

Kensington 360

...from page 1

center of Kensington life since it was built in 1955. It is where our community meetings are held; where the Kensington Community Council (KCC) holds after-school educational classes and Children’s summer camp; where adult classes are held during the day, and scouts hold their meetings at night. Kensington School’s 6th grade class celebrates their achievements with a promotion ceremony and dance each June as they move on to middle school. And many families have celebrated birthdays, retirements and other milestone occasions.

In short, this is a community treasure. It is also a community responsibility and we now need to reenergize our long history of stewardship by working together to see that the proposed renovation comes to pass. The Community Center was last renovated in 1987 and is long overdue for an update.

The benefits of the renovation are many: first and foremost, the safety of all who use the building, especially children who spend the most hours in it by far. For example, this session, the KCC is offering 62 classes after school for kindergarteners through 6th graders, and many of them are held in the Community Center. Studies show that at present the Community Center does not meet state seismic safety standards to protect occupants during an earthquake. This is particularly concerning as the Hayward Fault travels very close to the building. The peace of mind that parents, and all of

us, will have knowing that occupants will be as safe as possible with a public building that meets safety codes is priceless.

As a reflection of our civic values, the Community Center should be a building that welcomes everyone with full accessibility to participate in community life. Much of the proposed renovation involves bringing the building up to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. People also often have difficulty discerning the main entrance the first time they approach the building. The new design includes a well-marked entrance with a canopy and opens up the front wall to tie the main room to the patio and lawn. These enhancements will remove impediments to accessibility and make the space more welcoming to all.

An added benefit to the renovation will be to reduce Kensington’s carbon footprint with increased energy efficiency of the building. The glass front will add passive solar heating, and the canopy will provide shade in the summer. Insulation will be added under the roof and new, more efficient gas furnaces will make the building more comfortable year-round.

Looking back at the history of the community center, we know that an opportunity to make necessary improvements comes around about every 30 years. This is our time to make this investment for our community. Many volunteers have already dedicated hours of planning and effort to ensure that this building is safe, welcoming, accessible and environmentally conscious, reflecting Kensington’s ideals.

A major fundraising campaign is being

organized to engage the community in helping to make this happen. Not since the purchase of the park from the West Contra Costa Unified School district in the 1990s has such a large campaign been undertaken. The total cost for the base project is currently estimated at \$1.65 million and the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) has secured \$1.295 million through the current budget and reserves, a county grant, and pledges from the Kensington Community Council and the Kensington Improvement Club. Now residents can help. The goal is to raise \$360,000.

An active group of volunteers has started to organize fundraising parties and promote word-of-mouth donations. Keep an eye out for information tables on the Arlington, at Colusa Circle, and the Farmers Market on weekends.

Recently, a longtime community volunteer showed off a list of hundreds of residents who contributed to the funding of Kensington Park. We know from past experience that Kensingtonians are the type of people who are capable of anything they put their minds to when they put their talents to work. As the Community Center Renovation Fundraising project rolls out, please support in any way you can.

For more information, visit our website kensington360.org. If you wish to be an active volunteer in this once-in-a-thirty-year effort, please contact Anne Forrest, president of the Kensington Community Council at anneforrest24@gmail.com.



Kensington 360 – A View to the Future



By Anne Forrest and Sylvia Hacaj

This year Kensington is poised to make crucial improvements to one of our most important community assets, the Community Center, which is also affectionately known as the “Youth Hut.” The Community Center has been the

This rendering of the front of the planned renovation to the Kensington Community Center shows some of the new elements, such as a more visible, accessible entry and walls that open up into the garden. The new canopy offers shelter from rain and shade from the sun. The renovation will bring the center up to today’s seismic safety, accessibility, and energy-efficiency codes. Features include the canopy, folding glass walls, and a wider push-button entry. Interior upgrades are many—improved lighting, fully accessible kitchen and bathrooms, better heating, and more storage. Each upgrade is designed to coalesce into a contemporary and pleasing whole. Graphic courtesy of Glass Associates.

See Kensington 360, back page



MARVIN GARDENS

REAL ESTATE

We Know the East Bay!



1797 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Berkeley
4br/1.5ba ~ Listed at \$1,695,000



620 Coventry Rd, Kensington
3+br/2ba ~ \$949,000



631 Vincente Rd, Berkeley
4+br/2.5br ~ Price TBD

Packing, painting, pricing, staging.
We can help you every step of the way!



MARVINGARDENS.COM
510.524.0800

The New Option



SQUARE SCHOOL

SCHL

Family Information Nights

Berkeley
2/27
3/13

MIDDLE SCHOOL & DESIGN CAMPS

squareschool.org

Learn With Us

Letters to the Editor

Food Waste Survey

Dear Editor:

Many Kensington residents have inquired about having food waste taken as composting along with our green waste. Currently, most communities in California have weekly food compost/yard waste pickup.

At present, Bay View Refuse picks up unlimited green waste twice a month. For residents to place food waste with their yard waste, the service would require weekly pickup. Residents would be able to place out a rolling cart for food compostable/green waste along with 10 additional green waste in paper bags or other containers. To add this service, residents would see a 10 percent increase in rates (this would include the 3 percent increase allowed annually under the current contract).

At the district’s request, Bay View would increase the service to have food waste composted with weekly pickup and provide these carts to each household: one or two (65 gallon) food compost/yard waste rolling cart/s plus one (65 gallon) blue recycling can.

Bay View will include a survey card with your next bill in May to determine if residents want this additional service.

Eileen Nottoli, KPPCSD board director

Board’s Charge Is to Keep Us Safe

Dear Editor:

Writers to the Nextdoor website continue to report that Kensington is in the midst of a crime spree. At the same time, we’re down to five officers and one chief. In January, dozens of car windows on many streets were smashed, followed by a car theft, then followed by another smashed window, then followed by yet another car theft from a garage, then followed by thefts from two more cars.

At the January 11 meeting, the KPPCSD board did not address the low number of officers on the force during this time. After I spoke about this at the meeting, a few citizens, whom I would characterize as “pro-contracting out,” seemed to soften these horrible events, suggesting that “this could happen anywhere” or “maybe it was someone from Kensington,” implicitly suggesting that the spree has nothing to do with our being down to so few officers. The board said nothing about recruitment efforts or staffing issues and solutions. This is unsurprising, as the current board appears to be all about studying the matter, with a view to contracting out.

The board’s main charge is to keep Kensington safe. The board’s (very able) efforts focus on community center repair, website upgrades, and solid waste management. Those are legitimate items, but the strength of the police force should be the board’s main effort. The MOU has lagged. The General Manager’s presence has been reduced to two days a week. The board’s focus on studying the matter (with its attendant professional expense) has left us poorly prepared for the number of patrols and responses we desperately need. Existing officers feel they have no support, and shortly, they may not even have a job! This environment deters qualified officers from joining the police force, from staying with the force, and from joining as reserves.

