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Honoring the Past Before Courting the Future

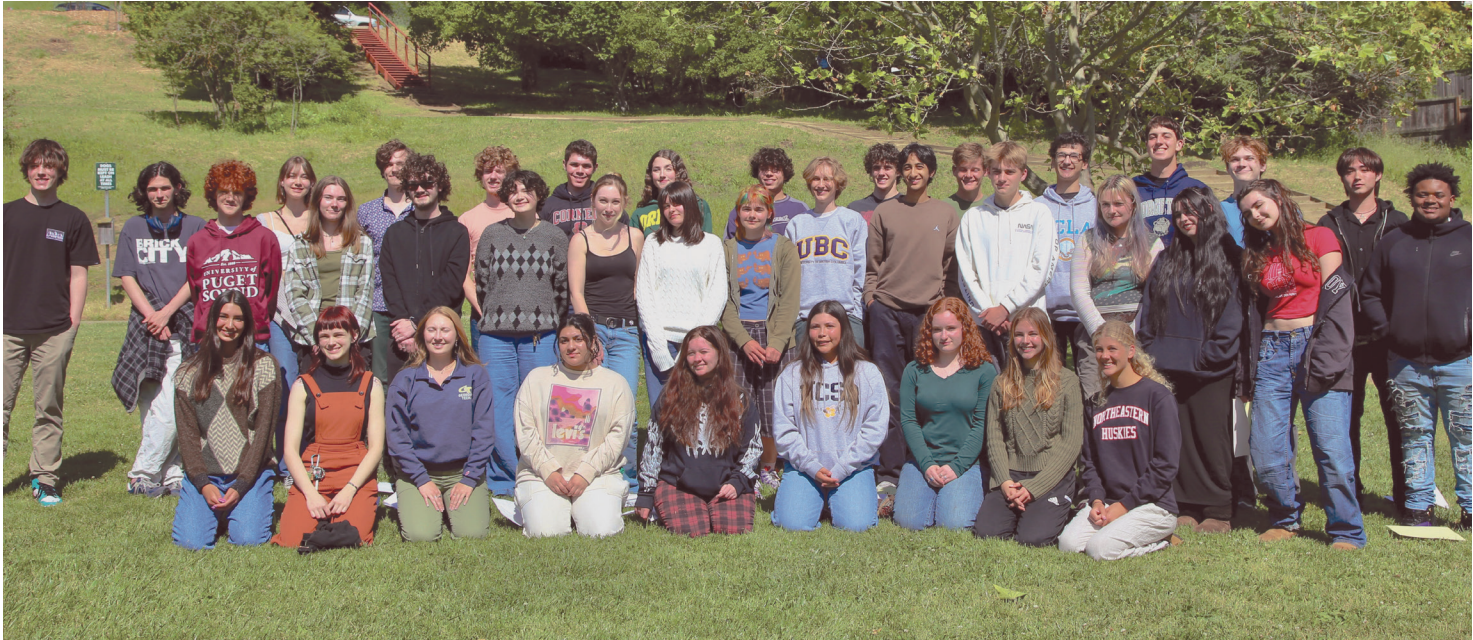


Photo by Doug Diego

Our seniors are off on a brand-new adventure, but they took time to greet old friends and classmates at the annual *Outlook* photo shoot. Each person photographed attended Kensington Hilltop Elementary at some point. Students who couldn't make the photo date are pictured individually on page 3.

Front Row: Julia Gracia, College Prep, Santa Clara University; Adea Hansen-Whistler, Berkeley High School, Macalester; Sasha Wolfsen, Santa Cruz HS, Georgia Tech; Ali Maria, El Cerrito High School, UC Berkeley; Elke Carlstroem, ECHS, SF State; Devin Virvet, Vintage High School, UC San Diego; Mia Stoliartchouk, Saint Mary's High School, UC Davis; Annika Punz, St. Mary's High School, UC Berkeley; Hazel Wijzen, Templeton High School, Northeastern.

Middle Row: Aaron Levi, Albany High School, University of Puget Sound; Brenna Moore, ECHS, UCLA; Drake Fillingim, ECHS, UCSD; Charley Tamagno, Berkeley HS, McGill; Anna McGurry, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Sakina Leduc-Akbar, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Sylvie Diego, ECHS, UC Santa Cruz; Sam Schweitzer, ECHS, University of British Columbia; Chaitanya Dandekar, ECHS, UCSD; Hugo Bale, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Violet McAvliffe, Berkeley HS, Smith College; Olivia Hibser, Berkeley HS, UCSC; Eve Stockford, Berkeley HS, UC Berkeley; Justin Cross, Albany HS, Berkeley CC.

Top Row: Adric Lumma, Los Gatos High School, Undecided; Theo Davis, Holden High School, Gap year; Eva Schroeder, Miramonte High School, University of Denver; Miles Medveczky, ECHS, Undecided; Max Medveczky, ECHS, Cal State Northridge; Ronan Fishbein, Berkeley HS, Cornell; Sydney Mercer, Albany HS, University of Oregon; Andrew Ford, ECHS, UCLA; Henry Clayton, ECHS, UCSC; Jack Malloy, ECHS, UC Davis; Abraham Rokhsar, ECHS, UCLA; Michael Hassner, College Prep High School, Georgetown; Max Fish, Albany HS, UCSC; Zaire Warfield, ECHS, Moler.

