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Macy Blackman
...from front page

the American Festival Café at Rockefeller Center. Macy and his Rockin’ Rebels played over 320 gigs a year for fourteen straight years at the center, clubs, and street festivals.

He loved living in New York, in a place so “downtown you had to go uptown to get there.” In 2000, he came out to California for a woman—a mistake that lasted, as he puts it, “Seven months and ten days.” The change wasn’t easy: “It’s too late for me. I’ll never be from here. I didn’t come here until I was fifty. But now New York seems like another life, kind of dreamlike. The only thing that’s constant is that I’m

still playing music.”

And all that, he says, is going very well—except for one thing (see below). After a stint teaching musicology at UC Berkeley, Blackman formed the Mighty Fines in 2003, and the group recorded its first CD in 2005. Other CDs followed, and the band’s new release, *Shoorah: The Songs of Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint*, had its own party a couple of weeks ago at the Back Room in Berkeley. The Mighty Fines features saxophonists Nancy Wright (John Lee Hooker, B.B. King) and Ken “Snakebite” Jacobs (Neville Brothers,

Temptations), bassist Bing Nathan (Lavay Smith) and drummer Larry Vann (Martha Reeves, Elvin Bishop). On a more informal—and rare—note, Kensington farmers’ market-goers got a treat March 12 when Blackman and others played down at Colusa Circle.

So what’s the one thing that bugs Blackman? “There are so many musicians that want to be here, that there’s no way you can make any money,” says Blackman. “They all want to play. They’re all over each other to not make a damn thing. You can play every night if you want and still make subsistence

wages.”

Yet Blackman is a contented man—he’s spent his life doing what he loves best. And he’s got a house with a garden—in Kensington. “It’s so different from the Bronx that I really know I went somewhere,” he quips. “It’s not like living in some half-baked neighborhood in SF. I am very happy here. It’s a beautiful house. When I was a little kid in Virginia, our gardener, who was 97 in 1954, taught me how to do a bunch of stuff in the garden, and I can do that stuff here. He would be really proud of me.”

Bringing the Community Together

K E N S I N G T O N

OUTLOOK

APRIL 2017

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 75 NUMBER 3

Kensington Profiles

Mighty Fine Macy Blackman Tickles the Keys, N’awlins Style



Lucky shoppers: Macy Blackman gave a rare performance at the Kensington Farmers’ Market March 12. Accompanying Blackman are saxophonist Ken “Snakebite” Jacobs and bassist Bing Nathan. Photo by Elisabeth Cornu

By Linnea Due

When singer/pianist/cornetist Macy Blackman bought his house on Yale, it took a bit of sleight of hand. Blackman was renting the property, and he had first shot at buying it for fair market value. Blackman, like the previous owner, didn’t have a lot of money. The garden was glorious, but the rest of the property had suffered years of neglect. “The house was ready to fall into the bay,” Blackman says. Once they got contractors’ estimates, the price began sinking—and then Blackman’s wife Marsha, an artist, went to work positioning furniture and hangings to spotlight the many interior defects. Blackman and his wife soon found themselves owners of the house they loved.

Blackman, who turns 69 this year, began specializing in New Orleans R&B in the mid-’70s, after an early career backing up the Drifters and the Coasters. He was living in New York at the time, and he says, “New Orleans came to me.” He became friends with drummer Charles Williams and then met Dr. John and Charles Otis. New York sported several New Orleans-based clubs, and Blackman played them all. But his longest-lasting gig came at

Human Factor Is Key

Community Center’s New Sound System Requires Speakers to Stop “Kissing”

By Linnea Due

On March 3, the KPPCSD’s recently formed Technology Committee met to discuss ongoing problems with the new sound system at the Community Center. While the system earns praise from nearly everyone, a few stumbles remain on that great highway to better hearing. At the February 23 meeting, longtime resident Dr. Frank Lossy had trouble adjusting his assisted listening device (ALD), which is supposed to work with his hearing aids to amplify the sound—but Lossy said that even without the ALD, the volume range was extreme. Speakers either seemed to be whispering or shouting—and for Lossy, the shouts were painful.

Dr. A. Stevens Delk, who has hearing issues, explained at the committee meeting that the new microphones are much better than the past system, but that some speakers cannot be heard while others overwhelm those in the room—especially audience members using a hearing aid. Because the old microphones were not good quality, users learned to “kiss” the mic while speaking up. With the new system, that strategy results in a blast of noise. While the microphones are far superior, they cannot be adjusted—which means speakers must learn to adjust their voices.

The committee, headed by director Eileen Nottoli, recommended that a

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Letters to the Editor

Job Split Behind Closed Doors
Dear Editor:
The Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) has been headed by a full-time combined position of general manager and chief of police for many years. However, at the last KPPCSD meeting, the board decided to split the position and immediately post for a general manager for only two days per week, without amending the policy manual to permit the split.