Our safety is at risk. Kensington has twice voted for special assessments to keep its own police force. Please put aside personal persuasions and follow the will of the community. Support and enhance the police force that we have!

Linda G. Lipscomb

No Need for Panic

Dear Editor:

A picture of dystopia in Kensington is being painted by some that fails to note that for quite some time before the current board was elected by a two-to-one majority, the KPPCSD board meetings were dysfunctional. The then board majority attempted to defend numerous and serious indefensible administrative failures. Among them were the inherent conflict of interest in the combined General Manager-Chief of Police position, poor oversight of that position, high legal costs for KPD issues (over \$200,000 per year), the suspect vetting process for officers, questionable credit card and travel issues, the

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.

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

K E N S I N G T O N
OUTLOOK
EDITOR
LINNEA DUE
ADVERTISING MANAGER
ALMA KEY
PUBLISHER
KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
59 Arlington Ave.
Kensington, CA 94707-1307

Published ten times a year by the nonprofit Kensington Community Council. (Monthly, except for the combined July/August and December/January issues.) Available online at www.KensingtonOutlook.com, courtesy of AboutKensington.com.

Editorial.....510-525-0292
editor@KensingtonOutlook.com
Advertising.....510-508-3241
advertising@KensingtonOutlook.com

Classified Advertising
Classified ad rates are \$7 a line (45 spaces or characters), with a 2-line minimum. Online ad forms are available after the back issues listings at: www.KensingtonOutlook.com.

Mail: For display and classified advertising, please contact our advertising manager by phone or email. Other mail to: 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707. Thank you!

APRIL 2018 DEADLINES:
Advertising Deadline March 8 Editorial Deadline March 10

infamous Berkeley Stop, the costly opposition to the citizen writ, and the crown jewel of RenoGate. Furthermore, data presented at the February 9 meeting showed that while ten officers received compensation, only six or seven of ten officers were on active duty for long periods during 2015-2017.

Yet some who oversaw these debacles are attempting to orchestrate Kensington public opinion via NextDoor posts and lawn signs urging that Kensington continue the failed policies of the past. Some posit tales of a potential crime wave in Kensington after an unpredictable rash of car vandalism that occurred at the beginning of the new year, this despite no real evidence that crime has increased in our community. The historical problems in the KPD require a long-term, sustainable solution, one being investigated by the Matrix consulting group.

The board is working hard and doing an excellent job on our behalf with minimal controversy and with due diligence, but it could do a better job of advising the public of the considerable progress they are making to solve many of the problems they inherited. The employment of General Manager Tony Constantouros resolves the inherent conflicts of interest and the lack of GM expertise that existed. With legal counsel Ann Danforth, the KPPCSD is receiving excellent advice from these two experts with extensive experience in community governance issues. We are truly fortunate to have their professional help.

Last, I encourage Kensington citizens to attend the KPPCSD board meetings to see firsthand transparent, efficient government in action.

Andrew Paul Gutierrez

Chopping Down the Tree
Dear Editor,

After over a year witnessing what goes on at Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) meetings, I am stunned at their blatant efforts to screw over police services, fire our officers, and contract out our police department all while bypassing basic democracy. There is a single-minded campaign to outsource our police services. Outsourcing has been an ongoing debate raging among some Kensingtonians for years. While I believe that there are legitimate arguments on both sides of the debate, the actions of board members are being driven by either inexperience, inactivity, or personal animus. The board has done everything in its power to cripple our police services. As we are looking at a year in which crime stats are through the roof, staffing levels are inadequate, pay is approximately \$25K less than comparable districts, and job security is nonexistent because of potential outsourcing. In addition, speakers at board meetings attack our police as incompetent/corrupt, costly, and easily replaced. Finally, they hired a GM who only works two days a week. The board is allowing the police force to die on the vine so they can chop down the whole tree.

There will be much talk about the soon-to-be released-study by Matrix Consulting. What needs to be remembered is that Matrix gets an extra \$75,000 from Kensington to oversee outsourcing our police services. Can't imagine what motivation they might have when writing their report.

In addition to these tactics, the KPPCSD board wants the decision to outsource police services made without meaningful community input. They have retained an attorney (at whose expense?) to learn if it is possible to bypass an election on outsourcing against existing law. The KPPCSD board does not want us to vote. Why?

Kevin Fitzsimmons

Let's Wait for Matrix
Dear Editor,

There has been much talk about our police staffing relative to budget and safety concerns, and I wanted to present some facts for the record. We have 5,000 residents and in the past have had 10 staff, including a chief who by the way has been included in the count for many years. Frankly, I am not sure how we got to that staffing number because there are no fixed staffing ratios.

According to the 2011 Municipal Service Report for Law Enforcement Services in Contra Costa County: "The number of sworn officers per capita is a traditional indicator of service level. There are no established state or national standards for police staffing levels." In reference to the cities the county surveyed the report states, "Agencies countywide averaged 1.18 sworn officers per 1,000 residents." We used to have 1.97 ratio, when we had 10 staff—we now have 1.2 ratio with a staff of 6.

The following low-crime cities have a ratio lower than ours per 1000 residents: Clayton 1.01; Lafayette .67; Moraga .69; Orinda .79 Danville .74; San Ramón .80; Saratoga .48. I added Saratoga because it is on the 10 Top Safest Cities in CA list, along with Moraga, Danville, and Orinda. Orinda, Lafayette, Saratoga contract out, the others have their own police departments.

From these numbers, it appears that the number of officers on staff doesn't imply or necessarily correlate with safety /crime stats in a community. I am satisfied with our staffing ratio until we get additional information from Matrix Consulting Group. I am also in full support of the board on this issue and want to remain open as we review our options relative to our needs.

Marilyn Stollon

See Letters , Page 7

Matrix Consulting Group will gather public opinion on options going forward for Kensington's police force at a public meeting March 17 at the Community Center. Coffee and pastries at 9:30, meeting 10am-noon. Please try to attend this important meeting.

510-658-0940

**PETITE**
Pet Sitting

petitepetsitting.com

Insured & Bonded

Daily Visits
Overnight Care
Dog Walking
Pet Taxi



JOHN DEY,
Owner

13 Years Experience


Excellent
References


JohnCDey@Gmail.com


DEY & NIGHT HOUSESITTING


Days: 610-4638


Evenings: 233-1848

On-demand rides for people without smartphones.

**JOIN:** Sign up online or over the phone.


**REQUEST:** When you're ready to ride, call our members-only concierge line and we'll send you a Lyft or an Uber immediately.

**RELAX:** We phone the driver to let them know how to find you, and monitor the ride to ensure you're picked up as planned.

**ARRIVE:** We handle the payment, so there's no need to carry cash!


The freedom of driving, without the hassle.

www.arriverides.com
(866) 626-9879



RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL


Interior • Exterior

Careful Preparation
for a Lasting Finish!

CALL TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

232-3340

Insured PL & PD • State Lic. #639300




YOUR LOCAL FAMILY-OWNED ALTERNATIVE
FOR ALL YOUR HAULING NEEDS.

