

Garden Partiers Get Down as They Give Big

By Mark Metz

Ever wonder why Kensington boasts one of the most well-respected and top-rated public elementary schools in the Bay Area? Look no further than the Kensington Education Foundation's annual Garden Party Benefit Auction! When you think about the glue that holds a community together, good schools are at the top of the list. But great schools don't just happen by themselves, especially in today's funding environment. It takes a tight-knit community of committed parents who are willing to roll up their sleeves and put their creativity to work.

Kensington Hilltop Elementary is fortunate to have such a dedicated group of parents, teachers, and extended family who come together year-round to make sure the kids at Hilltop have a wide variety of enrichment programs including art, music, PE, science and computer labs, math intervention, natural reading, band, running club, a top-notch library, and more. Research has proven time and again that these types of enrichment programs are the secret sauce of a well-rounded education, and events like the Garden Party and the Fall Pledge are what keep world-class learning on the front burner.

It all started 35 years ago in 1984 with a champagne cocktail hour and gourmet dinner catered by famed chef Narsai David at Blake Gardens. Since then, KEF has carried the torch to expand and innovate to make this fundraiser auction truly spectacular. This year's Garden Party, on November 2, was held at a new venue, the Richmond Country Club, to whom parents and organizers owe a huge debt of gratitude for the wonderful service. Then there are our top-tier sponsors including Arlington Wine and Spirits, El Cerrito Martial Arts, Children's Dentistry, Kensington Veterinary Hospital, and Mechanics Bank. Special thanks are also in order for the strong support from the real estate community, including longtime sponsor and advocate Ruth Frassetto & The Grubb Company, Zip Code East Bay, and Derek Suring from New Leaf Realty, the sponsor coordinator.



Great music and ample interludes for dancing provide a festive backdrop for socializing and browsing the silent auction. The parent band, Coyotes Interrupt Us, lays down favorites from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Plan for next year and mark November 7 down on your 2020 calendar as a "don't miss" date. Even if you don't have kids, they're already grown up, or elementary school isn't in your plans, there's no better way to connect with the movers-and-shakers of Kensington than the Garden Party Benefit Auction. The food is great, the bar is open, but it's the auction itself that provides the hottest action. Dozens of amazing offerings are tabled for the silent auction, including collaborative classroom art projects from each teacher.

The live auction, conducted by a professional team of auctioneers, however, is truly astonishing. A diverse collection of items up for bid include fine art originals, insider tours of big-name Bay Area tech companies such as Facebook and Pixar, and dinner parties hosted by luminaries such as Judy Sanders, principal of Kensington Hilltop for thirteen years. Watching the bids go through the roof and knowing that all funds raised contribute to the quality education of Kensington kids is a joy to behold, so make sure you are part of the action in years to come!



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The Kensington Farmers' Market and Colusa Circle merchants celebrated Halloween with treats, music, and entertainment, including the animal show, which features a very large and colorful snake. Photo by Nan Phelps Photography. Story and more photographs on page 12.

Public Safety Building Retrofit a Conundrum

By Linnea Due

During the course of three public presentations, the fire board's architect, Mallory Cusenbery of RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture, has proved an able and clear purveyor of complicated issues. At the November 16 public meeting held at Arlington Community Church, board president Julie Stein told the audience of around 30 people that renovating the structure at 217 Arlington Ave. was the only option. Fire Chief Michael Pigoni expanded on that thought: he said that other suggestions, such as the old reservoir or the EBMUD property along Berkeley Park Blvd., would not work because of the added response time to other parts of

Kensington. Pigoni said that the narrow roads, sharp turns, and traffic along thoroughfares make the preferred five-minute response time possible only from the most central location; other locations, even in perfect traffic conditions, could add three and half to four minutes to response times.

Cusenbery took the floor to say that response times were only one of the many complexities of the project. "There is a string of interrelated problems that arises," he explained—not least is that the current building is what he terms a "programmatic tangle," meaning the police and fire functions are intertwined in ways that reduce

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New Interim Chief Shifts Focus to the Future



By Linnea Due

When I spoke to our new Interim Chief of Police Steve Simpkins, he'd been on the job about three weeks. He started October 22 after being voted in at the October 15 KPPCSD meeting. Simpkins, a captain in the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, is on loan to Kensington for three to six months; at the meeting, he impressed directors and residents with clear objectives aimed at building trust in the department.

Simpkins is well versed in all phases of law enforcement. During his 26-year career, he's worked as a patrol officer, a detective, run detention facilities, taught criminal justice classes, earned an MA in administrative leadership, completed the FBI National Academy, and served as a contract chief of police for Danville from 2010-2017.

He is married and has four children, ages 11-18. We talked by phone November 6.

Why did you want to step in where so many others fear to tread?

One of the main reasons I'm willing to step up is a matter of practicality. I'm a captain in the sheriffs' office. Another chief doesn't have a safety net of being

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Kensington dissolved its police force and had no other options, El Cerrito would raise its rates to reflects its true costs and pension obligations.

If Kensington could not or would not pay, annexation would be the only answer, as is already anticipated in El Cerrito's written 20-year general plan. Assuming Kensington had no other options to annexation, it would then become part of the worst financially run cities in the state. And each director—each of you—would become an infamous part of Kensington's history.

I am not against contracting our police forces to another agency, but El Cerrito is not that agency. I suggest you stop negotiations forthwith.

Richard Karlsson

El Cerrito Public Forum and the Public Safety Building

Dear Editor:

We recently attended two events of interest to Kensington residents: the Public Forum on Kensington Police Services RFP, held by the El Cerrito Police Department on November 8, which was intended to solicit input from El Cerrito residents and business owners on the KPPCSD RFP, and the open house tour the next day of the Kensington Public Safety Building.

We were favorably impressed by the public forum. The chief of police, Paul Keith, did an excellent job presenting the material and fielding numerous questions and comments. Learning of the breadth and depth of services provided by the El Cerrito PD was very reassuring. They also espouse a community policing philosophy and provide “soft” services popular with Kensington residents such as vacation watches, responding to lost dog calls, and similar issues. Visit the El Cerrito PD website to see their services for yourselves. Chief Keith is a local resident and familiar with Kensington’s policing needs, which are very similar to those of the hillside areas of El Cerrito.

The safety building open house the next day was also an eye-opener but in the opposite sense. We were impressed with the personnel we met but not with the building. It is cramped and in need of repair. The majority of the building is compromised in meeting the needs of a modern fire department with larger engines, ADA accessibility, training equipment, offices, etc. Fitting a modern police department and administrative offices into that space is next to impossible.

