

————— *Bringing The Community Together* —————

K E N S I N G T O N

O U T L O O K

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A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 10

## Well We Went to a Garden Party...

On the patio, twinkling lights strung overhead; a backdrop of fading evening sky tied with an orange-gold ribbon at the horizon. All this and more greeted revelers high above Kensington at November's *Garden Party*—the annual Kensington Hilltop School fundraiser held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley.



The event couldn't have happened without the generous donations of items and services from the Kensington community, including such businesses as *Inn Kensington*, *The Arlington*, and *Arlington Wine and Spirits*, among many others. *Grubb Real Estate* and Ruth Frassetto were also major donors. Thanks go out to the many parent volunteers and event co-chairs, Nannette Erdtmann and (KEF President) Catherine Mercurio.

The *Kensington Education Foundation* throws this bash every year, and it is widely regarded as a "must go." Over 500 partygoers held that opinion this year, including Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner, Principal Judy Sanders, PTA President Pamela Gilbert Snyder, KPPCSD Board President Chuck Toombs, current Director Bill Wright, and past Director, Joan Gallegos; Police Chief Greg Harman and his wife Yolla, KMAC Board President Patrick Tahara and his wife, KASEP administrator Esther Hill and her husband, and local merchant and artist, Tricia Grahame, all spotted among the throng.

Best black leather jacket: Chief Harman. Best leggings: food team member Tamiko Ishidate. Best buffet dinner: *The Dad's Club*. Best hors d'œuvres: Yes!

*Pamela Gilbert Snyder, Jackie Lucas, and Tamiko Ishidate danced the night away, backed by the hot Hilltop School Dad's Jazz Band, Acting Up.*

The Garden Party raises critically needed money for programs not provided by the school district – including physical education, art, music, the *Read Naturally* and math club enrichment programs, computer lab, science lab, and the school library.

This year's auction items included such stand-outs as self-portraits by the first grade classes of instructors Rob John, Kristen Cason, and Christine Reidell; colorful hearts created by Bea Lieberman's kindergarteners; and a stunning Joan Miro (*Peintures Murals*), generously donated by Alex Adelman and Rob Ubilus.

### Inside:

**November Town Hall Meeting:  
State-of-the-Community Report**

**Nina Ramsey Interview • Part 2**



Happy Holidays!



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LAST MONTH

Town Hall Meeting

There’s so much going on in our “sleepy little town” it’s hard to get a nap!

At the November 7th *Town Hall Meeting* sponsored by the Kensington Improvement Club, club president Janet Hittle introduced a wide variety of our local and county representatives to a packed house of Kensington residents, for a comprehensive State-of-the-Community report, excerpted below:

**Chris Peeples, At-Large Director of AC Transit**, reported on AC Transit finances, and how they have translated into transit schedule changes, including those on the *7-Line* that runs through Kensington.

The bad news is that sales tax revenues and funds from the State are down. The good news is that AC Transit has reserves that it has set aside for such emergencies.

According to Peeples, these reserves have allowed AC Transit to go through a “rational planning process” when making needed service cuts. A 15% cut in service is expected. With only 5 lines carrying 50% of the passengers, less well-used lines – such as the 7 – unfortunately have to bear some of the burden of those cuts. (Only 35 people a day ride that bus.)

The current plan is to *short-turn* half of

those buses at Solano Avenue, which will result in 40 minutes between buses in Kensington during the week and 60 minutes between buses on weekends.

While some residents have suggested the possibility of running smaller vans as an alternative to the large buses, unfortunately it’s not significantly cheaper to run a 20-passenger van than it is to run a 60-foot articulated bus. (It costs \$148 an hour to run a bus, all-inclusive – comprised primarily of driver and mechanic costs.)

What can people do to improve service? Director Peeples suggests that they ride the bus. “The more people who ride the bus,” he says, “the more funds will be made available for public transit.”

**Community Library Manager, Liz Ruhland** reported that the 44-year old library building is having a mid-life crisis. While \$1.6 million has been set aside for just such an event, another \$400,000-\$800,000 is needed for a complete renovation, including a new furnace and ventilation system, wheelchair accessible bathrooms, and new windows and doors. Expansion of the service area and a 2,000 square foot addition are also being considered – at an additional cost of \$1.3 million.

*Friends of the Kensington Library*, which funds all the library’s programs that require additional financing, is looking for help and input into the changes that are currently under evaluation. Interested parties are invited to contact Liz at 524-3043 with suggestions, assistance, or contributions.

**Contra Costa County Supervisor, John Gioia**. According to Supervisor Gioia, there are three fiscal hits that are resulting in significant cuts to County services:

First, the drop in local property tax revenues: Countywide property tax revenues have historically increased 8-10% annually over the last decade, prior to the real estate market’s downturn. Now, the average single family home in our county is about half the value of what it was just a few years ago, resulting in property tax revenues declining 7-10%.

Second, the decline in revenues from the state has been significant. Third, due to stock market losses, the County is required to increase its financial contributions to its employees’ pension fund. These factors are causing California counties to cut law enforcement, health-, and social services.

To address shortfalls on the County level, Supervisor Gioia, through his role as the Chair of the *California Urban Counties Caucus*, is working on state and local government reform initiatives. Under an initiative sponsored by *California Forward*, local governments would be encouraged to work together to address local priorities and eliminate waste and duplication of services. If the county, cities, and school districts jointly developed a countywide action plan to address community needs, County Supervisors would have the ability to ask voters to endorse a 1-cent sales tax increase if approved by a majority vote, instead of the current 2/3 requirement.

Despite the budget crisis, the Board of Supervisors has been working with the District Attorney to ensure that there will be sufficient funding so that misdemeanors continue to be prosecuted.

To address neighbors’ concerns about the impact on existing views by the proposed 8,000 s.f. mixed-use, 3-story building (to include three residential condominiums and two ground-floor retail spaces) on Colusa Circle, Supervisor Gioia recommended that the project be downsized to a 2-1/2 story project instead. At the November 3rd Board of Supervisors meeting, the applicant, Andrew Woolman, withdrew the proposal.

**Chuck Toombs - KPPCSD**  
Board President, Chuck Toombs, reported that this year saw a change in the complement and makeup of the police force, with several officers leaving the organization and new officers joining. Throughout these personnel changes, the department continued to provide the level of service expected from our community.

On another front, Kensington is a beneficiary of *Measure WW*, an East Bay Regional Parks bond initiative, that will provide us with over \$258,000 (available for public park improvements only).

The Board will be using a sizable amount of these funds to construct a public bathroom in our park, adjacent to the basketball courts. Completion is expected in summer or fall of 2010.

We have also commissioned an architectural and engineering review of the Annex, with an eye toward providing another public building for our community’s use. We expect to use Measure WW funds to also pay for these improvements.

**New Challenges**  
The *Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission* (LAFCO) retains control over local governments, with the power to make recommendations about their operation and management. Controversial Municipal Service Reviews covering the Fire District and the Community Services District, that may affect the configuration of local government, are now complete.

The MSR for the Fire District, adopted in August, suggested that the District be consolidated with the Police District, with the goal of streamlining local government and allowing greater control and management over property taxes. However, LAFCO put off making a final recommendation until a companion MSR for the KPPCSD was completed. The Fire District Board is against such consolidation.