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • TRASH REMOVAL
OVERGROWN VEGETATION CLEARING • QUALITY WORK

(510) 367-5695

WWW.TRASHPATROL.COM

or dial **510 HAULING**
4 2 8 - 5 4 6 4





CAFÉ & BAKERY
FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED


372 COLUSA AVE
KENSINGTON CA 94707
(510) 596-9935

M-F: 7AM - 5PM WEEKENDS: 8AM - 4PM

VISIT US ON THE WEB @ WWW.SEMIFREDDIS.COM
OR AT OUR STORE IN BERKELEY, 3084 CLAREMONT AVE.

BAKING WITH PRIDE SINCE 1984





ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

Design/Build

Earthquake Strengthening
Foundation Repairs
Retaining Walls
Drainage • Remodels • Additions
Leak Investigations
Property Purchase Inspections

510.524.8058
www.IronwoodEngineering.com
License B444427

D. A. FLOWERS
& COMPANY, LLC

Comprehensive
Personal Financial Planning
&
Investment Management


fee-only
call for a free initial consultation

David A. Flowers, CFP®
Kensington Resident
(510) 868-2648

2213 5th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710
info@daflowersandcompany.com

www.daflowersandcompany.com

Planning is Everything



• Wills & Trusts

• Gifts & Estate Tax

• Probate

• Elder Law

The Law Offices of
Bonnie K. Bishop

Certified Specialist, Estate Planning • Probate & Trust Law
State Bar of California, Board of Legal Specialization

510-526-7144 1760 Solano Avenue, Berkeley, CA



MCE Contra Costa

In April 2018, residents and businesses in Kensington, along with Concord, Danville, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County, will start their more renewable and locally controlled energy service with MCE at competitive rates compared to PG&E, or they can choose another service option.

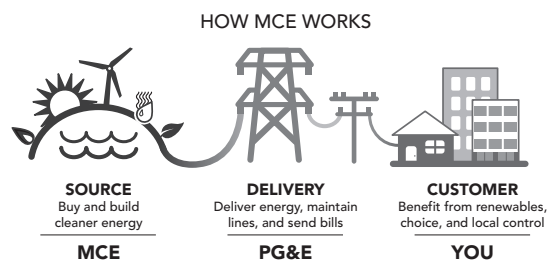
CHOOSE FROM 33%, 50%, OR 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

YOUR SERVICE OPTIONS	
	MCE Light Green 50% RENEWABLE Take no action and your electric service will be at least 50% renewable energy starting in April — Light Green is currently 55% renewable.
	MCE Deep Green 100% RENEWABLE Eliminate your electricity-related carbon footprint by opting up to 100% California renewable energy at mceCleanEnergy.org/DG-enroll or 1 (888) 632-3674.*
	PG&E 33% RENEWABLE You can choose to opt out and continue purchasing energy from PG&E at mceCleanEnergy.org/opt-out or 1 (888) 632-3674.*

*Please have your PG&E account number on hand.

How does MCE affect electricity services for Kensington residents and businesses?

Aside from having access to more renewable energy, not much will change. Residents and businesses can choose 50–100% renewable energy from a local public agency. MCE customers continue to enjoy the same reliable electricity service, with PG&E delivering power, maintaining the wires, and providing billing and gas services.



How do MCE rates compare to PG&E's?

Typical customers currently pay slightly less for MCE's 50% renewable electricity compared to PG&E's 33% renewable electricity, with costs nearly identical. Part of MCE's mission is to provide stable and competitive rates, and has, in fact, reduced rates the past two years in a row (by an average of 9% and 3.7%, respectively). MCE has limited rate changes to once annually and, as a local public agency, all changes are always discussed and reviewed at public meetings by MCE's Board of Directors, made up of locally elected officials representing each of the communities we serve. PG&E will implement new rates beginning March 1. MCE will review promptly and, if needed to continue providing competitive rates, will adjust its own

rates. For rates and cost comparisons visit: mceCleanEnergy.org/rates

Do CARE, Medical Baseline, and other low-income assistance programs continue with MCE service?

Yes. Low-income assistance programs like CARE, FERA, and Medical Baseline are unaffected by enrollment; these customers receive the same discount with MCE as they would with PG&E. Customers in these programs do not need to re-enroll nor take any further action.

Will my billing change?

No. PG&E will continue to send one monthly bill. Instead of one fee that combines charges for the delivery and generation of your electricity, the bill will show separate charges — one for electric delivery (PG&E) and one for electric generation (MCE). **MCE's generation rates simply replace the generation charges you currently pay to PG&E;** they are not an additional charge.

Is MCE's power supply more renewable than PG&E's?

Yes, considerably! MCE's power supply contains a higher portion of renewable resources like solar, wind, bioenergy, and geothermal. According to the most recent California Energy Commission Power Content Labels, MCE's Light Green service is 55% renewable and PG&E's service is 33% renewable.

I have solar on my roof. How does this affect me?

MCE offers one of the most generous Net Energy Metering (NEM) programs in California, and thousands of households and

businesses are already benefitting. If you choose MCE, you'll automatically be enrolled in our NEM program, which pays a premium rate for the excess electricity your solar panels produce. There's no need to reapply. At the time of your enrollment in MCE service, PG&E will initiate an immediate true-up of your account, sending you a bill for any electric charges incurred since your last true-up statement and zeroing out any accrued credits. To avoid losing any credits, you may elect to opt out your account, enroll your account early, or postpone enrollment with MCE until later in the year to better align with your true-up date. For more information, please visit mceCleanEnergy.org/ContraCosta

Which communities does MCE serve?

MCE has been serving Bay Area electric customers since 2010. Today, about 255,000 customers in Marin and Napa Counties, and the cities of Benicia, El Cerrito, Lafayette, Richmond, San Pablo, and Walnut Creek are buying more renewable energy from MCE. Concord, Danville, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County will enroll with MCE in April.

What kind of organization is MCE and who controls it?

MCE is a local, not-for-profit, public agency directly controlled by its member communities — like Kensington. Formed by the public to buy cleaner power and re-invest ratepayer dollars locally, MCE always prioritizes the interests of its customers. MCE's Board of Directors are democratically elected leaders from each community MCE serves and are not paid for their role with MCE. In consultation with MCE's staff, the Board determines MCE's rates, policies and programs in meetings that are open to the public.

How is MCE funded?

Like PG&E, MCE is funded by electricity ratepayers through their monthly energy purchases. MCE is not funded by taxpayers. A cornerstone to MCE's mission is to redirect ratepayer dollars back to local economies, and reinvest in its communities by providing low, stable rates, supporting local workforce development, and partnering with community-based organizations.

K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program

KASEP SPRING SESSION IS COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR VERY SOON!

- Tuesday, March 6th at 7:00pm for Kindergarten and 7:30pm for Grades 1-6 for online registration at <http://kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org>
- The class schedule and brochures went home in student's backpacks from school the week of February 26th. There are extra copies available at the KCC office and at the Kensington library.
- Spring classes begin Monday, March 19th and end Friday, May 25th.

