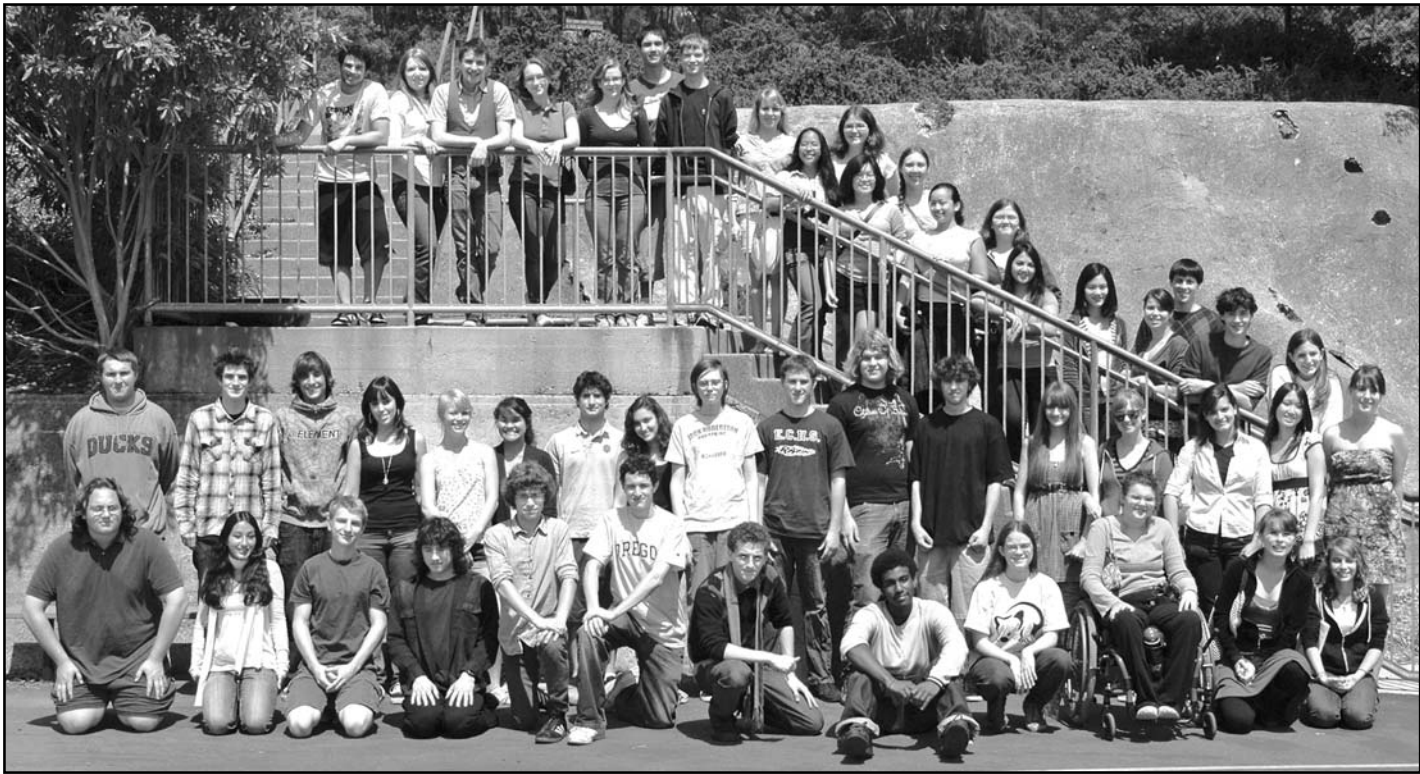


K E N S I N G T O N O U T L O O K

JUNE 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 65 NUMBER 5



Grads of '08 Move to Next Step

Graduating seniors – those who live or used to live in Kensington, and all those seniors who attended elementary school for some or all grades, regardless of where they live – participated in the *Kensington Outlook* annual senior photo on May 10. Below are seniors, including their current high school and the school they will be attending in the fall. Clif Taylor took the photo, which can be ordered from snapfish.com. Get the link at www.aboutkensington.com.

First Row, left to right: Brad Armstrong (El Cerrito, UC Berkeley); Delia Keller (Berkeley, SFSU); Julian Boshard (Head Royce, Lewis and Clark); Joshua Pines (El Cerrito, UC Berkeley); Andrew McAfee (El Cerrito, Humboldt State); Alex Muhr (El Cerrito, University of Oregon); Max Chanowitz (Marin Academy, UC Berkeley); Fenyang Smith (Marin Academy, UC Santa Cruz); Milena Schaller (Berkeley, UC Davis); Rosie Blanckenberg (Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz); Madeleine Miller-Bottome (Albany, Sarah Lawrence); Maya Pisciotto (Albany, Scripps).

Middle Row, left to right: Sam Berzon (Berkeley, University of Oregon); David Oppelt (Albany, Santa Barbara City Col-

lege); Joseph Miller (El Cerrito, UC San Diego); Kira Condey (Orinda Academy, Chico State); Emily Sheehy-Wilkins (El Cerrito, Humboldt State); Steffi Morrison (El Cerrito, UC Berkeley); Nik Block (Campolindo, New York University); Laura Jaffe (El Cerrito, The American University in Paris); Myles Schaller (Berkeley, UC Berkeley); David Miller (El Cerrito, Cal Poly); Mark Sorenson (Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara); Jeffrey Lane (Head Royce, UC San Diego); Katy Buder (Saint Mary's, UC Berkeley); Kathryn Gesner (Saint Mary's, Monterra College of Art); Lucy Cain (El Cerrito, UC Davis); Alice Che (El Cerrito, Stanford); Loren O'Hanrahan (El Cerrito, UC Santa Cruz).

Top Row, left to right: Josh Paradis (El Cerrito, Cal Poly); Lynn Weil (El Cerrito, UCLA); Chris Travlos (El Cerrito, Emerson College); Sally Walstrom (El Cerrito, Yale); Penny Wilson (Bentley, University of Oregon); Eliot Tang Smith (Bentley, Brown); David Whitney (El Cerrito, Tufts).

Stairs, from top to bottom: Carolyn Wegner (Berkeley, UC Berkeley); Courtney Holmes (El Cerrito, University of

Washington); Caroline Iwamoto (Albany, New York University); Sharon Seegers (El Cerrito, UC San Diego); Amanda Loo (Berkeley, Bryn Mawr); Jenny Adler (El Cerrito, UC Davis); Jennifer Tran (El Cerrito, UC Berkeley); Crystal Komarizadeh (El Cerrito, UC Davis); Stephanie Hironaka (Piedmont, Stanford); Parker Wells (Campolindo, Brown); Erin Olivella-Wright (Berkeley, Stanford); Ethan Poole (Berkeley, Willamette); Samantha Cook (Berkeley, UCLA).