Now complete, the MSR for the Police District makes several points: 1) Our Police District is legally empowered to provide fire protection services.

2) It makes findings similar to the Fire District MSR and notes that consolidation with the Fire District can offer opportunities to the community in exercising greater control over the share of local property tax dollars spent on fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement.


3) The MSR also suggests the Police District explore the possibility of contracting out with El Cerrito Police Department.

**Budget Woes**  
Kensington has passed deficit budgets for the last few years. Its 2008-09 actual deficit was approx. \$265,580. The projected deficit for 2009-2010 is \$364,265. These deficits originate in part from the way in which the County split up the property tax revenues between the Fire and Police Districts under Proposition 13; the impact of mandated accounting for retirement benefits reserves; and the overall increase in the cost of delivering public services.

After Prop. 13 passed, the County over-allocated a larger share of property taxes to the Fire District and under-allocated a smaller percentage of the taxes to the Police District. The 2007-08 Fire District property tax receipts were approximately \$2.6 million, while the Police District’s were roughly \$1.2 million.

The Police District’s share of property taxes by itself has never been sufficient to provide the full level of police services. In response, Kensington passed a series of parcel taxes designed to cover police services. The last parcel tax passed in 1997, set the fee on single family residences at

see Town Hall, Page 8...



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K E N S I N G T O N

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

KIDS AFTER SCHOOL

Located in the East Bay hills at 59 Arlington Avenue, the Kensington Community Council’s After School Enrichment Program (KASEP) winter registration will take place in the community center on Wednesday, Dec. 9th, starting at 6:45pm for kindergarten students and 7:15pm for grades 1-6. KASEP brochures are available in the office or at [www.aboutkensington.com](http://www.aboutkensington.com), listed under children’s services. Lottery slips are due to the KCC office mailbox by 9am on Tuesday, Dec. 8th. Classes begin when school reconvenes on Monday, Jan. 4. For additional information, please visit [www.aboutkensington.com](http://www.aboutkensington.com) to see a copy of the winter brochure, or call 525-0292.



ADULT CLASSES

Acrylic Painting  
Wednesdays, 9:45am-1:30pm

Stan Cohen leads this informal but professional workshop for established, and serious beginning adult artists. Mornings are devoted to developing painting, with assistance available. Afternoons are reserved for class critique. Enrollment is limited; instructor approval required.

At the Community Center. \$32/mo. residents or \$36 non-res. Please contact the instructor at 533-3003 to attend.

ADULT CLASSES

User-Friendly Pilates  
*with Ernie Adams*

Pilates is designed to stretch and strengthen your body in an intelligent way, and engages your deepest core abdominal, lumbar, breathing and pelvic floor muscles. Developing core strength gives you greater power and precision in movement, and helps protect your body from injury. Pilates can help you discover how to feel more powerful, age more gracefully, and move with more rhythm and flow. These classes are mixed-level, appropriate for those with experience, and also for those who are just beginning.

LEVEL ONE – Wednesdays  
*Get Stronger Without Getting Hurt*  
Level One is about becoming aware of deep supportive core muscles, learning how to release tight muscles, stretch and strengthen in a way that reduces the chance of injury.

7 Classes, 7:30-8:30pm, Jan. 13th – Feb. 24th. \$86 Residents, \$87 Non-residents. (\$15 drop-in, first class only). OR: take Level 1 & 2 together for \$140 – just \$10/class. Mats provided.

LEVEL TWO – Tuesdays  
*Endurance: Increasing the Challenge*  
7:30-8:30pm, Jan. 12-Feb. 23, Seven Classes  
\*\$86 Residents, \$87 Non-residents (\$15 drop-in, first class only)-Mats provided  
\*Special Discount: Take Level One and Level Two together for \$140 (\$10 @ class)

Level Two is about building endurance and increasing power and control of movement. It is a little faster paced and more challenging than Level One, yet involves many of the same principles.

Ernie Adams is a Pilates Instructor and Feldenkrais® Movement Educator, with an extensive background as a professional dancer. He presents a less stressful way of learning Pilates, and has sixteen years experience collaborating with physical therapists to treat orthopedic, neurological, dance and sports related injuries. If you want to get stronger in a way that reduces the chance of injury, give his classes a try. Private sessions are also available.

Contact Ernie at 619-9223 or [adams@bodyinaction.com](mailto:adams@bodyinaction.com); or check his website at [www.bodyinaction.com](http://www.bodyinaction.com).

To register for the class, contact the KCC office at 525-0292. Seven student minimum. Classes are held in the Kensington Recreation Building (‘E’), located in Kensington Park at 59 Arlington Avenue.

ADULT CLASSES

Yoga for Health  
Tuesdays 9:15-10:30am

Harmonize your body, mind, and spirit. This class involves basic Yoga poses, correct body alignment, breathing techniques, and relaxation. Develop strength, flexibility, endurance, and grace. Therapeutic concerns such as wrist, knee, neck and back pain, and stress reduction will be addressed. No prior experience required – all ages welcome. Please bring a mat to the class.

Fees for residents: \$15 for drop-in; \$75 for a series of 6classes. Nonresidents please add \$1 surcharge. To register, call the KCC office at 525-0292. Classes are held in the Community Center.

REGISTRATION

**Class Registration:** Please call the office at 525-0292. Some classes have enrollment limits; those registering will be notified if they can’t be accommodated.

**Tennis Court Reservations:** Reservations are for weekends and holidays only; the earliest is 9am. Call the KCC office at 525-0292 for tennis court reservation information. Tennis Court Fees: Residents – \$2 for a 45-min. singles reservation. Nonres: \$5.

**Kensington Community Center Rental Information:** Please call KPPCSD (Kensington Police Protection & Community Services District) at 526-4141.

59 Arlington Avenue, Building E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94704  
[kccrec@yahoo.com](mailto:kccrec@yahoo.com) • (510) 525-0292



KASEP Winter Holiday Party

All ages are invited to a winter holiday party featuring performances and exhibits from some of our Kensington After School Enrichment Program classes. The festivities begin at 7 pm, in the Kensington Community Center (“Youth Hut”).

Thursday, December 17th, 6:30pm

Thanks to Our Additional  
Fall Fundraising Donors!

(Through November 15)

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Jennifer Burke, an art teacher at Prospect Sierra School, is the founder of YAWS (Young Artists Workspace) located in Berkeley's Totland Park. A longtime art educator in the community, Jennifer was recently honored by the Berkeley City Council upon the tenth anniversary of YAWS. Congratulations, Jen!