Important Dates: Spring Break is April 2nd to April 6th - "NO KASEP CLASSES"

Sandy Thacker, KASEP carpentry teacher for 34 years is taking a well-deserved break spring session and will be returning for summer camp, Week 2 and FALL Session 2018.

Heads Up! Exciting new classes for the Spring session!

- Mondays (1:30 - 2:20pm) - Jeanne Rehrig (Creative Clay and Drawing with Pastels teacher), will be teaching "Creative Clay" for Kinder's. They will be improving their fine motor skills and creativity with sculpting pots, a sun medallion, and animal creatures: butterflies, fish, etc.
- Mondays (3:50 - 5:00pm) - Vicky Brodt (Art, Cooking & Gardening teacher), will be replacing Monday's late Muffin Madness class with the very popular Chocolate Creations class, which is still offered on Wednesdays.
- Tuesdays (2:30 - 3:40pm) and (3:50 - 5:00pm) - Play-Well TEKnologies is back with thousands of Lego parts. Build engineer-designed projects such as: boats, arch bridges, catapults, and battletracks, etc.
- Fridays (1:30 - 2:20pm) - Isabel Avila (Spanish teacher), will be teaching "Spanish" for Kinders. Through movement, song, music, art, and reading and listening activities, your child will learn to speak, read, write, and love the Spanish language.



CREATIVE CLAY ARTISTS

THANK YOU KASEP FUND DRIVE DONORS 2018

Donations of Up to \$25:
Michiko Irene Asao-Wells, Arthur Woodworth

KCC Summer Camp 2018 Welcomes You!



\$295 per week July 4th-short week, \$235

- Week 1 June 11 - June 15
- Specialty: Creative Clay with Jeanne
 - Field Trip: The Jungle
- Week 2 June 18 - June 22
- Specialty: Carpentry with Sandy
 - Field Trip: Pump It Up
- Week 3 June 25 - June 29
- Specialty: SkyHawk Sports Medley with Victor
 - Field Trip: Adventure Playground
- Week 4 July 2 - July 6
- Closed July 4, Short Week
- Specialty: Sweet Treats with Vicky
 - No Field Trip
- Week 5 July 9 - July 13
- Specialty: Fun with Food with Vicky
 - Field Trip: Bladium
- Week 6 July 16 - July 20
- Specialty: Upcycled T-Shirts with April
 - Field Trip: Lake Anza
- Week 7 July 23 - July 27
- Specialty: SkyHawk Sports Medley with Victor
 - Field Trip: Albany Bowl
- Week 8 July 30 - Aug. 3
- OLYMPIC WEEK
 - Field Trip: Bladium
- Week 9 Aug. 6 - Aug. 10
- Specialty: Creative Clay with Jeanne
 - Field Trip: Oakland Zoo
- Week 10 August 14 - August 18
- Specialty: Upcycled T-Shirts with April
 - Field Trip: El Cerrito Pool
 - End of Summer Air Bouncer and Jousting Tents

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10

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

For further information, contact Nobuo at: nnishi50@gmail.com 510-495-4860

Acrylic Artists

Wednesdays, 9:45 - 12:30pm, Community Center

Open Studio, lots of natural light. Come paint with other artists. Easels and tables are provided. Bring your canvas, paints, and creativity. Friendly group!

Tai Chi Chuan

Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10

A gentle martial art, tai chi is a safe, rewarding activity for people of all ages and all levels of health. Tai chi incorporates both mind and body. Nobuo Nishi, instructor, has been teaching for 18 years.

Light Green or Deep Green—a Choice with Lasting Impacts



Almost 36,000 solar panels collect energy at MCE’s Solar One site near Castro and Hensley streets in Richmond. The energy they generate takes the equivalent of 680 fossil-fuel cars off the road annually. Photo by Douglas Canning.

By Shoshana Wechsler, Kensington Green

This April, Kensington electricity users will have the opportunity to join fourteen Contra Costa cities and unincorporated communities—and the counties of Marin, Napa, and the city of Benicia—as customers of MCE. Founded in 2008 by the county of Marin, MCE is a public, not-for-profit electricity provider and California’s oldest established community choice energy program. It has a known track record for reliability and providing multiple benefits for its customers and the climate.

The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors chose MCE as the county’s energy provider last spring after a feasibility study and community input. Joining MCE, the supervisors decided, would best enable the county to meet its renewable energy goals—to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase local renewable energy generation, and create clean energy jobs in a county that has hosted more than its share of polluting industries. As with all the other community choice energy programs changing the energy landscape in California, customers can expect to pay the same or lower rates than they did with PG&E—while actively supporting clean green energy development. An announcement from MCE will be landing in Kensington mailboxes soon with information about the program and the April rollout.

MCE provides its residential and business customers with 50 to 100 percent renewable energy at competitive rates. All new MCE customers are automatically enrolled in MCE’s default option, its Light Green package, which contains 50 percent renewables, as compared to PG&E’s 33 percent. Although MCE’s percentage of renewables is higher, its Light Green rates have actually gone down the last two years in a row and are currently lower than that of PG&E.

Customers can also opt up a tier to Deep Green, which offers energy from 100 percent renewables, California-produced wind and solar. A third option called Local Sol provides electricity generated exclusively by 100 percent local solar.

Customers can also choose to remain with PG&E. But why would we, given that MCE provides more clean energy at reasonable rates and more community control than can an investor utility? MCE’s rates are set by its board, a group of public officials from all over its service area who seek community input before annual rate changes go into effect. (PG&E will continue to provide all gas services, electric power line maintenance, and billing.)

The Kensington Green Club encourages residents and businesses to follow the example of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) and the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD). Both boards recently voted to opt up (#optUP) to 100 percent Deep Green in the buildings under their jurisdiction. As their board members learned, this climate-friendly commitment is also surprisingly budget-friendly. Deep Green costs only 1 penny per kilowatt-hour (\$0.01/kWh) more than the Light Green 50 percent option. That’s about \$4 more for the average home’s monthly usage, roughly the cost of a cappuccino.

That extra four dollars a month has a surprisingly powerful impact, much longer lasting than a caffeine buzz. Exactly half of every Deep Green premium finances the start-up costs of new Bay Area solar farms in MCE’s service area. MCE’s Deep Green customers funded the Bay Area’s largest publicly owned solar farm, Solar One, a brand new 10.5 MW solar field located on a brownfield on Chevron refinery land in Richmond. In late December 2017, Solar One started generating electricity to 3,400 homes. It has also provided 341 jobs to the community, with the promise of more local green collar jobs and renewable energy development to come. The customer-supported Deep Green program has proven itself an important instrument for local green energy build out.

