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K E N S I N G T O N O U T L O O K

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FEBRUARY 2015

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VOLUME 72 NUMBER 1



Smile if you like chocolate! The Choclatiers of Kensington (See KASEP Classes, Page 3.)

Rolling Into the New Year!

Let's keep the momentum going! Thanks to all the community members who have already sent in their donations to KCC's Matching Funds campaign towards future improvements to our Community Center. We want to particularly thank the Friends of Kensington Library who sent in the generous donation of \$1,000. Their community spirit is an example for us all!

As of the beginning of the New Year, the Matching Gift fund contains close to \$9,000. KCC has already matched these funds, so that we now have \$18,000 dedicated towards the renovation. There is an additional enticement for those who are long time community members and were fortunate enough to buy their homes before Proposition 13; your income

see New Year, Back Page...

It's the Budget...

On the brink of the approval of a new contract for Kensington police officers, the town is buzzing with talk of the KPPCSD budget and its recent – and projected future – deficits.

According to information provided by the Kensington Property Owners' Association "The proposed MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)...requires police officers to pick up 12% of their pension costs over the four-year agreement. This is a change from the current contract in which the District pays all pension costs, and will reduce the District's pension expenses by \$124,000 over four years...Over the same period, Kensington police officers will receive a 16% salary increase."

While the KPOA states that "The District projects that by the fourth year, the MOU will increase annual police salary and benefit expenses by \$233,500," GM, Greg Harman says the \$233,500 figure is the *total increased cost to the District over the four-year length of the contract*, or an average of \$58,375 annually. This is the figure Board negotiators conclude

is needed to retain personnel and goodwill, to pay officers fairly, and to keep current levels of staffing. (See the Nov. 2014 GM Report at www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/kppcsd-board/general-managers-reports/ for a synopsis of the terms of the proposed contract.)

All counties are dealing with the fallout from declining tax revenues due to the recession. The Police District is dependent on property tax revenues for approximately 50% of its budget. The rest is made up from Police Special

Tax revenue (approx. 26%), Measure G revenue (approx. 19%), and the annual COPS grant funds (approx. 4%).

H i s t o r y . According to the California Special District *see Budget Pg. 2...*

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 7, 2015

**The KCC is having a swinging
March Madness Dance Party
With our favorite DJ & Dance Instructor
Contact KCC Office for tickets!**



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Seller

• KENSINGTON MARKET UPDATE •

	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE	BR/BA
• Stanford Avenue	\$1,498,000	\$1,750,000	6/3
• Kingston Avenue	\$789,000	\$896,000	3/2
• Amherst Avenue	\$698,000	\$860,000	3/1
• Cambridge Avenue	\$789,000	\$786,720	3/2
• Colusa Avenue	\$725,000	\$705,000	2/1

