



COMMUNIQUE

Contact us at: admin@pha-sf.org

Volume 2025, No. 1

Spring 2025

President's Message

Dear PHA Members,

We are all reeling from the attack on the Presidio from the White House and its minions. We were inspired to have an outreach event instead of a fundraiser this year. Time to gird our loins!

Happily, the Juniper Djinn concerts at the Interfaith Chapel were a success, especially the second show which was better attended. Everyone seemed to enjoy it, and Diane Johnson made a lovely display of the refreshments which included her delicious cookies. Intended for outreach rather than fundraising, it nevertheless netted something near \$5,000.00. I am waiting to learn if it brought us any new members!

We are looking forward to the Annual Meeting which will be held at the MIS Museum. The HMS *Racoon* (correct spelling) was a "ship-rigged sloop" with 26 guns. Although it barely made it here through storms in 1814, it seems to have lasted into the 1850s. We will have a reception and the talk in the upstairs conference room with a view of the landing site. Lunch will be served in the classroom downstairs after the talk. Rogelio Colindres, owner of Café RX, is catering our box lunches with an assortment of toasted sandwiches (even the vegetarian one is toasted). This allows us to reduce the price for our event to \$35.00. I hope everyone will be able to join us!

You will see on our ballot two interesting new board candidates. The historian we hoped would join decided she didn't have time to be on the

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board just now. But she will still be available to consult, write, articles and maybe help on committees. We will make her an honorary member.

One of the Presidio docents, Butch Byers, has taken on the task of saving the two green Earthquake Shacks yet again. These are the same ones we rescued years ago, and which were part of our former museum. They were in the way of the old hospital renovation. Since they are artifacts (not buildings) belonging to the National Park Service, they were removed by NPS and parked next to the Archives. If Butch is successful, we should consider giving him an award. PHA will try to help by encouraging NPS to let them go somewhere else rather than being destroyed, now that they are decommissioned. This is very frustrating after we tried so hard to get NPS to let us help restore them and were rebuffed only a few years ago.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on April 26th.

Sincerely,
Lucia

Lucia Bogatay,
President of the Presidio Historical Association

Presidio Historical Association Annual Meeting and Lecture Saturday, April 26, 2025, 11:30 a.m-1:30 p.m.

**Location: Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center,
[640 Old Mason Street](#), the Presidio (near Crissy Field)**

Philip B. Williams will speak on "The Curious Voyage of His Majesty's Ship *Racoon*: How Her Action in the War of 1812 Changed the Geography of America"



On the morning of January 14th, 1814, HMS *Racoon* arrived off the Farallon Islands. She was in a desperate state. Her hull was heavily damaged and for the previous two weeks her crew had been continuously manning the pumps in a losing battle to keep her afloat. Now they were exhausted, out of provisions, and encountering a huge breaking swell on the San Francisco bar. They had only one last chance to make it to safety. So, with all sails set, hatches battened down, and topweight jettisoned, they ran before a gale through the breaking surf, to anchor at last in calm water off the Presidio beach. They urgently needed the help of Commandante Arguello to repair and resupply.

Phil Williams will tell us the fascinating story of how the *Racoon* came to be in San Francisco Bay, and the enormous geopolitical consequences of what she had done. Phil emigrated to the United States from England 55 years ago. His father was a Royal Navy officer, so he spent his youth among British warships in Portsmouth Harbor in Hampshire, immersed in naval history. In San Francisco he founded a consulting firm dedicated to environmental restoration, and one of his projects was the Crissy Field wetland restoration, located exactly where HMS *Racoon* was dragged ashore. In his retirement Phil's interest is researching the history of the British Navy on the Pacific Coast, and he is the Vice President of the Drake Navigators Guild.

Register for the annual meeting at PHA-SF.org or by mail by filling out the following:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

_____ \$35 Ticket For PHA Members

_____ \$35 Ticket For The Public & Guests of PHA Members

_____ I cannot attend but would like to make a donation.

Mail to: Presidio Historical Association, P.O. Box 29163, San Francisco, CA 94129
Or sign up online (note that you must indicate the number of guests before pushing NEXT):
https://app.aplos.com/aws/events/2025_annual_meeting_the_curious_voyage_of_his_majestys_ship_racoon

Presidio Historical Association Annual Election of Officers

It's time for the annual election of officers for the PHA. Members of the Board of Directors are elected to three-year terms. Following the annual election of Directors, the Directors then elect the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer to one-year terms.