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Neighborhood Notes

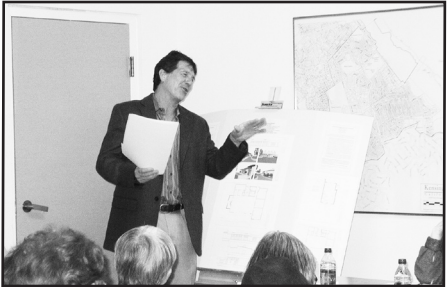
**Wicked Witch of the West Gets Her Fortune Told on Halloween**  
"Time's running out for you, my pretty!" Kids and adults alike were enchanted and terrified again this year by Sue & David Guffy's annual Haunted House on Ardmore Road. Lured by the friendly colored lights outside, yearly pilgrims and unsuspecting passersby who took the plunge were delighted, disoriented, and definitely discombobulated by what they found deep in the bowels of this haunted Kensington treasure. *Make a note to have your fortune told next year, if you dare!*



**El Cerrito High School Band's Pancake Breakfast**  
Last month *Friends of El Cerrito Music* sponsored a pancake breakfast to help raise funds to support student musicians in our local high school. Shown here, the *El Cerrito High Jazz Band* cooked up a delectable, audible brew, over sausage, eggs, and 'cakes. Daniel Schumacher on trumpet, Collin Chung and Patrick Schlesinger on sax, Dylan Romain, bass, and former Portola music director, Paul Yanomura (hidden), on drums. *Cool, real cool.*



**KCC'S Todd Hodson Presents Youth Hut Remodel Plan to KPPCSD**  
As reported last month, the Kensington Community Council wants to donate a \$250,000 renovation of the Community Center to the town of Kensington. Apparently there's some legal technicality that, if you want to remodel a building, you need the approval of the building owner to do so. Go figure! So, at November's KPPCSD meeting, Todd Hodson, in his usual somber style, described KCC'S proposal to the KPPCSD Board. The Board unanimously approved the undertaking, in concept, subject to its legal counsel's review and opinion as to whether it would require approvals as a public works project.




**New Reserve Officers Sworn In**  
Police Chief Greg Harman proudly gave the oath of office to 4 new reserve officers at last month's KPPCSD meeting. Officers Suzanne Tyler, Michael Colon, Kevin Hui, and Rodney Lafitte will now complete our officer training program, provide volunteer police services to our community, and be available for any full time positions that may arise.



**Regina Kong – Mechanics Bank Coloring Contest Winner**  
Somehow we missed snapping a shot of the talented but soft-spoken winner of the Coloring Contest (ages 10-12) at the Kensington Fall Parade and Picnic. Here she is in her home studio with her winning entry. (Her third year in a row in the winner's circle for her division!) Regina has decided to retire from this competition and pursue other artistic challenges in the future. *Frida Khalo, move over!*



**November Town Hall Meeting**  
At the November 7th *Town Hall Meeting*, our local representatives gave a State-of-the-Community presentation to a packed house of Kensington residents. Among the presenters was KPPCSD Director, Pat McLaughlin, who gave a pithy, organized explanation of the District's budget, and its projected deficit. See *Page 2* for a report on that meeting.



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at 6:30pm

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# Neighborhood Notes

## Santa & Hot Rod Jukebox Will Rock the Joint at Holiday Art Walk

The Arlington Avenue Holiday Art Walk will provide fun for the whole family, including art, crafts, treats, a drawing contest with prizes for the kids, live 50's music by *Hot Rod Jukebox* (featuring *Outlook* editor, Joel Koosed, on alto sax), an appearance by Santa Claus, herself, personalized T-shirts, and more in downtown Kensington. Arlington Avenue, Saturday, December 5th, 2:30-5:30pm. (Pick up contest applications and turn in your drawings at the Chevron Station before Dec. 5th!) Prizes provided by Kensington Nail Spa, Mechanics Bank, Inn Kensington, Arlington Pharmacy, Kensington Ice Cream Parlor, Arlington Cafe, and Tricia Grahame's Chevron Station.



## Holiday Arts, Crafts, Food & Music Bazaar

Shop locally for organic, unique, hand-crafted gift and food items, recycled packaging and sustainable wrapping. Join the fun and frivolity at Colusa Circle, Lower Kensington, Saturday, Dec. 5th, 10:30am-5:30pm.

## Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Comes to Kensington

Kathryn Roszak's *Children's Dance Performance Group* presents an abbreviated version of Tchaikovsky's well-loved *Nutcracker* Ballet. Performed by local children and directed by Kathryn Roszak, a former soloist with the San Francisco Opera Ballet and a popular children's dance instructor in the Bay Area. Appropriate for ages 3 and up. Sponsored by *Friends of the Kensington Library*. Tuesday, Dec. 8th, 6:30pm. at the Youth Hut, 59 Arlington Avenue. More information at: 524-3043 or <http://ccclib.org>. (Photo: Andreas Guthier)



## Firefighter Toy Drive & Community Pasta Feed - Saturday, Dec. 5

The Kensington Fire Protection District is sponsoring a toy drive benefitting the Richmond/El Cerrito Toy Program. In exchange for the donation of a new, unwrapped toy, the firefighters will serve you a pasta dinner! (One guest per donation please.) Toys gathered benefit families in need in the West County area. Kensington Fire Station, 217 Arlington Ave., 5-8pm. (A toy barrel to accept donations will be available through Dec. 20th.)

## New Children's Librarian Comes to Kensington

In November, Dori DeCommer began working at the Kensington Library. Dori has worked for Contra Costa County since 2006. She was the Youth Services Librarian for the Pinole Library until July of 2009. Before becoming a Librarian, Dori was a Library Assistant for the City of Daly City for seven years. She has two wonderful boys, ages 2 and 9 months. *Welcome, Dori!*



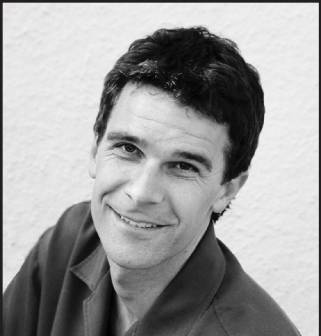
## German International School Opens at UUCB

Offering bilingual primary school, the *German International School of the Silicon Valley* (GISSV), one of three recognized German foreign schools in the United States, has moved into classrooms at the *Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley*.

The new campus is an offshoot of the successful main K-12 school in Mt. View. Class credits can lead to towards the bilingual German International Abitur as well as a California High School Diploma. GISSV will have an open house, conducted in English, on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:30-8pm, at UUCB, One Lawson Road, Kensington. [www.gissv.org](http://www.gissv.org)

## Fine Points of Acupuncture in Kensington

Dr. Frank Griffo has opened a new acupuncture office in Kensington. He provides complete medical care – treating nearly everything from pain, injury, and the flu, to infection and fertility. Dr Griffo was an instructor at the *American College of Chinese Medicine* and is a Subject Matter Expert for the California State Board. Arlington Acupuncture, 267 Arlington Ave. Suite D. 528-0132 or [www.fgacupuncture.com](http://www.fgacupuncture.com).



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OPEN HOUSE

for 8th graders  
and their parents

Sunday, December 6

1:00–3:30 pm

Program begins promptly at 1:00.

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The Journey Candle Lights the Way

Come join us as we explore what gives us light on our journey,  
and where we are being led during this most joyful season of Advent.  
We extend to you a warm invitation to these special events...