Marin County has set a high bar with its record of 100 percent municipal Deep Green accounts. Even the San Rafael Airport has opted up. But the number of residential accounts opting up to Deep Green is much lower. Fairfax households (at 8 percent enrollment, as of November 2017) and El Cerrito (at 7 percent, as of November) are the leaders thus far. These are fairly disappointing residential enrollment figures when one takes into account the 23,500 metric tons of carbon that the Deep Green program has already reduced. Climate protection takes all of us, and it’s clearly worth the minimal extra effort—just a few minutes—that Deep Green enrollment requires. Customers are automatically enrolled in Light Green, but will need to call or visit the website to opt up to Deep Green.

Kensington Green hopes that our community will lavishly commit to MCE’s Deep Green program. Why not have our clean energy and cappuccino, too? You can even enroll right now, before the April rollout. Kensington, let’s get some healthy competition going in Contra Costa County and do some record-setting enrollment. Learn more about MCE at www.mcecleanenergy.org and #optUP to Deep Green at www.mcecleanenergy.org/opt-up/.

5K Race Helps Low-Income Families

By Linnea Due

St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, promises to be a busy morning in Kensington. Not only will Matrix Consulting gather residents’ comments on police options at the Community Center (9:30am coffee and pastries, 10am meeting), but you can get your game on early by running or walking a 5K race that starts and finishes at Colusa Circle. Organized by Zip Code East Bay’s Josh Dickinson, racers (or fancy dressers) zoom down Colusa to Eureka, head past El Cerrito High to Moeser, turn around and come up Ashbury to finish in front of Semifreddi’s.

For several years, Dickinson and his family have run in a charity event called the Turkey Trot, in the town of Sonoma, which benefits Meals on Wheels. Last year they ran with their seven-year-old son, who attends Kensington Hilltop. “We had thought for years about doing a race at the Circle,” Dickinson said. “After we ran the Sonoma race with our son, we wanted to recreate that feeling. He was probably more excited about the muffins that they had at the end of the course. But it was the idea that we were doing it together as a family. It was something we’ll always remember. That’s the same vibe that we want to bring to this race.”

The event benefits Giveback Homes, to which realtors all over the globe contribute. In this case, a Berkeley family works with Giveback and Habitat for Humanity on a Build Day. “I like the business model where people in our profession can support this non-profit,” Dickinson said. “The realtors help to pay the overhead of the organization, and all the money from the actual fundraising goes directly to the build. Typically they’re houses that are foreclosures or bought at auction. They have a general contractor, and everybody follows the contractor’s directions to make it livable. The family pays the mortgage, but it’s managed so that low-income families can afford it.”

Joining Dickinson and Zip Code East Bay as sponsors are the Farmers’ Market, Benchmark Pizza, the Arlington Café, Lift and Sprint, Nan Phelps Photography, and Fuse Fitness.

Registration for the race starts at 7am, though people can preregister online. “We

expect people will show up between 7 to 7:30,” Dickinson says. “We’re blocking off the street that the Farmers’ Market is on. Benchmark is going to do a breakfast thing and also serve little 3- or 4-oz. beers for St. Patrick’s Day. We’ll have coffee and hot chocolate. The idea is to have a festive atmosphere.” The registration fee is \$30 for adults and \$10 for kids under 10—preregister at ColusaCircle5K.org.

New Project to Protect Local Pollinators

Beginning with bee-friendly garden signs and informational door hangers, the El Cerrito Garden Club recently initiated a project to protect bees and other pollinators in the El Cerrito/Kensington area. Club members distributed door hangers and displayed signs in their gardens to promote using environmentally friendly products rather than toxic chemicals for weed and pest control. The door hangers provide information on how homeowners can find alternative methods for weed and pest control. Signs will be available at garden club meetings and also at the March 27 butterfly pollinator workshop sponsored by El Cerrito’s Environmental Quality Committee at City Hall at 7pm.

Project initiator Landry Wildwind explains that she was inspired by a YouTube documentary, *Keep the Hives Alive!*. The film showed a similar program using door hangers and yard signs that was successful in getting neonicitinoid systemic pesticides banned in a Minnesota county last year. Neonicitinoids are toxic chemicals often contained in insecticides sold in garden centers and applied by commercial pest control companies. They have been associated with a decline in pollinators. Activists have had some success in convincing local nurseries and retailers such as Home Depot to phase out sales of plants treated with neonicitinoids. (In a sidelight, Rogers and Sons Honey sells what it describes as “hyperlocal honey from the hills and hollows of Kensington” at the Kensington Farmers’ Market.)

El Cerrito currently bans use of all herbicides and pesticides on city property, but BART, EBMUD, and the West Contra Costa County School District continue to use them. Landry hopes that public pressure on these entities as well as on area hardware stores will lead agencies and businesses to suspend use and sales of these products. For more information, or to purchase signs, contact Landry at landry@kenney-consulting or 510-527-5920.

Kensington Teen Finishes Tevis Endurance Race



Tal Zwik and Rader scamper up a sheer slope during the Tevis endurance race. Photo by Gore Baylor.

By Linnea Due

When Tal Zwik first ran the Tevis, an endurance ride that tests horses and riders on a grueling hundred-mile course through the Sierra mountains, the fourteen-year-old got pulled at a vet check twenty miles shy of the finish. Two years later, at age sixteen, Zwik managed to complete the race on his horse Rader, an Arabian gelding that his mother, Kim Zvik, stables at the Orinda Horseman’s Association. “I can’t do it this year,” Tal Zvik said. “It’s my junior year, and I just don’t have time to train for it. I’ll probably do it in 2019, though.”

Zvik started riding at age three but did not consistently ride until he was nine. Now, besides endurance races, he also competes in jumping events. The Tevis, which began in 1955, is the crown jewel of Western endurance riding. It involves going through the Truckee and Sierra mountains, riding on steep terrain and through narrow canyons. “It takes a year or so of training,” said Zvik. “You have to get your horse used to being that fit.”

The race, held in August, has a 24-hour cutoff—after that period, riders are disqualified. Horses must make it through multiple vet checks, also with mandatory time cutoffs, that measure condition, lameness, and hydration among others. “You start at 4:30am,” Zvik said. “That gives you the most light throughout the race. You ride up through the Truckee mountains and go through three canyons that are very hot, very steep, and take a long time to get through.” Zvik rode with a sponsor at first, but at the conclusion of the canyon stretch, he had to leave her and her horse behind, as it was clear she was not going to make the cutoff for the next vet check. “I rode alone for about fifteen miles,” he said. “Then I met up with an older gentleman and ladies and joined their group.”

“After the canyons, you’re three-quarters from the finish, close to Auburn. This is where most of the horses don’t make it,” he said, referring to being pulled at the vet check. “You ride through the night. It’s a beautiful spot. You see the moon glistening off the American River.” At that stage, Zvik says, “I was sleep-deprived, almost hallucinating. It’s 25 miles of night riding. You can use lights, blue or green, nothing bright. I passed people sleeping on their horses. There are three vet checks during that stretch.” Zvik says that at the last one, he was “absolute dying sore. Then this lady handed me some Advil and a cup of coffee. Then we went up this mountain five miles to the finish. Those last five miles take forever.”