The board discussed the job split in a special closed session meeting with consultants. There was no public analysis of why the position should be for only two days a week, of the financial impact of the split, of the qualifications, salary and benefits, or of the process for recruitment. There was no discussion about the process for hiring a permanent police chief either.

We should be concerned that this significant change in our governing structure happened behind closed doors. If we let the board get by with this, we risk further unilateral action by the board. For example, we know this board is considering contracting out our police. We are entitled to a public discussion of such a radical change in our police services.

Where is the transparency that this community expects, and deserves, and upon which the new board members campaigned? Please come to the KPPCSD board meetings to ensure that the directors know that Kensington taxpayers support their local police, and that any proposed changes to that structure must be discussed fully in a public session with citizen input.

Linda Lipscomb


Local Control an Illusion
Dear Editor:
As an objection to contracting for police services, I often hear the argument that “We would lose our local control.” I would argue that our “local control” is an illusion. We have little budgetary flexibility because salaries are the biggest part of the KPPSCD budget. Yet we have little control over them. We are always told that they have to keep up with neighboring departments, even though our officers do not face the much higher risk that our neighbors face. Where was our control when for years we generously paid the officer contributions to PERS? Several agencies said they are willing to provide policing. That would give some bargaining power and choices.

By contracting we would gain budgetary flexibility in staffing levels, both in number and rank, flexibility that we do not now have. We have an expensive, top-heavy structure. We are operating with 1/3 of the officers on medical or administrative leave (suggesting that we can operate with a lower staff level). A larger department can better absorb the inevitable leaves that officers take. It can use non-sworn/less expensive staff to do work such as parking, compliance, records management, community service liaison, or police technician, jobs that we now have our sworn officers do. Do we really want to pay officer wages to manage our car maintenance? We now have no way to replace poorly behaving officers. A larger agency would be able to exert better discipline

See Letters, page 5

Editor’s Note: *Astute readers may have noticed that the letters, despite a stated word limit, grow like that beanstalk Jack wanted to climb. Beginning in April, the Outlook institutes a new policy: Letters 350 words or under will appear in the print edition (space permitting). Any letter over 350 words will be printed in the online edition only. If letters are online, because of length or space limitations, readers will be directed to the online edition. If there is no notice of additional letters online, our correspondents managed to keep to the limit. Write on, folks.*

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The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues.

KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.

The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Outlook, its editor, or the publisher, the Kensington Community Council. Residents are invited to submit letters on matters of interest to the community. Letters must be signed and include the author's address and phone number (address and phone will not be published). Publication is subject to space limitations and the editor's discretion. Letters of 250 or fewer words are preferred. One letter per person, per issue. Obituaries for Kensington residents are published at no charge. E-mail preferred to Editor@KensingtonOutlook.com

PLEASE NOTE: *Modern digital customs call for one space, rather than the traditional two, after all periods.*

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May Advertising Deadline April 8
May Editorial Deadline April 10

K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP

Our KASEP Spring session just started and students can be found knitting, baking, tumbling, experimenting and much more! We LOVE keeping children active and involved here at KASEP.

Curt Jones is our dynamic KASEP Science Experiments & Inventions teacher. Trained as a Marine Biologist, he spent most of his career teaching Environmental Science for elementary and middle schoolers. He comes to us with a wealth of teaching experience and his enthusiasm for science is contagious. Curt uses interactive experiments such as rubber-band planes, straw-balloon races and using mirrors to draw that stimulate the students’ minds while also keeping their hands busy.

Curt is an author who wrote a “how-to” book of interactive science activities, and he is thrilled to see his activities replicated in other books and classes. Ryan is Curt’s three year old grandson, and every week Curt can be found instilling his passion and curiosity for the natural world we live in to Ryan.

Curt is undergoing knee surgery soon, which means he’ll be out for spring KASEP. When he returns for Fall 2017, don’t miss signing up for his science class—your children will learn so much while also having a lot of fun!

Our newest KASEP Instructor is April Schlanger, who is teaching Jewelry this session. Her background is in nutrition and selling wine, and as a creative soul, she’s fashioned some amazing jewelry pieces. Her students are learning how to make earrings, necklaces, amulets and more, primarily using “found” or recycled objects. Welcome to KASEP April!



Curt Jones, Scientist Extraordinaire

Ahh, the sweet sounds of the recorder

Circus fun



Cut the cake--a perennial camp favorite

Jazzercise Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8:15-9:15am, Community Center Come jazz it up with friends--move your body to the groove, have some fun and get stronger.

Body Sculpting Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:45-9:45am; Community Center Jazzercise, Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8:15-9:15am, Community Center. Specific exercises to tone and sculpt your body to make you long and lean.