Not pictured: Nick Bauer (International High School, Oberlin); Peter Boaz (Albany, George Washington); Max Claus (El Cerrito, UC Merced or SF State); Julian Jensen (Marin Academy, Boston University); Kellen O'Connor (El Cerrito, Cal Poly); Paul Rempel (El Cerrito, UC Berkeley); Ellie Riley (Saint Mary's, UC Santa Cruz); Curt Selak (El Cerrito, UC Santa Cruz); Patrick Stolke (Berkeley, UC Berkeley); Serena Tanaka (American School of Japan, Stanford); Daniel Teshima (Lick-Wilmerding, University of Puget Sound); Linh Tran (Bentley, UC Davis); Isabel Umali (El Cerrito, SUNY Purchase).

Colusa Circle Cell Tower Plan Axed

Activists relieved, but wary of future

Longtime insurance broker Al Caruso has cancelled a contract he had signed with T-Mobile to install a microwave tower on top of his mixed-used building at 367 Colusa Circle. The plan caused an outrage from neighbors and activists when it was unveiled last March because of concerns about microwave exposure to people and pets.

"In the interest of being a good neighbor, we decided to stop it," Caruso said. "I have been here for 50 years, longer than most people," he said, "and would like to remain in good relations with the neighborhood. It's not worth \$1,400 a month."

While activists are relieved, they still have their eyes on future plans by cell companies to erect towers in such heavily populated areas. Besides T-Mobile, whose representatives had signed the contract with Caruso, scouts from rivals Sprint and MetroPCS are also actively seeking locations to erect antennas.

"We're not out of the woods yet," said Marilyn Stollon, a leader of the campaign against Caruso's original agreement. One of the issues they face is that while cities such as El Cerrito have restrictions on cell towers, because Kensington is not incorporated, decisions by governmental boards are only advisory. The county could go ahead with granting permits for the structure even if Kensington's elected officials voted against it.

Caruso will now forfeit the \$1,400 monthly rent that would have been paid under the T-Mobile contract. Payments for the use of private properties for towers typically range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month, industry watchers say.

Ever since cell phones began to come into popular use in the early 1990s, arguments over where to put transmission towers have raged across the nation, with mixed results. While consumers want **Colusa Circle** continued on page 6.

Possible Increases in Parks Fee, Police Services to Face Kensington

Two increases in fees for the taxpayers of Kensington – a small increase for park maintenance and a larger one for police services – have not moved forward significantly in the past several weeks since the community services board approved the increases last April. However, both increases were the subject of criticism and support at the meeting of Kensington Property Owners Association last month.

Voters and/or property owners would have to approve each increase. The parks increase would be approved or rejected by a mail-in ballot sent to all Kensington

property owners, while the police services increase will appear on the November ballot if the measure meets final approval of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) by the end of August.

According to General Manager Greg Harman, the KPPCSD is looking at a budget shortfall for the 2008-2009 year simply to maintain services if increases are not passed by voters. At the park, he said, maintenance needs have increased since the park property expanded with additional land formerly owned by Hill-

top School, and the cost of removing dead and dying trees will increase. The district would also like to add a restroom – Harman himself estimated that would cost \$128,000 – but without an increase in fees construction would not be possible. The board has proposed that the increase be \$26, from the current \$13.20 per parcel per year to \$39.20.

Even without an increase, the parks might see an infusion of cash if the East Bay Regional Parks district decides to move forward with its own ballot measure covering the entire parks community, of

which Kensington is estimated to receive \$255,000.

A larger hit to Kensington pocketbooks is the police services increase, which would go up from \$300 to \$500 per year.

A fact sheet prepared by longtime residents John Stein and Carla Javits outlines reasons to support the measure. They point out that no increase in police funding has been made in 14 years, with no cost of living adjustment, the department will be facing a \$450,000 shortfall, and reserves are needed in case of an emergency or natural disaster.

Around Kensington in May...

Here is a smattering of odd and ordinary occurrences that were seen, smelled or heard around town last month.

Spring flowers popped with especially bright, puffy roses, so something went right with the weather in April. The scent of jasmine filled the air and wafted through car windows in the warm weather, especially at night.

The sound of “Razor” scooters rose from the sidewalks in the afternoons, their wheels bumping over the cracks in the pavement on Arlington Avenue.

The mercury rose to record highs in the middle of the month, with Oakland recording a record 101 degrees, and it was no cooler here.

Milk cost \$5.99 per gallon at Young’s Market (\$3.89 for a half-gallon of organic), and gas across the street shot above the \$4 mark for the first time in the nation’s history, where it hovered at \$4.13 toward the end of the month.

Bumper stickers on one drive along Colusa and Arlington: Three “Power to the Peaceful,” one “Stop the Spraying,” five “1-20-09,” which marks President Bush’s last day in office.

“Obama” bumper stickers on every 11th car. Hillary signs in yards, Obama signs in others, both candidates claiming blue and white with a touch of red. No sighting of stickers or signage for McCain. Yet.

Birds were busy building their nests in back yards and Kensington Park, with feathers and twigs in their beaks. The songs of robins grew especially loud toward the middle of the month, and by the end, the fat ladies holding eggs were looking for worms.

The extra hot mid-May days gave way to chillier temperatures and what is likely the last drizzle of the season, as smoke from a 3,900-acre wildfire near Santa Cruz that burned at least 29 homes tinted our sunsets with an extra shade of foreboding red.

Squirrels were active with their spring ritual, and by the end of May those mothers, too, were growing heavy.

Yet another sign for “Webkinz!” led to a visit inside the pharmacy, where mother of two Webkinz fanatics (Abigail and Madeline Lawrence, ages 7 and 9) explained them in terms that seemed foreign: They are stuffed animals with a code for Internet access, explained Deena Lawrence, and the girls go online to play games and win virtual points for their non-virtual pet. They name it then need points to feed it, or to furnish its room with a bed or a nightstand. “Up to date Beanie Babies,” someone said. And suddenly, the virtual pets are rocketing upward in popularity, with no explanation as to why a stuffed dog would need a nightstand.


A young father parked on Arlington Avenue, opened the back of his mini-van to have two big packages of Huggies diapers tumble onto the pavement, and he chuckled.

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EDITOR’S NOTE

Unless otherwise noted, the content of this *Kensington Outlook* has been reported and written by interim editor, Chris Lavin. She also will produce the joint July/August issue. Please send Neighborhood Notes, calendar items, story ideas, and comments for that issue to the usual e-mail address, at editor@kensingtonoutlook.com, or call her at 925-376-5592.