After attending the El Cerrito forum and the open house, it seems to us that a solution to the safety building dilemma would be to contract police services, all or in part, from El Cerrito in order to utilize the significant resources El Cerrito brings to the table. Certain functions would not need to be duplicated in Kensington, allowing a much smaller police footprint. A little creative architecture may be all that is needed to solve the safety building space problem.

Mark Wegner and Mary Korn

Where is the Cooperation?

Dear Editor:

We write to express our concern about the ongoing lack of cooperation between fire board and police and community services board. The latest example is the failure of the two boards to come up with a plan for the police as the fire board plows forward with a rebuilding of the Public Safety Building.

We had hoped that the election would lead to more cooperation between the boards, but the tradition of blind turf-ism seems to continue alive and well. The boards act as if they are running two different towns. Police and fire are the two most important services we need, and it is the height of provinciality for the boards to fail to work together.

When true towns and cities are managing fire and police, if the two lines of authority don't get along, the town/city council and mayor step in to provide the adult supervision. Not being a true town, Kensington doesn't have a council or mayor to do that, so our only choice is looking to the boards themselves for that leadership, which so far is lacking.

The two biggest examples are the police board's approach to financing the Community Center remodel/retrofit and the fire board’s recently announced Public Safety Building remodel/retrofit plans. The police board took out a loan with interest for the Community Center rather than looking to funds (our tax dollars) sitting right there in the fire board accounts, which the fire board clearly could lawfully spend on seismic retrofit and other safety-related construction. We never heard an offer from the fire board to handle that spend.

Results? While our tax dollars languish at the fire board, the police board is spending our money on interest for a loan that was not needed.

Now the fire board directors are marching forward with continuing tunnel vision. What they need to do is join with the police board directors to execute a Public Safety Building rebuild that will serve the firefighters and the police—not to mention the citizens of Kensington, whose tax dollars are paying for it.

Len Welsh and Karl Kruger

Many Moving Parts

Dear Editor:

Just when it appeared that the fire district was going to move forward with a plan to upgrade the Public Safety Building (PSB), which currently services both fire and police, to a fire-only station, it appears that perhaps something can be worked out to continue to provide a mixed-use facility. Such a plan would probably require upgrading the currently closed annex building in Kensington Park to handle fire and police uses that do not need to be at the PSB. There is a lot of discussion and analysis that needs to be completed, but if both the fire and police boards sit down and work through the details it may be a viable solution that could serve fire, police and administrative personnel at a reasonable cost.

To add to the mixture of complicating factors, it now appears we have to add in the cost/benefits of contracting out our police services with El Cerrito. A proposal to provide Kensington with full police services has been presented to the City of El Cerrito by the El Cerrito Police Department for El Cerrito City Council approval. There are a number of economic factors that will have to be studied in such a proposal and, of course, a decision to contract out would also bear on the cost for adding a revised police building area in Kensington.

One thing is certain, the permutations and cost factors will not only be complicated, but controversial.

Jim Watt

Fishing for PRAs

Dear Editor:

Between 30 January and 4 July 2019, the KPPSCD board received 42 costly and time-consuming Public Record Act requests (PRAs) for information—a huge increase over

previous years. More than 80 percent of the PRAs were from well-known supporters of status quo policing and vocal critics of how the current board is managing KPPCSD affairs. The broad scope of the requested documents is typified by: “All emails, text messages and other electronic and written communications between . . .” Some requests cover extended periods of time (e.g., 1 January 2016 to present). Many PRAs involve hundreds of documents, many of which needed to be reviewed by legal counsel. The legal costs alone for these PRAs was well over \$25,000 plus countless hours of staff (district secretary, general manager, district counsel) and of unpaid board time required to assemble them. And yet, many of the same requestors criticize the KPPCSD board for not getting things done (i.e. despite considerable evidence to the contrary) and for supposed frivolous expenditures of money.

How much of unpaid board director time did this occupy, time that could have been more constructively spent on district business such as the ongoing renovation of the community center, improving garbage and green waste services, housing for the KPD in the proposed renovation of the Public Safety Building, evaluating alternatives for high quality police services, working with the county to alleviate the dangerous traffic in Kensington, and working with the fire department to improve fire safety?

To my knowledge, no evidence of malfeasance, misappropriation of funds, nepotism, dishonesty, corruption, etc., or even evidence of a bad hair day came to light from these PRA requests. Was it merely harassment? The full list of PRAs can be viewed at www.FixOurKPD.org.

Andrew Paul Gutierrez

Successful Food Drive

Dear Editor:

We want to thank all of our Kensington neighbors for once again filling three barrels completely full for the Food Bank during our Halloween for the Hungry project. Thank you for your donations of canned goods—your generosity is greatly appreciated. See you next Halloween.

Jan, Mollie, Simone, and David Hudson

Kensington Property Owners Meet with BART

By Candace Capogrossi

Deep concern about the elimination of parking at the El Cerrito Plaza station was expressed by Kensington citizens at a November Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA) meeting held with BART officials. A new law, AB 2923, requires that BART develop high-density transit-oriented developments (TOD) on all its properties. These developments must be within a half-mile of their stations, which means that primarily parking lots are targeted. The law requires that 30 percent of the rental housing units be affordable with at least 20 percent restricted to very low (under 50 percent of area median income) and low-income (51-80 percent of area median income) households. BART hopes to make 35 percent of its housing affordable.

KPOA invited BART officials because no direct outreach to Kensington has been made. BART intends to solicit a project developer by this coming spring. The City of El Cerrito is a decision-maker for the project.

The meeting included our elected BART representative, Rebecca Saltzman, BART board vice president, and BART staff. They discussed alternative methods of getting to the station included biking, walking, or bus. Residents commented that bus service is not convenient particularly in the evening. Only one AC Transit bus line (Colusa Avenue line) provides service to the El Cerrito Plaza station from Kensington with service ending shortly after 10pm. While there are other lines connecting either upper Kensington or Arlington Avenue to other BART stations, those bus lines stop running after 8pm. In addition, taxi and ride-sharing services are expensive on an ongoing basis. Concerns about personal safety returning from BART at night without a vehicle at the station were raised.

BART officials said they plan to roll out an app to organize car pools for the station but that due to the large negative community response about elimination of parking, there would be more community meetings. BART also will require a station access study before the project is approved, but current BART TOD policy would provide no or limited parking at the El Cerrito Plaza station. Find more information at www.bart.gov/about/business/tod/ab2923. Email Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov.