– Current Pending Sales: 4

– Current Active Listings: 0

Source: EBRD-MLS Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

~~~~~

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## It's the Budget...

...Budget, from Page 1

Board Member/Trustee Handbook, “Prop. 13, enacted in 1978, imposed strict limits on property taxes to 1% of property value, causing special districts, cities, and counties to lose much of their local control and funding security. Before 1978, special districts received \$945M from property taxes (1977-78). Shortly after Prop. 13 was imposed (1978-79), (state-wide) special district property tax revenue dropped to \$532M, a loss of almost 50%.”

In 1980, residents passed a ballot measure that levied a tax of \$45/yr. for each single-family residence (described by some at the time as “a tiny fraction of the property taxes most...saved under [Prop. 13]”). Necessitated by Prop. 13, which reduced Police Dept. funds by (in Kensington’s particular case) approximately 60%, the measure was an attempt to halt the tapping of reserves, the reduction in police personnel, and the subsequent increase in home burglaries – all of which resulted from the reductions in funding. In 1984, a second measure was passed, increasing the Police Special Tax from \$45 to \$90/yr.

In 1993, as a result of the cessation of funding from the Special District Augmentation Fund (over \$500K received the previous year), and a new requirement to shift \$200K in property taxes to the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund, Kensington voters approved an increase in the Police Special Tax to \$300/yr. In 2010, residents approved Measure G – an additional special police tax of \$200 per parcel, subject to CPI.

The Argument in Favor of Measure G stated, “A supplemental police tax has been part of the Kensington fiscal package since the early 1980’s. At that time it was recognized that Prop. 13 limits threatened the ability of Kensington to maintain an independent police dept. with around-the-clock police coverage.” Inflation has eroded the purchasing power of the supplemental police tax voted by residents at that time; while the total revenue provided by the original supplement was the equivalent of approximately \$689K, over \$1M in today’s dollars is required to effect the same purchasing power. “This shortfall, combined with flat property tax revenues, has given rise to a projected budget deficit of \$364K in fiscal 2010 (actual: \$266K). To fund current deficits the District is now using up previously generated reserves.

“(T)he District Board studied other deficit-bridging options, including the outsourcing of the police function. An independent consultant determined that the cost of outsourcing was close to, and in some cases higher than, retaining our own locally controlled...Department. Absent an increase in the supplement, the only option that bridges the deficit would be to shrink the police department and eliminate patrol shifts.”

(The argument against the measure stated, “A tax increase of this magnitude would not be needed if the (Police and Fire Districts) would merge into one district and combine their currently collected tax revenues of \$5.1 million into one budget.”)

Even with the \$200 per single-family residence tax provided for in Measure G (not all of which was, at its discretion, actually levied by the Board), a 5-year forecast provided by Bill Wright and Pat McLaughlin in January 2010 showed that the District would begin drawing down reserves again by FY 2013-14 – which is what has happened.

According to the GM’s office, total

expenses are increasing at an average annual rate of 4.5%, while revenue is increasing at an average rate of 2.3%. A significant source of this discrepancy is the fact that the Special Police Tax measures in 1980, 1984, and 1993 did not include provisions for CPI increases. One informed source pegged the “lost” revenue from this wrinkle to be approximately \$5M – money the District would now have in additional reserves had CPI increases been included in those measures (as they were in the most recent Measure G) – over and above the reserves the District now has on hand – about \$1M.

The GM’s office maintains that, aside from changes in state-mandated PERS contributions (employer’s contribution up from 0% of salaries to 39% of salaries over the past 14 years – levied by the State, and totally outside the control of the District) and unexpected legal expenses over the last two years (the Bay View Refuse arbitration and the Writ of Mandate defense), the problem facing the District is a revenue problem, not an expense problem. Simply put, since Prop. 13, the District has never been provided with sufficient property tax revenue to fulfill its mandate.

GM Harman suggests this challenge can be met either by reducing staff or by increasing revenue. Revenue could come from additional taxes, or, as has been suggested, from a combining of the Police and Fire Districts and redistribution of the existing property tax revenue received by those Districts – a complex process that would not be without the possible risk of losing some funds to the County if it were implemented. This risk, and the political, administrative, and financial intricacies of combining the two Districts have prevented the idea from gaining much traction in the community, up to this point.

When questioned in January about possible consolidation of the two Districts, however, Lou Ann Texiera, Executive Officer of Contra Costa LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission), said, “If there was an interest in consolidating the two districts, unless someone was going to make a case for the County Fire Protection District to provide fire service in

see Budget, Back Page...

K E N S I N G T O N  
OUTLOOK

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March Advertising Deadline.....Feb. 8