Lavin has worked as a journalist in the East Bay since 1992. She is a former editor of the Oakland Tribune, and has worked as a reporter and editor at the San Francisco Chronicle.

The search for a permanent editor for the *Outlook* is ongoing. Candidates for the position will be evaluated by the Kensington Community Council. The council will be conducting interviews of prospective candidates in the coming weeks.

Battery, Cell Phone Recycling Continues

Kensington’s effort to recycle used batteries and cell phones has become a successful program, keeping electronic parts and their contaminants out of area landfills.


Ace Hardware takes old cell phones and all rechargeable batteries.

And in a one-woman effort to keep regular batteries out of landfills – where the acids eventually leak down to the groundwater table – Laurie Swiaddon collects them at the front desk at Marvin Gardens real estate, and regularly takes them herself to El Cerrito Recycling Center.

“It saves on gas for one person to do it all at once,” Swiaddon said.


Anyone may drop off batteries to Swiaddon at the office, 289 Arlington Ave.

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Kensington Market Update						
	Address	Beds	Baths	List Price	Sold Price	Days on Mrkt
* \$500 donation to Kensington Education Foundation for each of my Kensington home sales.	33 Arlington Ave.	2	1	\$495,000	Pending	16
	71 Kingston Rd.	3	1/1	\$520,000	Pending	14
	389 Ocean View Ave.	2	1/1	\$549,000	Pending	115
	51 Arlington Ct.	3	1	\$599,000	Pending	33
	92 Kingston Rd.	3	1/1	\$625,000	\$605,000	21
	15 Lenox Rd.	2	2	\$659,000	Pending	24
	338 Berkeley Park Blvd.	2	2	\$719,000	\$750,000	20
	155 Ardmore Rd.	2	1/1	\$749,000	\$744,000	13
	50 Avon Rd.	3	1/1	\$749,000	Pending	15
	145 Purdue Rd.	3	2	\$775,000	\$857,780	16
	24 Kerr Ave.	4	2	\$1,150,000	Pending	17

This information is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

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Bound copies of the newspaper going back to the 1940s are available at the Kensington Library.

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Deadlines
Advertising deadline June 8
Editorial deadline June 10

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Recycle This Newspaper

Property Owners Warned To Reduce Fire Fuel Loads

Who is responsible when a neighbor's tree branch grows to hover over your chimney? Are you allowed to cut it? If the tree dies, who is responsible?

These were some of the questions posed by newly appointed Fire Marshal Michael Bond last month to the Kensington Fire Protection District. The answers: You are responsible for your neighbor's tree catching fire. You may cut it. But if the tree dies, you are responsible.

"Sometimes it doesn't make a lot of sense," Bond said. "The best thing is to talk to your neighbor."

To deal with potential hazards, in May the El Cerrito Fire Department mailed more than 60 postcards to Kensington property owners who are in violation of ordinances designed to mitigate fire. Violations include dense, dying or dead vegetation, overgrown trees, or piles of debris.

The postcards are a follow-up to letters mailed the month before. After driving by all the properties in violation, the fire marshal targeted those who had not yet complied with postcards. "In June, we'll come back with a list of all the properties

still not in compliance," Bond told the district board. If the property owner has not cleaned up or trimmed the property, the board will be asked to approve a move for the county to go in and do it for them, Bond said. The property owner will be responsible for the cost of the clean-up, he said.

"But it's not like they're always going to send us a check," Bond said. If the property owner does not reimburse the county for the clean-up, a lien will be put on their property, so the county will eventually get the money when the property is sold – whenever that may be.

During the year a fire inspector drives by each and every property in Kensington, Bond said, looking for fire hazards.

El Cerrito Fire Chief Lance Maples introduced Bond, a former fire inspector, and announced Bond's promotion to fire marshal.

"He deserves it, and we're happy to have him," Maples told the board.

"It's fire season, and that's a reason why we're here," he said.

When You See the Red Flag....



Red flags like this one will fly over the fire station on days when there is a high danger of fire.

This summer, firefighters will raise a red flag on the flag pole in front of Kensington's fire station to warn residents that extreme fire weather conditions are present. Identical flags will fly at other stations throughout Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

The flags will be a reminder from the fire department to anticipate extreme fire

conditions, and to take steps to make homes safer from wildland fire. The El Cerrito Fire Department expects there will be several days this summer when red flag warnings will be issued, especially during late summer and fall.

Fire Chief Lance Maples recommends the following when the you see the red flag:

- ⌚ Be alert and report even small fires immediately by calling 911.
- ⌚ Have a plan for gathering family members, pets, and valuables in case of an evacuation.
- ⌚ Mow lawns before 10 a.m. when grass has the most moisture in it.
- ⌚ Use extra caution when using barbecues. Never use them around dry vegetation and make sure coals are completely out before removing them.

Things you can do to prepare your home before fire season arrives:

- ⌚ Clear flammable vegetation 30 feet to 100 feet from your home.
- ⌚ Clean your rain gutters.
- ⌚ Cut tree limbs a minimum of 10 feet from chimneys or stovepipes.

Library Looking for Book Club Members

Get started on your summer reading with Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, then join the Kensington Library Book Club. The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 28, 2008, at 7 p.m. at the Kensington Library, where *Persuasion* will be discussed.

The novel is Austen's final work and takes place during the few months between Napoleon's escape from Elba and the battle of Waterloo. The novel is a social

satire of England's landed gentry and is a tale of love lost and renewed.

Book group meetings usually are held on the fourth Monday of every month. Each meeting starts with a poem selected and read by a member with a brief discussion. New members are always welcome.

For more information call 510-524-3043, or visit www.ccclib.org.



Pet of the Month

Claudette is a beautiful 3-month-old white and fawn-colored French lop. She is gentle, personable, and well-mannered; loves to be held and groomed. Being French, she prefers fresh, organic, vegetables from the market every day and is particularly fond of parsley and dandelion greens. She would love to meet a family with a backyard garden and green thumb. If you would like to meet Claudette, please come by RabbitEARS, open seven days a week at its new location, 377 Colusa Ave, same side as the pub. Call 510-525-6155 for more information, or visit www.rabbitears.org.

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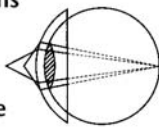


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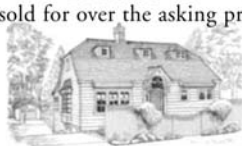
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KPOA Annual Meeting



Michael Angelo Silva of the Contra Costa County Planning Department talks to Kensington property owners about permit requirements at the Kensington Property Owners Association meeting.