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Town Meetings

KCC-Dec. 2, Jan.6 Kensington Community Council, 6:30pm. 525-0292 Building E

KPSC-Dec.9, Jan.13 Kensington Public Safety Council Earthquake/ Disaster Preparedness 2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165

KARO/ECHO-New time, new location! Dec.9, Jan.13 Amateur Radio Operators, 2nd Mondays, 7pm. 524-9815

KFPD-Dec.11, Jan.8 Fire Protection District 2nd Wed., 7pm Building E,

527-8395

KIC-Dec.23, Jan.27 Kensington Improvement Club 4th Mondays, 7:30. 524-7415

KPPCSD-Dec.12, Jan.9 & 23, Police Protection and Community Services District 7:30pm. ACC. Check website for updates 526-4141

Kensington Farmers' Market Live produce & live music every Sunday, 10am-2pm, Colusa Circle

Fire Board

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the efficiency and effectiveness of each. Then there is the real seismic danger: “An essential services building needs to survive a seismic event,” he said. “It has to be functional.”

The good news is that the building can be brought up to that level of seismic safety, Cusenbery said, but once a floor of \$169,000 is spent on renovation, ADA code kicks in. And then, he explained, “if you’re taking down walls and doing that level of renovation, you rebuild to industry standards and best practices; you’re not going to build substandard. So you have a ripple effect that comes from upgrading the seismic.”

The possible earthquake trace at one corner of the retaining wall at the rear of the building (together with the fault that runs down the Arlington) means that the building’s footprint cannot be enlarged, and remodeling must occur within strict parameters. The cost of renovation can only be half the replacement cost of the building. That replacement cost is at current prices for labor and materials, and it may include upgrades now mandated—for example, if an elevator is required, the replacement cost could include the cost of an elevator. Still, Cusenbery described completing renovations at half the replacement cost as “very ambitious,” and he said that it might involve reducing the scope of the project. Those figures should be known within weeks but must be approved by the county building department.

That department, now called Conservation and Development, has already thrown a curveball; it was assumed that since the second floor is not open to the public and only occupied by sworn personnel, who must, by law, be able-bodied, that an elevator from the first floor and a wheelchair lift to negotiate the second floor split-level would not be required. It now seems likely that the county will require both an elevator and the lift, which reduces space further.

Cusenbery made it clear that the renovated building, even with the elevator, would be able to fit the fire department’s needs. Dorm rooms would be larger, the kitchen and dining area would expand, and the fitness area, while not large, would at least not be in its current home in the electrical room.

Moreover, the required separate turnout room (for clothing, coats, gloves, etc.) and decontamination room would meet current standards. When firefighters return from a fire, they need to remove their clothing as soon as possible and shower down; chemicals from fires are toxic and can be cancerous.

Questions ranged from can’t the parking lot in back double as access (Cusenbery: “There could be litigation if you don’t provide it [elevator]. We’re going on the assumption that we need it.”) to whether building to seismic code is sufficient to protect the building (Cusenbery: “It’s true that the building code, while it has improved exponentially, applies to all sites. However, we do site-specific solutions custom-fit for the site.” Several speakers talked about seismic particularities of Kensington; Joseph Holmes noted that recent 3-D modeling has relayed welcome information in that the degree of shaking that we might be subjected to is significantly less than in areas on the Hayward fault north and south of Kensington..

Underlying all was the realization that there likely will not be room for the police in the remodeled building. There is an office downstairs for the district manager, which could function as a shift room; the elevator has reduced the size of the conference room in back. Several had suggested that two offices could be carved out of that space. Rick Artis described the history of the Public Safety Building, arguing that the board did not have the “moral authority” to remodel the building without accounting for the police.

Cusenbery advocated for a working committee with representatives from the two boards and community members who could brainstorm solutions to these issues. The park as a site came up several times; not mentioned was the likelihood of a lawsuit were that pursued, with more time lost. Firefighters stood at the back listening to the presentation. Larry Nagel thanked everyone who had come, saying that “This is an enormous problem, and there is no end in sight.” But there must be; we owe a safe building to those who work to ensure our safety.

October Police Log

2 DANGEROUS OR GRAVELY DISABLED PERSON, Kingston Rd. Unknown male subj in RP’s base-ment, RP just confronted him and asked him to leave.. Subj advised his name was Daniel Santos from Columbia. HMA, 20s, wht sweater w/stripes..no weapons. Unknown if he departed.

VANDALISM, Lexington Rd. RP’s veh was keyed sometime last night. Advised her neighbor doesn’t want anyone parking ifo his res., and he has been sending belligerent emails to the neighbors regard-ing the situation. Stated she has two vehs but only one parking space so she often parks ifo his res.

4 VANDALISM, Arlington Ave. Ifo KPD reporting scratches to his vehicle.

5 ANIMAL CALL, Coventry, Eldridge. Dog outside barking for the past 20 minutes, RP didn’t want to leave her name.

FOUND PROPERTY REPORT, brought to KPD. RP found a wallet and watch in her garbage. The property belonged to a person found sleeping under a resident’s home.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Highgate Ct.Unkn Male with 2 red lights keeps coming into backyard looking for dog.

8 CITIZEN ASSIST, Sunset View Cemetery on Franciscan/Eureka. Someone is burn-ing trash near the cemetery. Smoke alert possible rubbish fire. Transferred to Confire.

PERSON SEEKING ADVICE FROM PD, Valley Rd. RP requesting advice regarding a neigh-bor who left her a note on her vehicle accusing her of scraping the side of their vehicle.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Norwood Ct. Vehicle drove onto property and was seen driving towards Arlington Ct. RP concerned because work is being done on the home and there are tools out.

10 BURGLARY, Amherst Ave. Broken window.

FOUND PROPERTY, Kensington Park. Book bag, cell phone and child’s pink plastic shoes.

ALARM, Highgate Rd. Res aud burg poa motion in family room. Officers arrived and found rear window smashed. Albany PD Officers assisted with search of home and perimeter. Subjects had left prior to officers’ arrival. No items were taken.

11 VANDALISM, Beloit/Grizzly Peak Blvd. Street sign hit by vehicle at northwest corner during power corner during power outage. RP wants to remain anonymous.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, OCEAN VIEW AVE. Transient WMA brown shirt blue pack and blue duffle bag sitting on retaining wall ifo home. RP advising subject was there 5 hours ago and RP asked him to leave but he returned. RP will be leaving his home in 10 minutes.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Kensington Ct. RP says on multiple occasions unknown subjects coming to the residence and leaving trash when he and his family are not home. RP saying today he discovered his Halloween decorations from front yard and backyard have been tampered with. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.

15 SEXUAL BATTERY, Anson Ct. Occurred July, early August. Says that ? sexually assaulted her in his home and has been attempting to keep her quiet. 1st incident occurred at his home in Kensington and she scratched him on his arms to break free and 2nd incident grabbed her by the hair and hit her head on the table outside on the patio. She also said that he has had made numerous attempts to contact via text after the temporary restraining order. There is a current restraining order against subject.

