

Bringing the Community Together

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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FEBRUARY 2024 A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOLUME 82 NUMBER 1

Forty Years of Teaching Carpentry to Kensington Kids



By Jenny Parks

KASEP and the Kensington community have been immensely fortunate to have Sandy Thacker as a dedicated carpentry instructor for the past four decades. Thacker started teaching carpentry in 1984 when she was approached to share her carpentry skills with the Hilltop Elementary School community. At the time, Hilltop had a small after-school enrichment program, and Thacker became one of the earliest teachers in the program. Several years later, she also helped start an after-school program at Madera Elementary School and taught carpentry in their program for many years.

A Stanford University graduate with a BA in German and a Master's in Education, Thacker initially started her professional journey teaching German and English at Los Gatos High School. Her passion for education later led her to co-found a private middle school in Oakland. Following this venture, she embraced her adventurous spirit and worked alongside her brother as a carpenter, constructing houses in the Berkeley

and Oakland hills.

Simultaneously, she honed her skills as a professional photographer, contributing to prominent publications like *Tradeswomen* magazine and the inspiring compilations *If I Had a Hammer: Women's Work in Poetry, Fiction, and Photography* and *Hard-Hatted Women: Stories of Struggle and Success in the Trades*, edited by Molly Martin. In 2012, together with two other longtime KASEP teachers, Elaine Chu and Lynn Crook, Thacker wrote and self-published a book about teaching crafts to young children titled *Wood, Paper, Scissors: Carpentry, Book Arts and Sewing with Kids*.

Thacker has spent the last four decades refining and implementing a highly successful woodworking program for elementary school children. Her ability to navigate the intricacies of working with a range of hand tools, while remaining patient and good-humored, has left a lasting impact on her young students. Cara Marasco, a Hilltop

Danielle Madugo Chosen to Fill Out Dommer's Term

By Linnea Due

After two meetings, the first lasting two hours, the second a little over an hour (but it was in Martinez!), Kensington finally has a new fire district director to take over the seat vacated when Don Dommer resigned in October. After an application process in which the two applicants, Ciara Wood and Danielle Madugo, answered questions in writing, the two appeared December 7 at the Community Center to answer a question from each of the four remaining directors. They also gave opening and closing speeches, after which there was a period of public comment.

Wood stressed her decades-long efforts at fuel reduction along the border of Kensington and Tilden Park, her years with Diablo FireSafe, interactions with Tilden Park personnel, and her experience with budgets and strategic planning gained through eight years of service as a director on the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD). Madugo, a seismologist, described her expertise in evaluating hazards of all sorts (of which Kensington has its share), her three years experience on the fire district's Emergency Preparedness Committee as well as serving on an emergency committee at Hilltop School.

After discussion the fire board deadlocked two-to-two. Two more attempts met the same fate, and it was decided that the matter had to go to John Gioia and the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors to decide. That meeting happened January 11, at which time Wood and Madugo

See Carpentry, page 4

See Fire Board, page 7

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Kensington and Beyond Update

January 2024



Considering selling this Spring?

Optimize 2024 Spring Home Sale It is time to start planning.

While some homes are sitting on the market a little longer, prices have stabilized and inventory is low. Visit any open house that has just come on the market you might be surprised to see how many buyers are looking for their new home. Inventory is projected to remain low because pandemic purchasers who financed at historically low rates will likely hold on to their properties.

Key to a successful sale- proper preparation, strategic marketing, and critical, setting a competitive price.

You can have the glossiest listing in the market and still have difficulty selling if you don't set the right asking price. Conversely, if you enter the market with an appropriately priced home, most homes still receive multiple — and higher — offers within a short time. I consider pricing a home correctly to be the most important element of a marketing strategy. If your price is too high, your house could sit on the market too long and eventually sell for less. If your price is too low you could undersell it and forfeit significant value. The seller ultimately sets the offering price, I do my best to provide sellers with detailed data and information so they can intelligently price their home aimed at achieving the highest possible price.