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Kensington and Beyond Update

June 2024



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To view online visit: 55arlington.com



FEATURED LISTING | 251 Stanford Avenue Kensington | 3 BR | 2.5 BA | 2145 sqft.(+/-)
Classis Mid-Century design with soaring beamed ceilings and views of the Golden Gate, City and beyond.
OFFERED AT: \$1,589,000
To view online visit: 251stanford.com.com



SOLD | 205 Arlington Avenue Kensington | 4 BR | 3+ BA | 2904 sqft. (+/-)
Beautiful new home with a separate one-bedroom living area, tastefully finished with gorgeous Bay views
OFFERED AT: \$1,549,000
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SOLD | 92 Stratford Road Kensington | 3 BR | 2.5 BA | 1755 sqft. (+/-)
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If you are interested in knowing the value of your home or what is required to sell a home in this market, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary.

I am proud to be recognized as the #1 individual listing agent in Kensington for decades. It is my privilege to serve you.



Ruth Frassetto, CRS | 510.697.8606 | ruth.frassetto@compass.com | DRE 00779030

COMPASS

Kensington Market Update

APRIL - MAY 2024
3 Closed Sales
Median List Price: \$899,000
Median Sales Price: \$1,140,000
Median Sq. Ft.: 1,611
Median Cost Per Sq. Ft.:
List Price: \$558
Sales Price: \$708
Average Days on Market: 14

APRIL - MAY 2023
10 Closed Sales
Median List Price: \$1,247,000
Median Sales Price: \$1,537,000
Median Sq. Ft.: 1,770
Median Cost Per Sq. Ft.:
List Price: \$782
Sales Price: \$934
Average Days on Market: 13

Currently, there is a lot of inventory on the market. 11 Listings with a median list price of \$1,490,000! In this market, everything is about price.

The Importance of Reconveyance

You have paid off a mortgage or a lien (for example: Solar Lease or purchase) on your property, congratulations!!!

The Reconveyance is the instrument that proves you have paid off the debt. The debtor is supposed to record this instrument so the debt does not appear on your title. Frequently this fails to happen, the loan has been sold numerous times since you initially borrowed the money and the reconveyance still needs to be filed. A Reconveyance of the Deed of Trust is the document that releases the lender's interest in your property and confirms that you have fully paid your loan. When selling your home, this can be an issue, as the title must be clear to transfer to the buyer.

I recommend being proactive and making sure you have the Reconveyance Documentation available should you need it. In one of my recent sales, the preliminary title report showed a loan that had been paid off was showing as unpaid, the seller had to locate the current holder of the loan which had been sold numerous times, then contact that lender, and request the reconveyance before the transaction could close. What happens if the lender or in the example the Solar Company is no longer in business? The Title company needs to issue a "lost note bond", and a portion of the proceeds are held back as collateral. This can be expensive and create a delay in the closing. It is therefore important to request a reconveyance when the loan is paid off. Years later it can be an expensive issue to fix.



If you are interested in knowing the value of your home or what is required to sell a home in this market, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary.

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The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues. KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.

JULY-AUGUST-2024
DEADLINES
Advertising Deadline ❖ JUNE 8
Editorial Deadline ❖ JUNE 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.

KENSINGTON
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Police “Visioning” Meeting: Lots of Assessing, Different Visions

By Linnea Due

Over a nearly four-hour meeting billed as a strategic planning workshop, Ridgeline principal Dmitry Semenov set the stage for the fiscal analysis Ridgeline has contracted to provide for the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) and the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) in advance of a possible governmental reorganization that would end with one district and five directors rather than our two-district, ten-director system.

Semenov distributed pre-meeting questionnaires to KPPCSD directors, GM David Aranda, and Police Chief Mike Gancasz. Acting as facilitator, Semenov began the meeting by congratulating the participants for their thorough answers to the questionnaire, which asked them to address “SWOT”—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—for administration, police, and more. The directors, Aranda, and Gancasz were also asked to assess community perception, review a strategic plan from 2022, determine funding opportunities, and finally imagine multi-year visions broken down into time increments.

Ridgeline staff did the pre-meeting job of combining questionnaire answers into PowerPoint slides. Administration strengths included the current GM, finance department, great work ethic, customer service, a cooperative board, high caliber directors, and more. Weaknesses were staff turnover, no financial manager, limited interaction between board and community, reliance on consultants, no updates on website, etc. It was hard to square the excellent finance department with no manager or strong customer service with limited outreach and staff turnover. The threats followed suit: failure to retain a permanent general manager, inability to maintain competent staff due to lack of funding, financial hardship due to overspending on police building.

The assessment of the police was laudatory: competent chief, dedicated officers, stays within budget. The chief weakness was easy to guess: no permanent home with police now headquartered in El Cerrito. Director Cass Duggan suggested adding a full-time social worker to the force, perhaps replacing a sworn officer, while the threats included rising pension costs, the \$10 million price tag for a new building (though directors challenged that amount), and lack of a clear plan for evacuation.

Board president Dave Spath objected to this charge. “We just approved a leaflet in partnership with the fire district to educate people about evacuation. Street parking is not our responsibility. The county manages parking.”

