronic greetings via e-mail, and most of them are free.
- Buy a living Christmas tree that can be planted after the holiday season. If you have no space to plant it, give it to a friend who does or donate it to a park (see Events section).



The Presidio's living holiday tree is illuminated after peak energy use hours to conserve energy.

- Use homemade, reusable decorations.
- Give gifts that encourage environmental friendliness: reusable cloth grocery bags, Tupperware containers filled with homemade treats, a bus pass, or a bicycle headlight.
- Instead of buying a present at the mall, give a gift of time or talent.
- Wrap gifts in cloth napkins. The wrapping itself becomes a useful gift.
- Buy wrapping that is made from recycled paper and can be recycled after use.
- Make your own holiday gift tags out of the holiday cards you received the previous year.
- Wrap your gifts in brown paper bags that you can paint or decorate with stickers or rubber stamps.

This holiday, give the earth a gift by celebrating sustainably!

### Board Members

Donald Fisher	Mary Murphy
Jennifer L. Hernandez	William Reilly
Ira Michael Heyman	Toby Rosenblatt
Amy Meyer	

### December

Wednesday, December 27, 7:30 p.m.

#### Midwinter Bardic & Carol Sing

Bardic gatherings in traditional European folk culture were an opportunity for people to gather together against the chill of winter to share songs, music, and conviviality. Come recreate the experience at the Presidio's Interfaith Chapel (130 Fisher Loop). Call 415.775.4635 for directions.

By Jim Meadows  
Presidio Trust Executive Director

# Did You Know...?

PRESIDIO TRUST JOINS FEDERAL GIVING PROGRAM

This fall, the Presidio Trust joined hundreds of agencies across America in support of a unique and highly effective giving program – the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Launched in 1961, the CFC is the only authorized charitable fundraising campaign for federal employees. The program operates in more than 430 localities throughout the United States and is the largest and most successful workplace fundraising model in the world. Last year alone it raised over \$200 million for local, national and international charities.

The CFC is successful because it pools the gifts of thousands of individual donor employees, who



voluntarily elect to contribute a portion of their earnings. A guaranteed monthly income is then provided to charities working to educate children, serve the physically challenged, improve health care and support environmental preservation.

Participation in the CFC is especially gratifying for Presidio Trust employees because five Presidio-based organizations are recipients of the program. They are:

- The Exploratorium

- Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
- San Francisco Friends of the Urban Forest
- WaterKeepers Northern California
- The Wilderness Society

We've featured the programs of WaterKeepers in this month's Presidio Organization Spotlight, and you've read about the other organizations in the Post earlier this year. We are pleased to support their important work.

To date, Presidio Trust employees have contributed more than \$18,000 to the Combined Federal Campaign. We are gratified to make a difference in our community by participating in the CFC's tradition of giving.



## PRESIDIO ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT



### WaterKeepers

(FORMERLY SAN FRANCISCO BAYKEEPER)

Ten years ago, BayKeeper was one man with a boat intent on finding and stopping water polluters. In 1989, Dr. Mike Herz, a San Francisco Bay researcher, realized that all his studies indicated serious health declines even though U.S. Clean Water Act laws had long been on the books. Undaunted by the challenge of investigating hundreds of miles of shoreline, he set out to understand why the laws weren't working, and developed a multi-faceted program to confront polluters.

Today, tiny BayKeeper has transformed into WaterKeepers, a region-wide organization that encompasses the entire Bay-Delta watershed. Headquartered in the Presidio's Thoreau Center, WaterKeepers tackles major local, regional and statewide pollution problems by patrolling waterways, investigating pollution reports and initiating cleanup projects. It is



WaterKeepers' staff patrols 1,700 miles of waterways in search of polluters.

also the home of the BayKeeper Legal Clinic, where law students and staff attorneys develop evidence and strategies for taking on polluters in the courtroom.

WaterKeepers' programs encompass some of the most important work being done to improve the health of California waters. Its staff covers a lot of territory – 1,700 hundred miles of waterways and miles of river sites.

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### January

Through January 7, 2001

#### Traces of Time at the Exploratorium

This stunning photographic exhibition of over 30 images and 8 diagrams illustrates the effects of the passage of time on our natural surroundings. Check it out before it goes on its national tour! Free with admission to the museum. Call 415.EXPLORE or visit [www.exploratorium.edu](http://www.exploratorium.edu) for details.