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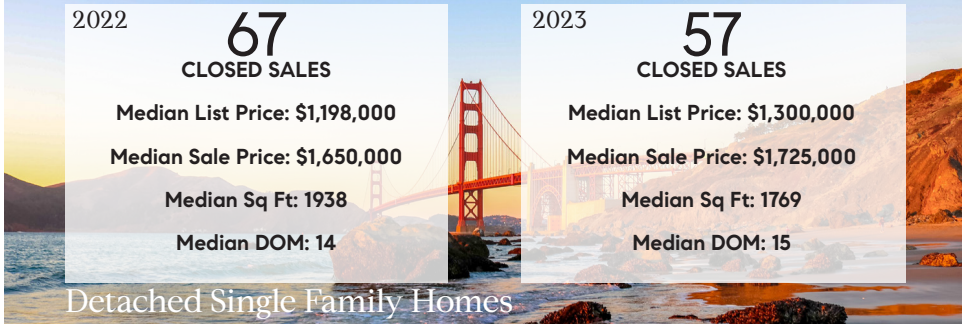
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Kensington Market Update

Year End Summary - 2022 vs 2023



Over 55? Transferring your property tax basis in CA? How does Proposition 19 change the rules on tax-basis portability? Prop 19 allows a homeowner who is 55 years of age or older, severely disabled or whose home has been substantially damaged by wildfire or natural disaster to transfer the taxable value of their primary residence to: a) a replacement primary residence anywhere in the state, b) regardless of the value of the replacement primary residence (but with adjustments if the replacement has greater value), c) within two years of sale and d) up to 3x (or as often as needed for those whose houses were destroyed by fire). The prior rule limited this exemption to a one-time transfer within the same county (Prop 90) and only if the replacement was of "equal or lesser value"

If the replacement property is of greater value, how is the new taxable value calculated? The new taxable value is calculated by adding the difference between the full cash value of the replacement property and the original property to the original taxable value. For example, if a seller of an original property has a \$300,000 taxable value and a full cash value of \$1M and then buys a replacement property for \$1.5M, the taxable value of the replacement property would be \$800,000.

Can a replacement property be purchased before the original primary residence being sold? Yes.

How does Prop 19 affect the rules on intergenerational transfers to children or grandchildren? It limits the exemption to those properties where the primary residence continues to be used as a family home by the child or grandchild transferee. If so, the taxable value will remain the same, subject to some upward adjustments if the property value, at the time of transfer, is more than \$1M over the original tax basis. The new taxable basis will be the assessed value of the property at the time of transfer minus \$1M.



If you are considering selling or just wish to know the value of your home in today's market, call me. The appointment is complimentary and confidential.

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510.697.8606
ruth.frassetto@compass.com
DRE 00779030

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Selected Entries from November/December Patrol Logs

- On Nov. 1, at 1856 hours, officers took a phone report of possible fraud and Elder Abuse. The loss was approximately \$20,000.
- On Nov. 4, at 2058 hours, officers responded to the area of Kenyon and Purdue avenues for a non-injury traffic collision.
- On Nov. 6, at 2139 hours, officers responded to the seven hundred block of Coventry Road for a report of a catalytic converter theft.
- On Nov. 8, at 0945 hours, officers responded to the eight hundred block of Coventry Road for a report of a catalytic converter theft.
- On Nov. 8, at 1036 hours, officers responded to the five hundred block of Coventry Road for a report of a catalytic converter theft.
- On Nov.16, at 1917 hours, officers were dispatched to Princeton Avenue for a hit and run property-only collision. The investigation is ongoing.
- On Nov. 18, at 0852 hours, officers were dispatched to Highgate Road for an auto burglary.
- On Nov. 20, at 1046 hours, officers were dispatched to the four hundred block of Colusa Avenue for a hit-and-run collision that occurred on November 17.
- On Nov. 24, at 0515 hours, officers responded to Columbia Avenue for a missing person report. Through a multi-jurisdictional investigation involving Kensington, East Bay Regional Parks, and Oakland Police Department the subject was located and provided medical treatment.
- On Nov. 30, at 1318 hours, officers were conducting routine traffic enforcement on Beloit Avenue, when they arrested a subject with out-of-county warrants.