Finally, the riders trek into the stadium, to cheering crowds at 4am. “By then, you don’t even feel exhausted,” he said. “There is lots of adrenaline. And there is a final vet check.” Some are disqualified at that check, moments before the finish line. “But I made it through the race.”

Zvik is coasting into the finish line of his junior year at El Cerrito High, which he calls “awesome, filled with cool people.” During the interview, he was driving to his jumping lesson at the stables. He and Rader have more hurdles to climb...and canyons to traverse.

More Letters

Let’s See if Retrofit Can Work

Dear Editor:

I read the February *Outlook* article about the December 13 fire board meeting during which the seismic report of the Public Safety Building was delivered. This article covers two important issues involving the PSB. The first is that the seismic study indicates that a possible fault could exist at the eastern boundary of the property and that no additional construction of the PSB should occur within 50 feet of the eastern boundary. This effectively eliminates any major expansion of the existing PSB. It is surprising that the inability to expand the existing PSB has come to light a year and a half after the Kensington Fire Protection District spent more than \$125,000 of Kensington taxpayer money on plans for enlarging the building from 5,600 to 11,800 square feet.

The article then explains what choices are available if on-site expansion is not possible. It is suggested that the only choice for a larger facility is to construct a new facility in Kensington Park adjacent to the Kensington library. Before we spend more time and Kensington taxpayer money on doubling the size of a new building in Kensington Park, we need to examine how we can retrofit the existing building to meet seismic and code compliance. Initial numbers suggest that we can retrofit the existing structure with available dollars versus a significant tax increase for a larger facility in Kensington Park. It is time we started to consider retrofitting the existing building rather than eliminating existing park land for a new facility adjacent to a church, library, and school. It is very likely that a relocated PSB will cost more than \$10.0 million in construction, perhaps \$2.0 million interim relocation costs and new fixtures and \$8.0 million for a loan. That’s about \$10,000 per household.

Jim Watt

Market Update

253 Stanford Ave, Kensington
Handsome 4BR/3BA Mid-Century Modern. Stunning Golden Gate and beyond views. Romantic lofty master bedroom suite. Ideal location blocks to Transbay & BART bus stops, shopping and awarded Hilltop School.
Offered at \$1,150,000

200 Arlington Ave, Kensington
Stunning views of the Bay! Expansive 4BR/3BA accessed through a courtyard. Gorgeous remodel with tasteful finishes and state-of-the-art improvements. Perfect for single family or multi-generational living.
Offered at \$1,989,000

1625 Navellier St, El Cerrito
Pending. Sweet updated, level-in home with peek-of-the-Bay view. Sought-after location, just blocks to BART, shopping and parks. Updated kitchen and baths, fresh and inviting design. Attached garage. Rustic yard.
Offered at \$699,000

If you are considering selling your home in the Spring market, it’s time to start planning. Or if you simply wish to know the value, call me! The appointment is complimentary and confidential.

RUTH FRASSETTO, CRS
CalBRE Lic. #00779030
Over thirty-five years of experience you can count on
510.697.8606 | 510.652.2133/414
rfrassetto@grubbco.com
Visit GRUBBCO.COM for additional information about current listings
Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. Data provided by East Bay Regional Data - MLS.

Arlington Community Church
United Church of Christ
52 Arlington Ave (510) 526-9146
Rev. Tony Clark, Pastor
www.arlingtoncommunitychurchucc.org
No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.

Join Us for Holy Week & Easter

Arlington Community Church has a series of events planned for Lent and Easter. Come worship with us during this season.

Regular Sunday worship service at 10:00 a.m.

- **Palm Sunday March 25, 10:00 a.m.**
The Joyous Procession of Palms
- **Maundy Thursday March 29, 7:00 p.m.**
The Last Supper and Christ's Passion
- **Good Friday March 30, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
Quiet service of meditation on the seven last words of Christ.
- **Easter Sunday, April 1**
8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

At Arlington Community Church

God is still speaking,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Emergency Preparedness Must Start Block by Block

By Linnea Due

When El Cerrito/Kensington Battalion Chief Dave Gibson got to the Fountaingrove area of Santa Rosa on the night of the North Bay fire, he was astounded at what he saw. “I will tell anybody that in my thirty-plus years of firefighting, I hadn’t seen anything like that,” he said. “It was indescribable to see the devastation, not just a house or two, but entire subdivisions. These were neighborhoods.”

Gibson, who was recently appointed the department’s emergency preparedness coordinator, is not alone in his assessment. In the wake of the North Bay fires, Kensington residents worry anew about wildfires and earthquakes. Who would respond in the case of wide-ranging emergencies? Should we be holding drills

or mapping out evacuation routes? Gibson says that there are three firemen (one is a paramedic) stationed in the Public Safety Building at all times. Those three can only do so much.

“We’re used to fighting the fire,” Gibson said. “They weren’t able to fight that fire. All they could do was notify people. It was moving too fast, and winds were clocking 70 mph. They went through a neighborhood with a loudspeaker. They couldn’t fight the fire. In that severe of a situation there is nothing any of us can do.”

Gibson said that with our very high fire hazard designation, people must be prepared to think for themselves. “Don’t wait,” he said. “Don’t wait for someone to tell you to leave or how to leave. Evacuation routes are a good idea, but when we really have to scramble to get people evacuated, to get them notified, the idea that there will be someone directing you to make a left hand turn here or there, I don’t want people to think that there will be someone there to do that. Get your go-kit, get off the hill, get out of the way of this thing.”

Part of that preparation is a go-kit. Gibson said some Santa Rosans did not have time



Three-quarters of the team—Three of four Ardmore Road block leads stand in front of their emergency equipment shed. Left to right, Barbara Metcalf, Janet Mowery, and Ednalee Warnecke. Not pictured: Trish Hackemack. Photo by David Mowery.

to pick up their wallets before they sprinted from their homes. A go-kit should contain medications, clothes, money, whatever you think that you’ll need for a few days out of your home. You should have a go-kit for pets with similar items. Some people have two kits—one grab-and-go, one for a longer stretch.

Earthquakes offer a different scenario but one equally challenging for the fire department. “We conduct table-top exercises,” Gibson said, indoor training drills with difficult situations. “One involved the station collapsing on top of the engines during an earthquake,” he said. And with the fault running down the Arlington, it’s possible that the road cannot be driven. “Getting the engine out of the firehouse is one of our concerns. A fire engine weighs 35,000 pounds. If the road is compromised, those are huge concerns because of the size and weight of an engine.”

“This is going to be the norm,” Kensington Public Safety Council’s Katie Gluck says,

“Get your go-kit, get off the hill, get out of the way of this thing...Don’t wait...”- Battalion Chief Dave Gibson

speaking of drought and fire danger. Gluck worries about how people can evacuate in the case of a massive fire: “We are dangerously understaffed with our police force. The police are supposed to tell people where to go, which road to take. We won’t have people directing traffic. What if people turn on a road where a tree is down?” (In February, the Kensington Fire Protection District approved purchase of a \$14,000 drone that can thermal-image “extinguished” fires that are not completely out, find lost people through heat signatures, transmit camera shots of blocked roads, and examine the path of fires from overhead.)