Saturday, December 30, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

#### Fort Point By Candlelight

Tour beautiful Fort Point by only the light of candles and the stars to experience the fort as soldiers did a century ago. Reservations are required. Phone 415.556.1693.

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# THE PRESIDIO VOTES

AMERICA'S CLOSELY WATCHED ELECTION WAS ALSO AN HISTORIC MOMENT FOR THE PRESIDIO

**ON AN OTHERWISE UNREMARKABLE TUESDAY, JAMES PENNINGTON, UNKNOWINGLY, WALKED INTO HISTORY. AT PRECISELY 7 A.M. PENNINGTON BECAME THE FIRST PERSON EVER TO CAST A VOTE IN PERSON INSIDE THE PRESIDIO. FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS UNTIL THAT DAY, PRESIDIO RESIDENTS – MILITARY FAMILIES LIVING PERHAPS THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM HOME – HAD VOTED BY ABSENTEE BALLOT OR IN A NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE OUTSIDE THE WALLS.**



**In addition to being a national park, the Presidio is also Precinct 3101. Park residents can now vote within the gates for the first time in history.**

It was appropriate that the honor should fall to a man who enjoys his civic duty and, in fact, takes it very personally. Five years ago, the last time he voted in person, he unnerved a poll worker by shoving his ballot into the box and announcing, “Take that, you bastards!”

Throughout the day, residents arrived at newly-minted Precinct 3101 in a steady stream. Most balanced their telephone-book-thick voter handbooks along with coffee cups, water bottles, backpacks, and cell phones. Dogs waited outside in the sunshine and babies smiled at the poll workers. Occasionally, the line stretched out the door and down the stairs of the Presidio Alliance

Building 563, where the polling station was located.

Inside in the unassuming meeting room, most of the chairs and tables had been neatly stacked to make room for seven polling booths standing side by side. As the day progressed and voters filled each station, the room took on the look of a classroom. But the mood was much happier than final exam day.

“We saw our neighbors, plus we walked the dog,” said Fraser Preston, a late afternoon arrival who’d strolled over with his wife. “It was excellent.”

At 8 p.m., with a few last minute voters safely inside, a worker declared “the poll is closed.” Two

others removed the hand lettered “Vote In Here” sign from the door, and the official red, white and blue notifications from the parking lot. Scott Burg, a researcher at UCSF, bent over his ballot, flipped through the handbook, marked a choice, read again, lifted his head in thought, marked some more, and, finally, at 8:20 p.m., fed his long sheets into the Eagle machine. He became voter number 696.

“This is just like me,” he said with a smile, indicating his tardiness. Then he motioned to the empty voting booths and tables, “What better use for a public space?” He pulled on his jacket and walked out the door. He, too, had made history.

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## UPDATING THE PRESIDIO PLAN

YOUR IDEAS ARE NEEDED TO SHAPE THE PRESIDIO TRUST IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (PTIP)

It’s been five months since we first asked for your ideas to help us update the plan for the Presidio’s future. To date, hundreds of people have attended one of our four community workshops, returned our *Presidio Post* questionnaires, sent in ideas by mail and email or visited our website. Thank you for your response!

As 2001 begins, we are approaching an important milestone in the planning process – the end of the “scoping” period. Scoping is an information gathering process during which the community comments on the issues, actions and alternatives they think should be included in a plan and studied in an environmental review.

We’d like to know what issues you think are important, but we need to hear from you before the end of the comment period – **January 15, 2001.**



### LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

Send your comments to:  
**PTIP**  
Presidio Trust, c/o John Pelka  
34 Graham Street  
P.O. Box 29052  
San Francisco, CA 94129-0052  
ptip@presidiotrust.gov

### SEEN THE WORKBOOK?

In November, everyone on our mailing list received an important document, the *Conceptual Alternatives Workbook*. This booklet contains valuable information – a proposed “vision statement” for Area B of the

Presidio, proposed planning principles that apply to all plan alternatives, a range of options for how the interior of the Presidio could look and feel in coming years, and a schedule for the planning process.

Each conceptual option represents a different planning emphasis. A final plan alternative may draw upon a mix of ideas from the different options. We urge you to review the workbook and complete and return the response form found inside. If you’re not on our mailing list, you can download the information from [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov) or request a copy by calling 415.561.5414.

### NEXT STEPS

Our next public meeting will be held in the spring at which time we will present a draft Presidio Trust Implementation Plan (PTIP) and Environmental Impact Statement. For additional news and information, please visit [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov).