November 29 10:00 a.m.	The Journey Candle Lights the Way to God's New Day
December 6 10:00 a.m.	The Journey Candle Lights the Way Out of the Wilderness
December 13 10:00 a.m.	The Journey Candle Lights the Way to Repentance
December 19 7:30 p.m.	Musical celebration, Amahl's Amazing Journey Home, presented by Young People's Bell Choir, Choir and Dance Theater
December 20 10:00 a.m.	The Journey Candle Lights the Way for the Woman Who is Blessed
December 24 5:00 p.m.	Family Christmas Eve Service, The Candle Gift Is Given. Children of all ages are invited to participate
December 24 10:00 p.m.	Candlelight and Communion Service, The Candle Gift is Received

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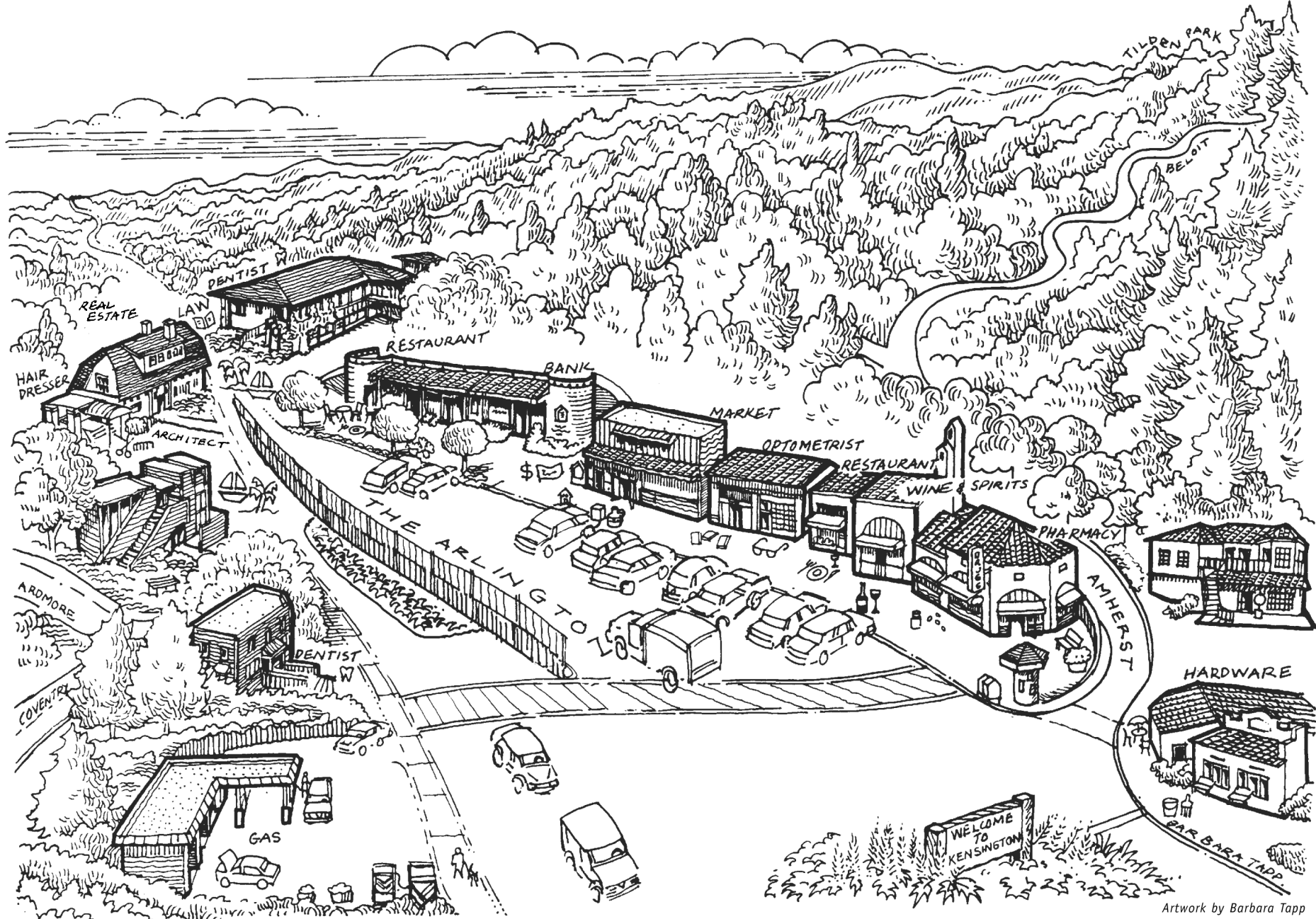
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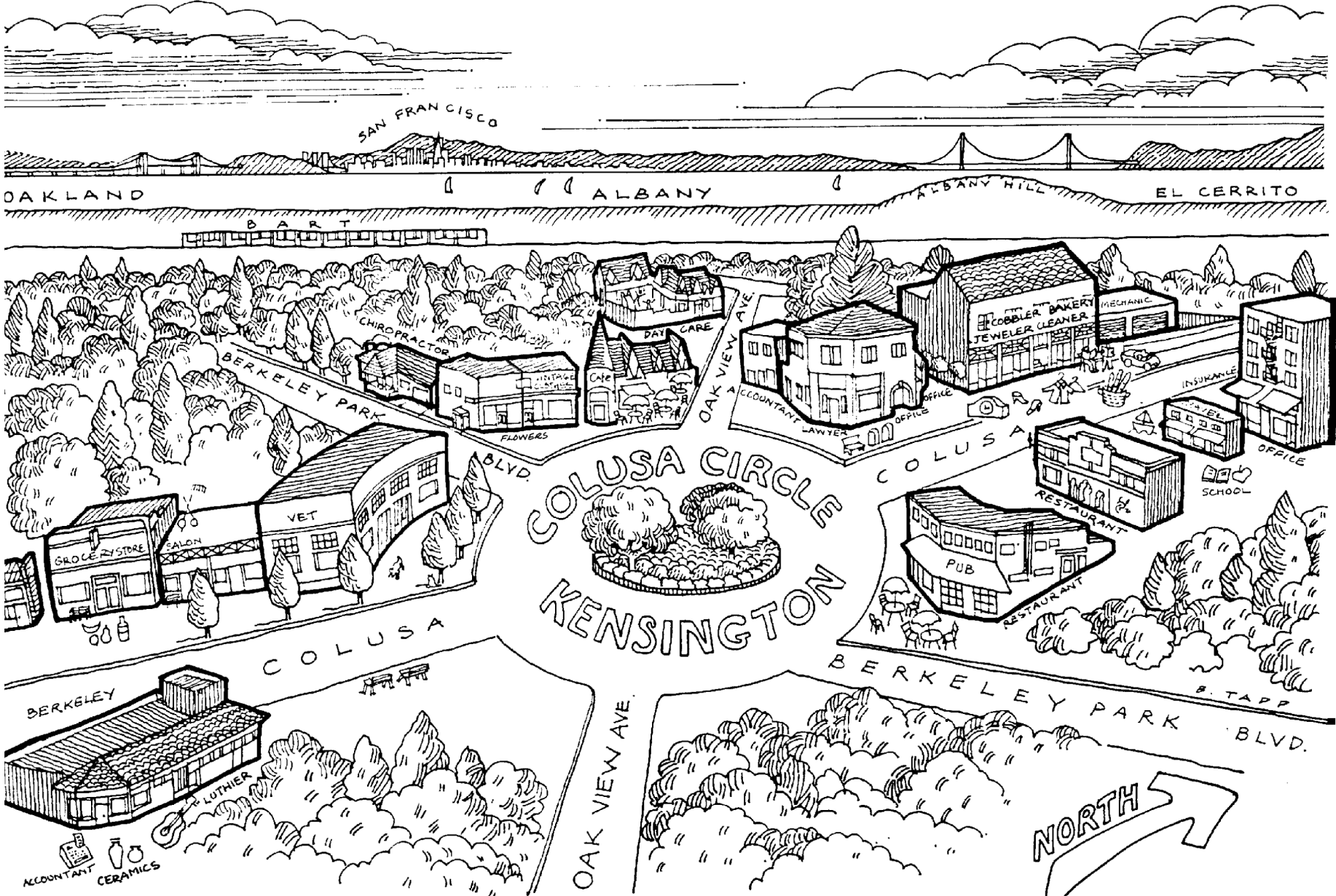
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# COLUSA AVENUE