Gluck and Peter Liddell describe the Public Safety Council as primarily an educational organization. “We provide support for other groups, the CERT folks and amateur radio people, people doing emergency preparedness. We participate in drills; we get information to the general public. Every year we do a big wildfire presentation.” The KPSC has run workshops on caring for animals in disasters, scams and ID theft, seismic retrofitting, flood control, conflict resolution and many other useful topics that increase the safety of the community.

Gluck said that a master emergency plan developed by the El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department is housed at the station but is not on the district’s website: “If it were there, everyone could read it.”

(The plan was mentioned at the February 7 fire board meeting, and Chief Lance Maples noted that the plan was developed for fire, government, and public agency personnel, although anyone can read it at the station or can get it by email.)

Liddell and Gluck said that the timing of wildfire presentations is critical. “We want to do it soon enough so people get on the ball and get rid of their weeds and do prevention around their house,” Gluck said. “We can’t do it too soon or the weeds will grow back.”

Liddell described the work of the amateur radio operators, the ECHO teams. “Their work is going to be crucial in an emergency,” he said. “They’re trying to set up a cadre of people in each CERT area. Those people can provide status reports of fires, injuries, all sorts of things. How do you get it down to the Emergency Operations Center if there is no phone or cell line?” The EOC for both El Cerrito and Kensington is at the El Cerrito City Hall.

Gibson explained what the EOC does: “The EOC staff report there and set up different divisions: planning, logistics, command. And those people are dependent upon reports from CERT areas. Where are the fires, gas line breaks, water line breaks? Who better to provide that information than the people who live right in that area?”

And who better, Liddell said, to transmit that information than the radio operators. “If the EOC wants a particular area investigated,” he said, “they can send CERT people to see and come back with damage assessments. The CERT and ECHO teams are integrated. The radio people come to talk at the last CERT training session. It’s not complicated to get a license that would allow us to do everything we need in a disaster.”

Both Gibson and Liddell suggested that people subscribe to two local emergency news feeds. The first is NIXLE.com, which sorts by zip code. “Because we share a zip code with Berkeley, you get a lot of Berkeley news,” Liddell said. He also recommended the county warning system. At CWSalerts.com, you can register your cell phone and your home phone. Those will receive alerts such as evacuation notices or shelter-in-place warnings.

Gluck mentioned the particular challenges for Kensington—we are at extremely high risk for both wildfire and earthquakes. “One thing that would be really helpful is for people to go around and meet their neighbors. Who is home and who is not home? Who is handicapped and who is elderly? Encourage people to get the gas shutoff valve installed.” The valve automatically turns off the gas in case of a rupture. The valves are cheaper if the installer can do several houses at once; for more information, go to QuakePrepare.com.

Janet Mowery has been attending monthly CERT meetings at Hal Graboske’s house for several years. She explained that the idea of CERT is that each block organizes itself,



Battalion Chief Dave Gibson was recently appointed Kensington and El Cerrito’s emergency preparedness coordinator.



At Prospect Sierra, our whole focus is to help your children become successful students and caring people who strive to build a better world.

Come see how we’re different.

PROSPECT SIERRA

prospectsierra.org

(K-4) 2060 Tapscott Avenue | (5-8) 960 Avis Drive
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Bay Area Green Business - NAIS Model School of the Future - Ashoka Changemaker School
US Department of Education Green Ribbon School



Ednalee Warnecke shares the CERT message at the Kensington Farmers' Market.

training is a good first step. After training comes meeting and organizing your neighbors. Mowery described the process on Ardmore. “My neighbor Edna Warnecke and I did it together. We went door-to-door together, shared the jobs, distributed memos to our neighbors. We held a yard sale to raise money to supply our emergency shed on Ardmore. We raised \$1200 for those supplies. And now we have four neighbors involved as our block leads.”

Emergency sheds typically contain radios, pry bars to raise fallen timbers, chain saws, space blankets, first aid materials, and much more. The Kensington Fire Department maintains a CERT shed program, in which the department may purchase the shed and some supplies; neighbors can put in more items than the department provides.

Perhaps the best strategy is to start somewhere. If you’ve already tired of your New Year’s resolutions, make a spring promise to do something to improve your own safety and that of your neighbors. Battalion Chief Gibson said it best: “The North Bay fires opened our eyes to understanding how little time everybody had to get out of there.”

Matrix Assesses Police Services and Hosts Community Meetings in March and April

By Sylvia Hacaj

The KPPCSD is on a fact-finding mission to evaluate the Kensington Police Department and to assess approaches to providing community policing and law enforcement services. We have contracted with the Matrix Consulting Group, which has conducted studies of over a hundred police and sheriff’s offices in California. The Matrix study follows the 2016 recommendation of ten Kensington residents appointed to the ad hoc committee on governance and operations.

The first phase of work includes interviews with all members of the department, an assessment of all aspects of existing operations, and an opportunity for community input. Matrix is convening the first community meeting Saturday, March 17 at 10am at the Community Center. Matrix president Richard Brady will review the scope and purpose of the study and explore current law enforcement needs, ideal characteristics of community-oriented police service, and alternative strategies. Coffee and pastries will be served at 9:30am.

Also mark your calendars for Matrix’s second meeting April 28, 10am at the Community Center. This meeting will focus on the results of the assessment and next steps in the process.

New KPPCSD Website User-Friendly, More Attractive

By Chris Deppe, KPPCSD board director

As many Kensington residents probably know, the KPPCSD launched a new website on January 11. Most folks appreciate the new look and organization.

- Here’s a recap of some of the new features:
- We are now kppcsd.org. This better reflects who we are and is easier to type! We’ve also got a new logo.
 - The home page automatically shows the next three meetings
 - There’s a new interface that lets you see all the information related to a meeting on one page (Video/Audio, Agenda, Minutes, and any other associated documents).
 - The Governance section has a page dedicated to transparency certificate requirements and tracks our progress
 - Many documents that were once scanned copies are now searchable PDFs, such as the Ad Hoc Final Report
 - We added a FAQ section to help users navigate the new site

Since our launch we’ve had some questions about documents either being hard to find or not on the site at all. We tried to migrate the old site to the new without missing anything important, but of course there have been some things that fell through the cracks. We encourage anyone with comments about the site, including missing documents, to email webmaster@kppcsd.org, and we’ll do our best to address any concerns.

Also, we had originally wanted to keep the old site live for a period of a few months to allow for an easier transition, but unfortunately the old site was hacked in December and again in January. After the first hack in December, we took a lot of steps to tighten up security, but with the second hack it became obvious that there were just too many holes to plug, and we shut down the site for good. The new site uses a completely different and much more secure system, so the problems that plagued the old site should be gone. If anyone has concerns about this, please email webmaster@kppcsd.org.

picking a block leader, getting to know the neighbors, and encouraging each other to gather supplies and do trainings for emergencies. Mowery lives on Ardmore—“It’s a long street,” she said. “We just recently got handheld radios,” she reported, “so that we can communicate with each other.”