HIT AND RUN - Property Damage, Colusa Ave.

16 911 CALL, Arlington Ave. RP saw male going in and out of the street, seems aggra-vated and threw a beer can in the street.. WMA wearing white hoodie and blue jeans yell-ing at motorists and going into the street. Transported to hospital.

17 BURGLARY, Arlington Ave. 10 minutes ago, 2 males unk description l/s head-ing towards Marin Ave. KPD officers arrested male subject in Oakland.

PETTY THEFT, Highland Blvd. Mail taken.

18 PETTY THEFT, Highland Blvd. RP reporting her mail was stolen from her mail box sometime yes-terday afternoon. Stated a neighbor also had their mail stolen and had made a report already.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Rincon Rd. Per RP’s wife, WMA looking into vehi-cles, swinging couple of white bags, heading toward Blake Gardens.

20 CITIZEN ASSIST, Kenyon Ave. Census worker WMA 5’9” heavier build glasses clip-board and badge outside in grn Volvo wagon. RP does not want to give out personal info and wants him to leave, says same subj was there approx. 3 weeks ago.

DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Yale Ave. Verbal. Female heard yelling at male to get off her property.

21 CITIZEN ASSIST, Coventry Rd. RP advising that a person posing as his friend on Facebook con-vinced him to give up personal information including; Name, address, dob, mother’s maiden name etc. and the scam has continued to text messages. RP would like advice on how to handle the situation.

Suspicious Person/s, Beloit. RP advising he’s in Italy and his security camera caught footage of a subject walking around on his property and in his backyard but was never seen leaving the property. BMA wear-ing construction vest. Subject was also seen spraying something from a bottle in his front yard.

23 MISC CIVIL MATTER, Arlington Ln. RP feels he’s being harassed by neighbor at Norwood since he reported him to water board this morning after disputes over watering the lawn. Parties Advised.

Disturbance of Peace, Yale Ave. Yelling coming from street, male and female.

24 REQUEST FOR EXTRA PATROL, Rincon Rd. RP would like extra patrol since a neigh-bor alerted her to someone setting up a tent in their driveway.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Highland Blvd. WMA, 6’, average bld, looking into vehicles.

25 VANDALISM, Yale Ave. Two tires ice-picked at two different times. One occurred Sunday night, the other a couple nights ago. RP advised he may know who is responsible.

26 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Arlmont Dr. Person claiming to be with census bureau, was at residence 20 min ago, and has been on property before about 1 month ago.

27 PETTY THEFT, Ocean View Ave. Neighbor found two packages opened up with contents inside. No security camera footage.



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Service and Sweets Define a Life

By Linnea Due

Jackie Karkazis and Sharon Lazaneo would be a hard act to follow. As Karkazis puts it, “We were naïve. You might say we were insane.” The two were fulltime child protection workers when it occurred to them that it might be fun to start a restaurant in their spare time.

Karkazis grew up in the Bay Area (her grandparents operated a bakery on Solano Avenue in the ‘30s and ‘40s); she graduated from UC Berkeley with a major in communications and public policy. Accepted into the Peace Corps, she was slated for Guatemala, a prospect that terrified her. Instead, she opted to work in children’s services, originally through the Alameda County Probation Department, where she met Lazaneo in the six-month-long training program. The two would work as children’s advocates for decades, even while running the restaurant.

“There was a small bakery on the Arlington in the late ‘70s,” Karkazis says. “They didn’t make their own pastries; they brought them in and sold coffee and teas. I started making cakes for the bakery. Then they said they were tired of running it.”

Karkazis, together with Lazaneo and two other friends, Melinda Dennen and Kathy Davisson, decided they all liked to eat, so why not operate a restaurant? “None of us had cooked in a professional kitchen,” Karkazis says. “We were fearless. We spent six months remodeling the space.” Lazaneo built tables and cabinets, and the two brought in furniture from the Kensington home they’ve shared since 1973.

Karkazis engaged a consultant who asked who would be doing the clean-up. “Us,” Karkazis answered. The dishwashing? Waiting? Cooking? The consultant informed Karkazis that the four women, who all had day jobs, could not possibly do everything.

Inn Kensington opened in 1981. “One of the first persons we hired was Thu Tan Le, and he’s still there,” Karkazis says. “Then we hired Hung Tran, and he now owns the restaurant.” The two were Vietnamese refugees; Inn Kensington also employed Chinese fleeing the Cultural Revolution. “We had a math professor working here, an obstetrician, an engineer. None of these people could get other jobs. We also employed all our kids’ friends at one time or another.”

For the first six months, none of the women took a salary. Then *Chronicle* food critic Patricia Unterman wrote a favorable review, and the restaurant took off. “Towards the end, Sharon was cooking 300 or more meals on a weekend,” Karkazis recalls. “She had a special way of making omelets that were so light and airy.” Between the restaurant and their “day” jobs, the four were working seven days a week. “I so understand the trouble restaurants have finding a cohesive staff,” Karkazis says. “You need incredible teamwork, the same energy and work ethic.”



After thirteen years, Karkazis and Lazaneo decided it was time to hang it up. They sold the restaurant in 1994 and went back to social work fulltime. “But I still feel like Inn Kensington is part of me,” Karkazis says.

“A couple of years ago I was thinking of ending my career in social work,” she says. “I hadn’t really baked much from the time I left the restaurant. I took some classes and pulled out my old recipe books. It was like finding a lost love. I started bringing over cookies and tarts and pies to a wine-tasting group that’s been going for thirty years, and people loved it. I sold things to the wine group and neighbors. I sell boxes of cookies for gifts, then I went in the direction of tarts, then more cookies. It’s been a lifesaver for me. I’ve got a sweet tooth that just won’t end. Thank you, my dear mother for not limiting my sugar intake!”

But just as she never left Inn Kensington behind, she has not lost her focus on children. “I signed up to cook for this group called Cake4Kids. It’s an organization that gives birthday cakes to kids who are in foster care. They post who needs a cake, and you deliver it to the agency. It’s just lovely.”

Karkazis can be reached at Jackie.karkazis@gmail.com.