Building Permits Needed — Even for Water Heaters

The home-remodeling and repair list read by Michael Angelo Silva of the Contra Costa County brought some gasps and some incredulous laughter at the annual meeting of the Kensington Property Owners Association.

"If you want to replace metal inserts in your windows with wood, you need a permit. If you're remodeling your bathroom, you need a permit. If you want to work a business in your home, you need a permit. If you want to build a fence higher than six feet, you need a permit," Silva said. "If you want to put in a new hot water heater — the old one breaks — you need a permit."

A permit for a new water heater?

"If a water heater is not installed correctly, it will be like a rocket if it explodes," Silva explained to those questioning such a requirement.

Almost 200 property owners and interested residents from Kensington turned out for the annual meeting of the property owners association on May 3, where they listened to presentations from Silva, Police Chief and General Manager Greg Harman, Janice Kosel of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Service District, Cindy Kimball of the Kensington Municipal Advisory Council, El Cerrito Fire Chief Vance Maples, and others.

Silva said that permits for most routine tasks, such as replacing a water heater, are done over the counter at the planning department in Martinez. He recommended arriving early in the day, "when there aren't any lines," and that such permits take only moments to issue — and require payment of a \$62.50 fee in the case of the water heater.

Questioned about the inconvenience of going all the way to Martinez for such a mundane task, Silva said that his office

is considering opening a satellite office, perhaps as early as September, closer to Kensington to make issuing permits a less time-consuming experience for contractors and homeowners.

Permit requests for most home repairs and many improvements may be faxed to the office, as well, Silva said. To find forms, visit www.cccounty.us, click on Building Inspections, and go to Forms.

Residents also questioned Silva on the county's decision to change the name of the planning department from Building Inspection and Community Development to the Department of Property Conservation — a name that sounded like "obfuscation" to some residents who voiced opposition to it.

Another hot-button issue in Silva's presentation involved deer fences. As long as they aren't taller than six feet, he said, they're OK. Anything higher than that is in violation of the county ordinance — unless, of course, if there is a permit for it.

"We're not going to go around in people's back yards and look for violations like that," Silva told the community. But if his office receives a complaint about a fence or any other code violation, inspectors are obligated to investigate, he said, adding that complaint forms could be downloaded or printed from the county's website at www.cccounty.us.

Police Chief and General Manager Greg Harman followed Silva's presentation, and started out with a joke that crime was down partly because he had a sign installed at Kensington's border proclaiming, "Entering Kensington. Do not commit crimes," to which a member of the audience, still reeling from Silva's permitting process explanations, quipped, "Did you get a permit for it?"

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Rabbit Rescue Group Launches Coffee Brand

Lots of changes have taken place at Judy Hardin’s RabbitEars rescue foundation for house rabbits – she has moved her storefront to Colusa Circle and has partnered with Thanksgiving Coffee Co. to launch a nationwide brew to benefit the plights of orphaned and abandoned rabbits.

“All the brands (of coffee) are slightly

describe the plight of many house rabbits: They are one of the most misunderstood creatures on earth, Hardin says, and while they easily bond with humans and other animals, are often discarded by irresponsible owners.

For more information about how to buy the coffee and support rabbit rescue



Judy Hardin gives a big smooch to one of her rabbits in need of a permanent home at RabbitEars’ new location on Colusa.

different, but still branded in a way I think no coffee has ever been done before,” Hardin said.

First up is Bucky’s Blend, a coffee named for a young rabbit adopted from RabbitEars. Hardin recently heard from Bucky’s new owner that he is as big as a small dog now, and sleeps with the kids every night. Petunia is the maven of another blend of coffee, and she was adopted by the Growing Light Montessori School as a mascot. Students – even those who have moved on to other schools – still come by RabbitEars to buy presents for Petunia.

Bella, who with her faithful husband Bingo Bob is still looking for a forever home, is the proud namesake of a third blend of coffee.

The three blends – which Thanksgiving Coffee Co. developed using fair trade and organic beans – will begin to be distributed this month in celebration of House Rabbit Society’s 20th anniversary. A portion of all the profits will be donated to the society and toward funds for a wild rabbit sanctuary.

Package notes describe the different blends, from Bucky’s dark and after-dinner-like flavor to Petunia’s lighter roast. Bella is a decaf gal. The packages also

and wild rabbit habitat, you may write to RabbitEars, 377 Colusa Ave., Kensington, 94707, call 525-6155, or visit www.rabbitears.org. Retailers and consumers may purchase the coffee directly from Thanksgiving, www.thanksgivingcoffee.com.

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OBITUARIES

Rev. William K. “Bill” Laurie



The Rev. William K. Laurie died April 17 after succumbing to complications from esophageal cancer. A memorial service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, June 7, at the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. He was 83.

A longtime resident of Kensington, Rev. Laurie served several churches as interim pastor in his retirement, and was active in his local parish in Kensington.

Rev. Laurie was born June 2, 1924, in Altoona, Pa., and grew up in Jeannette, Pa. He was a Navy pilot during World War II, flying Martin Marauder B-26 bombers. He married the love of his life, Abigail Jean Benson of Jeannette, in 1946.

Rev. Laurie graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1948, entered Eden Seminary in Webster Groves, Mo., and was ordained and licensed to preach in June 1951. For six decades he served as a minister in the United Church of Christ at churches in Ohio, Missouri, and California.

He served as vice-president of administration for the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, retiring in 1989. He spent his years in Kensington volunteering at several charity organizations, and in 2005, he

and his wife Abbie moved to Chico to be near family.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Abbie, their five children, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Memorial services are scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, June 7, 2008 at Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. Kensington, CA, 94805. Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association at www.alz.org. You may view and send condolences on line at www.NBCFH.com.

Nancy Lundblad

Nancy Lundblad of El Cerrito passed away peacefully May 3. She was 81.

She was born and raised in Antioch, the daughter of Joseph Fredericks and Maude Miller, also native Californians. She attended University of California-Berkeley, where she met her future husband, John Lundblad, a young scientist working at Cutter Laboratories. They were married in 1948 and four years later, they moved into a house they built in the hills of El Cerrito. They raised three children, and lived the rest of their lives together in the house they loved.

Mrs. Lundblad was a teacher in the Contra Costa School District from the early 1970s until her retirement in 1987. She talked of growing up in Antioch, her childhood summers in Yosemite with her grandfather Baba, jitterbugging at the drop of a hat, the yearly Fredericks family picnics, potluck dinners at the Arlington church, her lifelong friends and “family sails” on the San San Joaquin river.