Acrylic Artists Wednesdays, 9:45am - 12:30pm, Community Center Come paint with us! Bring your creativity and we’ll provide the easels. After painting we eat lunch & offer friendly critiques of each other’s work.

Tai Chi Chuan 9:30-10:30am Fridays, Community Center, \$10 Gentle Tai Chi exercises strengthen the body while also helping to calm the mind. When you have a calm mind, your body relaxes, which then reduces stress. Less stress is good!



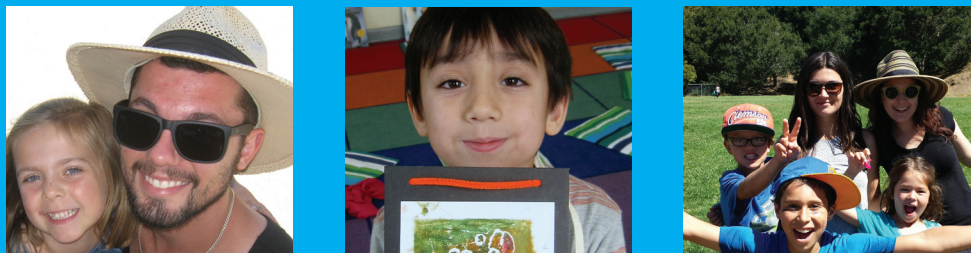
Jazzercise and Body Sculpting Enthusiasts

KCC Summer Camp 2017

\$285 per week July 4th-short week, \$230

Week 1	June 12-June 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Carpentry• <i>Field Trip: The Jungle</i>	Week 6	July 17-July 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Skyhawk Sports• <i>Field Trip: Scandia Miniature Golf/Laser Tag</i>
Week 2	June 19-June 23 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Ceramics - handbuilding• <i>Field Trip: Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science</i>	Week 7	July 24-July 28 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Talisman Jewelry• <i>Field Trip: The Jungle</i>
Week 3	June 26- June 30 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: SkyHawk Sports• <i>Field Trip: Oakland Zoo</i>	Week 8	July 31-August 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OLYMPIC WEEK• <i>Field Trip: Adventure Play-ground</i>
Week 4	July 3-July 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Closed July 4/Short Wk.• Specialty: Cooking with Vicky!	Week 9	August 7-August 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Ceramics air dry clay with Jeanne• <i>Field Trip: El Cerrito Pool Party</i>
Week 5	July 10-July 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SPIRIT WEEK• Specialty: Cooking Part II with Vicky• <i>Field Trip: Lake Anza</i>	Week 10	August 14-August 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty: Legos -Playwell Technologies• End of Summer Air Bouncer and Jousting Tents & Home-made ice

Summer Camp Registration is Online and On-going
Register on the KCC Website or call KCC at 510-525-0292



Ethan Houser returns as our KCC Summer Camp Director

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Important Dates

Spring Break is April 3-7th and there are NO KASEP classes that week.
Spring KASEP ends May 26th.
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KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccrec@yahoo.com, or call 525-0292. M-F, 11am-4pm.
Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am. Call the KCC office for info. Court Fees: 45-min. singles reservation: Residents: \$2; Nonresidents: \$5.
Kensington Community Center Rental Info: Please call Andrea at the KPCCSD (Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District) at 510-526-4141.

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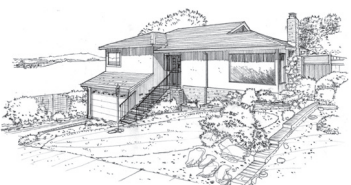
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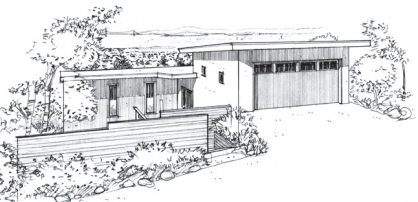
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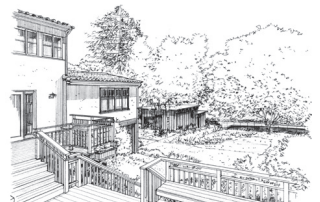
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Passings:

Longtime Kensington resident Thelma Elkins passed away February 15 at the age of 93, surrounded by her three children and a grandchild. She was suffering from metastatic cancer. Thelma and husband Mort Elkins (deceased) moved to Kensington in 1975. She loved living in Kensington and knew many people in the community. She was particularly fond of Larry’s rotisserie chicken in Kensington market. She hosted her 90th birthday family and friend reunion party at the Kensington community center.



Thelma was born in the Bronx, NY, and moved to San Francisco in the ‘50s. She married Mort during a time both were actively resisting McCarthyism. Thelma went on to earn a master’s in social work at Cal. She practiced as a psychiatric social worker in Berkeley and Oakland for nearly 40 years. She became a well-known business owner in Berkeley, opening Easy Going Travel Shop and Bookstore after her son was given a near-impossible list of items to acquire for a trip overseas. She ran it in both brick and mortar form as well as online for nearly 25 years.