Terms expiring in 2025: Lucia Bogatay, Robert Cherny, Phil Faroudja, Paul Wermer

Directors continuing:

Terms expiring in 2026: Bryan Baker, Peg DiGiammarino

Terms expiring in 2027: Samantha Davis, Jason Wright

Gary Widman continues on the Board so long as he is the immediate Past President.

Ballot, 2025 Election of Directors

The Board recommends a vote FOR each of the following persons.

Brief biographies of the new candidates are on the next pages.

	FOR	AGAINST
Lucia Bogatay	•	•
Phil Faroudja	•	•
Paul Wermer	•	•
Don Reuter	•	•
Stephen Voris	•	•

The undersigned member of the Presidio Historical Association acknowledges receipt of this Notice of the Annual Meeting of Members dated Spring 2025.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Detach and return this page no later than April 15 or bring to PHA Membership Meeting on April 26.

RETURN YOUR BALLOT BY MAIL TO:

Presidio Historical Association, PO Box 29163, San Francisco, CA, 94120

OR VOTE ONLINE AT:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeD6dmqJGSpv1fJtGnAwtG7j7EGuCCis9F0EjKnLQsYBWBK_Q/viewform

OR BRING YOUR BALLOT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING ON APRIL 26.



Presidio Historical Association Annual Election of Officers Statements by New Candidates for Director

About Nominee Don Reuter

Don was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to a German-American father and Korean mother (a stunning world culture setting at the beginning) and attended the University of Cincinnati in the early 1980s before enrolling in the Fashion Institute of Technology, NYC. Even before graduating from FIT, Don went to work at the prestigious Anne Klein Design Studio, designing, with other exceptional graduates, for the firm's famous fashion products.

Soon after, Don was employed by a sportswear division of designer Geoffrey Beene but was quickly moved to work directly for the acclaimed auteur, who, at the time, was considered America's Dean of Fashion, as one of his couture ready-to-wear assistants. Among the many areas in which he worked, Don included all of Mr. Beene's licenses, domestically and in Japan, where he traveled frequently. He was also mainly responsible for the company's seasonal runway presentations, including model and music selection, choreography, film edits, and special effects.

While at Beene, Don met world-renowned makeup artist Kevyn Aucoin and, through a significant personal and professional twist, became entirely responsible for conceiving and putting together every facet and bringing to the public all of Mr. Aucoin's highly coveted books, including the *New York Times* #1 Bestseller, *Making Faces*, until his untimely death.

Concurrent to his astounding success with Kevyn, and for the next dozen-plus years, Don worked as a collaborator, co-writer, illustrator, graphic artist, and creative director or sole author on many more pictorial-heavy and award-nominated books in cinema, beauty, and gay social and history studies. Several also became quite popular in their respective genres, especially *Greetings from the Gayborhood*, and *Gaydar*, a top seller in GLBTQ topics.

As of late, Don has geared his days to working part-time in retail, which he did very early in his career. He entwines this with his passion for visiting noteworthy site-specific gift shops in museums and tourist spots worldwide, like the Presidio. This unique place teases Mr. Reuter's constant analytically creative ways and is where Don's attention to the Presidio Historical Association (PHA) first appeared. He immediately felt his life and work history could partner with a group steeped in its own remarkable history by channeling his visual and organization skills to bring both into a brighter future while embracing each other's passionate legacies.

Presidio Historical Association Annual Election of Officers Statements by New Candidates for Director (continued)

About Nominee Stephen Voris

The Army assigned me to the Presidio in 1983, and I tell people I have never really left! The place is in my DNA. I was an officer assigned to Headquarters, Sixth US Army at the Presidio. My wife Betty and I lived in government quarters on Kobbe Avenue. We would fall asleep at night listening to the Golden Gate Bridge foghorns. During the time I was at the Presidio, I continued my education in the evenings, graduating with an MBA from Golden Gate University. We had developed a love for the Bay Area, so I elected to retire from the Army in 1987. We decided to live in San Francisco, and I went into business here. I had the position of VP, Marketing for a graphic communications and printing company in San Francisco. Retiring for a second time in 2010.