She is remembered by her three children, Eric, Jan, and Vicki, and son-in-law Lou; her grandchildren Matthew, Ana-Lisa and grandson-in-law Mike, and many others.

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Colusa Circle *cont'd from page 1*

complete coverage, they also do not want the towers themselves in plain view, or erected near homes or schools or public places where human exposure to microwaves are inevitable.

Several respected scientific research organizations have recommended a good distance be maintained between people and cell tower transmissions, including the Bionitiative Report (www.bionitiative.org), which says 1,000 feet should be maintained. Other organizations recommend even wider berths.

More than 400 people signed the petition circulated this spring regarding the Colusa Circle tower, and claimed that more people in more than 300 homes would have been affected and property values jeopardized.

"I don't go along with that part at all," Caruso said about property values. "But I felt I should be a good neighbor."

And in the meantime, activists are breathing easier.

"We are very pleased and give a collec-



The roof of this building at 367 Colusa Circle was targeted by T-Mobile for a cell tower.

tive sigh of relief and a big, big hurrah to Al and his sisters for doing this," Stollon said.

No-Interest Loans for Home Repairs

According to Mike Silva of the Contra Costa Department of Construction and Development, the county offers low-interest and no-interest loans to property owners who need to make upgrades to their houses or rental buildings but are having trouble paying for repairs.

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"There is no reason for someone to be living with a leaking roof or without heat," Silva told the Kensington Property Owners Association last month.

To help, two types of loans are available if the amount borrowed is \$40,000 or less – 3 percent loans, and zero-percent financing for deferred payment.

Many senior citizens on fixed incomes would qualify, Silva said, by using the equity in their homes to qualify. Others on fixed incomes might qualify, as well.

To find out more, call the department at 925-335-1111.



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At the Park



Surely one of Kensington's largest dogs, Atlas, moves through his training paces alongside dog walker and trainer Alyssa Vincent at Kensington Park. The Great Dane stands higher than Vincent's waist, but he listened to her every command.

Prizes for those who 'Catch the Reading Bug'

Summer reading returns to the Contra Costa County Library June 9 when the staff launches "Catch the Reading Bug." This year's summer reading program has programs for readers ages 2nd through 5th grade, and for students in the 6th through 12th grades with the library's "Metamorphosis" Teen Reading Program. Parents and caregivers of love bugs from birth to 2 years are encouraged to earn some sweet prizes by participating in the library's early literacy-building Baby Reading Program.

For adults 18 and over, simply submit a book review online at ccclib.org for a chance to win a real honey of a prize: The



Booklover's Bag full of goodies, or an overnight stay for two in a deluxe guestroom, including tax and parking, at Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Prizes for the Baby Reading Program, Kids' Summer Reading Program, and Teen Reading Program will be available beginning Monday June 30.

For more information or to get started, please contact your community library or visit us online at ccclib.org.

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Around Colusa Circle

New Locale For Market Draws Crowds

The new Colusa Circle location for the Kensington Farmers' Market has proven to be a huge success, with plenty of parking and a level area for tables and strolling – unlike the previous location in the Ace Hardware parking lot – and has attracted more customers and more vendors.

"It's so much better," said Alexandra Eisler, the owner and proprietor of the Kensington Marmalade Company. "I used to lose a jar a week because it would roll downhill at the old space. You'd hear one roll and shatter and then someone would pipe up, 'There goes another one!'"

"I think she lost quite a few jars," said artist and photographer Diane Lake, from her booth displaying greeting cards and



matted photographs. "With a larger space, we've been able spread out and add some new vendors," said Market Manager Richard Firme, of Firme Farms in Gustine. "We've added grass-fed, free-range beef, fresh pasta, and Beckman's Bakery in the last few weeks, and we have tomatoes coming up soon." June 8 marks the official grand open-



Above, Alexandra Eisler points to the tree up the hill that provides the fruit for her grapefruit marmalade. Richard Firme, above left, provides vegetables.

ing of the season, with special tastings, music and a bouncy castle for the kids. The market is open every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the market now boasts about 20 vendors with fresh fruit and produce, and local crafts.

Andrea Salazar, owner of Lone Oak Farms, said, "For us, the start of summer means my favorite fruits, peaches and apricots are hitting their prime, and that is definitely a reason to celebrate! We love the new location and seeing lots of new faces."

Local businesses adjacent to the market have also enjoyed a spike in customer visits. Ike Joh, owner of The Colusa Market, says Sundays have become one of his busiest days. Joh adds, "Now I have to increase my inventory for Sunday because the Farmers' Market brings in so many people from the surrounding area."

Founded in July 2006, the Kensington

Farmers' Market is now located on Oak View, adjacent to the Colusa Circle. For more information about the market or to receive a vendor application, call 510-524-5604.

Tea for Life

At the Firme Farms booth, Kathryn Kaiser keeps a cold jug full of hibiscus and mint tea from the Nile River Herb Company in the Sudan. She swears by it: The tea contains no caffeine, is full of vitamin C, and is known to reduce blood pressure. Children love it, and a half gallon can be made for about \$2. Kaiser promises to begin stocking boxes of the tea for sale, and she will provide samples at the grand opening June 8. Proceeds from the sale of the tea goes to fund fresh-water drinking projects in the Sudan.

Post-Meridian Opens for Breakfast, Lunch

Robin Valerie Low is one of those high-energy, inspired people who work seven days a week. Her passion is her restaurant, the Post Meridian, but on most days breakfast and lunch hours are filled with largely empty tables.

"It's been slow at breakfast and lunch," she said. "It surprises me some, because we opened for breakfast and lunch because people were stopping by and requesting that we do it. We have some wonderful regulars in the morning, but it hasn't really picked up."

Low opened her French-inspired restaurant in March 2007 at 1568 Oak View at Colusa, and like most restaurants, the going is tough, despite rave reviews in the Bay Area press.

"I have a kitchen full of wonderful staff – they are great – but I'm paying medical and dental for the staff and, well, you know how it goes," she said during a recent lunch hour, when only one table was occupied.

Low learned her craft in France, and lives in the neighborhood. Her French-inspired cuisine is almost totally organic. She sometimes has to settle for "transitional" ingredients in a pinch, but that's OK with her because she feels for the transitional farmers, ones who are growing organically but because of regulations have not qualified yet to use the word "organic."

She loves her neighborhood and her customers. "You know people by their dog's names before you know the people's names," Low said.