Plagued by the onset of macular degeneration in both eyes, she established a low-vision support group through the nonprofit Ashby Village, and she worked tirelessly to advance the rights and benefits for low-vision citizens. She is survived by three children and six grandchildren.



Kensington Hilltop’s Annual Spring Carnival Hits Seventy—and Residents Can Help Make It a Winning Day for Kids

The Kensington Hilltop Elementary community is excited to be planning for the 70th Annual Spring Carnival to be held May 13 from 11am-3pm. Save the date for the school’s highlight event, held rain (last year!) or shine (hopefully this year!).


The carnival promises lots of fun for the family, and there are several ways community members can help the school prepare for what will be a great event, such as planning to purchase gift (or self-gift!) plants at the sixth annual Rhea Wilson Plant Sale. Kid-grown plants and kid-designed arrangements are just in time for Mother’s Day!

And donate your gently used items (no computers, electronics, or large furniture please) to the carnival’s popular White Elephant sale. Please set aside items now to donate May 12 at the school.

This year’s beautiful handmade quilt, “Mesa at Dawn” could be yours at the 35th annual raffle drawing. Local businesses can still donate for our other prize baskets. Please contact Serena Heaslip (serenaheaslip@yahoo.com or 510-290-8095). Also, raffle tickets go on sale starting April 11. Buy tickets from your neighborhood elementary school students.

Donate children’s bicycles for “Deals on Wheels,” the carnival’s benefit bicycle sale. To donate bicycles, coordinate drop-offs with either Bruce Marvin, bmarvinca@gmail.com or Tom Boardman, worldbtom@gmail.com.

Check out next month’s edition of the *Outlook* for more details on this event—and see you at the carnival on May 13!




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Letters

...from page 2

over officers. They would have real personnel and legal departments to help avoid the sorts of legal expenses the district has faced. The agencies we talked with all said that we would have the ability to replace officers that are not a good match with Kensington. Contracting would give us more control, not less.

Mabry Benson

We Need Another Option

Dear Editor:

A year ago, the Kensington Fire District (KFD) received a report on the structural integrity of the Public Safety Building, which houses the Kensington fire and police departments. The report indicated that this 48-year-old building, located about 300 feet from the Hayward fault, does not meet current seismic safety requirements. Given the importance of having these essential services after a severe earthquake, we need to repair or replace the building. The KFD has hired consultants at a cost of over \$225,000 to study options. That report is due this June.

As part of a scoping session, the KFD asked police and fire chiefs to provide input on desirable space needs should the building be replaced. While no specific “ideal” size has been suggested, the KFD has commented that the building could increase to 12,000 to 15,000 square feet, more than twice the size of the current 5,800 square-foot structure. While this will provide more commodious space for existing personnel, it places real constraints on where the building can be located and greatly increases the costs to Kensington taxpayers. Estimates now range from \$7.5-\$10.0 million.

Of the three options under study, two have little chance of providing a workable solution given seismic issues and building constraints. Option 1 is a seismic retrofit of the existing building. Because codes for seismic loads have more than doubled, seismic engineers do not believe the building can be upgraded to meet the requirements of an essential services building. Option 2 looks at replacing the building with a 12,000 square-foot building. The KFD has already concluded that such a large building cannot fit on the existing site with required parking. That leaves Option 3 as the default alternative.

Option 3 would involve a building of about 15,000 square feet plus adjacent off-site parking on the hillside slope of Kensington Park about 50 feet south of the current library. Since this parkland was acquired for open space by a two-thirds vote, any use change will require voter reapproval and an expensive and lengthy environmental review process culminating in a report that must be certified by the KPPCSD board. These obstacles may doom Option 3 to a costly and futile exercise.

Why spend so much effort and money on three options with limited chances of solving the problem? Why isn’t the KFD considering a fourth option—a two-story, 8,000 square-foot building with rooftop parking on the existing 10,620 square-foot lot? This would increase the current building size by 2,200 square feet and provide adequate police parking. While extra features that the chiefs would like may not be accommodated, it is time to substitute desirable for practical. Kensington voters and taxpayers deserve an affordable solution that works.

Jim Watt

Back in the Day

Dear Editor:

Back in the day, longtime Kensington resident Alan Fong and I were journalism collaborators, he with KCBS-TV News and me as a Discovery Channel documentary producer. Alan was most well known for being one of four Asian American student activists who, in the late ‘60s became a conscientious objector, headed a large coalition of Berkeley-based activists and forced Cal to create the Ethnic Studies Department. Much later, I was less well known for being part of a rainbow coalition of students who took over the Brown University administration building for similar reasons. In 2013, I moved in with Alan and did the landscaping, housecleaning, safety, and sometime driving in exchange for a room at his Highland Blvd. home.