March Editorial Deadline.....Feb. 10

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Letters to the Editor are on Page 6.



# K E N S I N G T O N C O M M U N I T Y   E D U C A T I O N

## KASEP

### Kensington After-School Enrichment Program

Thank you parents for a successful Winter KASEP registration! KASEP classes are in full swing, ending Friday March 20th. Our office will be closed President Week, Feb. 16–20th (NO KASEP). Mark your calendars: Spring KASEP Class Registration is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10th at 7:30pm. Spring KASEP classes start Monday, March 23, ending Friday, May 29th. Spring’s class schedule will be available for viewing online and a brochure will go home in your child’s backpacks the week of Feb. 23rd. For more information, check out our website: [www.KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org](http://www.KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org).

## SUMMER CAMP 2015

*Welcome to KCC Summer Day Camp!*

Summer Camp with KCC is where kids come to be active and outdoors. Campers learn new skills, embrace creativity, and socialize in a relaxed setting. In camp we offer group tennis lessons, arts & crafts with Ms. Vicky (KASEP teacher), and specialty classes in the afternoon, such as gymnastics, carpentry, cooking (different each week). All camp games are played in a safe and supportive environment. Every Wednesday – field trip day – we head out to explore Bay Area sites.

Camp life is for children entering 1st-6th grades in FALL 2015. Camp life is a full day of activities, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Cost is \$250 per camper, per week. Morning Care (8-9am) and Afternoon Care (5-6pm) are available for an additional fee. Registration Starts Tuesday, March 3rd, and is Ongoing.

**Register Online:** [www.KensingtonCommunityCouncil.Org](http://www.KensingtonCommunityCouncil.Org).

### KCC Summer Camp Activities & Schedule

**Week 1:** June 8 - June 12

Specialty: Carpentry  
Field Trip: The Jungle

**Week 2:** June 15 – June 19

Specialty: Gymnastics. Field Trip:  
Adventure Playground/Berkeley

**Week 3:** June 22 – June 26

Specialty: Iron Chef Pizza Competi-  
tion. Field Trip: Oakland Zoo

**Week 4:** June 29 – July 3 (*Spirit*

*Week*). Specialty: Sports Madness:  
Statistics in Action! Field Trip: Lake  
Anza

**Week 5:** July 6 – July 10

Specialty: Circus Arts  
Field Trip: Bladium/ Rock Climbing  
& Soccer

**Week 6:** July 13 - July 17 (*Olympic*

*Week*). Specialty: Gymnastics. Field  
Trip: Lindsay Museum-Animals of  
Mt. Diablo

**Week 7:** July 20 – July 24

Specialty: Monster Mash Clay  
Zombies. Field Trip: USS Hornet  
Battle Ship/Alameda

**Week 8:** July 27 – July 31

Specialty: Paper Weaving Arts/Bread  
Making. Field Trip: Lake Temescal

**Week 9:** August 3 – August 7

Specialty: Woodland Gnomes & Fairy  
Houses. Field Trip: Bladium/Rock  
Climbing & Soccer

**Week 10:** August 10 - August 14

Specialty: Monster Madness Paper  
Creations. Field Trip: El Cerrito Pool  
Party and Grand Finale!

*Changes in the schedule may be made for  
unexpected circumstances*

## JAZZERCISE

**Monday through Friday – Ongoing (drop-ins OK)**

**8:15-9:15am; Kensington Community Center / bring water and a mat**

Need to loose a couple of “holiday” pounds? Think New Years’ Resolution! Join Kevin’s Jazzercise class. **The \$49 processing fee is WAIVED**. Sign up for 12 months and payments start in March at \$40 dollars a month; unlimited classes.

Jazzercise fitness class combines dance-based cardio with strength training and stretching to sculpt, tone, and lengthen muscles for maximum fat burn. Jazzercise is a fusion of jazz dance, resistance training, Pilates, yoga, and kickboxing.



**BODY SCULPTING with Kevin**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays,**  
**9:15-10:15am • Ongoing**

Body sculpting is shaping your body to look leaner, more toned, and strengthened. **The \$49 processing fee is WAIVED** for this class too! Sign up for 12 months and payments start in March Register at class. Come join the fun and get healthy. Just bring a mat and weights and we’ll get started!

**Classes at the Kensington Community Center**  
**Questions? Call Kevin at 486-2728**

## REGISTRATION

**KCC/KASEP Office:** 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: [kccrec@yahoo.com](mailto:kccrec@yahoo.com), or call 525-0292. M-F, 10am-4pm.

**Community Ctr Rental Info:** Please call Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) at 526-4141.

**Tennis Court Reservations:** For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am. Call the KCC office for information. Court Fees: 45-minute singles reservation: Residents: \$2; Nonresidents: \$5.



*Join us for Summer Camp 2015!*

**ACRYLIC ARTISTS**  
**Wednesday, 9:45am – 12:30pm**

Open Studio, easels and tables provided. You bring your creativity and paints. Paint in community of other artists. The Community Center is spacious, with lots of natural light. Bring a lunch, as the morning is spent painting, then lunch and time for optional critique. Questions? Call KCC at 525-0292.

## KCC FALL FUND DRIVE

*Additional Donors – Thank You for Your Generosity!*

### \$5,000

Rick and Clay Akiwenzie

### \$1,000

Kensington Friends of the Library

### \$200 and Above

Vida and Paul Dorroh  
Barbara and Henry Nelson

### Up to \$100

Anonymous  
Carl and Lisa Brodsky  
June and David Cheit  
Betty Ann Engel  
Dane and Patricia Gillette  
David & Lillian Fujimoto Hampton  
Monica and John Sullivan  
Chuck and Nancy Toombs  
Marlene Walters

### Up to \$50

Jill Bryans  
Richard Carll  
Elena Caruthers  
Donald Freed  
David and Susan Garfin  
Egon and Annette Hoyer  
Curt and Peggy Jones  
Linda Lipscomb  
George and Diane Phillips Moore  
Nancy Okasaki  
Rodney and Sarah Paul  