GM David Aranda said, “We need to look at the big picture. We need a professional [evacuation] plan done. The police have responsibilities, but with the manpower the chief has there's only so much they can do.”

Duggan said, “I personally see this as the biggest concern in Kensington. Consolidation will help this, and I'd like to see all the money go to this issue. I'd like to delay on the building. We've got to address our safety.” This topic was revisited later on.

By the time the meeting got to the public perception of the district, directors worried that the exercise would be misunderstood—that the PowerPoint, posted on the website, would be viewed as residents' perceptions rather than assessments by the directors, Aranda, and the police chief. Sylvia Hacaj said, “We need to survey the community. We need a really good community survey.” Aranda said that he had interacted with ten or fifteen residents—a tiny fraction of Kensington residents, and often the same people. “How do we get the facts out [to tell the district's] story?”

Cracks in that story began to emerge when Semenov got to what he termed “Rolling up the sleeves,” the police building. Everyone agreed the police needed to be in Kensington, but Semenov's listed options included a stand-alone building, relocating portables behind the library, putting the department in the Public Safety Building (PSB), or creating a county multi-use building that would house the library with the police. Hacaj said that locating the police in the PSB was “no longer a solution,” while director Alex Aquino-Fike questioned the purpose of the slide: “There is really only one option we're considering, and that's a stand-alone building.”

Duggan said a county building combining the library, administration and the police could be cheaper but proposed relocating the police in portables behind the library to “let the dust settle” before a consolidated board was seated. Director Sarah Gough, who had, with Aquino-Fike, been on the committee that investigated building options, said,

See Police, Page 4

April Patrol Log

- On April 2, law enforcement officers responded to Arlington Court to conduct an investigation into a deceased individual. No evidence suggesting foul play was discovered, and the case was forwarded to the Coroner's office.
- On April 3, officers were notified at the KPD lobby regarding a reported sexual assault. An investigation has been initiated, with paramount focus on providing necessary resources and support to the victim.
- On April 7, law enforcement personnel responded to Sunset Drive to investigate instances of vandalism and grand theft. The investigation remains ongoing to ascertain pertinent details.
- On April 10, officers were dispatched to Kenyon Avenue to investigate a report of an auto burglary.
- On April 12, officers responded to a report of a residential burglary on Amherst Avenue. The residence was unoccupied and under construction. The investigation into this matter is currently ongoing.
- On April 16, officers responded to Garden Drive to address a possible burglary of an unoccupied residence. A formal report was documented, and the investigation continues to progress.
- On April 17, officers were alerted to a bomb threat at Kensington Hilltop School. Collaborative efforts with school authorities and West Contra Costa County Unified School District ensued, ultimately determining the threat to be non-credible. A comprehensive walkthrough of the school premises yielded no suspicious findings. A detailed report was filed to document the incident.
- On April 18, officers responded to a non-injury traffic collision in the vicinity of Westminster and York avenues.
- On April 18, officers responded to Lexington Road following a report of petty theft from a motor vehicle. Investigations into this incident remain ongoing.
- On April 23, law enforcement personnel responded to Kenilworth Drive regarding a reported stolen vehicle. Investigations into the matter are ongoing.
- On April 25, officers were dispatched to Kenyon Avenue to investigate a report of identity theft. A report was filed, resources were extended to the victim, and investigations are currently underway.



Child-Focused Nonprofit Moves into ACC

By Erin Yi

The International Child Resource Institute (ICRI), a beacon of hope and innovation in early childhood education and community empowerment, is excited to announce that ICRI's beloved Hearts Leap program will enhance its reach by moving to the Arlington Community Church in Kensington. The program is currently enrolling children aged 18 months to five years, promising to continue its legacy of nurturing young minds with care and expertise.

Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Berkeley, ICRI is a globally recognized nonprofit committed to improving the lives of children and families worldwide. With a vision sharply focused on enabling every child and family to realize their fullest potential, ICRI has vigorously advocated for children's rights and supported women and girls, responding proactively to international health emergencies and nurturing grassroots community development.

ICRI's influence spans several continents, with significant accomplishments in the United States, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nepal. Among these, ICRI's initiatives in Kenya stand out. ICRI operates two preschools in Kenya, reaching 131 children from low-income to ultra-poor families. We offer clean water, sanitation, healthcare services, and food in all our programs. We recognize that for many, the food these children eat at our center may be the only meal they have daily. By providing these essential initiatives, our goal is to help these children survive and thrive in the future.

Additionally, ICRI operates nine dynamic programs here locally that create a warm, secure, and stimulating environment where children can learn, grow, and flourish. The newest addition, Hearts Leap at Kensington's ACC, aims to deliver unparalleled early childhood care and education. We provide care and education to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. We have a relationship-based, child-centered, project-driven curriculum with activities including art, play with open-ended materials, and interaction with nature to encourage unique expression and interest. ICRI warmly invites the community to join its mission. Whether by enrolling children in ICRI's programs, volunteering, or contributing to the many transformative projects underway, individuals and organizations can make a real, tangible difference. For more information or to get involved, please contact ICRI at (510) 644-1000 or via email at info@icrichild.org. You can also visit our website at icrichild.org. To enroll in our Hearts Leap Kensington ECD program, please email nell@icrichild.org.