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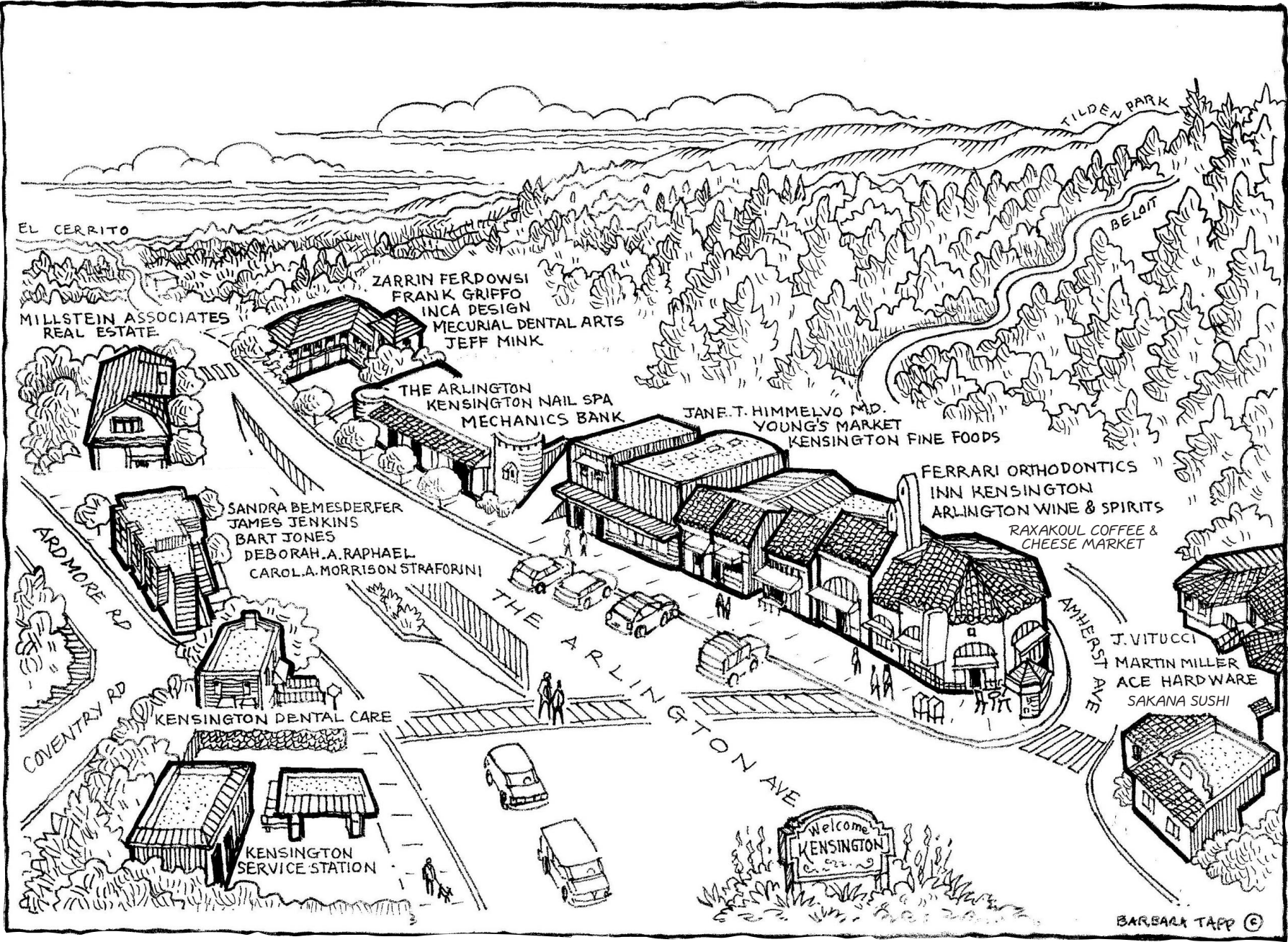
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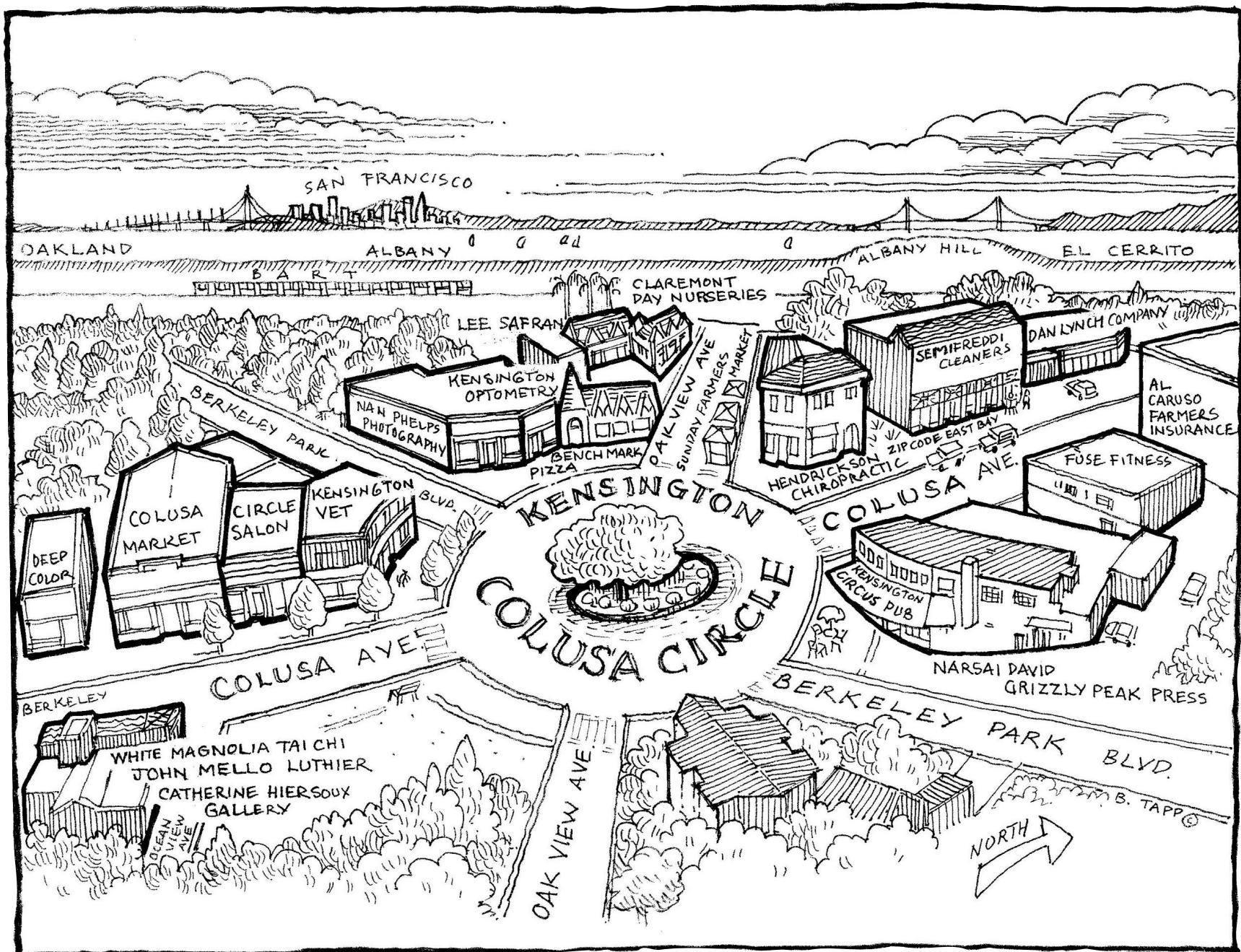
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Community Education