### Announcements

#### Give A Tree A Home

Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) can help you find a home for your living tree after the holiday season. Bring it by their office in the Presidio (Building 1007 – visit [www.fuf.net](http://www.fuf.net) for directions) between January 3 to 15 and FUF will find a willing recipient. If you are interested in picking up trees for replanting, call Alexis Harte at 415.561.6890 x 106.

#### Pet Cemetery Tales

The Presidio Trust’s historical reporter is interested in talking to anyone who has a pet buried in the Presidio Pet Cemetery. We’re eager to learn the stories behind the humorous and touching grave markers. Call Dianna Waggoner at 415.923.5863 or email your tale to [dwaggoner@presidiotrust.gov](mailto:dwaggoner@presidiotrust.gov).

Wednesday, January 10, 6 to 9 p.m.

#### Pilot Program Workshop

Come learn how the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service plan to revitalize the Presidio’s forested areas, enhance native plant communities, and restore historic views this year. The meeting will be held at the Golden Gate Club. Call 415.561.5418 for details or directions.

Library Hours:  
Weekdays  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
415.561.5343

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P.O. Box 29052  
San Francisco  
California 94129-0052  
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Fax: 415.561.5315  
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www.presidiotruster.gov



## Presidio Profiles

### Les Ayers

**On December 7, 1941, Les Ayers was a student at West Point Preparatory Academy at the Presidio's Fort Scott. The school's goal was to teach young soldiers enough history, math, and foreign languages to excel on West Point's entrance exam. Les' father, Lt. Colonel Russell Ayers, was stationed at the Presidio, and the whole family lived on the Main Post. Les is now retired and lives in Sonoma with his wife. In honor of the anniversary of the attack at Pearl Harbor, here's what he remembers of that day, in his own words:**

“December 7 was a beautiful day. We kids at Fort Scott knew how to get off the post officially on VOCO, Vocal Order of the Commanding Officer, which was for important things like your mother's funeral or going to church.

And, naturally, if you were going to church, you're not going to the post chapel, for crying out loud. You're going as far downtown as you can reasonably figure out. So, five or six of us left together that morning to go to Grace Cathedral. It was entirely possible that some member of Miss Burke's or Miss Hamlin's School would show up at a lunch place and we'd all have an afternoon date.

When we came out of church, newsboys were everywhere. There were scare banner headlines: Pearl Harbor! Japanese Attack! We took one look at that – remember most of us were Army brats – and we

knew one thing would occur even if we hadn't heard it personally: all leaves, all passes, would immediately be canceled. So we told everybody goodbye, got on the old D car, and rode back to the Presidio.

It was pandemonium. And, of course, the officers were all scared to death. They had more information which had come down through military channels and knew that the Pacific Fleet had been severely disabled. In their minds, they could see Japanese battleships coming over the horizon, passing in front of the Golden Gate and pulverizing the old forts. So the Commanding General immediately set up a 24 hour perimeter defense of Fort Scott.

The Commandant said, “Hey, I've got a job for the prep school crowd.” We were told to man the 25th Avenue gate, a very popular shortcut across the Presidio for

anybody driving from that part of San Francisco to the Marina or to Van Ness or the Golden Gate Bridge. I was the supply sergeant, so I went to draw up ball ammunition. We were never allowed to carry anything that would really shoot or hurt somebody. We had old World War I rifles, but they could shoot. The clerk who was peacetime wanted to literally count out each bullet. Instead of just giving us the great big box of them, he practically wanted to issue them one by one. So I stood in line along with everybody else and got our issue, took it back, and handed it out to our troops.

We had an old, old truck from the motor pool because we weren't big time, we weren't real soldiers. Driving this Chevrolet truck with a canvas top to deliver the guard detail was my assignment because I was the only one who had a GI



**Les believes this image of him and his father was taken at the photographer's studio at the Presidio. Lt. Colonel Ayers was ordered to serve in the South Pacific shortly after the attack at Pearl Harbor.**

driver's license.

That initial guard detail went on the gate on Pearl Harbor Day.

We didn't know if we were going to be on guard duty for the rest of our lives or at least until the end of our enlistment. However, the Commandant, who was also a West Point graduate and a Brigadier General at Fort Scott, finally decided that it was more important for the prep school detachment to get back to school and take the exams. So we went back to school, probably in late January.”