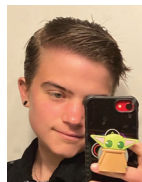
Seniors Who Missed the Photo Shoot



Ellis Lay,
Bentley HS,
Boston U



Rivka Pelisse,
Paris,
Undecided



Wylder Devito,
Edison HS,
Portland CC



Amanda Jordan
Hawaii Prep Academy,
Occidental College

KPD’s Vijay Thota Polices for the People

By Linnea Due

Officer Vijay Thota was born in Oakland’s Children’s Hospital, but he spent a grand total of two months in the States before his parents sent the infant to India to be raised by his grandparents. He went to a Christian boarding school through the sixth grade and then returned to the States to start seventh grade at Willard Middle School in South Berkeley. To say there was culture shock is an understatement.



Thota said that his parents, first generation immigrants, “worked, worked, worked.” And once back in the States, they expected him to “study, study, study.” Thota was more interested in playing soccer, but his parents were cautious about his interactions with other kids: “So much of my social life has been suppressed by my parents because they were so cautious,” he said in a recent interview.

He ended up leaving Berkeley High to get a GED so he could enroll in a medical assistant course in Pleasant Hill. His parents, meanwhile, opened an Indian restaurant in Stockton. While continuing medical and criminal justice courses, Thota helped out in the family business: “They opened the restaurant in 2009, and I worked there until I started the [police] academy in 2019.” Thota mostly worked the front of the house, talking to customers, answering questions, and being the face of the enterprise. Like many police officers, he is a people person, and he was not fond of being stuck in the kitchen. Towards the end of 2018, he took a six-week vacation to India and discovered that his father had arranged a marriage for his son. “In any relationship, you have to work things out,” Thota explained. “I was open to an arranged marriage.”

That working-out was interrupted by the pandemic. He and his wife married in 2019 but his wife was unable to join him until 2022. He says that she is still adjusting, and he is able to help because of his own experience feeling at sea after arriving in Berkeley.

Thota feels that all these experiences—working in the restaurant, making friends in difficult circumstances, aiding his wife in transitioning to a new country—have helped him be a better police officer. He began his policing career in Stockton but did not care for the culture. While attending the academy, Thota realized that department wasn’t for him. “I felt policing is about talking to people,” he said. “In Stockton there wasn’t much community policing because you’re on a beat.” He ended up completing his courses at the South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium in San Jose. And it was there that he heard Kensington was looking for officers.

“I didn’t know Kensington; I really just knew South Berkeley. Soon after I graduated, I went for a ride-along with Brad Harms. I was so impressed with the way he presented himself and with the department. He took his time to show me the community. I didn’t want to put in any more applications—I wanted to be here. And within three months, I was hired by this department.”

Thota’s positive impressions haven’t changed. “The department is trying to build a department that matches the personality of the residents of Kensington. It’s much more organized than Stockton. When I started the training program, it’s not a one-way street. They assess the personality of the person. In the past, the department had problems. Now people that get hired are suited to work here.”

He explained that as a police officer, you have a lot of authority. And to Thota, an important part of policing is “not to abuse your authority. You need to show that no problem is too small to deal with. People look to you for answers. And you need to be personable.” As an example, Thota, who works graveyard, found that people in Kensington walk their dogs at two and three in the morning. “You can stop your car and get out and walk with them. Just talk to people.” And he also found that residents are the department’s best resource. “We can’t be all over the district. They’re our eyes and ears.”

Thota joined the department on September 11, 2023. The biggest problem he’s seen is staffing shortages. He says that trying to build a culture attuned to the community takes time and hard work, which means officers wear multiple hats and often work alone. “I’ve been working graveyard for three months. It can be scary. We have to thank El Cerrito and Albany because they’ve been our backup. When we go to domestic incidents, Albany and El Cerrito are there.” But, he noted, those officers can’t stick around long, as they’re busy too. “It’s different when you have your own partner. Working alone makes it more dangerous.” (Kensington officers also serve as backup to El Cerrito and Albany.)

The department recently hired two new officers but still needs another officer and a sergeant. “We hire people to stay in this department for a long time,” Thota said. “It’s not about the money. It’s about the culture.” And the people.

Police
...from Page 3

“This whole issue is to give you direction for the fiscal analysis. The board has concluded that a stand-alone building is the way we’re going to go.”

Hacaj noted that the directive to cost out locating the police in the PSB was from the fire district, not the KPPCSD. Gough shot down the county building idea: “In the course of our committee work we met with the county. There is no appetite on the part of the county to fund any part of the police building.”

Two and a half hours in, Semenov asked the directors to brainstorm quick and easy short-term wins. Hacaj proposed surveying the community as a quick win. GM Aranda thought installing a dog park in Kensington Park could prove a win. That idea didn’t prove popular with Spath, who said that he’d been studying the size of successful dog parks, and that Kensington’s park would be too small. “I think we should be enforcing the requirement that owners keep their dogs on leash. People in Kensington need to obey the law.” Spath also felt that a master plan for Kensington Park needed to be hammered out before looking for “quick and easy wins.”