Because the Post Meridian is smack in the middle of a residential neighborhood, typical lunch business from shops or offices is several blocks away. So Low is trying to think of ways to let her neigh-



Robin Valerie Low is the proprietor of the French-inspired Post Meridian restaurant on Colusa Circle.

bors know that she's open for breakfast and lunch. Her breakfast special simulates the breakfast you would find in a quaint French hotel, complete with baguette, black currant jam, local cheese, and of course rich, organic coffee. She also serves house-made sausage, with an emphasis on local, organic and seasonal produce, all with a French flair. Even the butter is local.

"Sometimes people will call me over just to find out where the butter came from, it's so good," Low said.

Yet as with most restaurants, paying for the staff is by far the biggest chunk of the pie. "I believe in paying something fair," Low says. The national health-care crisis is felt by entrepreneurs like Low. "And people have to have insurance."

Post Meridian is open from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, with a gradual transition to lunch or brunch around 11:30. Dinner is available from 6 to 9 p.m. on the same days. You may call Low – or anyone on staff – with questions at 510-525-1350, or visit www.postmeridian.com.

Nan Phelps Moves Studio to Circle

What photographer Nan Phelps likes most about her new space on Colusa Circle is the light. Well, the light and the neighbors.

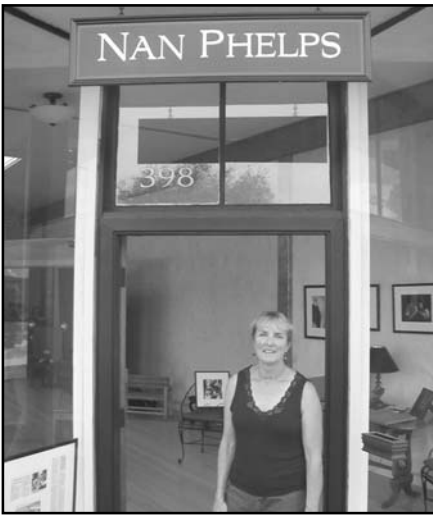
"It's a village here," Phelps said. "I love it."

After years on Solano Avenue, Phelps began looking for studio space that would provide room to shoot and enough natural light to make her portraits work. She found it, and she made her move February 1.

Phelps, who lives in the Richmond hills, has been a professional photographer for 25 years. Her work is personal, catching the right moment a baby's expression erupts into joy, or the more subdued side of a subject. Her black and white images show every shade of gray, creating a mood that can be joyous or contemplative. They seem almost always tender. She also shoots in color.

"I love working with families," Phelps said. She does portraits, both individual and family, and also people with their pets. Sometimes she shoots in the studio, other times on location, and she also covers weddings and other events.

The light in the studio also is flatter-



Nan Phelps is a noted Bay Area photographer who has moved her business to Kensington.

ing to the portraits themselves, which now lean up against the walls around the studio so that Phelps can move them quickly if she finds she needs the right space for a sitting.

"This is just such a great neighborhood. Everyone is so nice! I really feel at home here," Phelps said.

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Preparing Those Home Meals

Local Business Tries to Make It Easier

Cooking for a family as a single parent or even when both parents work outside the home is a challenge. Planning, shopping, cooking, then cleaning up can be a frustrating and exhausting experience, yet eating together as a family is a time-honored tradition that is gradually deteriorating.

A myriad of businesses throughout the area have tried to step into the gap between bad fast food and wholesome home-

“Once a month, in two hours, you can assemble nightly dinners for your whole family for the whole month.”

-- Tina Yanagimachi

cooked meals that aren't takeout. One is Dream Dinners, opened nine months ago by Tina Yanagimachi and her partner, local parent Jack Ren. It's a storefront operation in El Cerrito Plaza that allows users to sign up online or on the telephone for what they want to cook, then all the ingredients are waiting for them at the session they choose. The cooks grab an apron, assemble their meals according to the recipes provided, put them in a refrigerator as they finish them, and at the end of the session, they box them all up and take them home to the freezer, labeled with a printed recipe and cooking instructions.

“I used to be a school teacher, and when I got married I found it difficult to be working and providing meals at the same time,” Yanagimachi said.

According to a recent New York Times story, 27 percent of all food sold in the United States ends up spoiling. Assembling meals at a place such as Dream Dinners is one way to reduce costs and waste, and it saves time.

“Once a month, in two hours, you can assemble nightly dinners for your whole family for the whole month,” Yanagimachi said. “It probably saves me 35 hours a month, it saves gas money, and my husband loves the food. I use lots of customized ingredients, and I can make a low-sodium diet for him. You can do what you want – like add half the butter from the recipe. And it's fun to do. People have fun here.”

Cooking 12 large dinners for six people (or 24 dinners for three) costs \$250. None of the items are cooked. Children 8 and older can participate in assembling the meals.

Until Yanagimachi decided to franchise with Dream Dinners for her El Cerrito location, she had been going all the way to Pleasanton to prepare her meals for the month, because that had been the closest location.

According to *Time* magazine, it's cheaper than making the meals yourself. “I learned that you can clip as many coupons as you want,” wrote reviewer Joel Stein, “but you can never make a dinner as cheaply as these kitchens can.”

Savings are evident when you consider the ingredients that cooks don't have to buy in bulk, such as olives or dried plums. Menus are available online by location, so Yanagimachi can take advantage of fresh local produce and meats.

For more information about Dream Dinners, visit www.dreamdinners.com, or call Yanagimachi at 510-525-8822.



Linda Fong of Kensington assembles dinners for the month at Dream Dinners in El Cerrito Plaza. Customers reserve a session, build their meals with fresh ingredients, then take them home to the freezer.

KENSINGTON CALENDAR

1 **Kensington Farmers' Market**, Oak View at Colusa, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Continues each Sunday.

3 **General Election**. For more information visit www.cocovote.us or call 925-335-7871 to find your polling place.

6 **Bay Area Classic Harmonies**, 7:30 p.m., Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. Choral works by Vivaldi and others. Ticket \$15, \$12 for seniors, \$5 for children. Call 526-9146 for more information.

7 **Easy Bay Open Studios**, 2 p.m. till late afternoon. Live painting with Bradley Platz, Eclectix Gallery, 7523 Fairmount Ave. at Colusa Ave., Visit the web site for more information at www.eclectixgallery.com.

E-Waste Dropoff, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at El Cerrito Electronic-Waste Drop-off event. Volunteers will be taking electronic waste from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 7. Continues June 8. Call 215-4350 for more information.

9 **Kensington Community Council**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center. Call 525-0292 for more information.

Summer Reading Festival, sponsored by Kensington Library. Prizes available for all age groups. Call 524-3043 for more information, or

visit www.ccclib.org for entry forms.

13 **Dads' Club Dinner**, with Thai and Indian food. Tickets \$25. E-mail KensingtonDadsClub@yahoo.com for more information.