Rich and Kathleen Seyfarth  
Larry and Ann Sullivan  
Clif and Jane Taylor  
Jonathan Vines  
Robert and Cynthia Wantland

### Up to \$25

Van Baldwin  
Patricia and Joshua Bortman  
Marvin Martin  
Rudi Nunlist  
Edward Spiller

**2014-15**

## New!

**PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES**  
**Get the most out of your digital photos!**

**3 Mondays: March 9, 16, 23**  
**7- 8:15pm, limited to 8 students**  
**\$65 per student for all 3 sessions**

**Place: KCC Recreation Bldg./**  
**Internet access. Pre-registration**  
**required: call KCC at 525-0292**

If you’re looking for the quickest way to get up to speed with Adobe Photoshop, both Windows and Mac, check out this new workshop. Our personal guru, Mike Conner, will help you use Photoshop to take your photos from good to *Great!*

No need to purchase Adobe products. Bring your own computer and photos.

Mix it Up: Photo remixes and mashups are easy – pull something out of one photo, pop it into another, and the color and lighting blend for a realistic-looking scene.

Goodbye flawed, hello phenomenal: Whiten teeth or make skies a vibrant blue in one step. Make unwanted stuff vanish with one brush stroke.

Move things like magic: Move objects in a photo – the background just fills in.

Organize updates: Check out some of the new ways to organize, share, and search for your photos.



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REALTORS

## Market Update

*Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley*  
Four bedrooms / three baths  
Originally offered at \$975,000  
Sold: \$975,000

*Stanford Avenue, Kensington*  
Four bedrooms / three and one-half baths  
Originally offered at \$1,498,000  
Sold: \$1,750,000

*Amherst Avenue, Kensington*  
Three bedrooms / one bath  
Originally offered at \$698,000  
Sold: \$860,000

*Cambridge Avenue, Kensington*  
Three bedrooms / two baths  
Originally offered at \$798,000  
Sold: \$792,000

### KENSINGTON MARKET SNAPSHOT - OCT. 2014 - DEC. 2014

No Current Listings

- 5 Pending • Average List Price: \$472 per sq. ft. Average days on the market: 28
- 25 Sold • Average List Price: \$446 per sq. ft. • Average Sales Price: \$500 per sq. ft. • Average days on the market: 27

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## Need a gift for your Valentine? Flowers and wine, perhaps?

D'Jour Floral of Kensington Gardens will offer an array of ready-made bouquets and balloons for that special someone. Rose bouquets, mixed bouquets, seasonal fresh flowers and plants will be available. You will find this selection of flowers at **COLUSA MARKET**. Be sure to check out their wine department.

Shopping the Arlington? Stop by **THE COUNTRY CHEESE COMPANY** for a sweetheart bouquet or other floral gift...and then pop next door to **ARLINGTON WINE & SPIRITS** for a wonderful bottle of wine.

To arrange for fresh floral arrangements to be delivered on Valentine's Day, call Judy at **(510) 525-7232** or email D'Jour at [antiquesdjour@aol.com](mailto:antiquesdjour@aol.com). Valentine deliveries are limited and must be pre-booked a minimum of 72 hours in advance.

*~D'Jour Floral of Kensington Gardens ~ with roots in Kensington since 1951~*

## Neighborhood Notes

### Welcome to the World, Orleans!

Baby 'Orleans,' with proud father, Joel de Valcourt, Dark Heart Chili co-owner with his wife/Orleans' mother, Yvette. (At right: father and son.)

### Cal State Summer School for the Arts Application Deadline: 2/28

Talented, motivated high school artists in a range of disciplines are encouraged to apply for the California State Summer School for the Arts (CSSSA), an intensive pre-college summer training program at the CalArts campus in Valencia. The four-week program, held from July 11 to August 7, covers fine arts, dance, music, theatre, photography, film/video, and creative writing. Scholarships are available. No student is denied attendance due to the inability to pay. The application deadline is February 28. Apply at [www.csssa.org](http://www.csssa.org).

### Annual K-Group Meeting

Every year, the Kensington Community Council (KCC) brings together all the town's "K-Groups" to update the other members of the community on what they've been up to and what they've got planned for the coming year. Reporting groups this year included the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Dad's Club, PTA, the Police District (KPPCSD), the Fire District (KFPD), General Manager Greg Harman (shown), Public Safety Council (KPSC), Kensington Improvement Club (KIC), Kensington Municipal Advisory Council (KMCA), Kensington Property Owners' Association (KPOA), and Friends of the Kensington Library (FKL)

### Local Resident Named to Macalester Dean's List

Sophomore, Heather Bourne, the daughter of Gerold Bourne and Janice Prudhomme, has been named to the Dean's List of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, for academic achievement for the fall semester, 2014-2015. A graduate of Lick-Wilmerding High School, Heather had a semester grade point average of at least 3.75, twelve or more credits on a regular grading option, no grades below C-, and no withdrawal or incomplete grades for the semester. *Congrats, Heather!*

### Lipscomb/ Lloyd Feted

Lorraine Osmundson, Vida Dorroh, Gayle Tapscott, and Kay Reed hosted a reception celebrating Linda Lipscomb and Tony Lloyd's years of service on the KPPCSD Board of Directors, at the Community Center, on Saturday, January 10th. A good time was had by all. *Thanks again, Tony and Linda, for all your good work!*

### Outlook Editor's Photo Exhibit: Opening Feb. 13th

Due to last minute changes by the City of Oakland affecting the opening of Joel's photo exhibition in January in Oakland, that opening has been postponed until February, at a new location, in Alameda. He is presenting his photographs to the public in an exhibit, *Wabi-Sabi – Decay, Emptiness, and Other Ephemeral Beauty*. "Wabi-Sabi" is a meme from Japanese culture that "seeks beauty in the imperfection of all things as they evolve from – and devolve back into – nothing." Opening reception: Friday, February 13th, 7-9pm at the Frank Bette Center, 1601 Paru Street, Alameda. Free. Info: 236-8632.