Aquino-Fike thought hiring a high school intern to deal with the website and communications could be done quickly. Spath said, “Then we need a plan for that individual to do.” The survey ran into similar problems: too early to do a survey about whether the community wanted to tax itself for a police building when so little was known about costs or possible grants. The board decided to stop talking about “quick and easy wins” and move on to top priorities.

Aranda said he considered determining the cost to make the Annex a usable building a top priority of the next one to three years. Hacaj wanted a master plan for the park. “I would like to see the minimal needs of the park fully funded because at this point they are not,” she said. And of course, figuring out the building that will house the police and administration is a short-term priority. Semenov summarized: “The building, the Annex, funding for the parks and for operations... Big nuts we’re trying to crack.”

A Dash of Cold Water

Those weren’t all, even as Aquino-Fike pointed out the short-term priorities had become overwhelming. Gough brought up the ever-impending GM hire, since Aranda is an interim and restricted by CalPERS as to how many hours he can work. Spath brought up studies that are mandated for solid waste and franchise fees (besides the park and the police, the district also oversees the solid waste contract with Bay View.)

See Police, Page 5

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Arlington Kiosk Gets a Makeover

By Lisa Caronna

The round kiosk on Arlington was recently reconditioned and painted thanks to dues and donations to the Kensington Improvement Club (KIC). The kiosk with the blue awning is one of the key features at the southern entrance to Kensington.



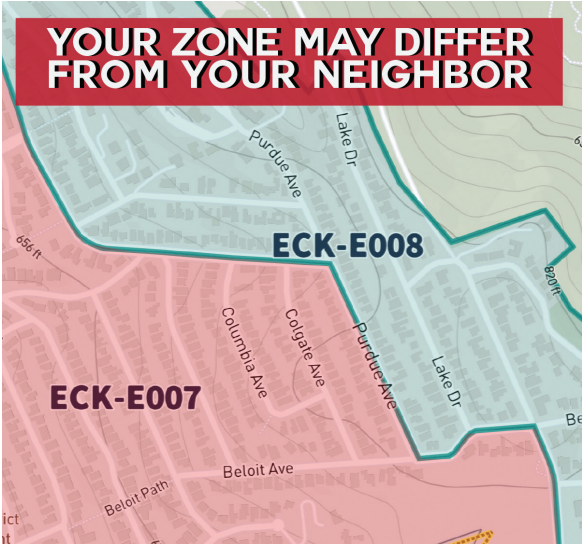
KIC President Linda Lipscomb stated, “KIC keeps their eyes on needed improvements to the public areas in Kensington and work to make improvements when possible. It’s the little things that make a difference and demonstrate that we all care about this community and the spaces we share.”

A bit of history—local architect Bart Jones, who still lives and works in Kensington, designed the Arlington kiosk was designed in the early ‘80s. And the Boy Scouts constructed the project under Jones’ direction. Anthony Knight, who for years was on the KIC board of directors in various capacities, did not leave all of his KIC do-gooder activities behind him: for years now, and to this day, Knight monitors the kiosk and removes outdated notices, and makes sure enough tacks and pushpins are available to put up notices. Just another one of KIC’s members volunteering quietly, largely sight unseen, to do good for our town!

Wildfire Evacuation Details Coming to Your Mailbox

By Johnny Valenzuela

The Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) is rolling out a public awareness campaign of critical information residents must know in the event of an evacuation. Each household in Kensington will receive instructions tailored to one of six zones within the community. These zones are based on the Genasys zones, formerly known as Zonehaven. Please note that instructions will vary depending on the zone boundaries, and that neighbors living close to you may live in a different zone.



For instance, residents of Lake Drive will find zone-specific details that differ from those a block to the west. You will receive a detailed map highlighting your zone’s boundaries, insights into the risks unique to your zone, your designated zone number, and crucial reminders to assemble “go-bags” and establish a well-planned evacuation route. Planning should include discussing arrangements for shelter with friends or family outside the immediate danger area.

The importance of thoroughly reviewing this information and discussing preparedness plans with your neighbors is a key part of doing your part to prepare for wildfire evacuations. Creating a community-centric approach to emergency readiness enhances individual safety and strengthens our community resilience. Especially consider how you can assist neighbors who might need extra help during an evacuation—planning together ensures the safety of the most vulnerable members of this community.

Watch for your mailer, review its contents, and discuss with your neighbors to improve safety and preparedness in Kensington. If you’d like to host a Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Party to discuss improving wildfire prevention and preparedness on your street, reach out to prepare@kensingtonfire.org.

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Police
...from Page 4

Duggan again proposed evacuation planning. “Emergency preparedness should be our top priority. What is the role of the police in an emergency?”

Police Chief Gancasz said, “The role of the police in an evacuation procedure is to declare an evacuation. I will be very blunt with you. There is one police officer on duty during the day [or night]. If there is an earthquake, there is one police officer to evacuate 5,000 people.... Get it out of your head that one officer can evacuate 5,000 people.” He noted that surrounding cities have hired disaster preparedness coordinators. “They prepare plans. Eighty percent of those plans provide public education.” Gancasz added that when he arrived in Kensington, he was told to “get on the disaster preparedness train.” He asked how much the district had budgeted for disaster preparedness. The answer was nothing. “The GM and I are on the same page. We want to employ a part-time disaster preparedness professional to write a plan.”