December

- On Dec. 1, at 1156 hours, officers took a report of a stolen car on Arlington Ave. The investigation is ongoing.
- On Dec. 8, a theft of property from a vehicle was reported in the 400 block of Beloit Ave. The crime was discovered when several items were reported as found property to KPD. Ofc. Payne identified the owner of the property who discovered the items were stolen from her vehicle.
- On Dec. 8, officers responded to a stolen vehicle report on Estates Rd• On Dec. 8, officers responded to a theft of property taken from a vehicle on Kerr Ave.
- On Dec.10, officers responded to the 200 block of Cambridge Ave for a report of a theft of a catalytic converter from a vehicle.
- On Dec. 11, at 1030 hours, officers responded to a carjacking near Colusa Circle. The suspects arrived in a getaway car, brandished a shogun, and threatened the owner. The suspects left in the getaway vehicle and the victim's vehicle. ECPD's Flock cameras were used to obtain leads on the suspects. KPD's investigation is ongoing, and investigating officers have authored search warrants.
- On Dec.13, a non-injury hit-and-run collision occurred in the 100 block of Arlington Ave. The suspect fled the scene, and the investigation is ongoing.
- On Dec. 14, a vehicle burglary was reported in the 200 block of Amherst Ave. The suspects broke the vehicle's windows and took \$1,100 worth of tools from the vehicle.
- On Dec. 22, officers responded to the 200 block of Purdue for a report of fraud. A bank employee interrupted the crime.
- On Dec. 30, officers participated in a DUI checkpoint with the Hercules Police Department. One arrest was made for driving under the influence.

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.

MARCH 2024 DEADLINES
Advertising Deadline ❖ FEB.8
Editorial Deadline ❖ FEB.10

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the writers and do not reflect the opinion of the Outlook, its editor, or the Kensington Community Council. Letters must be signed and include the resident's phone number and address (which will not be printed). Letters 350 words or under will appear in the print edition (space permitting). Any letter over 350 words will be printed in the online edition only. Publication of letters and articles is subject to space and the editor's discretion. Obituaries of Kensington residents are printed without charge. All material must be received by the 10th of the month preceding issue date; submit by email to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com. No press releases or PDFs; Word documents or text in the body of an email are acceptable.

Use one space, not two, after all periods.

K E N S I N G T O N
O U T L O O K
EDITOR
LINNEA DUE
ADVERTISING MANAGER
ALMA KEY

PUBLISHER
KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
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Letters to the Editor

Improper Procedures

Dear Editor:

I sent this email to all KPPCSD board members and interim general manager David Aranda following the December KPPCSD board meeting:
I am very disturbed by the dismissive comments you gave at the December 14 board meeting in response to the objections by me and others to being named as potential litigants in the closed session agenda. You said that we should have just talked with you about the issues of signing of a contract before board discussion and approval of that contract as well as having the self-same firm review the contract. Please recall that when I heard about those actions I immediately wrote on September 27 to all board members and the GM to voice my concerns that district procedures were not properly followed. I also pointed out the conflict of interest in the firm reviewing its own contract. Yet you complained that we should have talked to you. Well—I had reached out and only got the lame response that it was OK.

As I said December 14 in my comment: It was not OK.
I think that you are getting bad advice from the GM and law firm, who seem to be willing to skirt proper procedures. And now by those comments you are shifting blame to us for our objections.

Mabry Benson

Insurance Cancellations Mandate Action

Dear Editor:

In light of the recent wave of non-renewals from fire insurance companies, the Kensington Fire Protection District should ask the El Cerrito/Kensington fire department to conduct defensible space inspections of homes as has been done by other jurisdictions pursuant to state law. The area within five feet of structures should be as free of combustible material as possible. Many homes in Kensington have substantial vegetation in this area that could catch fire from flying embers in a wildfire. Removing this vegetation would make our community safer. Homeowners in Marin County who have complied with fire department requirements have had their fire insurance lowered as a result of lowering their risk. Many in Kensington are facing increased costs from the remaining companies that still provide fire insurance. And El Cerrito is obligated to provide fire prevention services pursuant to the First Amendment to the agreement with Kensington's fire district.

Eileen Nottoli

On January 8, Kensington Fire Protection District Board Director Larry Nagel sent this letter to KFPD General Manager Mary Morris-Mayorga (copied to the other board directors):

Re: My Retirement Effective January 31, 2024

It is with very mixed feelings that I am informing you that I will be retiring from the position of Director of the Kensington Fire Protection District, effective January 31, 2024. My wife and I will be moving to Santa Rosa shortly, and I therefore will no longer be eligible to be a director.

I have found my almost thirteen year tenure as director of KFPD, including three years serving as the board president, to be immensely challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. I am proud to have been a part of the district and to have participated in so many projects that have made the district stronger and more resilient, especially the seismic retrofitting of Station 55 and the establishment of the KFPD Emergency Preparedness Committee. I am grateful for the many friends I have made in the fire community in Contra Costa County. It has been my privilege work with the firefighters in the El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department who put their life on the line every time they respond to a call.