Artwork by Barbara Tapp



INTERVIEW

Nina Ramsey  
Interview Pt 2

We continue our virtual Q & A with Nina Ramsey, the President of the Kensington Fire Protection District Board of Directors, on her views about the issues currently facing the KFPD and our community:

**KO:** Some skeptics say the Fire District, by spending its accumulated surplus, is trying to make itself look “poor” – and therefore a less attractive candidate for consolidation with the KPPCSD. In some eyes, recent actions by the Fire District support this suspicion:

- The Fire District has doubled its reserves (amount on hand to pay for contracted fire services from the El Cerrito Fire Department) from 6 month to 12 months (Estimated “cost”: \$1 million set aside, instead of the previous set aside of \$500,000.)

- For the first time ever, this year the District waived collection of its supplemental fire tax (Estimated cost: \$200,000).

- The District did not avail itself of the optional securitization program that allows districts to be reimbursed in this fiscal year for the property tax “clawback” by the state (Estimated \$200,000 out of pocket, to be recaptured at a later date).

- The District has decided to pay for all the upcoming improvements to the Public Safety Building in this fiscal year, rather than stretching them out over time (Estimated “cost”: \$400,000).

These expenses provide a snapshot in time that transforms a cash-rich District into one that looks completely different. What is the District’s response to this allegation?

**NR:** The revised contract with the City of El Cerrito allows for an additional 6 months of reserves. One year of reserves provides both Kensington and El Cerrito time to plan for contingencies in the event the KFPD has financial difficulties. An analysis of our finances indicates that we may not have the current financial strength in the coming years if expenses continue to rise and revenues remain flat or diminish. A merger of the two District Boards, with the deficit currently identified by the KPPCSD, appears to be designed to take reserves from fire services to shore up KPPCSD’s identified financial shortfall. This approach might extend the current financial life of the KPPCSD for an additional two or three years, but it will deplete the reserves designated for fire engines and repairs to the seismic damage to the Public Safety Building, and endanger the delivery of fire, paramedic and vegetation management services to Kensington.

KFPD has considered waiving the parcel tax of \$83 per household for the past several years. We were able to do this due to our planning for economic hardship. We also felt this was a small gesture to help the community.

Because of KFPD’s prudent financial planning, we are able to survive the 8% “loan” the State is forcing upon public agencies. The State has promised to pay back the loan with accrued interest earned, by 2013. Those agencies that are participating in the loan securitization program will not receive the interest earned from the State; the interest will instead go to the bondholders.

During the past 15 years, KFPD has always paid for costs at the time the work was done or the purchase was made. This is part of our financial planning and we have not changed that practice. As the District completes projects, we then create replacement funds for ongoing repairs to the Public Safety Building or replacement of the fire engines. Planning ahead gives us the ability to pay for these expenses as they occur. The current work has been in the planning stage for two years, long before any talk of a merger. Construction is estimated at \$400,000; in addition, the consultant fees for the architecture, engineering and geotechnical assessments and construction management are estimated at around \$60,000. For the past 10 years KFPD has been “catching up” on needed repairs and building code upgrades that had been deferred because of the deficit incurred prior to contracting with El Cerrito in 1995. Since that time we have had a major seismic renovation and remodel, made mechanical repairs and upgrades, renovated the kitchen, replaced an inadequate emergency generator and resurfaced the parking lot, among other projects.

**KO:** It’s also been rumored that the District has spent over \$28,000 in legal fees for consultations regarding LAFCO and the lease negotiations with KPPCSD. Can you provide a breakdown of those expenses?

**NR:** As with any professional organization, accurate and legal decisions must be made to protect KFPD from excessive liability. Over the years KFPD has always used legal counsel when it came to contracts and decisions that affected the District’s ability to provide effective service. Contractual agreements sent to the KPPCSD were prepared by our attorney.

**KO:** What is the current offer by the District to KPPCSD for the Police District’s rental of their portion of the Public Safety Building?

**NR:** The KFPD is discussing the proposed rental agreement in closed sessions as property negotiations; at this point the proposal is confidential. A proposed rental agreement has been forwarded to the KPPCSD for their Board’s consideration. The KFPD is awaiting a response.

... Town Hall from page 2

\$300 per household and \$450 for commercial and multiple family units, with no cost of living adjustments (which were unavailable at the time of its passage).

Additionally, we are now required to actually accrue reserves for retiree medical benefits of \$120,000 annually.

Finally, while 85% of our budget goes to police services, compared with other regional organizations – taking into account both salary and benefits – our police officers are in the lower ranks of compensation. These costs have continued to rise since the parcel tax was implemented in 1997.

In the face of increasing District expenses, and absent any changes, the deficits will continue to grow, as our income remains

the same. We have only a few options: raising taxes, cutting services, consolidating with the Fire District, or contracting out police services to a cheaper provider.

The Police District will generate an annual deficit of about \$300,000; The Fire District reported a surplus of roughly \$450,000 in 2007/2008. Clearly their surplus could absorb our deficit in a merged district. And according to the Fire District MSR, the Fire District has substantial reserves of around \$3.9 million of which \$2.3 million are uncommitted (\$1.05 million being committed to the contract reserve requirements with El Cerrito Fire Department, and \$550,000 committed to building replacement). These reserves, coupled with those from the Police District, could certainly be put to a great combined public

See Town Hall, page 9...



## COLUSA CIRCLE PRESENTS

# Holiday Arts, Crafts & Food Fair!

**Saturday, December 5 10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

*Shop locally for unique, handcrafted holiday gifts.*  
*Enjoy music, discounts & prizes while supporting local artists & artisans!*

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Kensington Library and Friends of the Kensington Library present:

Children’s Dance Program

“*Highlights from The Nutcracker*”

includes dancers from Danse Lumiere

Directed by Kathryn Roszak

**Tuesday, December 8th at 6:30 p.m.**

**Kensington Community Center**  
59 Arlington Ave. Kensington

The event is free

We would like to thank Ruth Frassetto and The Grubb Company for their generous support and bringing the arts to Kensington.





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# From the Files of the KPD

## Excerpt From October 2009

•09-4084 On 10/5/09 at 2108 hrs. Sgt. Khan re-registered a sex offender for his annual registration.

•09-4601 On 10/6/09 at 1640 hrs. Sgt. Khan was assigned a residential burglary investigation on Purdue Ave. The back door to the garage had been forced open.

•09-4704 On 10/13/09 at 0811 hrs. Officer Wilson took a burglary report from a contractor who was remodeling a home on Anson Way. Tools were stolen.

•09-4715 On 10/13/09 at 1725 hrs. Officer Stegman took a residential burglary report from a resident on Highland Blvd.