KASEP

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Enrichment Program

Happy Holidays Families! Our Winter Online Registration is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3rd at 7:00pm for Kindergarten and 7:30pm for grades 1-6. You can register on your laptop,desktop and on your mobile device. You can also create a new account on line before registration to make registration night a little smoother. Please make sure your account is up to date: #1 phone number should be the best contact number (usually a cell phone #), email address and your child’s grade should be current. KASEP Winter Brochure and class schedule is on-line: www.Kensington-CommunityCouncil.org.

Staff will be in the KCC office the evening of registration to take walk-in registrations for families paying with cash or check and to provide support for anyone having difficulty online (525-0292).

Winter KASEP session starts the same day as Hilltop School, Monday, January 6, 2020 and continues for 9 weeks, ending Friday, March 13th. Your enthusiasm for our new Fall classes: Adventures in the Garden, Beginning Mandarin, Crafty Creations, and Skyhawk’s Kinder Sports Medley will continue to the Winter session. We are excited to offer a new piano class taught by our current mandarin and craft teacher, Elain Chu who has taught many Kensington children piano for many years. We are also bringing back Recorder taught by Jane Webber.

Fall KASEP session ends on Friday, December 13. Our office will be closed for winter break, Monday, December 23, 2017 - Sunday, January 5, 2020. Additional holiday closures are: Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 20, 2020

Follow us on Instagram for updates @thecommunityofkensingtonca



Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, RECREATION BUILDING - ROOM A \$10* New location due to the community center construction

The tai chi class is based on Dr. Paul Lam’s Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention program, which has been taught to millions worldwide. In the United States, it has been recommended by the Arthritis Foundation and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for its effectiveness in bringing pain relief, improving balance, and significantly reducing falls. The class is suitable for all people, regardless of physical condition. It is however, especially helpful for people who may be experiencing some health difficulties. The exercises incorporate all the health enhancing benefits of regular tai chi, but focuses on movements that are safe and relatively simple to do. For further information, contact Nobuo at: nnishi50@gmail.com

Tai Chi Chuan

Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, RECREATION BUILDING ROOM A, \$10

A gentle martial art, tai chi is a safe, rewarding activity for people of all ages and all levels of health. Tai chi incorporates both mind and body. Nobuo Nishi, instructor, has been teaching for 18 years. KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg. E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccec@yahoo.com, or call 525-0292. M-F, 1:00-5pm.

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 KPPCSD (Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District) at 510-526-4141.

Kensington Calendar

Locations:

Arlington Community Church (ACC), 52 Arlington Ave., 526-9146
Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave., 525-0292 (closed)
Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 524-3043
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB), 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, www.uucb.org

Ongoing:

Jazzercise with Kevin Knickerbocker
Mondays-Fridays, 8:15am \$20 class or \$55 unlimited per month. ACC
Kundalini Meditation, Mondays, 7-8 pm, (1st-timers: req'd intro by appt at 6:30. RSVP amrita@heartofc.org). \$15 per class, \$10 sr/std. ACC.
Mindful Yoga with Wendy Beckerman
Tuesdays, 9:15am, bring yoga mat. \$18 drop-in or discount for series. ACC.
Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Building E at the park, \$10
Israeli Folk Dance Wednesdays, \$6, lessons/beginners 8pm, request dance party starts at 9pm. ACC.
Tai Chi Chuan Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Building E at the park, \$10

December Events

December 1 Kit Hewitt, writer and facilitator for UUCB Write For Your Life writing group, will speak on “Joy: Galapagos Islands.” UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
December 1 Colusa Circle Annual Tree Lighting Event starts at 4.45pm, tree will be lit at 5.15pm. Please join Colusa Circle neighbors & friends for the third annual Tree Lighting. Enjoy beautiful lights, festive music, delicious hot chocolate, and community spirit.
December 2 Kensington Library Knitting Club "The Castoffs" All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. 6:30pm. Free.
December 3 & 10 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
December 5, 12, 19 Baby & Toddler Storytimes Stories, songs, puppets, scarves, shaky eggs, and loads of fun! Kensington Library, Two identical sessions 10:15 & 11:15am. Free.
December 5, 12, & 19 Read to Dogs! Each week one to three calm & gentle therapy dogs will be at the library, waiting for kids to read to them (or parents of younger kids can do the reading). Call or come by to schedule an appointment. Drop-ins often also work. Kensington Library, 2:30-3:30pm. Free.
December 6, Interfaith Vigil against Gun Violence. Music, words, and silence. 12 - 12:30pm in the sanctuary. ACC.
December 7 Film Screening *Dirt Rich*
Join us for a free screening of the award-winning film *Dirt Rich* by local director Marcelina Cravat. Marcelina’s first film *Angel Azul* traveled to over 50 festivals and won 13 awards. Through a beautiful exploration of geotherapy strategies, *Dirt Rich* inspires the viewer to discover that through the return of carbon to the soil we restore hope for humanity. 7pm, ACC.
December 7 Contra Costa Chorale concert: Leonard and Copland. UUCB, 8pm. \$20/15.
December 8 Dr. Lenore Ralston will speak on "Two Faces of God: Elohim and Adonai: A Faith-Journey of a Secular Jew.” UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
December 8 Holiday Fair, Part 1 with sale of crafts, recycled gifts, plants,