### Coming: Amy Ream Sings for Good - March 8th

Aspiring mezzo-soprano Amy Ream, soprano Marcelle Dronkers, and pianist Nancie Kester perform classical and Broadway songs at UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd. Kensington. A "Chocolate Reception" follows the recital. Your \$20 donation/adult (kids under 18/free) is tax-deductible and benefits BOPR, a non-profit providing sports, fitness, and recreation programs to individuals with disabilities ([www.bopr.org](http://www.bopr.org)). Info: [www.AmySingsForGood.org](http://www.AmySingsForGood.org).

2015 Fire District Directors (L to R), Mike Kassarian, Secretary; former President, Janice Kosel; Larry Nagle, President; and Nina Harmon, Vice President. (Not shown: Joe DeVille.) Photo: Paul Dorroh



# From the Files of the KPD

The Police Report is published on a space-available basis, and will return. The Police Report, Board packets, monthly reports, minutes, recordings of the KPPCSD Board Meetings, and Bay View County Solid Waste contracts are available for review at [www.KensingtonCalifornia.org](http://www.KensingtonCalifornia.org).

# In Memory

## Tihomir Novakov

1929 - 2014

Tihomir Novakov, Ph.D, known as Tica Novakov, a Serbian-American physicist, and the scientist who coined the term ‘Black Carbon,’ passed away at the age of 85 due to natural causes.

As a scientist, Novakov was known for his groundbreaking work on black carbon, air quality, and climate change research.

Novakov was born in Sombor, Serbia on March 16, 1929. His father was a veterinarian and his mother was a homemaker. While in high school, Novakov began to build x-ray tubes and radios, furthering his scientific knowledge on his own.

After graduating from the University of Belgrade with a PhD in nuclear physics, he taught at the University of Belgrade and worked at the Vinca Nuclear Institute. Novakov immigrated to the United States in 1963 and began working as a research scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He later founded an Aerosol Research Group, which traveled the world conducting groundbreaking research on climate change. Dr. Novakov was a distinguished member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Novakov research papers were published in hundreds of

peer-reviewed journals. In October, 1974 Science Magazine published *Sulfates as Pollution Particulates: Catalytic Formation on Carbon (Soot) Particles*, which Novakov co-wrote with S. G. Chang and A. B. Harker. In 1982, *Real-time Measurement of the Absorption Coefficient of Aerosol Particles*, which he co-wrote with A.D.A. Hansen and H. Rosen, was published by Applied Optics. In 2008 he published a paper for LBNL entitled *Response of California Temperature to Regional Anthropogenic Aerosol Changes*. In his 80’s Novakov shifted his research focus to studies of the history of environmental science. He continued to conduct research until the last month of his life.

Novakov was a polyglot who spoke Serbian, Hungarian, Russian, English, and German. A lifelong lover of opera, Novakov was a patron of the San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan Opera for more than 40 years.

Marica (Mima) Novakov, his wife of 60 years, passed away in February of last year. Novakov is survived by the couple’s daughter, Anna Novakov, an Art History professor at Saint Mary’s College of California and granddaughter Christina Novakov-Ritchey who is a doctoral student at University of California, Los Angeles.

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

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

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

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

Letters to the Editor

You're Invisible

(Editor):

Mornings it is dark til late and it gets dark early and yet perfectly intelligent people wear all black. From their shoes to their hats and everything in between. Folks: You're invisible. I have almost run over several of you in poor light. Please wear something reflective or white, preferably on a moving body part. Wrist or ankle. Tongues don't count. Don't become a speed bump this season.

Ted Blanckenburg

Dog Attack

On the afternoon of January 10th, I was suddenly attacked by a large black dog near the corner of Beloit and Cambridge and knocked over backwards. Fortunately I landed on the grassy curb strip and not on the sidewalk, but I was dazed for hours afterwards. Fortunately too, a neighbor across the street came to my rescue (thank you very much). Shame, shame, shame on the people who let this vicious beast loose in the first place. What is Kensington coming to when one cannot go for a walk without carrying a club for protection.

Willard Bohn

The Mail Must Go Through

I am so glad that I can now drive right up to the mailbox that is in the parking lot near the beginning of the Ardmore Path. It's so convenient to stay in my car to put something in the mail. For a while there was a van parked in the way, and the box was not in a good spot. Newly elected KPPCSD director Vanessa Cordova got both problems fixed.

I'm on Nextdoor Kensington where someone wrote about the lack of access to the mailbox, which started a discussion. Vanessa saw those postings and decided to take care of the problem. Vanessa worked with the owner of the vehicle, the local police, and the US Post Office. The mailbox has been repositioned to a much better location. It's so great to have someone like Vanessa watching out for the issues that affect our everyday lives. Thank you Vanessa!

Susan da Silva