I wish everyone in the district the best of luck for the future.

Laurence Nagel, Director

Editor's Note: After a countywide renumbering, Kensington Fire Station 65 is now 55 (the other two stations in El Cerrito are now 51 and 52).

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Fireside Film Festival Gets Neighborly

By Sara Laferte

The film for ACC's Fireside Film Festival in February is *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. Tom Hanks portrays Fred Rogers in a timely story of kindness triumphing over cynicism, based on the true story of a real-life friendship between him and journalist Lloyd Vogel. After a jaded magazine writer is assigned a profile of Fred Rogers, he overcomes his skepticism, learning about empathy, kindness, and decency from America's most beloved neighbor.

The film will be shown on February 23 at Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue. Please plan to arrive at about 1:15 to allow time to grab your popcorn and settle in before we start the film at 1:45. If your schedule allows, linger for a few minutes after to discuss the film. Link to trailer: <https://youtu.be/-VLEPhfEN2M>

Black Herbalism and Foodways

Enjoy free programs offered by the Kensington Library at 61 Arlington Avenue. Call 510-524-3043 with questions. Thank you to the Friends of Kensington Library for making library programs possible.

Tues, Feb 13, 6:30pm Cinema Chat The library's Cinema Chat meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm. After watching a monthly film selection at home, join other cinema enthusiasts for a light discussion on the movie. Please note, this program is not a screening, but all titles are available through the library's streaming service Kanopy, or inquire regarding availability of DVDs for borrowing. February's film is *The Rules of the Game* (1939), by Jean Renoir. Considered by many to be one of the greatest films ever made, it's a scathing critique of corrupt French society disguised as a comedy of manners. Taking place over a weekend at a marquis' country château, Jean Renoir's classic film lays bare some ugly truths about a group of haute bourgeois acquaintances. Direct link at: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/ccclib/video/113461>

Saturday, Feb 10, 2:30pm Black Herbalism and Foodways Black North American Herbalism and the associated African American Materia Medica encompasses 400 years of innovation and resilience in plant science. Join Shereel Washington in this introduction to the rich history and knowledge of African American herbal healers, past and present. The presentation will also touch upon important staples in African American foodways. Samplings of "Know your Roots" tea will be available to take home (while supplies last), as well as a special recipe for collard greens.

Fridays, Feb 2,9,16,23 Baby and Toddler Storytime Fun stories, songs, action rhymes, and more! Great for increasing early literacy skills and making friends. Two identical sessions. 10am & 11am.

Tuesday, Feb 27, 6:30pm Uncle Jer's Traveling Bee Show will bring live bees to the library! Learn about these fascinating insects through an engaging presentation and puppet show! This program is intended for ages 5 & up.

Tues, Feb 13, 6:30pm, Castoff's Knitting Club Meets this month on the second Tuesday. (Usually meets the 1st Tuesday of each month). 6:30pm. Open to all levels of knitters. Bring your own yarn!

Tuesdays, Feb 6, 13, 20 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. 6:30pm.

Monday, Feb 26, 6:30-8pm Kensington Library Book Club The club meets online via Zoom, usually on the fourth Monday of each month. The selection for February is *Bel Ami* by Guy de Maupassant

February, all month Come to the library to enjoy a satellite art show from the Bay Area's 2024 Art of the African Diaspora (www.aotad.org), showcasing photographs by Xan Blood Walker: www.xanbloodwalkerart.com/

Carpentry

...from Front Page

parent and alum, fondly reminisces, "I remember making gifts for my family when I was in carpentry in the fifth grade. I just noticed the other day my brother still has his desk organizer I made for him in 1988."

Beyond her classroom endeavors, Thacker finds joy in quilting, birding, hiking, and reading. Together with her husband, she explores the world, often attending the annual World Esperanto Congress, where their fluency in the International Language enhances their global experiences. Thacker also generously lends her time to volunteer for Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Before Enlisting Project.

Thacker's carpentry class remains a beloved staple at KASEP, with registration slots filling up within minutes of opening. Marasco expresses her gratitude, saying, "I was so happy to get all four of my kids in her class over the years so that they could have the same experience I did." Sandy Thacker's legacy as an educator and mentor continues to shape the lives of the Kensington community, leaving an indelible mark on each student fortunate enough to pass through her skilled and compassionate hands.