At the end, they settled on these as the near-term priorities: determining what to do with the Annex, district funding, staffing and permanent general manager, emergency preparedness plan, solid waste studies, park funding, district building.

Semenov tried to attack a four- to six-year list but that quickly devolved into discussion about timing. “Everyone’s really tired,” he concluded. He proposed putting together a list of priorities broken down into stages that would accomplish those priorities. Chief Gancasz volunteered to do one item not on the short-term list: create a set of ordinances that the department needs in order to police effectively. For example, there is no ordinance against camping in Kensington Park. Aranda said, “The district needs a set of ordinances that allows us to enforce rules that people break.” Gancasz chimed in. “It’s a simple process. You can create an ordinance that says no parking on certain streets during red flag days and a determination of what penalties would be imposed. It’s no different than a no-camping ordinance in the park. It would have to be posted and noticed online.” Gancasz said he could knock out such a list of ordinances and fines in six months.

At the end, Semenov said he would meet with Aranda and Gancasz and start breaking down the priorities into “digestible bites.” Then he will come back to the board for what is likely to be another long, taxing meeting.



KENSINGTON K-9s

Virgil: Man About Town
By Winston Churchill, Bulldog

I remember being so excited the first time I saw Virgil. He was walking along Arlington Ave. with his parents, Jo and Mark. Woof, woof! I just couldn't stop barking at him. Woof, woof! Hello, new friend! Finally, I found a neighbor that looks even more like a cartoon character than I do! Virgil is a Basset Hound. And from the way he confidently struts his handsome 72 lbs. about town, it's clear that Virgil is no ordinary Kensington K-9. He's an AKC Champion, officially named Castlehills Man about Town. But when he's not in the show ring, he's just goofy, lovable Virgil. Jo and Mark first fell in love with Virgil when they met him at just a week old. Now 11 years of age, he's enjoying a leisurely, pampered retirement. For eight years, Virgil enjoyed competing in AKC conformation events. In these very popular competitions, dogs are evaluated on how closely they conform to the established standard of their breed. With Jo as his handler, they



were a winning team and enjoyed training together, traveling to dog shows, competing, and making friends with Bassets and those who love them. Jo and Mark formerly had a Basset named Archie. They love this breed because they're so distinctive and full of personality! Bassets are known to be gentle and sociable, friendly with children and other dogs. They have soulful facial expressions and an overabundance of goofiness. Everywhere they go, people smile and ask if they can pet Virgil. At this point, Virgil spends most of his time relaxing and playing at home with his family. He also enjoys walks around town to greet his fellow Kensingtonians. He loves going to the beach and happily barking at other dogs playing in the surf and running across the sand. His special talent is singing Happy Birthday with his hound dog howl. Virgil's walks about town have grown shorter and slower since he's recovering from a back injury. Virgil suffered from a herniated disc a year ago, causing pain and paralysis in his rear legs. He had emergency spinal surgery and underwent three months of physical therapy, aqua therapy, and rehabilitation. Fortunately, Virgil has resumed his walkabouts and is happily wagging his tail again. He's on a slow and steady journey to recovery. Although he's enjoying retirement, he continues healing and getting stronger every day. Virgil still has the heart of a champion.

Song Circle, Yayoi Kusama, Wild Things Highlight June Library Events

By Jenny Rockwell
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, June 4, 6:30pm, Castoff's Knitting Club Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Open to all levels of knitters. Bring your own yarn!
Tuesdays, June 4, 11, 18, 6:30pm Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome.
Tuesdays, June 4, 18 Read to a Dog Join us and a licensed therapy dog for a fifteen-minute reading session every first and third Tuesday afternoon. June 4 session will be from 4-5pm, June 18 3-4pm.
Sat, June 8, 1pm Song Circle Come sing in joyful community with Eileen Hazel and Lilianna Parker. Community song circles, deeply rooted in ancient human traditions, are experiencing a revival in our modern era. In a world saturated with commercially produced music, these gatherings provide a meaningful return to the essence of shared musical expression.
Tues, June 11, 6pm Friends of the Kensington Library Friends of the Kensington Library, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, has worked to improve and financially support library services in Kensington since 1959. Open to all Kensington residents.
Tues, June 11, 6:30pm The World of Yayoi Kusama Join art lecturer Avril Angevine for an illuminating view of Yayoi Kusama, one of the world's most iconic and celebrated artists working today. With connections to Pop Art, Minimalism, psychedelia, and popular culture, Kusama's multidisciplinary career transcends categories as the artist continues to innovate over a career spanning more than 70 years.
Thurs, June 13, 2pm Blast off with Paper Rockets Start summer off with a bang by making a cool paper rocket and shooting it a hundred and fifty feet in the air. Really, it's that high. You might have seen stomp rockets, but this is much better.
Mon, June 24, 6:30-8pm Kensington Library Book Club The club meets via Zoom, usually on the fourth Monday of each month. June's book is Giants of the Earth by O.E. Rølvaag.
Tues, June 25, 6:30pm Conservation Ambassadors' Wild Things In conjunction with the Kensington Community Council, the Kensington Library presents the amazing animals of Conservation Ambassadors! We don't know what they are bringing, but we know that it is going to be awesome. The show is at Kensington Park, uphill from the library.
June 2024, Seed library While supplies last, the Kensington Library seed library is always being restocked with free seeds of seasonal varieties. We also accept seed donations!