As many of you know, I filed a written complaint against a KPD sergeant. The sergeant who came to the scene of an assault against me told me that he was a longtime friend of the guy, gave the guy legal advice instead of questioning him about my complaint, and wrote it up as a verbal disturbance. Even after interim Chief Hart told the sergeant to do a real investigation, and the guy confessed, the sergeant ignored Hart’s order to take it to the Contra Costa County DA’s office. Instead, he buried it.

Yes, the KPPCSD did start an investigation, but only after I made public the fact that I had filed a complaint against the officer. Contrary to law, KPPCSD directors did not make public the steps of how they advertised or interviewed for the investigation job. The investigative firm’s website talks about work the firm does for employers. Not so much for the public. And since the sergeant is now interim chief, everything connected with the investigation goes through him. When he found out that I had ordered a DVD dub of the dispatch call, he intercepted it. It should be clear that he shouldn’t be investigating himself. When I asked for the case to be sent up to the Attorney General’s office, the KPPCSD would not respond. Even worse, when the investigator contacted me on a Saturday with no warning, she said the KPPCSD hadn’t given her a copy of the complaint, the original police incident report, or the revised incident report that finally went to the DA’s office several months later.

I’m not the only one discouraged from making police complaints. Recently, a Kensington woman in her seventies told me that when she tried to file a complaint against the Kensington police, she was told to go online to find the complaint form. Yet the forms are in the station lobby. Things that make you go hmmm.

Alan died on January 13. I moved on January 20. To the end, Alan was a fighter. When I moved to Kensington in 2013, one of the first things he did was take me on walks in Richmond to encourage people to fight against a development that would displace longtime residents. I’ll keep fighting for what is right—just as many of you who feel that you have been treated wrongly by the KPPCSD should. Alan would have liked that.

Skye Phillis Dent

Maintenance Contract, Not Rental

Dear Editor,

I wish to correct an error in the March 2017 *Outlook*. In the article regarding legal fees, it states that the Kensington Community Council (KCC) has a rental agreement with the KPPCSD to use the community center for its after-school enrichment program. This misrepresents the longtime relationship that the KCC has had with the KPPCSD.

For many years now, as one of the primary users of the Kensington Community

Center, the KCC has had an agreement of understanding that we would help pay for the upkeep and maintenance of the center to offset its daily use by the KCC’s Kensington After School Enrichment (KASEP) program. KASEP offers over 50 classes to our families, supporting after school programs for over 500 children during the school year. Many of these classes are held at the community center. To offset this use, the KCC gladly pays the KPPCSD over \$16,000 a year to see that the building is cleaned and maintained for everyone to use.

The KPPCSD has always allowed the KCC to use the building for free, as a cooperative effort between the governing board of the KPPCSD and the KCC for the good of our community and for the education and safety of our children. While KCC sponsors the publication of the *Outlook*, it does not edit articles appearing in the paper. KCC regrets the error and hopes this explanation will clarify any misunderstanding.

Anne Forrest, KCC President

Correction: At the December 17 KPPCSD meeting, Gail Feldman said regarding bifurcation, “We need to move on and need to do the work that the Ad Hoc Committee started working on, which is to help you figure out how to address that position whether you split it or keep it as one position.”

Sound System

...from front page

reminder be given before each meeting, instructing those with louder voices to moderate and not stand too close to the mic, while those with soft voices should project more. Exacerbating the hearing problem is that the microphones on the dais have 15-inch stems, the longest of three manufactured lengths, so that they can only be angled slightly and remain too high. A shorter length would have been preferable.

Briefly touched upon was the lack of video for a few past meetings. Once this occurred when the power went out, corrupting the recording. Committee member David Bergen (Simon Brafman is the other committee member) suggested that an uninterruptible power supply be purchased at a cost of around \$100. The other times were because the system was not turned on properly—human error defeats technology.

Bergen then discussed the Community Center’s new WiFi system, which depends upon a satellite. The cost for the HughesNet service is \$182.44 per month—and its limited data allowance can only be used at certain times. When the allowance is spent, it reverts to dial-up speed. The committee agreed that there should be a WiFi policy, but the HughesNet system, which is contracted for two years starting last October, presents significant obstacles. Other options include cable and U-Verse, with U-Verse a far cheaper and faster option than the current system. Linda Spath asked if the KPPCSD meetings could be live-streamed to encourage participation in community affairs, but Bergen said that the HughesNet system could not be used for live-streaming.

At the KPPCSD’s next meeting, held on March 9, Bergen made an announcement about how to use the microphones, particularly at the podium, where members of the audience address the board. Delk explained that when we speak, we cannot hear what others hear. We hear our voices internally, so we cannot ascertain how loud we are talking. Speakers at the meeting took this admonition to heart and checked microphone distance and volume by asking the audience, especially those using hearing aids or the ALDs, if they were speaking too loudly or softly. The technology committee will continue to meet to discuss policy for WiFi and other matters. The next meeting will be held sometime in April—check the district website for date and time.