11 **Kensington Fire Protection District**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center.

12 **Kensington Police Protection & Community Service District**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center. Call 526-4141 for more information.

14 **Live Oak Park Fair**, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 1301 Shattuck Ave. Artists and craftspeople will display their wares. Call 221-7100 for more information, or visit www.liveoakparkfair.com. Admission free. Continues June 14.

Book Release Party, 2 p.m., Kensington Library, for *Rogue Beekeepers of Kensington: Hillside, Orchard, Garden, Hive*, by Judith Adamson. Free. Call 524-3043 for more information.

24 **Kensington Municipal Advisory Council**, 7 p.m., Community Center. Call 273-9926 for more information.

Send calendar items for the July/August joint issue to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com, or mail a release or information to Kensington Outlook, 52 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707.

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Neighborhood Notes

Father’s Weekend Arts Fair

North Berkeley will be the site for the 38th annual Live Oak Park Fair on Father’s Day weekend, with dozens of artists and craftspeople displaying their best wares. Jewelry, textiles, woodwork, painting, photography, limited edition prints, ceramics and more will be on display, and exhibitors will be at their booths to talk about their work. Lots of food and drinks and continuous entertainment will be available for all ages from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 14 and 15 at the park, 1301 Shattuck Ave. at Berryman St. Call 510-227-7100 for more information, or visit www.liveoakparkfair.com. Admission is free.

Classical Harmonies to Perform

The Bay Area Classical Harmonies chorus (B.A.C.H.) has been performing together for more than 10 years. Directed by Andrew Chung, it will present Vivaldi’s Gloria as well as other classical pieces at a concert at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, June 6, at the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave., in their last concert of the year. The group is known for possessing some of the best young talent in the Bay Area. Tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$12 for seniors and \$5 for children. Call 510-526-9146 to reserve a seat. The church is wheelchair accessible and parking is available.

Dads’ Club Dinner

Mark June 13 on your calendar for the annual Dads’ Club Dinner, sponsored by the dads of Hilltop School. Tickets are \$25 per person, and this year Thai and Indian food will be featured. Virtual DJs Paul Normington and Kevin Cadogan will provide the entertainment. And sorry, no child care will be available this year. For more information e-mail KensingtonDadsClub@yahoogroups.com.

Semifreddi’s Completes Makeover

Now grabbing your loaf of bread at Semifreddi’s at Colusa Circle is a nicer aesthetic experience. (The smell of fresh loaves stays the same.) New lighting, new paint, new woodwork – and the smiles on the faces of the staff remain the same, too. The bakery completed its remodel in late April.

Bzzzzz.....

Bet you didn’t think there were bee-keepers in hiding around Kensington. If so, don’t miss the book release party for *Rogue Beekeepers of Kensington: Hillside, Orchard, Garden, Hive*, by Judith Adamson at the Kensington Library on Saturday, June 14. Honey tasting and free samples of products made from beeswax will begin at 2 p.m. at the library, 81 Arlington Ave. Call 510-524-3043 for more information.

Marching for Health Care

Several members of the El Cerrito Democratic Club plan to rally in support of HR 676, the United States National Health Insurance Act, and SB 840, the California Universal Healthcare Act, at noon on Thursday, June 19. The site is Moscone Center West, at Howard and Fourth streets. The closest BART stop is the Powell Street station. For more information visit www.singlepayernow.net or call 415-695-7891.

Electronic Waste Drop-Off

Get rid of your old monitors, computers, and other obsolete or broken electronic components at the El Cerrito Electronic-Waste Drop-off event. Volunteers will be taking your waste on June 7 and 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 6400 Manila Ave. Call 510-215-4350 for more information.

Wednesday Peace Rallies

Every Wednesday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. the El Cerrito Peace Rally is held against the war in Iraq and in support of U.S. troops. It is held on the first, third, and fifth Wednesday at the del Norte BART station, and at the corner of San Pablo Avenue and Hill on the second and fourth Wednesdays. For more information call 510-517-0239.

Volunteers Needed for ‘National Night Out’

The Kensington Police Department will participate in National Night Out on August 5 to raise awareness about community crime-prevention. Volunteers may fill out a form online to receive an organization kit containing how-to materials.

The National Night Out campaign is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in anti-crime programs, and strengthen neighborhood spirit and partnerships with police.

Along with a display of lights and front porch vigils, participants may organize and participate in a variety of activities, such as block parties, cookouts, visits from the police department, flashlight walks, contests, and youth programs.

Nationally, the program has proven to be an effective and inexpensive program for crime prevention for 25 years. Coordinator kits include how-to materials such as promotional ideas, guidelines, tips, questions and answers, camera-ready art and sample news releases and proclamations. There is no cost to register or to order an organization kit. Visit www.nationalnightout.org to participate.



Steve Hobbs took this photograph at around 6 a.m. from Grizzly Peak, from a spot below the steam trains in Tilden Park. Mt. Diablo looms in the background.

Landscape Photographs On Display

Photographs by landscape photographer Steve Hobbs will be on display starting this month at Kensington Optometry.

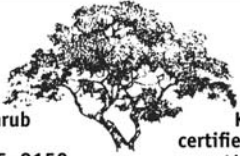
Hobbs’ passion for landscape photography focuses on Bay Area themes, but he also has been drawn by travel experiences to many other locales and cultures. His collection includes photographs from the Canadian Rockies, Montana, New England, Kauai, Baja California, mainland Mexico and Spain.

The Kensington exhibit will feature some of his Bay Area landscapes, as well as others from across the nation.

Hobbs grew up in the Bay Area and lived in Kensington for 20 years. He prefers to shoot in color, feeling that it best captures the beauty and vibrancy of the natural world and its people. Most of the time, it’s best to shoot landscape photographs either early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when the light is right, he said.

“Fog is very difficult to shoot,” Hobbs said. When he managed to land the photograph above, “I was really happy about it.”

The exhibit, sponsored by optometrist Russell Cotteral, is open to the public



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On the Sidewalk



Over the past several years young families have begun to move to Kensington in larger numbers. Bhrett Lash is one, with baby Sam Schweitzer on her back and accompanied by Genevieve and Julia Schweitzer in her pretty summer dress, all on their way to Colusa Market. Even an errand such as buying dish soap can be a challenge with three little children.

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Peace Child Summer Camp in Third Year



Campers surround the world in peace during a past Peace Child Summer Arts Camp production.

The Arlington Community Church will sponsor its third annual Peace Child Summer Arts Camp during the week of August 11 to August 15.