During this time, I was a continual visitor to the Presidio, taking advantage of our wonderful place for physical fitness (Lots of jogging!). Plus walking my dogs, and being involved with friends and activities. I visited a Presidio Trust exhibition (Before the Bridge) in 2013. I read that the Trust was looking for volunteers for the Officers' Club which was undergoing extensive historic renovation. I was hooked! Being a history nerd and with my background at the Presidio, I knew this was for me. I interviewed, was selected and went through the initial extensive Docent training program. I was on duty when the Officers' Club opened to the public in 2014. I loved meeting visitors and interpreting our common history for them! I continued developing my knowledge of the history of the Presidio and the many diverse people that passed through the Bay Area in peace and war. Since I was a Vietnam veteran, I was often selected to talk to visiting veterans and tour groups.

I became one of the leaders of our Docent group. And I was one of the "ringleaders" when, during the Pandemic, the Presidio Trust management announced they were going to dismantle the museum in Building 50 (Officers' Club) and turn the space into offices! Unbelievable! Well, long story made short, with the education and support of the Trust Board chair and co-chair, we prevailed. Activism at its best! And as a result the Museum is still there today in the historic Officers' Club to inform and enrich present and future generations of visitors! I continued volunteering until 2022 when I had to stop volunteering for medical and other reasons.

I am now pleased to be involved with the Presidio Historical Association, and the ongoing work it is doing to actively promote the history and heritage of this wonderful place!

I have been active with other volunteer activities in San Francisco as well. I was a volunteer at the San Francisco Symphony for over 20 years. A great experience! And I have been a volunteer for the past eight years with the UCSF Healthy Aging program. UCSF is a national leader in both Alzheimer's research and healthy aging. It is a privilege to contribute to their efforts.

The Presidio and the Right-Wing Tech Ascendancy

Dismantling the Presidio Trust could be a first step in remaking San Francisco.

by Lincoln Mitchell

One of the many ways the second Trump administration feels different from the first one is that this time it seems to be hitting San Francisco much more directly. Largely because of Elon Musk, right-wing tech leaders and their anti-democratic preachings have played an enormous role in the first few months of Trump's second administration. Those writing, as well as many powerful individuals around the President [have roots, or have spent time, in San Francisco](#). This contributes to San Francisco being more wrapped up in, and targeted by, this administration than was the case from 2017-2020.

This brings me to the Presidio, specifically the decision of the Trump-Musk regime to defund the Presidio Trust. It is very likely a first step in what could lead to a privatization of the Presidio and a test case for the kind of "Freedom City" that the right-wing tech billionaires have been trying to create for some time now.

Because the Presidio is nestled in the northwest corner of the city and constitutes about 5% of the area of San Francisco, anything that happens there will have a significant impact on the rest of the city. If the Presidio becomes a testing ground for unfettered development and of a tech take-over that includes fewer rights, particularly for the less wealthy, and greater surveillance, it will have an impact on all of San Francisco.

Some of this is self-evident. Building significantly more housing in the Presidio will create traffic congestion and other service related problems for about a quarter of the city. Similarly, as the Presidio is privatized, San Franciscans will lose a beautiful public outdoor space. However, the impact could go far beyond that.

Freedom cities are an explicit threat to democracy and self-governance. Even advocates for Freedom Cities make little effort to conceal this. Mark Lutter and Jeffrey Mason are Freedom City cheerleaders, so the language they use in their article in *Palladium* (see link) about turning the Presidio into a "Freedom City," should be examined closely, but the bottom line is still clear: "The existing [Presidio] trust structure could be reformed, and the board of directors reconstituted, to facilitate

the development of the Presidio, or even just a portion of it, as a Freedom City which enjoys broad autonomy, a vastly improved regulatory environment, and preemption over extreme state and local restrictions on construction and emerging technologies."