Taxes, Milk, and Meatloaf

Dear Editor:

Since '81/82 KPPCSD's parcel taxes increased at an annual rate of 8%. But half of District revenue comes from the tax based on property value, which because of Prop. 13 can only increase 2% a year — that is, for properties that have not been sold in the previous year. I wondered how this revenue is affected by the 50-75 homes sold in Kensington each year and usually reassessed at higher values.

The 2010 Voter Information Pamphlet for Measure G states: "The KPPCSD property tax base increased 300% in the last 16 years." From 1994 to 2010 the rate of increase was 7.6% a year — a lot more than 2%!

A Director said that recent reductions in assessed values had cost communities 10-15% of their property tax revenue. Kensington has done relatively well since '05/'06 with no more than a 1.2% decrease any year, and only one other negative year at -0.2%. In the last 5 years revenue increased 8.5% — versus 6.9% for social security benefits, based on CPI. Last year's 7% increase was more than projected and another gain of 5-9% is projected for this year. What the housing

crisis/crash actually did was temporarily reduce the District's usual 5-10% a year increase in this revenue. Even so, since '94 the annual rate of increase has been 6.3% — significantly more than inflation at about 2.4%.

Less than 5 years after Measure G added an additional \$500,000 of revenue a year for our admittedly great police, we are again told we cannot keep the Department as is without another tax increase.

As my Grand Daddy Scootle Delk used to say, "You can only milk an old cow just so much before she dries up and is good for nothing but meatloaf — and not even good meatloaf." The same can be said about Kensington's cash cow, just can't be milked but so much.

A. Stevens Delk

Invitation to All Residents

Many in the Kensington community want very much to reestablish a branch Post Office that Kensington has had since the 1950's, but that stopped functioning in January, 2014, when Wing's Pharmacy (which housed the branch Post Office-299 Arlington Ave.) discontinued business.

Another merchant in the same Arlington commercial area is willing to house a reestablishment of this much-needed Post Office.

Kensington—a community of 5,000 people (2,200 households)—plus many surrounding community members of Berkeley and El Cerrito, have relied on this post office. Last year alone it was responsible for over \$250,000 in postal transactions.

A Kensington resident has already been in contact with Carol Harris (Berkeley Post Office Administrator), who stated she would only let us have a very limited postal station, which could merely offer priority mail transactions. This is not adequate!

As a concerned Kensington citizen, I have been in contact with Barbara Johnson, aide to Congressman Miller. Ms. Johnson was willing to help us, but, upon the occasion of Congressman Miller's retirement, is now closing their office and therefore is no longer available. She recommended that we contact Senator Boxer.

This is an invitation to all Kensington residents to let your voice be heard on this matter by sending your letters of support to Barbara Steinberg at 27 Edwin Dr., Kensington, CA 94707, so that we can present our strongest case to Senator Boxer.

Barbara Steinberg

| KPPCSD Budget<br>Surpluses/Shortfalls |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| FY Ending                             | Total \$ Up or Down |
| 2006                                  | + 21,537            |
| 2007                                  | +109,634            |
| 2008                                  | - 35,900            |
| 2009                                  | - 63,925            |
| 2010                                  | - 266,000*          |
| 2011                                  | + 85,920**          |
| 2012                                  | + 48,971            |
| 2013                                  | - 104,922***        |
| 2014                                  | - 240,000****       |

\* Began financing of medical retirement benefit for future retirees (\$240K); Park Restroom (\$50K); Measure G passed.

\*\* Start of Measure G tax collection.

\*\*\* Legal fees for Bayview arbitration expensed.

\*\*\*\* (Estimate.) Majority of legal fees to defend Writ of Mandate expensed (Total legal fees budgeted: \$70K; total legal fees spent: \$244K).



# Kensington Kalendar

**Feb. 1 Matthew Fox**, internationally acclaimed spiritual theologian, Episcopal priest, activist, author and professor; founder of University of Creation Spirituality. "Meister Eckhart: A Mystic Warrior for our Times." 10-11am. Free. Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 Kensington Farmers Market.** Live produce & live music Sundays, 10-2. Free. Colusa Circle.

**Feb. 2 Jazzercise**, 8:15am (daily, Mon-Fri); ongoing. Community Center

**Feb. 2 Kensington Library Knitting Club "The Castoffs."** All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. We will provide support, encouragement and help. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043.

**Feb. 3 Body Sculpting Class**, (9:15am Tues/Thurs) on-going. At the Community Center.

## Town Meetings

Kensington Community Center  
59 Arlington Ave., Kensington

(Schedule Subject to Change – Call to Confirm.)

**KCC - Feb. 2nd  
Kensington Community Council**  
1st Mondays, 7:30pm. 525-0292

**FKL - Feb. 3rd  
Friends of the Kensington  
Library**, 7pm (at the Library, 61  
Arlington Ave.) 1st Tuesdays

**KPSC - Feb. 9th  
Kensington Public Safety Council**  
Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness  
2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165

**KFPD - Feb. 11th  
Fire Protection District**  
2nd Wednesdays, 7pm. 527-8395

**KPPCSD - Feb. 12th  
Police Protection and  
Community Services District**  
2nd Thursdays 7:30pm. 526-4141