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Kensington Turns Out for Rickey Hull's Memorial Service

By Linnea Due

On January 3, Kensington residents and police department representatives journeyed to Fairfield, to the Mount Calvary Baptist Church, to attend a life celebration for Rickey Lee Hull. Hull died on December 12 at the age of 61. Long one of Kensington's most popular police officers, Hull served as an officer, sergeant, master sergeant, and interim police chief (several times) over the course of a 23-year career.

Hull was uniquely suited to Kensington. Speakers described him as a voracious reader with hundreds of books, always willing to debate an issue. His sister-in-law noted that you couldn't win because "Rickey knew everything there was to know about everything." Residents remember him as easily approachable and ready with a smile; he was especially kind and solicitous to older people. Hired by Barry Garfield, Hull endured the Harman years in his self-contained, stoic manner. Once he said, as someone marveled at his ability to withstand the arrows coming his way, "It's only politics."

Garfield's brother spoke, saying that former chief Garfield was in the hospital and begged his brother to come in his place. His brother said that after Garfield hired Hull, the two became best of friends, and Hull spent many hours with the Garfield family. "Rickey became our brother," he said. Another popular officer, Kevin Hui, said that colleagues warned him when he was first on the force that Hull had a mean streak. After six months of being wary, Hui realized that Hull was as even-tempered as could be (and likely that the mean streak lay elsewhere).

Police Chief Mike Gancasz and Officer Jose Fajardo attended the ceremony in uniform and led the hearse to the cemetery in Dixon in a Kensington squad car, lights flashing. Residents attending included past police district director Eileen Nottoli, Monica Sullivan, Helen Horowitz, and others.

Many of his childhood friends were in attendance and others joined on Zoom. A woman who went through the academy with Hull said that recruits were given sobering statistics about what they would face as career officers (she remembered 2.5 divorces per officer) and warned about the lasting impact of stress. Chief Gancasz said later that many officers die within the first sixty months of retirement. Hull retired in December 2020, falling squarely within that sad statistic. He was a man who loved his family, fishing, hunting, and reading, and he devoted every attention to Kensington residents for over two decades.



Passings

Charles W. Fender, Jr. was born 11/23/1918 and passed away on 11/23/23, 105 years young, at his home of 72 years in Kensington. He grew up in Berkeley, attended UCB, where he met his beloved wife, Clavel, in 1941, and they had 78 wonderful years together, until Clavel's passing in 2021. He is survived by his two daughters, in whose arms he quietly passed, a nephew and his family, four grandchildren and their spouses, and seven great grandchildren.

He served in the army during WWII for four years as a civil affairs officer and developed a passion for Italy and her people. Upon returning home he attended Stanford Business School on the G.I. Bill. This way he could root for both Cal and Stanford at the many years of football and basketball games he attended, depending on who was winning!

Charlie was passionate about his community, his church, YMCA and the Seafarer's Ministry. He and Clavel had a vibrant network of college friends with whom they were very active for decades. They traveled the world together, and with friends, and visited all 50 states.

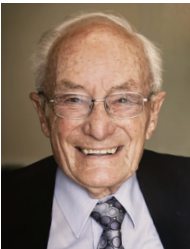
Charlie was an avid bridge player, singer, dancer, reader, mountain climber, hiker, bike rider, and tennis player until 96 years of age, when he said he "just wasn't very good at it anymore!" He built innovative furniture for his home and gardened with passion. He retired at 65 and said, "I don't know how I ever had time to work."

He was lovingly cared for during his last two years by five wonderful caregivers whom we appreciate beyond words. He was kind, playful, a great parent/grandparent/great grandparent and friend and enjoyed a full and well lived life until his last breath. We were fortunate to have him in our lives for so long.

Evelyn Smart Sellers passed away on October 12, 2023 at age 97. A Kensington resident from 1959-2014, she grew up in Belmont, MA. She was active in many clubs in high school, graduating as the class salutatorian. She studied Romance Languages and Literature at Radcliffe College, graduating cum laude with a bachelor's degree, and then earning a master's degree there in French and Spanish. In college, she met her future husband, Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., a Harvard graduate in History. They married after college and eventually settled in Princeton, NJ where Charlie was assistant professor of History at Princeton University. They started a family, and for the next seven years she devoted herself to raising her two children, Grier and Janet.