Urban Farming Takes Off

Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia reports that local food production is alive and well in the west bay. The Farm to Table Community Supported Agriculture Project (CSA) is a youth- and resident-run nonprofit venture led by Urban Tilth. Their mission is to ensure that fresh, locally grown produce is available to all West Contra Costa County residents.

- The CSA is currently offering three different memberships, each of which will get you a ten-pound box of fresh, locally grown seasonal fruits and vegetables each week.
- \$25 week (\$5 is tax-deductible and makes it possible for a low-income family to pay only \$10 per box)
 - \$20 week
 - \$10 week for low-income families

Seniors and busy families, listen up: for only an extra \$2.50 per week, you can have your box delivered anywhere in West County.

For those who prefer to pick up their boxes, there are two locations: AdamsCrest Farm, 5000 Patterson Circle, Richmond (off the Arlington) and the Urban Tilth office, 31 Maine Ave. Richmond (off 2nd St). If ten members or more pick up their boxes at Gioia’s office, that can become another pickup location. Gioia’s office is at 11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D, El Cerrito (near Cutting). Call 510-232-0911 or email admin@urbantilth.org to sign up.

All proceeds for Urban Tilth’s CSA program support youth and community programs at local school and neighborhood gardens.



Uncompleted crosswalk at Highland Blvd. and Arlington Ave. Photo by Ken Hempel.



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KPPCSD Board: Which Comes First, Nailing Down Funds or Signing Contracts?

By Chuck Toombs

The KPPCSD board has committed to spend upwards of \$1 million for vitally necessary improvements to our Community Center. The architect that the board has selected projects total construction costs of \$850,000 or more, and the district is currently negotiating a separate architectural services agreement for \$150,000 fee with that architect. However, the district has only about half the funds necessary for this work. Is it prudent to begin construction and to enter into a \$150,000 fee agreement with the architects without realistically thinking about how the district will fund the entire capital improvement?

Board President Rachelle Sherris-Watt said at the January 26, 2017 board meeting that the district has \$207,000 in cash set aside for the project plus \$158,000 from Measure WW funds. She suggested that the board would ask that funds from future budgets be used to pay the current building costs, and that the reserves might also be available.

The district actually has \$526,000 towards construction costs, with \$368,000 previously budgeted by last year’s board, and access to an additional \$158,000 in Measure WW funds to reimburse the district for actual costs, *provided the project is completed by December 2018*. The district is short approximately \$500,000.

In 2014, the Kensington Community Council agreed to contribute \$250,000 towards construction costs if the Measure L park bond passed; likewise the Kensington Improvement Club agreed to fund \$10,000, the Kensington Fire Protection District agreed to pledge \$10,000, and the Kensington Property Owners Association agreed to make an equally robust contribution.

Measure L did not pass, and KCC has not currently agreed to contribute \$250,000—instead it has committed \$32,000, consisting of \$16,000 in community donations and matching grants of \$16,000. KCC President Anne Forrest stated that while KCC is willing to work with the board to help fund any retrofit and remodel, KCC wants to examine the final design before committing any funds. And the other pledges, if still available, are not enough.

It appears that that Ms. Sherris-Watt and her board may borrow from current reserves to pay for Community Center reconstruction and then hopefully repay those loans, if at all, with funds from proposed future budget savings. Aren’t we counting our chickens before they hatch? Are there enough savings we can wring out of our current and future budget to pay for this construction without damaging necessary services and projects? For example, current police ranks have declined from 9 officers and one IGM/COP to 5 officers and one IGM/COP. While this measure has generated savings, it has also broken a compact with the community on promised levels of service, all without public debate. Can we afford to gamble with public safety this way without the public’s consent?

The board is also facing other critical expenses that strongly suggest district reserves should remain untouched. For example, the district may need to make increased contributions to CalPERS to fund mandatory pension obligations due to declining investment returns whether it contracts out or not. And the board will have to provide an unknown amount to house the police during the Public Safety Building’s renovation or new construction as well as likely pay increased rental when the police return to a new Public Safety Building. Has the district considered these other costs as it eyes its reserves and future revenues for construction expenses?

Moreover, is the board truly looking for savings everywhere? Consider these actions: The current board gave former Master Sergeant Rickey Hull a promotion to IGM/COP with a raise to \$142,000, similar to the salary paid the prior IGM/COP. Finance committee member Jim Watt publicly stated that the district will spend at least \$250,000 in total CalPERS pension costs on this raise. Yet this board walked away from significant savings by not rehiring former IGM/COP Kevin Hart at a flat hourly rate, with NO health or pension benefit costs.