June 1- August 3, 2024, Summer Reading This year Summer Reading is celebrating all things nature. The Contra Costa County Library's summer literacy program focuses on conservation, animals, and getting invested in protecting the ecosystems we cherish. Readers of all ages can visit cclib.org/summer for fun projects and challenges to help keep our planet thriving. Every completed entry is eligible for a free book and a chance to win prizes.

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OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT. Kensington Village Center @ 268 Arlington Ave, 250 SF, 1st Floor, adjacent to waiting area. Private. Call Bart Jones @ 510-527-9328.

PARENT COACHING - early childhood specialist Susan Gann, former preschool teacher/director turned child psychotherapist (retired). Phone/Zoom sessions available. Resume and references available upon request. 510-604-2375

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER - Quality Headshots to Family Portraits. Nan Phelps Photography located at 398 Colusa Ave. Learn more at nanphelps.com or YELP. Contact: nan@nanphelps.com or phone 510-527-8845

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A heartfelt thank you to all the Kensington families! For every transaction with a Kensington family, I proudly donate 10% of my commission to the Kensington Education Foundation. Your support not only helps me but also contributes to the growth and development of the Hilltop Elementary community.

TAILORED SERVICE FOR EVERY HOME

Each listing presents its own unique challenges. With over a decade of experience in both real estate and industrial design, I offer a distinct perspective. Having resided in Kensington with our three sons since 2013, I understand the local market intricately. My unwavering commitment to service ensures that each home is marketed to its best advantage.

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Introducing our Concierge Program, designed to alleviate the stress of preparing your home for sale. At 0% interest, we cover all preparation costs, including staging. With my background in high-end retail and store design, I bring a designer's eye to every aspect of the process, ensuring your home is showcased in its best light.

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KENSINGTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION



KCC Summer Camp

We're in full swing with plans for an incredible summer camp experience! We're delighted to announce that Shira Skloot is joining our summer camp team as Camp Director. Shira's work in the KASEP office, coupled with her camp directing background, brings a wealth of expertise to our program. Her vibrant energy, creativity, and musical talents promise an unforgettable summer ahead.

Assisting Shira is Ayaz Earley, our Camp Assistant Director. Ayaz's journey from KCC camper to CIT and counselor has uniquely prepared him for this role. His passion for camp and his wealth of experience make him a fantastic addition to our leadership team.

Alongside our exceptional camp counselors, we're thrilled to have Kaleb Paige and Anna Thomsen as our Head Counselors. Their dedication, leadership, and commitment to fostering a welcoming environment ensure that every camper's experience is enriching and memorable.

With such an outstanding team in place, we're gearing up for a summer filled with adventure, laughter, and lifelong memories. Get ready for the best summer yet!

We still have space available in many weeks of camp.



Summer Schedule for Adult and Family Classes

April Schlanger Summer Cooking Series

June 18th: Pickling Veggies and Fruit:

Learn how to make a basic pickle brine that works great with vegetables and fruits, and learn how to use these pickles in recipes.

July 9th: Upcycle Your Excess Summer Fruits

Too much fruit? Learn how to make sauces, compote and beverages with all that summer fruit.

July 23rd: Basic Fermentation and Pickling:

Learn the basics of kimchi and pickles.

Cardio Dance with Karma Smart

Moves to
Thursdays 10am-11am beginning June 6th
Community Center
Cost \$15 drop in or register online

KCC Summer Camp Activities & Schedule

\$425 Kensington Resident/\$470 Nonresident per week

Week 1 June 10- June 14 Active Waitlist

Theme: Rainbows & Unicorns • Specialty: Creative Crafts w/ April Schlanger • Mid-Week Activity: Sterling the Bubblesmith

Week 2 *June 17–June 21 (no camp Wednesday 6/19) *cost \$350/\$385
Theme: Superheroes • Specialty: Carpentry

Week 3 June 24–June 28

Theme: Enchanted Forest • Specialty: Fun with Food
• Mid-Week Activity: Brian Scott Magic Show

Week 4 *July 1- July 5 (no camp Thursday 7/4) *cost is \$350/\$385
Theme: Stars & Stripes • Specialty: Dance Fitness • Mid-Week Activity: Cooking Creations

Week 5 July 8 – July 12

Theme: Dino Days • Specialty: Sports Medley • Mid-Week Activity: Visit from the Vivarium

Week 6 July 15 - July 19

Theme: Jr. Chef Showdown • Specialty: Cooking w/ April • Mid-Week Activity: Cooking Competition

Week 7 July 22 – July 26

Theme: Animal Adventures • Specialty: Cooking Creations • Mid-Week Activity: Petting Zoo

Week 8 July 29 - August 2

Theme: Under the Sea • Specialty: Legos • Mid-Week Activity: Chocolate Creations

Week 9 August 5 - August 9

Theme: Olympic Week • Specialty: Camp Olympics

Week 10 August 12 - August 16 Active Waitlist

Theme: Beach Week • Specialty: Sports Medley • Mid-Week Activity: Cooking with Vicky



Yoga with Anja Borgstrom

Strength & Balance Yoga - Tuesdays at 8:30am
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

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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@KensingtonCommunityCouncil





Our family has long been fond of Sushi Matsu, a charming spot known for its exceptional sushi, conveniently located at the intersection of Moesser and San Pablo. Just across the street from the Japanese grocery store Yaoya-San where we shop for everything from seaweed to sake, this neighborhood has become our go-to destination for satisfying our cravings for all things Japanese.