Christmas decorations galore, light lunch, and silent auction. UUCB, 10:30am-1pm. Free.
December 8 Artisan Gift Fair with local artists, Unique hand-crafted gifts, one of a kind scarves, hats, ceramic cylinders with succulents and herbs, much more. Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese, 11am-2pm.
December 8 Sing for Peace A holiday concert and cookie buffet. Joyful secular songs and music of peace. Featuring Katie Lipka and the Youth and Children’s Choir, Luminescence Choir, instrumentalists, soloists, and guest musicians. UUCB, 1pm. Admission \$20 & \$15, Families \$30, all are welcome.
December 9 Sustainable Stitching Stitch, Patch and Repair! Bring your well-worn textiles and learn visible mending techniques to give these beloved articles a new life. These empowering skills lend sustainable solutions for slow fashion. Embedded in each intricate stitch are stories of social activism and personal expression. Led by Beth Molnar of Green Art Workshop. For Adults and Teens. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043.
December 10 Afternoon Craft: Fill the Gap Braiding Using a provided template, participants will make their own braids using the very simple Fill the Gap method. The braids are a seven-stranded braid that can be used for gifts, bracelets, wrapping presents, key chains, it's up to you! For elementary school-aged kids. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
December 14 Kensington Symphony Orchestra "American Holiday.” UUCB, 7:30pm. \$25/20.
December 15 Dr. Karen Voorhees will speak on "Death Doesn't Exist.” UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
December 15 Holiday Fair, Part 2 with sale of crafts, recycled gifts, plants, Christmas decorations galore, light lunch, and silent auction. UUCB, 10:30-1. Free.
December 16 Memoir Group Monthly Memoir Group led by Ruth Robinson in the Fireside Room. 10am, free.
December 16 Tissue Paper Mandalas Create a beautiful circle mandala using small geometric tissue paper shapes, sequins & stars. Simply stick the tissue paper pieces to clear contact paper. Your mandala will look great in a window with the light shining through it. For kids of all ages. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
December 17 Fratello Marionettes present The North Pole Review “The North Pole Review” is the perfect way to get into the holiday spirit. This music-based production showcases our graceful ice skater Crystal Chandelier, the high-kicking antics of the Russian Trepak Dancers, and a trio of dazzling acrobatic penguins. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
December 19 Bridge Night Monthly potluck and bridge play at all levels for ACC'ers and guests. 6pm, ACC.
December 21 Holiday Concert and Green Bazaar 2pm. Step away from the craziness of the holidays and be our guests. Our concert will feature Celtic music and a carol sing, followed by a Green Bazaar with crafts and treats. ACC.
December 21 CommUniTea Neighborhood Tea & Talk Live original music with Tim Hampton and the Kensington Jazz Kats. Taste new tea and products from Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese, 299 Arlington Avenue.
December 21 Artisan Gift Fair See December 8, 4-6pm.
December 21 Winter Solstice Service and Labyrinth Walking. UUCB, 6pm.

Free.
December 22 Handel’s “Messiah” sing-along concert with live orchestra and soloists, conducted by Bryan Baker. This oldest Messiah-Sing in the Bay Area will include a new surprise or two this year. Scores are available to borrow with deposit or bring your own. Costumes admired—not required (your choice of theme!). UUCB, 6pm. \$20 available at the door or through Brown Paper Tickets; all are welcome.
December 24, Christmas Eve Worship Joyful music and candlelight as we celebrate Jesus’ birth. Children of all ages invited to participate. 5pm. ACC.
December 30 Kensington Library Book Club Join the discussion! This month’s selection is *Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing. Book Club is open to all. 6:30pm. Free.

January Events

January 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 Baby & Toddler Storytimes See December 5.
January 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 Read to Dogs! See December 5.
January 2 First Thursday Community Potluck Monthly potluck supper and program, always free and open to all, 6pm, ACC.
January 5 Hana Matt, teacher of world religions at GTU, will speak about St. Teresa of Avila (1550-1582), a nun who founded many reformed monasteries and convents of Carmelites all over Spain. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
January 6 Kensington Library Knitting Club “The Castoffs” See December 2. 6:30pm. Free.
January 7, 21 & 28 Family Storytime See December 3.
January 7, 14, 21, 28 CERT Training The Community Emergency Response Team teaches neighbors to help themselves and each other. You will receive hands-on training in Disaster First Aid, Disaster Preparedness, Basic Firefighting, Light Search and Rescue, Damage Assessment, and How to Turn Off Utilities. 6pm, ACC.
January 9 Toni Gattone, author of *The Lifelong Gardener*, will speak on how to garden with ease and joy at any age. 9:30am, El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. Visitors \$3.
January 12 Hana Matt (see January 5) will speak about Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), who wrote music, poetry, plays and nine books, who gave us a concept called “Veriditas,” or “Greening Power.” UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
January 13 Cubelets Robot Blocks! Come create changeable robots entirely out of cubes that attach magnetically. There are sensing, action & thinking cubes that cause the robot to move around, spin, light up, detect distance and more. No experience necessary. A fun introduction to simple coding concepts! Best for age 5 and up. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
January 13 Election Hacking and Security Learn about the movement by prominent scientists, statisticians, and voting advocates to restore confidence in the security of the US electoral system. Presented by Philip B. Stark, Associate Dean for the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and professor in the UC Berkeley Statistics department. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
January 14 Tilden Trail Cam Presentation Come learn about and see photos of animals on the park trails that are not seen so often while hiking. This may include foxes, coyotes, and possibly even a mountain lion every now and then. Best for age 5 and up. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.

January 16 Bridge Night See December 19.
January 18 Emergency Preparedness Marlene Keller, block captain for the Community Emergency Response training program of El Cerrito and Kensington, will talk at the AAUW West Contra Costa Branch meeting about the importance of preparing for emergencies and how we can prepare for them. Christ Lutheran Church, 780 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito, 10am. Free. All are welcome.
January 18 CommUniTea Neighborhood Tea & Talk. See December 21, 4-6pm. Musician to be announced.
January 19 Dr. James Lance Taylor will speak in the Personal Theology series. He is a professor and director of the African American Studies program at the University of San Francisco and author of *Black Nationalism in the United States: From Malcolm X to Barack Obama*. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
January 20 Monthly Memoir Group See December 16.
January 21 Paper Airplanes! Make a variety of cool paper airplanes with possibly a few launchers thrown in. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
January 26 Alex Pappas will speak on "The Perennial Philosophy of Aldous Huxley & Western Thought." Pappas is author of *Heaven and Nirvana: Duality and Nonduality in the World Religions*. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
January 27 Kensington Library Book Club Join the discussion! This month’s selection is *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. 6:30pm. Free.