A job offer of full professorship at UC Berkeley for Charlie took the family west, and they settled in Kensington. When after several years, their marriage ended in divorce, Evelyn pursued a career teaching Spanish and French in the Richmond and Oakland schools. She continued to refine her proficiency, studying in Paris at the Sorbonne, and at a university in Tours, France.

Active in her church and in the East Bay Alliance Francaise, she loved her home, gardening, reading, and her cats. In 2014, Evelyn moved east to be closer to daughter Janet. She spent her last two years in hospice care with declining health, finally passing in Grand Rapids, MI. She is survived by son Grier of Philadelphia, PA and daughter Janet of Grand Rapids, MI.



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CITIZEN FORUM

PRA Requests Are a Right, Not a Reason to Scold Constituents

On September 27, the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) held a special board meeting to consider hiring a new law firm, Best, Best & Krieger (BBK). Yet in the meeting's agenda packet was an agreement with BBK, already signed by KPPCSD board president Alex Aquino-Fike several days prior to the meeting. Out of concern over the premature signing of a contract before it had been considered and approved by the full KPPCSD board, as well the sudden, unexplained switch to a new law firm, several residents filed a Public Records Act (PRA) request.

It appears that the PRA request hit a nerve. The names of all the citizens making the request were published in the agenda for the board's December 14 special meeting, under the heading "Anticipated Litigation." This was unforeseen and puzzling, as no litigation, nor anything apart from the original PRA request, had been discussed when the requesting citizens met privately with President Aquino-Fike after the September meeting. We merely explained our desire that the board always follow proper procedure and not cut corners.

In addition to publishing our names, board members and the district's interim general manager repeatedly stated, during the December 14 public meeting, that responding to our PRA request was costly, that the PRA request was unnecessary, and that our questions could have been answered by further discussion. But in fact the discussion, in our private meeting with the board president, had left a key issue unclear. The president had mentioned "an emergency" leaving her no choice but to sign the contract before board discussion and approval. Yet since even the newly hired attorney advised that the contract could not take effect prior to full board approval, the president's premature signing of the BBK contract could not, in fact, provide any "emergency" legal coverage by that firm.

The "emergency," based on a notation in a resolution at the December 14 meeting, appears to concern improper reimbursement of the general manager for airfare, contrary to CalPERS rules. Since the board had previously consulted a BBK attorney on CalPERS issues (mentioned at its September public meeting), it seems to us that the same BBK attorney could have been consulted regarding the need for the general manager to refund airfare. This "emergency" should have been manageable without the board president signing a new contract with BBK prior to full board review and approval.

As for the expense incurred by the district in complying with state law by answering the PRA request: a PRA request is a right of every citizen, to check up on its government. Shame on a government that wants to shame citizens for exercising their rights. —Mabry Benson, Bill Benson, Tom Dean, Andrew Gutierrez, Marina Gutierrez, Marilyn Stollon, John Gaccione, David Bergen, Eileen Nottoli, Craig Rice

Citizen Forums are guest editorials written by Kensington residents. To submit a Citizen Forum for consideration, email editor@kensingtonoutlook.com



KENSINGTON K-9s

Sweet Cookie: A Small and Mighty Survivor
By Winston Churchill, Bulldog

Cookie is a diminutive friend that I met during my afternoon adventures in Kensington Park. She was walking with her dad, Steve, and caught my eye because she's a pint-sized powerhouse. At 5.1 lbs., she's small but mighty!

I noticed that while Cookie is tiny and shy, she has a calm inner strength. After meeting with her parents, Steve and Steve, I understood why. This little lady is a survivor.

About a year and a half ago, Cookie was found underneath a car, heavily pregnant and struggling to give birth for nearly two days. She was saved by Jelly's Place Animal Rescue, which rushed her to an emergency veterinary hospital. She was already septic and even coded while under anesthesia. Fortunately, she was revived with CPR, underwent emergency surgery to remove the pups, and spent three days in the ICU.

Barely a year old, she had already survived a life-threatening pregnancy and life on the streets. Steve and Steve visited Cookie at Jelly's Place and agreed to foster her. Lifelong cat lovers, they had never had a dog. But once Cookie came into their home, they knew she was meant to stay and quickly submitted their adoption application.

Cookie is so much more than a pet. For her dad, tall Steve, she is an emotional support dog. He has multiple sclerosis and relies on a wheelchair for mobility. Cookie spends her

days happily sitting on his lap as he zooms about and her nights curled against him as he sleeps. They provide each other with comfort and companionship.