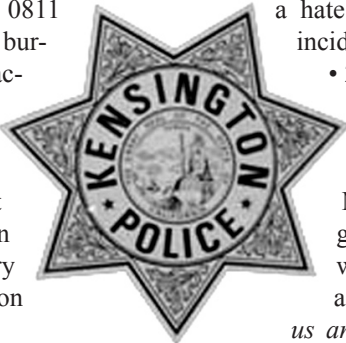
•09-4793 On 10/19/09 at 0420 hrs. Officer Ramos took a graffiti report at the Kensington Hilltop School.

•09-4796 On 10/20/09 at 0837 hrs. Officer Wilson took a non-injury accident report at Arlington Ave. and Wellesley Ave. It was a solo vehicle accident. The driver had a suspended license, had no insurance, no proper registration, and a poorly maintained vehicle (brakes failed). *(But what is the problem, officer?)*

• 2009-4523 – On 10-2-2009, at approximately 1558 hours, Officer Medina responded to a non-injury accident in the 300 block of Arlington Avenue. Involved parties information was exchanged and a CHP555 form completed. *(Doncha just hate filling out those CHP555's?)*

• 2009-4532 – On 10-3-2009, at approximately 1431 hours, Sgt. Hull, Officer Martinez, and Officer Ramos responded to 300 El Cerrito Plaza to assist with a man with a gun call. Suspect was arrested by ECPD. *(Hey, I called for assistance – not to be arrested!)*

• 2009-4533 – On 10-3-2009, at approximately 1506 hours, Officers Martinez and Ramos responded to the 1300 block of



Arlington Ave. to a residential burglary alarm for ECPD.

• 2009-4534 – On 10-3-2009, at approximately 1552 hours, Officers Martinez and Ramos responded to a suspicious event in the 100 block of Highland Boulevard. Officers located a white swastika spray painted in the gutter on the east side of the roadway. There was no evidence of a hate crime associated with this incident.

• 2009-4663 – On 10-10-2009, at approximately 1931 hours, Sgt. Hull and Officer Medina responded to the Melodee Bar for an unwanted guest per request of ECPD who was busy investigating a robbery. *(Hey, can you send us an unwanted guest over here, STAT?)* A suspect was located and contacted. The suspect was not wanted so he was released from the scene to continue his journey home. *(OK, let's see – they called the police for an unwanted guest but the suspect was not wanted so they let him go. Who's on first?)*

• 2009-4961 – On 10-30-2009, at approximately 1950 hours, Sgt. Hull responded to a report of auto burglary in the 200 block of Colusa Avenue. An El Cerrito resident reported her vehicle was broken into and the in-dash stereo and other items were stolen. *(She continued to maintain, however, that the Barry Manilow CD's found in her car did NOT belong to her. She was taken to the station for further questioning: "What was The Captain and Tennille's biggest hit?" "Is it true that Tony Orlando once appeared on television with his zipper down?" )*

• 2009-4975 – On 10-31-2009, at approximately 1228 hours, Officer Martinez responded to a report of grand theft at the 00 block of Norwood Avenue. A resident reported a theft of a Cannondale mountain bike from a bike rack attached to the rear of her vehicle.

## ... Town Hall from Page 8

use for police and fire protection services.

While the financial picture is alluring, there are real differences in the mission of each District and the core competencies of each board of directors, which might make a transition to a merged District problematic. It's difficult to predict the level of each department's services to the community in the absence of a skilled board capable of managing both departments. The community has also expressed many concerns over the need for continued high levels of independent fire services in light of our proximity to Tilden Park – a firestorm waiting to happen – as well as countless other issues meriting further public dialogue, as well.

Contracting out with El Cerrito Police Department may be one way to resolve the financial shortfall. Police consultant and former interim chief, Special Employee Brown Taylor, has prepared a draft final *Feasibility Study Contract Police Service Alternative*. (Download 11/12/09 Agenda Packet at [www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/kppcsd-board/board-agendas-0](http://www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/kppcsd-board/board-agendas-0)) High points are as follows:

ECPD has a full service police department with many diverse services; but Kensington may not need all of them.

Under a hypothetical program, Kensington would require 6 patrol officers provided by the ECPD, with field supervision, support services, investigations and administrative overhead, all provided by El Cerrito.

Kensington would remain liable for a substantial amount of "District overhead," including a GM/COP to provide contract oversight and continue on as the District GM; a District Secretary, and a Police Service Aide. Other expenses would also continue, including, but not limited to, current and retiree medical expenses, communications/records management, and vehicle fuel, maintenance, and replacement costs.

In this case, the projected savings related to contracting out might be as little as \$157,919. El Cerrito's cost per officer are surprisingly not that much cheaper than Kensington's. Given how costs tend to increase, it would not be too long before the savings evaporate as costs of service outstrip a static revenue source.

There would also be major transition costs of over \$450,000 with special consideration arising from the impact on existing personnel and on a new district ordinance,

which in essence requires voter approval to move from an independent department to contracting out for police services.

There may be other "contracting out" alternatives; however, while they'd provide adequate coverage during peak hours, they'd result in reduced service during "off-peak" hours, with a general patrol rather than a community-specific patrol.

## Nina Ramsey KFPD

Fire District Board President, Nina Ramsey, reported that, since the Fire District began contracting out for fire services, it has added paramedics to every engine that goes out. The District provides CERT training, disaster training, and CPR classes; it manages the interface with Tilden Park. Every property and house is inspected by the fire marshal annually to evaluate the vegetation and to provide guidance to the owners on the required management to reduce the risk of fire. The District owns and maintains its own fire engines, which need to be replaced every 15 years. (Two new ones will be ordered over the next 9 years.) Maintenance and seismic upgrades to the Public Safety Building are scheduled. 32 new fire hydrants have been added and the water system has been upgraded for safety and increased water pressure.

Revenues are expected to stay flat, while expenses are expected to increase incrementally. Ramsey said it's difficult to project when those two lines might cross – it could be 5 or 10 years.

Despite the District owing \$1.7 million for the retirement costs of previous fire officers, KFPD finances are solid at present; using them for the KPPCSD's projected shortfall, however, will endanger fire services. We are currently keeping one year of reserves on hand for the contract with El Cerrito to provide fire services to Kensington – the industry standard.

Having met a list of requirements involving policies, procedures, continuing education, and audit standards, and in recognition of KFPD's commitment to good governance and to ethical and sound operating practices, Nina reported that this year KFPD became the newest *District of Distinction* through the *Special District Leadership Foundation* – one of the most prestigious local government accreditations in the state of California.

See Town Hall, page 13...

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### 2009 Kensington Holiday Real Estate Trivia

- How many homes sold in 2009 (1/1/09 - 11/9/09)?  
a) 58                      b) 47                      c) 64
- What was the highest number of days that a home was on the market?  
a) 115 days              b) 172                      c) 334
- Which of the following streets had the most homes sold?  
a) Coventry              b) Amherst              c) Colgate
- What was the average price of homes sold?  
a) \$661,000              b) \$704,000              c) \$712,000

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We're pleased to share our outlook for the 2010 Kensington real estate market. Give us a call.

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# KENSINGTON CALENDAR

## Town Meetings

at the  
Kensington Community Center  
59 Arlington Ave., Kensington  
(Unless otherwise noted)

**Friends of the Kensington Library**  
**December 1st & January 5th**  
7pm at the Kensington Library, 61  
Arlington Avenue. 1st Tuesdays.