During daily sessions from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., participants work on producing a musical show, including sets, costumes, artwork, dancing, singing, clowning, and puppetry. The show will be presented Friday evening, and possibly be repeated on Saturday, August 16, for parents and friends in the community.

Young people ages 8 to 14 are invited to participate. Shanti Moorjani will direct the music and song, Lisa Klein will direct visual arts, sets, and costume design, and shadow puppetry, and Michael Mansfield will direct acting and dancing.

Peace Child Summer Arts Camp creates musical productions each summer to teach young people about the values of peace and kindness and justice-making in the world. The cost is \$125 for the week. A morning snack and lunch will be included.

All of the work of the Peace Child Arts Camp will prepare the young people to be an integral part of the weekend production of the musical. For more information, visit the church website at www.acc-ucc.org, or contact the church office for an application at 510-526-9146. Arlington Community Church is located at 52 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, across from the Kensington Public Library.

Time for Pool Safety

Now that hot weather has arrived, it's time to check the safety of any hot tub or swimming pool on your property or rental unit.

Last summer, two toddlers died when they fell into a backyard swimming pool in Antioch while their mother was inside using the bathroom.

Contra Costa County paramedics say that small children drown every summer somewhere in the county, and that a child can drown in as little as nine seconds once he or she has fallen into a pool or hot tub. Therefore the state and county have issued the following safety recommendations. At least one of the following must be in place to comply with California state law.

- The pool should be isolated from access to the home by locking doors or other devices.

- The pool should have a fence and a self-closing and self-latching gate that can accommodate a lock.
- A pool cover that meets safety requirements should be used.
- The residence should be equipped with exit alarms on those doors providing direct access to the pool.
- All doors providing direct access from the home to the pool shall be equipped with a self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism placed no lower than 54 inches above the floor.
- Equip the pool with a pool alarm that, when placed in pools, will sound upon detection of accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. The alarms should meet independent certification requirements.



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Hilltop Carnival A Big Success



The 61st annual Kensington Hilltop Carnival was held May 10, with plenty of sausages, hamburgers, and garden burgers disappearing from the grill manned by the Hilltop School's Dads' Club. Members of the club wore brand new T-shirts for the occasion.

Children enjoyed snow cones, a visit to a fire truck and other treats while adults perused the white elephant sale, a bike sale, and bake sale.

The event is a major fundraiser for the PTA and Dads' Club at Kensington Hilltop School.



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From the case files of the KPD

This report is based on the many reports in the police logs of the Kensington Police Department. The Outlook is solely responsible for the writing and editing of this report.

Events in April

■A false alarm was investigated and found to have been set off by dust. Cleaning does not necessarily mitigate such problems. Later in the month another false alarm was found to have been set off by a cleaning person.

■A resident reported that her husband was missing. Later found that he had been safely transported to the hospital.

■Bronze headstone nameplates stolen from Heian Garden area of Sunset Cemetery. Investigation led to arrest of a suspect in Rodeo.

■A suspicious vehicle was reported. The resident read the license plate to the dispatcher, who determined that the vehicle was stolen. While responding to that call, officer was flagged down by a motorist who reported her car had been stolen. After completing that report, officer noticed a suspicious vehicle parked less than 10 yards away. That one, too, had been stolen.

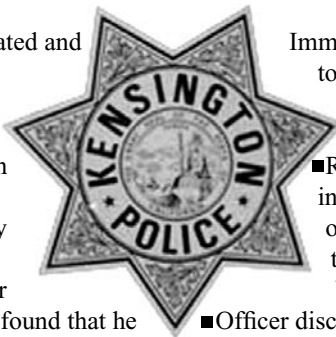
■A day worker rear-ended an unoccupied parked vehicle on Cambridge Drive. Wasn't paying attention.

■Theft from an auto on Sunset Drive of several hundred dollars worth of gardening equipment. Some apparently already owned by the thief found abandoned on Anson Way.

■Non-injury accident when a resident's car collided with parked delivery truck outside Young's Market. Truck won.

■Resident reported a moving truck making its way down Eldridge Court and tearing down overhead wires as it passed. Several residents attempted to get the driver to stop with negative results. Residents were able to point out the damage to the driver but he drove away.

■Officer responded to a residence on Ardmore Road after an infant pulled from the countertop a cup of water that had just been taken from the microwave.



Immediately escorted ambulance to the freeway, where it proceeded to Children's Hospital.

■Resident reported a home invasion robbery, but when officers arrived, found that the caller was home alone. No crime occurred.

■Officer discovered vehicle stopped in the middle of Coventry Road. Driver found sitting on the curb, intoxicated. Driver arrested for DUI.

■Missing person report. When officer arrived, missing person came home. Confusion ensued as to where the missing person had gone and what time she had been expected to arrive home.

■Fraught adult reported missing child on Purdue Ave. Child found inside home.

■Elderly adult reported gone. Had just gone out for a walk.

■Elderly female needing help with a pesky lock was successfully freed from her bedroom.

■Resident on Purdue Avenue reported a wild animal acting strangely. Animal gone when officer arrived.

■Resident on Los Altos Drive reported smelling something strange. Call disconnected.

■Highland Boulevard resident complained of hearing loud wind chimes.

■A dog attacked a deer on Arlington Avenue. Outcome unknown, but either way, bad for the deer.

■Bee hive reported in tree on Arlington Avenue. Vector control contacted.

■Hot tub found abandoned in playground on Highland Boulevard. Propane bills evidently too high, tub perhaps better used as a sandbox.

Kensington Police Department	
Emergency	911
Police dispatch	236-0474
Non Emergency office (daytime)	526-4141
Kensington Fire Department	
Emergency	911
Non Emergency office (daytime)	527-8369

Got Deer?

You probably do. In the next issue of the Kensington Outlook we would like to publish some of your favorite stories about your problems, experiences, and peevs regarding our domesticated neighbors of the forest. Well, formerly of the forest. So please write up your favorite, most funny or amazing experiences, and send along a picture if you have one.

Also, if you have a fool-proof method of keeping deer out of your garden (yeah, right), let us know.

E-mail your contributions to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com, or mail to Kensington Outlook, 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, 94707. Contributions must be received by June 10.

Thieves Using Shaved Keys to Steal Cars

The Kensington Police Department would like to warn car owners of a popular method being used by car thieves. If you own a Honda – the most popular make of car currently targeted – you should be especially careful, officers say.

The current method of operation for thieves is to use “shaved” keys. As cars get older and more used, the locks wear down. Thieves file down a key that can be manipulated to unlock doors and start the ignition. Several cars that have been stolen recently have been found to have no lock damage.

The method has been used on Saturns and Nissans in the past.

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