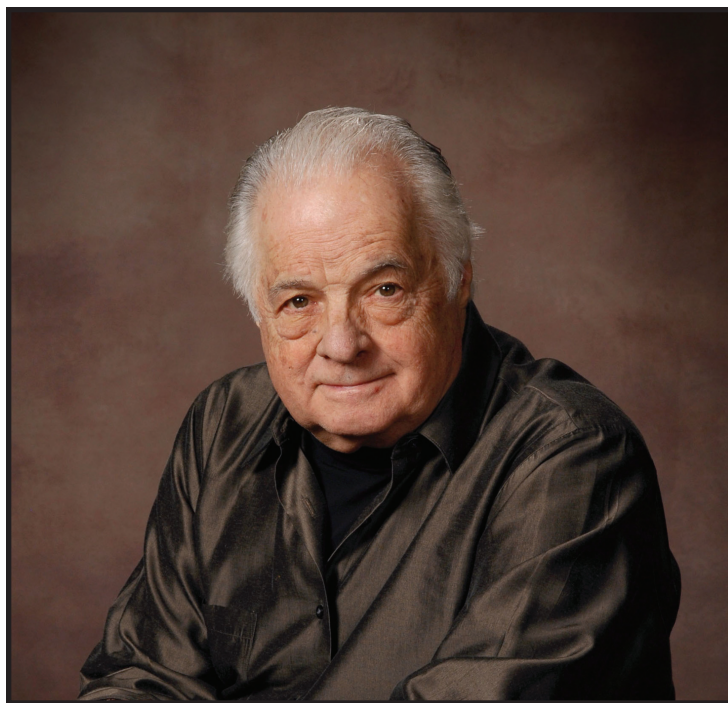
**KIC - Feb. 23rd  
Kensington Improvement Club**  
4th Mondays, 7:30pm. 527-3062

**KMAC (Tent.) - Feb. 24th  
Municipal Advisory Council**  
Last Tues. 7pm. (Call Supe. Gioia's  
office to confirm: 231-8691)

**KARO/ECHO - March 9th  
Amateur Radio Operators**  
2nd Mondays of odd months,  
7:30pm. 524-9815

**KPOA  
Property Owners Association**  
Meets quarterly. 559-8232

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



Sounds New will celebrate Herb Bielawa's 85th birthday with a retrospective of his chamber music. Saturday, February 7th at 8pm at UUCB

**Feb. 3 The Power of Myth at the Movies: *A Beautiful Mind*** (2001). View this movie before class, then come to the discussion led by Richard Stromer from 7:30-9pm. First Tuesdays of the month; \$8 each. Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 3, 10, 17 & 24 Family Storytime.** Picture books, songs, and rhymes. Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043.

**Feb. 5, 12, 19, & 26 Baby & Toddler Storytime.** Stories, songs & action rhymes for young children and their caregivers. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. Two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free. 524-3043.

**Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26. Thursdays in the Park**, 2-4pm, ongoing. All ages welcome to get fresh air and exercise as we help get the fuel load down around the Kensington Community Center. Meet at the dumpster at the Arlmont end of the parking lot on Arlington. We will be working at various spots within the Park. Releases must be signed, both parents must sign release for minors. Some tools will be on hand, but bring your favorites for gardening/pruning.

**Feb. 7 Sounds New** will celebrate Herb Bielawa's 85th birthday with a retrospective of his chamber music. 8pm UUCB, 1 Lawson Road, Kensington. Free parking and wheelchair access. Suggested donation is \$20/15. [www.SoundsNewUS.org](http://www.SoundsNewUS.org), or 524-2912.

**Feb. 7 One-Day Dream Workshop** with Jeremy Taylor. 9:30am-5pm. Suggested donation: \$60. Register: Lonnie Moseley at 655-1444. Please bring a brown bag lunch. Coffee and tea will be provided. Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 8 Rabbi Harry Manhoff**, Congregational Rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in San Leandro, lecturer at St. Mary's College, author, comic book collector. "Tu B'Shvat, the Jewish Arbor Day: Planting Trees in Israel." 10-11am. Free. Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 9 El Cerrito Art Assoc. meets:** Peter Hewitt presents *Papier Mâché*. EC Community Ctr., 7007 Moeser Lane, EC., 7pm. Free. 277-6996.

**Feb. 9 Local artist and art historian Michael Stehr** presents the first in a new 3-part series on France. This month's topic is Chartres Cathedral. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 7pm. Free. 524-3043

**Feb. 10 - Mar. 17 6-Week Dream Workshop** w/Jeremy Taylor. 7-9:15pm. \$150 suggested. Register: Lonnie Moseley, 655-1444. UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 13 Bach Opera Recital.** 7:30pm, Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. [www.acc-ucc.org](http://www.acc-ucc.org).

**Feb. 14 "Love Songs & Chocolate" – A Musical Valentine.** Romantic songs in a casual cabaret-like setting, interrupted every so often by delicious desserts. Includes dessert buffet: \$20/15; at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1157912>, or door. No one turned away for lack of funds. W/chair accessible. Free parking. 7:30pm. UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. 525-0302

**Feb. 15 Barbara Bye**, movement artist, combines the study of classical Indian dance with gestures and spoken words: "Favorite Heartfelt Poems Embodied." 10-11am. Free. UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 15 & 17 West Edge Opera Presents Opera Medium Rare** – little-known operas by well-known composers: Rossini's *Zelmira*. Sun., 2/15, 1pm at Rossmoor Event Ctr, 1010 Stanley Dollar Dr., Rossmoor, WC; and Tues., 2/17, 8pm at Freight & Salvage, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. Tix at [www.WestEdgeOpera.org](http://www.WestEdgeOpera.org); or by phone: Rossmoor: 841-1903 or The Freight: 644-2020 ext.120. Info: 841-1903.

**Feb. 16-20 KCC/KASEP Closed** for President Week

**Feb. 17 Berkeley Garden Club Lecture Program**, 12:30-3pm, Albany Community Ctr., 1249 Marin Ave. 12:30-1: plant exchange; 1-2: meeting; 2-3pm: lecture – "Fuchsias" by Rodney and Janice Bergquist of the American Fuchsia Society. Public welcome. [www.berkeleygardenclub.org](http://www.berkeleygardenclub.org).

**Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday Service.** 7pm, Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. [www.acc-ucc.org](http://www.acc-ucc.org).

**Feb. 19 Emergency Preparedness.** The Kensington Public Safety Council presents Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Trainer, Pam Grossman: Basic Emergency Preparedness. 7pm at the Kensington Community Ctr., 59 Arlington Ave. Free. RSVP requested but not req'd: [kensingtonpsc@gmail.com](mailto:kensingtonpsc@gmail.com).

**Feb. 21 Path Beautifiers meet** to spiff up Stratford Path, 10am-Noon. Bring tools for "spiffing" if you've got 'em. Cookies and water provided.

**Feb. 21 Musical Performance by The Hoots.** The Hoots play children's oriented music rooted in folk, Americana, and rock. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. 11am. Free. 524-3043.

**Feb. 22 Ruth Gendler, artist and author**, on "The Qualities of Creativity and Beauty." 10-11am. Free. UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302.

**Feb. 23 Kensington Library Book Club.** Discussion of *Light Between the Oceans* by M. L. Stedman. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043.

**Feb. 28 Early Visionaries of Spiritual Democracy:** Walt Whitman and Swami Vivekananda led by Steven Herrmann. 9am-1pm. Suggested fee: \$35. Info: [sbhermann@comcast.net](mailto:sbhermann@comcast.net). Register: 655-1444 or [lonniemoseley@hotmail.com](mailto:lonniemoseley@hotmail.com). UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org).

**Feb. 28 Kensington Symphony Orchestra** performs works by Paul Dukas, Richard Strauss, and Howard Hanson. \$20; seniors & teens, \$15; Kids under 12, free. 8pm, UUCB, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. 526-6752

**Coming March 3: KCC Summer Camp Registration Online**, 9am.

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BACK PAGE