Without much public debate, the board also decided to hire a separate part-time GM at \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year to supervise district operations, working an average of 2 days a week—is this realistic?

I provided Sherris-Watt and her team with material from the CSDA Finance Corporation in early 2016 describing available public financing alternatives. Yet Sherris-Watt stated in the January 26, 2017 meeting that she would do everything in her power not to ask for a bond. Public financing may be the best way to pay for necessary repairs to the Community Center while still preserving vital programs and services.

Our board must think realistically about how it will fund major capital improvements and still provide acceptable levels of public service before it commits to these capital costs. Surely vital capital costs and police and public services are equally important and both deserve our full support. And perhaps we all need to ask what kind of community we want and how much we are willing to pay for it!



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Join Us for Lent and Easter

Arlington Community Church has a series of events planned for Lent and Easter. Come worship with us during this season.

Regular Sunday worship service at 10:00 a.m.

• Palm Sunday April 9, 10:00 a.m.

God’s Justice Found in the Joyous Procession of Palms

• Maundy Thursday April 13, 7:00 p.m.

The Last Supper and Christ's Passion

• Good Friday April 14, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Quiet service of meditation on the seven last words of Christ.

• Easter Sunday, April 16

7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service

8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

At Arlington Community Church

God is still speaking,
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OF CHRIST



Kensington Calendar

Locations:
Kensington Community Center 59
Arlington Ave., 525-0292
Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave.,
524-3043
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berke-
ley (UUCB), 1 Lawson Rd., Kensing-
ton, 525-0302, www.uucb.org

Ongoing:
Jazzercise, 8:15-9:15am, Monday,
Wednesday, Friday, Community
Center.
Body Sculpting, 8:45-9:45am, Tuesday
and Thursday, Community Center.
Acrylic Artists, Wednesdays 9:45-
12:30pm, Community Center. Open
Studio to paint with easels provided.
Tai Chi Chuan, 9:30-10:30am Fridays,
Community Center, \$10

April 1 & 22 Saturday Drop-in Craft
Kids and parents are welcome to
come in and make simple crafts
and drawings. Kensington Library.
Available all day (10am-4:30pm)
while supplies last. Free. 524-3043.
April 2 Rabbi Harry Manhoff, Con-
gregational Rabbi at Temple Beth
Sholom in San Leandro; author; lec-
turer at St. Mary’s College; doctorate
in the New Testament. “The Torah
in the Time of Jesus.” 9:30am. Free.
Unitarian Universalist Church of
Berkeley.
**April 3 Kensington Library Knitting
Club** “The Castoffs” All levels wel-
come. Please bring your own needles
and yarn. We will provide support,
encouragement and help. Learn new
stitches, share your talents, and meet
new friends. Normally meets on the
1st Monday of the month. 6:30pm.
Free.
April 4, 11, & 25 Family Storytime
Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes,
and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas
welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30
pm. Free.
**April 5 Kensington Unit of League of
Women Voters** Discuss local issues
with us at 1:15pm. 21 Camelot Court.
527-1332
**April 6, 13, 20, & 27 Baby & Toddler
Storytime** Stories, songs & action
rhymes for young children and their
caregivers. Kensington Library.
Two identical sessions 10:15am &
11:15am. Free.
April 8 Rosies Forever Real-life Rosie

the Riveters will share their stories
at a dinner and silent auction ben-
efiting the Rosie the Riveter Trust.
Starts with cocktails at 6pm at the
Mira Vista County Club, 7901 Cut-
ting Blvd., El Cerrito. Entertainment
includes a special Rosie the Riveter
hula and other dances performed by
Nā Mamo No’eau; guests will also
enjoy 1940s-era jazz and piano music
performed by Dan Damon. For tickets
and more, visit the trust’s website
at www.rosietheriveter.org.
April 9 Cat Zavis, executive director of
the Network of Spiritual Progressives,
attorney, mediator, child advocate,
and author. “The Role of Spirituality
in a Time of Political Crisis.” 9:30am.
Free. Unitarian Universalist Church of
Berkeley.
**April 10 & 24 Kensington Library’s
Digital Docent** will answer your
eReader and digital library questions
every other Monday by appointment
at 1pm. This one-on-one 60-minute
appointment is intended for people
seeking assistance with eBooks and
eReaders. Sign up onsite at Kensing-
ton Library Info Desk. Please bring
your device. This appointment is Free.
524-3043.
**April 13 El Cerrito HS Speech &
Debate team** Annual speech show-
case 7pm at the ECHS auditorium,
540 Ashbury. Students will perform
interpretive pieces in various genres
that they are taking to the state cham-
pionship and to the national tourna-
ment of champions. Refreshments
available. \$15; \$5 students.
April 15 Sculptures and Their Stories
African American artist and writer
Rhonda Servin will speak at the
AAUW meeting. She sculpts women
and tells their stories. Christ Lutheran
Church, 780 Ashbury St., El Cerrito.
10am. Free. All are welcome.
**April 18 Puppet Show: “Grandpa
Bunny’s Egg-citing Day”** Randal