Behind that feel-good language about regulatory frameworks and preemption of restrictions, the meaning is very clear. Freedom cities would strip local government, in other words the people, of any ability to reign in corporate greed or ambition, and turn that power over to those very corporations to do what they want. Their goal is nothing less than remaking our system of government so that corporations, not the people, govern. It is now apparent that the word "things" in the tech slogan "move fast and break things" ultimately refers to democracy and the US.

I know that some will read this and think I am over-reacting and will tell themselves that I am turning what will likely be few more condos in the Presidio into the end of democracy. I hope I am over-reacting, but if we have learned anything from this decade of Trump, it is that the worst is always likely to happen.

Musk in particular has a vision of tech fascism that may play itself out in the Presidio in the coming months and years. Even if it fails, the impact on San Francisco, a city Musk has despised for years, could be very substantial.

For the articles cited in the article, see:

[Duran, Gil. "Trump Targets San Francisco's Presidio." *The Nerd Reich*. Feb. 20, 2025.](#)

[Lutter, Mark, and Jeffrey Mason. "Building the Presidio Freedom City." *Palladium*, Jan. 17, 2025.](#)

[Woodworth, Max D. "Freedom Cities': Trump and an American global new city." *Urban Geography* v. 45 \(2024\).](#)

This is an abbreviated version of Mitchell's essay that is available [here](#) in its entirety.

Kibitzing with Lincoln is a reader-supported publication. For more information, go [here](#).



Then, Now and Forever

For nearly seven decades, the Presidio Historical Association (PHA) has been at the forefront of matters concerning the Presidio, a signature piece of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (1972). Its dedication to this beloved park began by ensuring that Fort Point would become a National Historic Site (1970) and the Presidio itself would be a National Historic Landmark District (1962).

The PHA has also, throughout its entire existence, helped maintain and augment the site's historical interpretation with our esteemed colleagues at the National Park Service, more recently the Presidio Trust and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and multitudes of passionately historically minded individuals. But at no time has preserving and presenting the Presidio's profound history been as crucial as at this epic moment

From Indigenous times through its two hundred-plus years of military occupation by three countries, most prominently the United States until 1994, to today's visits of millions from across the globe, it is an incredible example of self-funded, access-for-all public land in an urban setting with a dedicated focus on its historical integrity. However, we know too well that keeping this multifaceted park vital and open can only be guaranteed by constant foresight and care.

We were then, are now, and hope forever to be the group whose sole existence is to serve as stalwart proponents of this park's complex and compelling stories—tales of truth, valor, hardship, and more that anyone interested in many of America's most important moments can secure and communicate for the interest and enlightenment of present and future generations. Whether by volunteering as a Presidio docent, joining PHA as a member, donating to its historical cause, or attending an event, including our benefits, you can participate in this critical mission: keeping a priceless jewel of a park alive, well, and ready for any uncertainty ahead.

Thank You For Coming Out To Show Support For The Presidio!

A big thank you to all who came out on March 1 to show support for our Presidio! It was incredibly encouraging to see over 300 people come out for preserving and protecting our historic Presidio of San Francisco and National Parks across America.



CARTOONS FROM *THE PRESIDIO SUN*, THE POST'S WORLD WAR II NEWSLETTER

The Publication Featured News But Also Had Comics

Compiled by Phil Faroudja



Cartoon by Garold "T/4" Ratzlaff from *The Presidio Sun*, circa 1943-1945, exact date unknown. Ratzlaff served in the Signal Corps, ranked Technician 4th Grade, or "T/4."

Eager Edgar

by Ratzlaff



Cartoon by Garold Ratzlaff from the September 20, 1945, issue of *The Presidio Sun*.

8 ————— THE SUN —————

STUBBY

by Cpl. Hager



Cartoon by Corporal Ernest Hager from the September 20, 1945, issue of *The Presidio Sun*.



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Please visit our website at pha-sf.org
and our upcoming events calendar at
<http://presidioassociation.org/pha-calendar-events>

The Presidio Historical Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3)
organization chartered in the State of California. Donations
to the Presidio Historical Association are tax deductible.

Members: We Want to Hear From You!

Please email the PHA office (admin@pha-sf.org)
as soon as possible so we may confirm or update
our email list and weed out errors. We have heard
from some members who only get USPO mailed
items, even though they do have email.

We also invite members to submit articles that
might be of interest

Please contact:

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