Renovation Fund

...New Year, from Page 1

tax-deductible contribution will amount to only a fraction of the property taxes saved over the years – and your contribution will be doubled by KCC’s matching contribution!

Again, thank you to everybody who has contributed and we hope to see more people in the coming months step forward and take advantage of this opportunity.

Anne Forrest,  
KCC President

The Budget

...Budget, from Page 2

Kensington, it would be a hard argument for the County to make to want to retain some sort of portion of the property tax.” (LAFCO is a countywide agency formed to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies. *See LAFCO, Outlook, May 2009* at [www.KensingtonOutlook.com](http://www.KensingtonOutlook.com))

Sup. John Gioia, reported that the County Consolidated Fire District (on whose Board of Directors he sits) has not expressed any interest in operating fire services in Kensington. Assuming that remained the case, it’s possible – or perhaps even likely – that a consolidation of the two Kensington Districts could happen without a loss of revenue from Kensington to the County.

In 2009, the County’s legal counsel provided a “preliminary conclusion” that “(P)robably the property tax collected by the KFPD would be transferred to the (KPPCSD), should those districts be combined. (This consolidation) would require the approval by LAFCO...The law governing the allocation of property tax when jurisdictional changes occur is notoriously

complex...(I)n the past under similar circumstances the property tax has been transferred from the ‘losing’ district to the ‘gaining’ district.”

1% of property taxes passes through to Kensington’s two separate Districts. Set by the State at the time of Prop. 13’s passage, 30.5% of that 1% goes to Fire, and 13% of that 1% goes to Police. (At the time these percentages were set, the Police District was running “lean” and the Fire District was running “rich.” Nevertheless, the percentages were set in stone, and only the state legislature can change them.)

Now, almost forty years later, the Police District continues to struggle on its smaller share, and the Fire District appears to be accruing substantial reserves, while pre-paying some significant expenses, contributing to water/sewer improvements, and purchasing new equipment (all, it should be noted, while doing what most residents seem to feel is an excellent job of fire protection and emergency response).

Recently, the Fire District graciously reduced the Police District’s rent for the Public Service Bldg. from \$35K to just \$1/yr. While this helps with the Police District’s budget challenge, it is far from a total fix, and may essentially be the limit of any transfer of funds between the two Districts, short of combining them.

All that being said, the GM’s report for November 2014 suggested two strategies for maintaining the Police District’s reserves over the next five years:

1. “(R)educe the expense of legal fees from the current budgeted expense of \$150K/yr. Current litigation is coming to a close, and unless another unexpected lawsuit is filed against us, we should be able to reduce our legal fee expenses during the next five years. By reducing our (budgeted) legal expenses by \$25,000 each year, this would give us an additional \$125K in cash reserves by the end of FY 2020.”

Actual legal fees for 2013-14 were \$244K – which included the cost of arbitration with Bay View Refuse – Kensington’s waste hauler, who was awarded an increase identical to the amount offered them by KPPCSD prior to arbitration; and the cost of defending the Writ of Mandate. In both cases, costs were incurred as a result of claims against the District, which are, of course, outside its control; both the complainants refused settlement offers prior to arbitration or trial, respectively. (Some have argued that, rather than incur these costs, the Board should have acceded to demands by Bay View Refuse and the plaintiffs in the writ rather than to follow the written contract in the former matter and defend itself in matters the District saw as pertaining to freedom of speech for its directors in the latter. In the matter of the writ, some of those same parties are now protesting the District’s endeavor to recover part of its legal costs – an estimated \$150-200K that would accrue to the District’s bottom line.)

2. “(Delay) filling the next police officer position that opens up, in order to benefit from a salary savings for a period of time.” 2 members of the department are expected to retire within the next 3-5 years. In order to help balance past budgets, (new officers have not been) hired immediately upon openings, saving on salary and benefits for a period of several months. (Our experience has been, however that), if... position(s) were left vacant for too long, overtime costs would increase, as would time off requests and sick leave, causing staffing shortages resulting in increased response times, and officer safety issues.”

All these ideas were set to be explored further at finance committee meetings scheduled for both Districts on January 29th.

*See KPPCSD Budget Surpluses/Shortfalls, Page 6.*