Metz and The Puppet Company wel-
come you and your whole family for
a fun evening of theater at the library.
Come have a silly time and laugh
while puppets Grandpa Bunny, Irving
and his chick workers, paint colorful
eggs using colors from the flowers and
a special egg-coloring machine. It all
gets upended by a playful pup run-
ning through. A secular tale featuring
lively music, original songs, and pup-
pets from the director of the famous
Storybook Theater at Children’s
Fairyland, Oakland. Sponsored by the
Friends of the Kensington Library.
Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
524-3043.
April 22 Spring Shredding Event The
Kensington Fire Department hosts
free shredding from 10am-2pm at the
north end of the library/community
center parking lot on Arlington Ave.
Questions? Call 510-215-4450.
April 22 KSO & Keyboards Concert:
Horatio Parker & Beethoven with the
Kensington Symphony Orchestra and
keyboard artists Bryan Baker and
Katya Koleshnikova. 8pm. Tickets at
the door: \$15 general / \$10 students.
Unitarian Universalist Church of
Berkeley.
April 23 Rev. Craig Scott, retired
lawyer and UU minister, UUCB
member, social activist and com-
munity organizer. “Prophets of
Resistance.” 9:30am. Free. Unitarian
Universalist Church of Berkeley.
**April 24 Kensington Library Book
Club Discussion** of *Someone* by Alice
McDermott. Book Club normally
meets on the 4th Monday of the
month. 6:30pm. Free.
**April 27 Mozart’s Requiem with the
Kensington Symphony Orchestra**,
multiple UU choirs from both sides
of the bay, and soloists. 8pm. Tickets
\$15 general/\$10 students. Unitarian
Universalist Church of Berkeley.
April 30 Ann-Marie Sayers, Matsun

Ohlone Native American, Director of
Indian Research, Tribal Chairwoman
of Indian Canyon Nation. She will
discuss Native American cultural and
spiritual practices. 9:30am. Free. Uni-
tarian Universalist Church of Berkeley.

Town Meetings


**Kensington Community Center
59 Arlington Ave., Kensington**
KCC-Apr.3 Kensington Com-
munity Council 1st Mon-
days, 7:30pm. 525-0292
**FKL-Apr.4, Friends of the
Kensington Library**, 7pm (at
the Library) 1st Tuesdays
**KPSC-Apr,10, Kensington
Public Safety Council** Earth-
quake/Disaster Preparedness
2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165
**KARO/ECHO-Amateur Radio
Operators** 2nd Mondays of
odd months, 7:30pm. 524-9815
KFPD-Apr.12, Fire Protec-
tion District 2nd Wednes-
days, 7pm. 527-8395
KPPCSD-Apr.13 & 27. Police
Protection and Community Ser-
vices District 2nd & 4th
Thursdays 7:30pm. 526-4141
KIC-Apr.24, Kensington
Improvement Club 4th Mon-
days, 7:30pm. 524-7514.
**KMAC (Tent.)-Apr. 25, Munici-
pal Advisory Council** Last
Tues. 7pm. (Call Supe. Gioia’s
office to confirm: 231-8691)
Kensington Farmers’ Market
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Sunday, 10am-2pm, Colusa Circle.




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February Kensington Police Log

February 6 IDENTITY THEFT, Beverly Ct. Identity theft of resident, under investigation.

February 8 WARRANT ARREST, Arlington Ave. Resident had a \$15,000.00 drug-related warrant out of Kensington Police. Resident was booked into county jail.

WARRANT and DRUG ARREST, Highland Blvd. Resident was arrested on a \$25,000.00 drug warrant out of El Cerrito. Resident was booked into county jail.

February 10 MISSING PERSON, Berkeley Park Blvd. Resident went for a 14-hour walk. Wife was concerned and not happy when he returned.

February 11 THEFT, Kenilworth Ct. Resident found someone in their unlocked vehicle taking change. This case is under investigation.

February 17 VANDALISM, Beloit Ave. Unknown suspect(s) punctured victim's car tires.

THEFT, Highgate Rd. Unknown suspect(s) entered victim's unlocked car.

February 18 HIT AND RUN, Colusa Ave. Driver fled scene after hitting two parked vehicles. Driver is a resident and was located by another resident several blocks away.

February 22 ID THEFT, Highgate Rd. Unauthorized use of bank information.

OUTSIDE ASSIST, Ashbury Ave. ECPD was tied up on a traffic collision and asked for assistance from KPD. I responded to two suspicious subjects following a female. The female was able to get home without incident. Searched the area and was unable to locate the subjects.



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