And for her other dad, just Steve, she is his activity partner. He slips Cookie into a carrier sling and takes her everywhere. They go on long walks and bike rides through the hills. She enlivens his errands around town and brings smiles to everybody they meet. They provide each other with fun and adventure.

As first-time dog parents, Steve and Steve describe this tiny dog as the best cat they've ever had. They are still surprised by how much Sweet Cookie has changed their world. She enriches their lives with her comforting cuddles and makes them laugh and smile every day. Cookie is a tiny thing, but surprisingly strong, and she fits perfectly into their family.



KENSINGTON

Community Education



Photo by Shira Skloot

KASEP: Kensington After School Enrichment Program

KASEP

In January, KASEP kicked off another exciting session with over 75 classes offered each week, a record number for the program. Including several new classes like Improv and How to Host a Tea Party. Despite the short days and potentially wet weather, we are still offering outdoor sports classes like Volleyball, basketball and Track & Field for kindergarteners. The wet weather has not dampened the kids' enthusiasm, and we continue to have KASEP classes even if it rains by relocating outdoor classes to an indoor space.



Important dates

- Winter break February 19-23
- Summer Camp Registration February 27th
- Spring KASEP Registration March 5th
- Spring KASEP session begins March 18th
- Spring KASEP ends May 31st
- First day of Summer Camp June 10th
- Last day of Summer Camp August 16th
- Fall 2024 KASEP registration August 27th

KCC SUMMER CAMP

KCC is already planning for another fun summer of KCC camp for 2024.

KCC Summer Camp is for children entering first grade in the Fall 2024 up through incoming 6th graders. We offer 10 weeks of camp, starting Monday, June 10th through Friday, August 16th. . You may enroll by the week. KCC camp offers tennis lessons, daily arts and crafts with an afternoon of sports & games along with a themed activity such as carpentry, ceramics, Legos, and a whole lot of fun!

Online Camp Registration opens February 27th at 7:00pm We will begin taking camp counselor and CIT applications in March. Applications can be found on our website at the bottom of the summer camp tab.



Adult and Family Classes

Mediterranean Cooking

When: Every Tuesday evening in the Community Center
Time: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
Location: Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave, Kensington
Price: \$45 per class, which includes all materials needed for the class.
Flexible Attendance: Join us each week for a comprehensive culinary journey or drop in when your schedule permits
January 30th Turkish Cuisine Part 1
February 6th Turkish Cuisine Part 2
February 13th Valentines French Provencal cuisine
February 20th no class
February 27th Italy Featuring Elba Island

February Special - Bring a friend for free - Mediterranean Cooking Classes on 2/6, 2/13 & 2/27. Pay for one person and bring a guest at no cost.

Wire Wrapped Jewelry Making class

When: Friday, February 9th
Time: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
Location: Recreation Building (Bldg E), 59 Arlington Ave, Kensington
Price: \$45 per class, which includes all materials needed for the class.



Cardio Dance with Karma Smart

Fridays 11:15-12:15 Community Center
Cost \$15 drop in or register online

Yoga with Anja Borgstrom

Strength & Balance Yoga -Tuesdays at 8:30am
Strength & Balance Yoga -Thursdays at 11:30
Cost is \$20 drop in or register online



Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi

Wednesdays & Fridays from 9:30-11:00am
Drop-in fee is \$15



Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/adult-and-family-classes

Keep checking our website for updated adult class schedules.

The Kensington Outlook can now be found at: KensingtonOutlook.com
Archive copies can also be found on our website dating back to 2003.
KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Recreation Building Kensington CA 94707

E-mail: Info@KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org, or call 510-525-0292.
Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.



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Town Hall Meeting Set for February 8

By David Aranda, KPCCSD Interim General Manager
The Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPCCSD) is hosting a town hall meeting for all Kensington residents to outline the hazard mitigation programs the district presented to Contra Costa County during the county's development of the hazard mitigation plan.
Hazard mitigation plans impact every resident, and the plan is the first step in attempting to obtain grants to safeguard the community when it comes to natural disasters such as wildfires and earthquakes. The meeting will be held at the Community Center at 6pm on February 8. Questions about this meeting can be sent to David Aranda, interim general manager at daranda@kppcsd.org.