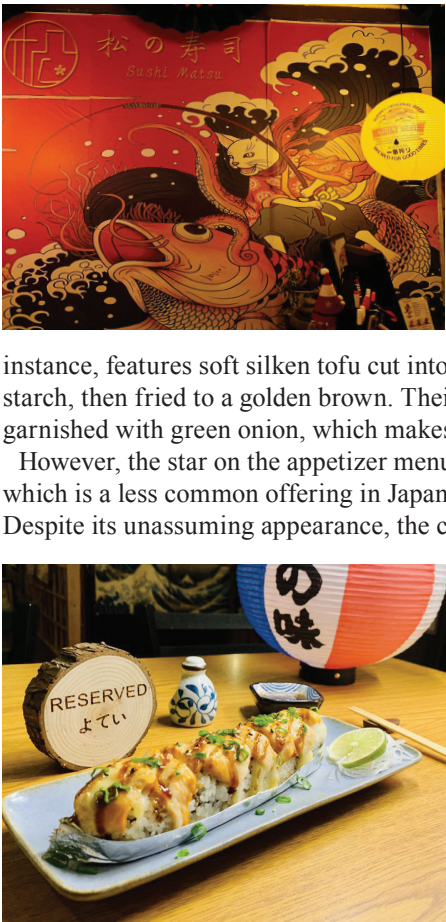
Recently, a drive past Sushi Matsu revealed a remarkable change to its once humble facade. What was once modest storefront now boasts a stunning transformation, featuring a colorful mural that demands a second glance. Set against a red backdrop, an homage to Hokusai’s iconic wave sweeps across the scene, with a lively gold koi fish in the foreground and Mount Fuji standing tall in the distance, completing the picturesque panorama.

Kudos to both the artist and Sushi Matsu for showcasing cultural artistry while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of their restaurant. This vibrant addition brightens up the entire neighborhood.

Stepping inside Sushi Matsu, one is immediately drawn to another large mural featuring the same Hokusai motif, this time with a whimsical twist: a cat fisherman riding a giant koi, blending Hokusai’s style with comic-book flair, its style and energy seamlessly connect with the newly created artwork out front.

During peak hours, dining amidst the bustling ambiance, with walls adorned with posters and graphics, feels akin to a cozy spot in one of Tokyo’s urban hubs —except, perhaps, for the basketball game playing on the big screen TV. Once settled, the compact prep station in the back is busy crafting sushi to order.

The menu at Sushi Matsu offers a range of classics, from traditional rolls to nigiri and sashimi. Always drawn a sushi restaurants special rolls, a guilty pleasure of mine is the



49er’s roll, featuring crab meat, salmon, and avocado, topped with thinly cut, whole lemon slices. The lemon adds a hint of sourness and bitterness from the peel, creating a unique and memorable flavor profile. Another favorite is the Lion King roll, which also features crab meat, but is baked and topped with garlic and unagi sauce.

While it is easy to fill up on a selection of rolls, what sets Sushi Matsu apart is its appetizer selection. The Agedashi Tofu, for instance, features soft silken tofu cut into cubes, delicately coated with potato or corn-starch, then fried to a golden brown. Their version is served in a savory dashi broth and garnished with green onion, which makes for a delightful balance of textures and flavors.

However, the star on the appetizer menu is the Hamachi Kama, or yellowtail collar, which is a less common offering in Japanese restaurants even here in the Bay Area. Despite its unassuming appearance, the collar is revered for being the meatiest and juiciest part of the fish. With a subtle and clean flavor, its preparation is simple with only the minor addition of house ponzu sauce to accentuate its natural qualities.

From its captivating murals to its menu that delivers consistent quality, Sushi Matsu stands out in its community and never disappoints!

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MIDYEAR UPDATE
FROM ZIP CODE EAST BAY

WE LOVE KENSINGTON! Our love for our community is central to our mission. Here are a few updates about what we’ve been up to in Colusa Circle this spring.

COLUSA CIRCLE 5K Thanks to everyone who participated in the 6th annual Colusa Circle 5K run on Saturday, April 13th. We raised over \$4,000 for **GROWING TOGETHER**, which will support their garden and environmental education program at El Cerrito High School. You can check out photos from race day on our website at zipcodeeastbay.com/events.

EARTH MONTH CLEAN-UP The ZCEB team gathered in April to celebrate Earth Month by cleaning up litter in Colusa Circle and the surrounding neighborhood. We love helping our community sparkle!

NEW AGENT Join us in welcoming Cheri Mallo to Zip Code East Bay! A Bay Area resident for more than 30 years, Cheri brings her passion for helping people, love of houses, and background in art and design. Ask her about her favorite hiking trails!
cheri@zipcodeeastbay.com

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