**Kensington Community Council**  
**December 7th and January 4th**  
1st Mondays 7:30pm 525-0292

**KPSC - Dec. 14th & Jan. 11th**  
**Kensington Public Safety Council**  
EQ & Disaster Preparedness  
2nd Mondays, 6:30pm. 508-8163

**KARO/ECHO - January 11th**  
**Amateur Radio Operators**  
Provides assistance to community  
emergency response teams in the  
case of natural disasters. Actively  
soliciting new members interested  
in operating amateur radios as a  
community service. 2nd Mondays  
of odd months. 7:30pm. 524-9815

**KFPD - Dec. 9th & Jan. 13th**  
**Fire Protection District**  
2nd Wednesdays 7:30pm. 527-8395

**KPPCSD - Dec. 10th & Jan. 14th**  
**Police Protection and**  
**Community Services District**  
2nd Thursdays 7pm. 526-4141

**KIC - (No Dec. Mtg.) Jan. 25th**  
**Kensington Improvement Club**  
4th Mondays, 7:30pm. 558-1123

**KMAC - Jan. 5th & Jan. 26th**  
**Municipal Advisory Council**  
(No Dec. meeting.) 7pm. 273-9926

**Dec. 1 Family Storytime.** Best for ages 3  
and up. Kensington Library, 61 Arling-  
ton Ave. 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Dec. 1-4 Scholastic Book Fair.** Books  
for all ages, software, and educational  
activities. Kensington School Library,  
Tues.-Fri., 8am-3pm and Thurs.,  
5-8pm. [bwansick@gmail.com](mailto:bwansick@gmail.com)

**Dec. 2, 9, 16 Young People's Choir.**  
Learn sight-reading, voice training,  
and music basics, for a performance on  
Dec 19. Small fee/scholarships avail-  
able. Arlington Community Church, 52  
Arlington Ave. 6:15-7pm. 526-9146

**Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Advent Midweek**  
**Discussion.** Using the book *While We*  
*Wait: Living the Questions of Advent* by  
Mary Lou Redding, we'll look at some  
lesser-known biblical figures who have  
Advent messages for us. Arlington  
Community Church, UCC, 52 Arling-  
ton Ave. 1-2:30pm. 526-9146

**Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Wake Up To Al-**  
**Anon.** 7-8am. Fireside Room, Arling-  
ton Community Church, 52 Arlington.

**Dec. 3, 10, 17 Young People's Dance**  
**Theatre.** Creating dances and songs  
for performance on Dec 19. Small fee/  
scholarships available. Arlington Com-  
munity Church, UCC, 52 Arlington  
Ave. 6:15-7:30pm. 526-9146

**Dec. 3, 10, 17 Baby & Toddler Story-**  
**time.** Stories, songs, & action rhymes  
for young children and their caregivers.  
Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave.  
10:15 & 11:15am. Free. 524-3043

**Dec. 4 Fitness Friday** at Kensington Hill-  
top Elementary School: Walk to school  
with your children. Then meet kids,  
parents, & teachers on the upper yard  
for breakfast treats and coffee provided  
by *Espresso Subito*. To sponsor/volun-  
teer: email [lesmac@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lesmac@sbcglobal.net)

**Dec. 5 Arlington Avenue Holiday Art**  
**Walk.** Fun for the whole family, includ-  
ing art, crafts, treats, live 50's music by  
*Hot Rod Jukebox*, live Santa, personal-  
ized T-shirts, and more. 2:30-5:30pm.

**Dec. 5 Holiday Arts, Crafts, Food**  
**and Music Bazaar.** Shop locally for  
organic, unique, hand-crafted gift and  
food items, recycled packaging and  
sustainable wrapping. Join the fun and  
frivolity at Colusa Circle, Lower Kens-  
ington, 10:30am-5:30pm. 525-6155

**Dec. 5 Rabbit Rescue Christmas Craft,**  
**Gift and Food Fair.** Support rabbit  
rescue and adoption efforts, HOP  
LOCALLY for unique crafts and gifts,  
all packaging will be recycled and  
sustainable. RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa  
Ave., 1-4pm. [www.rabbitears.org](http://www.rabbitears.org)

**Dec. 5 Firefighter Toy Drive – Com-**  
**munity Pasta Feed** to benefit West  
County families in need. In exchange  
for the donation of a new, unwrapped  
toy, firefighters will serve you a pasta  
dinner. Kensington Fire Station, 217  
Arlington Ave., 5-8pm. 527-8395

**Dec. 6 Messiah Sing in Baroque Style.**  
Handel's "Messiah." Sing-along con-  
cert w/live orchestra. 6pm, Unitarian  
Universalist Church of Berkeley, One  
Lawson Road, Kensington. \$15 gen-  
eral, \$10 studs/seniors. No one turned  
away for lack of funds. W/chair acces-  
sible. Free parking. [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org)

**Dec. 6, 13, 20 Young People's Hand**  
**Bell Choir Rehearsal.** Ages 8 &  
up. Fireside Room, Arlington Com-  
munity Church, 52 Arlington Avenue,  
11:30am-12pm. \$10/month. 526-9146

**Dec. 7 West County Winds Community**  
**Wind Ensemble performs** its winter  
concert, including the *Candide Suite*  
by Leonard Bernstein, and others. 8pm  
in the *Knox Center for the Performing*  
*Arts* Auditorium at Contra Costa Col-  
lege. Free, on a space-available basis.  
Meet-the-musicians reception follows.  
<http://westcountywinds.org>

**Dec. 7 "Castoffs" Knitting Group.** All  
levels welcome and some help pro-  
vided. Kensington Library, 61 Arling-  
ton Ave., 7 pm. Free. 524-3043

**Dec. 8 Kathryn Roszak's Children's**  
**Dance Performance Group** presents  
an abbreviated version of Tchaik-  
ovsky's *Nutcracker Ballet*. Ages 3 and  
up; Sponsored by the Friends of the  
Kensington Library. At the Youth Hut,  
59 Arlington Ave., 6:30pm. 524-3043.

**Dec. 8 Author Showcase.** Join *Iowa*  
*Short Fiction Award*-winner, Kathryn  
Ma, for a talk on her debut short story  
collection, *All That Work and Still No*  
*Boys*. 7pm, El Cerrito Library, 6510  
Stockton Ave., EC. 526-7512.

**Dec. 8 German International School**  
**(GISSV) Open House,** conducted in  
English, 6:30-8pm. One Lawson Rd.,  
Kensington. Info: 558-0436

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10 p.m. Late Service

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# KENSINGTON CALENDAR

**Dec. 9 Kensington Area Republican Women’s Club “Toys for Tots” Christmas Party,** 12pm; Lunch at 12:30. Mira Vista Golf & Country Club, 7900 Cutting Blvd., EC. \$20. Reserve by December 4, please, at 524-5689.

**Dec. 10 The El Cerrito Garden Club Annual Christmas Luncheon,** with holiday entertainment. El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. Guests are welcome. Advance reservation required. \$20 Adm. 237-4192

**Dec. 12 Beading for Teens.** Learn how to create your own beaded jewelry, with Yolanda Seay. For students in grades 6 thru 12. Sponsored by *Friends of the El Cerrito Library*. 4:30-6pm. El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Ave., EC. Please call to register: 526-7512.