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Fire Board
...from Front Page

answered more questions, some concerning consolidation, and heard more public comment. The supervisors also fielded emails of support for both candidates. Throughout the process, both candidates were described as well qualified and committed to helping Kensington be a safer community. In the end, it seemed to boil down to their views on consolidation.
Madugo listed investigating consolidation as her top priority on her written application, while Wood thought a variety of options should be considered, including creating area-wide fire agencies, such as Albany, Berkeley, and El Cerrito/Kensington. (Though consolidation is the common term, the agency that would supervise the process, Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, deems it a reorganization, in which the fire district would be dissolved and fire and EMT services would be managed by the KPCCSD.)
In the end, the board voted 5-0 to appoint Danielle Madugo as a director of the Kensington Fire Protection District. In an ironic twist, Larry Nagel, one of the remaining four who deadlocked, resigned as of January 31, so the application process will begin anew to choose another director to fill out Nagel's term. Both appointed terms expire at the end of this year, so the seats will be up for election in November.
Replanting Grants Available to Residents
By Johnny Valenzuela
The Kensington Fire Protection District is offering a Replanting Grant for residents to replace hazardous vegetation with fire-smart plants. This grant provides matching funds to encourage the removal of hazardous plants and debris from properties in Kensington. To participate, residents must first register for the grant program. After registration, an on-site project review is conducted with KFPD coordinator Johnny Valenzuela. It's important not to start the project until it's verified by the coordinator. Project documentation must be submitted by April 30, 2024. This initiative aims to enhance fire safety in the community through smarter vegetation management. For more details, residents can visit the Kensington Fire Protection District's website at www.kensingtonfire.org/replant

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KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Experiencing the Flavors of Peru

By Ittai Shiu

Since 2012, El Mono's founders, Matt and Dani have passionately pursued their mission to bring the flavors of Peru to the Bay Area. Recently relocated to 11720 San Pablo Ave., this family-owned and operated restaurant goes above and beyond, prioritizing healthy ingredients and delivering an unforgettable dining experience. Translating to “the Monkey” in Spanish, El Mono’s logo is a playful interpretation of the Nazca geoglyph for the monkey, which is prominently featured throughout the establishment along with Peruvian artwork and décor, creating a warm and inviting environment.

During a visit on a rainy evening, we discovered their lively live music nights on Fridays and Saturdays. The ambiance was vibrant, thanks to the talented cajon player Pedro Rosales from the Oakland-based band Proyecto Lando, whose fusion of traditional Afro-Peruvian genres such as Lando, Zamacueca, and Peruvian Waltz created a colorful and upbeat atmosphere! As always, we started with the ceviche.

The Peruvian version is simple, made with lime juice, rocoto chili pepper, and spices with a side of sweet potatoes and toasted Andean corn. It’s a much different experience because the fish is meatier with a tangy and refreshing flavor.

I have a few personal favorites at the restaurant. First, the Chupe de Camarones—a delicious shrimp chowder made with aji panca chili and topped with a perfectly poached egg. It’s a creamy, savory delight, though I always struggle to finish a full serving. Then there’s the Pesto N’ Steak: a comforting dish of pasta coated in their homemade pesto sauce, accompanied by a succulent Certified Angus Beef New York steak adorned with queso fresco. It’s a simple yet exceptional family recipe that never fails to impress.

During this last visit, we discovered the Seco de Cordeo, a stewed lamb shank dish that is fall-off-the-bone tender and infused with aromatic flavors. Accompanied by savory beans, and crowned with Creole onions, it’s a flavorful combination that leaves a lasting impression. The Pisco Sour, originating from Peru, is a distinctive cocktail. It combines Pisco, a white brandy



crafted from muscat grapes, with lime juice, egg white, cinnamon, and bitters. This concoction brings forth floral and herbaceous notes that beautifully complement Peruvian cuisine.

El Mono, with its full bar, serves up a tasty version, but it’s worth peeking at its specialty drink menu before deciding.

Among the enticing options, two pisco-based standouts are the Chicha, boasting a stunning purple hue, and the Marcuya, which celebrates the sweetness of passion fruit. Both are delightful choices for exploration.

The restaurant offers a fantastic happy hour, available all day on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 5pm-7pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. As the team would say, especially as we all kick off a new year, “Cheers to Health!”

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Teacher: Nan Phelps

SAT. FEBRUARY 10, 10AM-1PM

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Teacher: Mark Altenberg

SAT. FEBRUARY 17, 10AM-1PM

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Teacher: Mark Altenberg

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