Kensington Recreation Director Needed

The Kensington Community Council is seeking a new Director of Recreation. The position is a part-time job of 30 hours a week job with a flexible summer schedule.
This job works closely with the children and families of our community. This person is responsible for the planning, administration, and the accounting of the day-to-day operations of the Kensington After School Enrichment Program (KASEP), KCC Summer Camp, the KCC children’s classes, and Adult Recreation programs. The job reports directly to the Kensington Community Council, a community non-profit organization. www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org
The position works independently with a small part-time staff and performs a variety of administrative and analytical tasks to develop an array of educational and enriching after school class offerings, to recruiting teachers to teach KASEP classes, and the summer camp specialty teachers and counselors. The position is the public liaison and public face of Kensington community recreation, providing a time-honored enrichment program for the students of Kensington School and the greater Kensington community.
This leadership position requires a significant degree of initiative, independence, and judgement. The ideal candidate for this position will come from within the Kensington community and be familiar with the program. Additionally, we are seeking someone with a background in education who is up-to-date technologically, is a problem solver with attention to detail, and has a customer-focused approach in a public agency.
If you are interested in learning more about the job and starting salary, please contact Anne Forrest at anneforrest24@gmail.com

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Winter Solstice Service
Saturday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.

Sing-Along Messiah
Sunday, December 22 at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services
Tuesday, December 24
5:00 p.m. Family Service
10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

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A brace of captains from the office of the Contra Costa County Sheriﬀ showed support at the November 14 swearing-in of Interim Kensington Police Chief Steve Simpkins. Photo by David Bergen.

Chief
...from page 1

able to return to the sheriffs’ office. If I’m not the person the community wants, I go back to my office in Martinez. But on a personal level, I’m eager for a professional challenge. After already serving as a contract chief for seven years [in Danville], I wanted to see if my skills and experience can transfer to another community.

What is your initial take after a couple of weeks on the job?

There are good things going on here. It’s good to see small town neighborhood policing. Obviously there are challenges, and I want to help everyone move forward.

You said in the meeting that you wanted to build trust on three levels: in the department, in the community, and with the district.

My job as chief is to facilitate conditions of trust. It’s like a three-legged stool—the only way that it will stand up correctly is if all three legs are working well. That means that I need to spend an appropriate amount of time and energy on all three groups. Part of a police chief’s job is to maintain trust.

Could those aims be mutually exclusive because of long-standing animosities?

In each of those three areas, we all—the police, the community, governance— have a responsibility to move forward. If you want to continue to look in the rearview mirror at things you can’t go back and erase, then you’re not solving anything. You’re unable to progress and create good police work. Even if there are long-standing problems, we all need to be able to move forward to solve them.

Do you think that an independent department of Kensington’s size can be operated successfully?

The short answer is yes. If you look up and down the state and across the country, the vast number of departments are small. There are creative and innovative ways to handle things like staffing and absences. It can be done, but it takes work. And it takes the three things that I talked about; it takes trust. Is it a challenge? Certainly. It takes everyone.

Why do you think the sheriff, who turned Kensington down on its RFP, would offer your services? Is there an end game here?

No, the sheriff’s letters is pretty clear why he turned it down. The sheriff is concerned with community safety everywhere in Contra Costa County. There’s a big difference between offering some leadership experience and offering an entire contract.

What have you done so far in meeting people?

I was here on Halloween driving around in a police car, stopping and talking to people. I went to the Halloween celebration at the Farmers’ Market. And I was at the school recently. I have to tell you that at this point, all the people I’ve communicated with have been very appreciative of the police department. Lots of people understand the role that the police play and want to have us around.

As an instructor at the Academy, do you think that you can help find quality recruits?

I’ve taught at Napa Valley College for 15 years. I frequently interact with new academy students. Stereotypes are stereotypes. Are there young men and women who want to run around with their sirens blaring and all the adrenaline? Sure, but there are also plenty of people who want to serve in a community policing environment. The perspective might be out there that it’s more difficult to find police officers in 2019 than it was earlier. But academy classes are full. There has to be strategic recruiting. You find people who want to serve in a small town family environment, a small family serving a small community. We need to recruit that way: If you’re looking for a place where the majority of your time is community-based, we’ve got it for you.

I imagine that you have read the Matrix recommendations. What did you think of the report and its conclusions?

It’s a little early for me to say. Twenty-six years have given me a good idea of what effective law enforcement is. I’ve been a supervisor, manager, chief, so I have a decent handle on good policing. Before I weigh in on what an outside consultant says, I’d like to look at what I see here.

Sir Robert Peel said in the 1800s that the police are responsible for reducing the fear of crime. If we are doing our job, we are reducing that fear. A consultant looking at statistics and hours and that sort of thing doesn’t necessarily get at that primary function.

You asked earlier whether a small town police department can run effectively. Clayton, Calistoga, Ross, Belvedere are all small departments that run very well.

Can you contract out effectively? Yes, you can do that too. The community needs to decide what it wants to do. The indecision makes it tough on everyone, on the officers and on the community. A decision needs to be made.

Part of what I can bring to the table is that half of my career has been on contract law enforcement. San Ramon, Orinda, Danville were all contract positions. I can help give objective advice on the way forward. Ultimately, it’s the community’s decision. I see my job as needing to do the best that I can to build trust with everyone involved.

You can now follow the Kensington Police Department on its new Facebook page. Interim Chief Simpkins plans to post regularly. Link: www.fb.me/KensingtonPD

Tal Zvik Enters the Navy

By Linnea Due

2019 El Cerrito High graduate and longtime Kensingtonian Tal Zvik joined the Navy recently and is now in training camp. Writes Zvik: “From an early age, I identified what I wanted to do with my life, and stuck by my decision and passion through high school. A military career has been my obsession since I can remember. I constantly asked my dad about his time and training as a para-trooper in the IDF (Israeli Defense Force). I was addicted to his stories, ones of not just bravery but also of cooperation. “No one left behind” ... is the best example of this value I embraced...

“When I was twelve, I heard my dad and his friends talking about a special secretive military group... My early research only confirmed who I wanted to be. I started counting the years it would take for me to finally go through the process of selection and training; it was still ten years away.

“Undeterred, at thirteen, I studied and trained myself for the Navy's ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Core) physical as a high school senior. I created my own exercises, kept spreadsheets, and logged my improvement.” This persistence and devotion has paid off, as Zvik is now on his way to embracing his dream.

Join us this Advent and Christmas!

Arlington Community Church

52 Arlington Ave. in Kensington (right across from the library)

“Thin Places,” an Advent sermon series
10 am each Sunday, beginning December 1

Thin places...where the door between the world
And the next is cracked open for a moment
And the light is not all on the other side.
-Sharlande Sledge

Holiday Concert and Green Bazaar
Saturday, December 21, 2 pm

Step away from the craziness of the holidays and be our guests.
Our concert will feature Celtic music and a carol sing,
followed by a Green Bazaar with crafts and treats.

Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday, December 24, 5 pm

Joyful music and candlelight, as we celebrate Jesus’ birth.
Children of all ages invited to participate.

Do some good. Find your people. Help the earth.
www.arlingtoncommunitychurchucc.org

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