**Dec. 12 Kensington Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert.** Bach, Handel, Verdi, Wagner, Strauss (pere et fils), Narins, others. 8 pm at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. Suggested Donation: \$15; Snrs & studs, \$12; Children free. W/c accessible. 524-9912

**Dec. 12 The El Cerrito Democratic Club Annual Holiday Party.** Saturday, 7-9pm, 903 Elm Street, EC. Current & former members and those who would like to join are welcome. Info: 527-5953 or [panterazero@gmail.com](mailto:panterazero@gmail.com)

**Dec. 12 Small Critter Adoption and Toy Making Fair.** A toy making elf from the North Pole will be on hand to help you create toys for your own pet bunny, guinea pig, rat, hamster, or mouse; or for shelter critters. RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa Ave., 1-4pm. 525-6155

**Dec. 12 & 13 Hiersoux Gallery Exhibition** of wood-fired ceramics. 10:30am to 5:30pm. 427 Colusa Ave. Free.

**Dec. 14 Swedish Folk Music.** Mark Walstrom and his daughter return for an evening of traditional Swedish folk and holiday music. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Dec. 15 Arlington Community Church Bell Choir.** Holiday favorites played by a local music ensemble. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 7pm. Free.

**Dec. 17 Tree Trim & Crafts.** Come decorate our holiday tree with your craft projects. Materials and ideas provided. Ages 5 and up, including “tweens.” The holiday tree is donated by the *Friends of the Kensington Library*. 61 Arlington Ave. 3:00-4:30pm. Free. 524-3043

**Dec. 19 Amahl’s Amazing Journey Home.** The Young People’s Bell Choir, Choir, and Dance Theater create a musical celebration combining 4 holiday classics: *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *The Nutcracker*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Messiah*. Arlington Community Church, UCC, 52 Arlington Avenue, 7:30pm. 526-9146

**Dec. 24 Family Christmas Eve Service.** 5pm: *The Candle Gift Is Given*; 10pm: *The Candle Gift is Received*. Arlington Community Church, UCC, 52 Arlington Avenue. 526-9146

**Dec. 28 Kensington Library Book Club Discussion:** Philip Roth’s *Everyman*. 61 Arlington Av., 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 4 Meeting of the “K-groups,”** hosted by the Kensington Community Council, to share info on activities and to consider how the groups might work together. A representative from each of the K-Groups is invited to attend. 7:30pm, at the Community Center.

**Jan. 4 “Castoffs” Knitting Group.** All levels welcome and some help provided. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 5, 12, 26 Family Storytime.** Best for ages 3 and up. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Av. 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 6 Kensington Unit of the League of Women Voters meets** to discuss local issues. 44 Beverly Rd., 1:15pm. Guests welcome. Call to confirm: 524-6071.

**Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 Young People’s Choir.** Learn sight-reading, voice training, and the music basics. Small fee/scholarships available. Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. 6:15-7pm.

**Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 Wake Up To Al-Anon.** 7-8am. Fireside Room, Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue

**Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 Baby & Toddler Storytime.** Stories, songs, & action rhymes for young children and their caregivers. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 10:15 & 11:15am. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 9 New Year’s Rabbit Adoption Fair.** RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa Ave., 1-4pm. [fixpets@yahoo.com](mailto:fixpets@yahoo.com)

**Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31 Young People’s Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal.** Ages 8 & up. Fireside Room, Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave., 11:30am-12pm. \$10/month. 526-9146

**Jan. 11 Traditional Eskimo Dance Program with Patricia Bullett.** Slide show and exhibition of Eskimo dances. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 14, 21, 28 Young People’s Dance Theatre.** Creating dances and songs. Small fee/scholarships avail. Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. 6:15-7:30pm. 526-9146

**Jan. 16 Electronic Waste Drop-Off Event.** Kensington Library parking lot, 59 Arlington Ave., 9am-3pm. Info: 888-832-9839 or [www.Unwaste.com](http://www.Unwaste.com)

**Jan. 16 Small Animal Adoption Day.** Adopt a pet rat, hamster, rabbit, or guinea pig, RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa Ave., 1-4pm. [fixpets@yahoo.com](mailto:fixpets@yahoo.com)

**Jan. 19 Live Reptile Show.** *Friends of the Kensington Library* and *East Bay Vivarium* present snakes, tortoises, lizards, frogs, and more. Ages 3 and up. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Avenue. 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043

**Jan. 23 Rabbit Adoption Day.** RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa Ave., 1-4pm.

**Jan. 25 Book Club.** Discussion of *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 7pm. 524-3043. Free. (4th Mondays)

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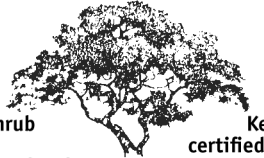
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— Mark Twain

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... *Town Hall* from Page 9

**Greg Harman, GM/COP**

Kensington’s General Manager and Chief of Police reported that October provided typical examples of the KPD’s dedication to community service and its pro-active approach to law enforcement.

“From traffic stops that turned up confirmed gang members on probation for burglary – and which resulted in an arrest for weapons violations, to rescuing a baby sitter and toddler locked out of their house (and signing up the grateful family for the Kensington Key Program), this is the type of police work and community service we’re committed to providing, and which makes me proud to be a part of this organization,” he said.

**Changes at Police Department**

This year, personnel have changed, internal investigations are nearly completed, and conflicts within the KPD have been resolved. Four new reserve officers have been added, for a total of six reserve officers now in place.

Five KPD programs are continuing, including Neighborhood Watch, Vacation Checks, The Key Program, Senior Center,

and four officers dedicated to Walk to School Day every first Friday.

As General Manager and Chief of Police, Harman reported that he continues to participate in the Kensington Improvement Club, Kensington Community Council, Kensington Municipal Advisory Council, Kensington Public Safety Council, the Dad’s Club, State and Contra Costa Chapters of the California Special Districts Assoc., the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee, West County Chiefs Assoc., and the Contra Costa Chief’s Assoc.

Chief Harman said he has been kept busy as GM with many special projects this year, including: The Bay View Waste Management Rate Review and the Brown Taylor Police District Audit (both completed); the UC Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies traffic survey (to be completed this month); the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, scheduled for Spring 2010; Building of the Park Restroom, slated for Summer 2010; Annex Assessment, the KCC Youth Hut Remodel, and the balloting of a possible police tax increase.

Once these projects have been completed, Greg said he expected to have more time to focus on his duties as Chief of Police.

**LAFCO Executive Officer, Louann**

**Texiera**, also spoke at the November Town Hall Meeting. When contacted following the Nov. 18th *LAFCO* meeting, at which the MSR for the KPPCSD was presented to the committee, she confirmed that LAFCO had accepted the recommendation of its consultant that the existing Sphere of Influence for the Fire District remain extant. The SOI for the Fire District has not yet been confirmed. This means that it’s still a possibility that it may *recommend* that the Fire District be merged with the KPPCSD.

A LAFCO Fire District “Workshop” is planned for Feb. 2010 to include all West County Fire Districts – details of agenda, expected outcomes, format, etc., to be announced.

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**Late-Breaking News**

**Kensington/El Cerrito Annual Coat Drive:** December 1st -January 8th.

Bring clean, usable coats, hats, and scarves (only) to the Kensington Library or Fire Station. All donations go to St. Anthony Foundation in San Francisco. 61 or 217 Arlington Ave., Kensington