The purpose of the monthly meetings is to try to extend these efforts to other streets. Mowery estimates that only four other streets in Kensington Area 6 (lower Kensington) have block leads. “Hal says that Ardmore is the most organized in Kensington, but we don’t think we’re that prepared,” Mowery said. “It’s hard to get people to come to a meeting even on their own block.”

Yet that’s where the effort must begin, said Mowery: “It’s got to largely start at the block level.” Although people can volunteer to be block leaders without CERT training, that

Kensington’s Police Force Faces Challenges—as Do Others

By Eileen Nottoli
KPPCSD board vice-president

Police services are vital to Kensington as they are to all communities. Police assure that our community is safe, and more often than not, the engagement of our officers with residents contributes to the harmony of our community. The work of our officers is not easy, but it is critically important.

In a time when police departments throughout California are struggling to maintain fully staffed forces, a small department like ours faces particular challenges. President Sherris-Watt and I have been meeting regularly with KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros and Interim Chief of Police Rickey Hull to address our police staffing and recruitment needs.

Maintaining a full roster of officers in the face of injuries, vacations, training, retirement, and administrative leaves is particularly problematic for a small department such as Kensington’s. In a larger police force, the loss of an officer can be easily accommodated, but Kensington’s budget does not enable us to maintain a cushion to fill in for unexpected vacancies. It takes considerable time and money to recruit and vet candidates. Indeed, in the fall, when Chief Hull suggested hiring a reserve officer in anticipation of one or more vacancies in our police department, there was community opposition.

Kensington is not the only community struggling with police staffing problems. During our negotiations for dispatch services with Albany, Police Chief Mike McQuistan said that he teaches at police academies where enrollments are down even though admission standards have been lowered. He attributed this to better opportunities in a good economy and the increased scrutiny of police. *The Desert Sun* reported that open positions for law enforcement professionals increased over 600 percent from 2010 to 2015 based on the Peace Officer Standards and Training government job listings. A December article in *Berkeleyside* said that “Berkeley police staffing levels have reached a crisis point.” Chief Andy Greenwood is quoted as saying, “We’re going to have to rethink a bit how we do business.”

While I and other lay people may think that being a police officer in Kensington would be highly desirable because of our low crime rates, I am told that it is not attractive to those interested in a professional law enforcement career because we lack opportunities to work in specialized investigative units, and our small force means few opportunities for advancement. A comparison of salaries on Transparent California shows that

The Desert Sun reported that open positions for law enforcement professionals increased over 600 percent from 2010 to 2015 based on the Peace Officer Standards and Training government job listings. A December article in *Berkeleyside* said that “Berkeley police staffing levels have reached a crisis point.”

Kensington’s salaries are considerably lower than base salaries for officers in Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, and Richmond, where total pay compensation, including overtime and other pay, is much higher. Palo Alto is now offering \$25,000 bonuses on top of starting salaries from \$100,000-\$119,000. This is the competitive environment in which Kensington is recruiting officers. While our retirement benefits are more generous than other jurisdictions, young officers are focused on salary, not retirement benefits, especially with the high costs of area housing.

Kensington’s long-standing problem of maintaining a fully staffed force is aggravated by conditions that transcend Kensington. Indeed, these enduring challenges are among the reasons that our board voted to bring in Matrix Consulting Group to thoroughly analyze Kensington’s police service options. It is essential that the board and the community have an informed, fact-based discussion on how best to provide Kensington with stable, professional police services that we can afford.

In the meantime, we have a problem that must be addressed.

There are four ways that Kensington can hire a new police officer. We can hire a police officer from another agency, commonly called a lateral hire. We can recruit graduates from a police academy (although new academy graduates require a Kensington officer to supervise the new graduate for a considerable time). We can hire a retired officer, or we can hire from reserve officer programs. Historically, Kensington’s salaries and our limited opportunities for professional advancement have hindered efforts to recruit and retain new officers from other departments or from a police academy, and to my knowledge, the department has not used the option to hire retired officers. Kensington has had more success with its reserve officer recruitment, and Chief Hull has worked hard to maintain an active reserve program. In all of these approaches, the hiring process is both time-consuming and costly because candidates must have a background report and psychological evaluation.

The KPPCSD board is fully committed to maintaining an adequately staffed police force. Given the long-standing challenges we face in accomplishing this, it is essential that General Manager Constantouros and Chief Hull vigorously pursue all of Kensington’s recruiting options. This must be our primary priority until minimal staffing is restored. Realistically recognizing our continuing vulnerabilities and competitive limitations, ongoing recruitment must be a priority for Kensington into the foreseeable future. Thus, I am requesting that our General Manager provide a report at each KPPCSD meeting, in public session, on the progress being made on each of our recruitment options.

I also encourage all Kensington residents to attend the first meeting that Matrix Consulting Group will host to seek public input on the kinds of police services Kensington wants. The meeting will be held at the Community Center on Saturday, March 17, from 10 to noon, with coffee and pastries at 9:30.

Kensington Calendar

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

Ongoing:
Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10
Acrylic Artists Wednesdays, 9:45-12:30pm, Community Center, \$9
Tai Chi Chuan Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10
Jazzercise with Kevin Knickerbacker ACC, Mondays-Fridays, 9:15am \$20 class or \$55 unlimited per month.
Mindful Yoga with Wendy Beckerman Tuesdays, 9:15am, bring yoga mat. \$18 drop in or discount for series.
Israeli Folk Dance Wednesdays, \$6, lessons/beginners 8pm, request dance party starts at 9pm.

March
Kensington Unit of the League of Women Voters No March meeting. Our next meeting will be on April 4 when we will have a guest speaker to discuss environmental issues. Save the date!

March 1 All-Day Women’s Retreat, ACC, 6pm. When is a garden not a garden? What comes to mind as an archetypal garden? Are you a planter of flowers, or do you prefer veggies? Would you rather be in charge of weeding and pruning or putting in the annual beds? On the eve of the new landscaping and garden project at ACC, and in the middle of Lent, gather with others at ACC to explore the topic of Gardens: within and without. \$15 covers refreshments, lunch and materials. Sign up in advance, contact Ruth Robinson at ruthrobinson2@icloud.com.

March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 Baby & Toddler Storytime Stories, songs, puppets, egg-shakers and loads of fun! Kensington Library, two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free.

March 4 Rev. Sue Magidson, longtime member of UUCB, UUCB Community Minister, Spiritual Care Coordinator and Chaplain at San Leandro Hospital. “Radical Listening as Spiritual Practice: How Giving Someone Our Undivided Attention Can Change Us ... and Them.” UUCB, 9:30am.

March 5 Kensington Library Knitting Club “The Castoffs” All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. We will provide support, encouragement and help. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. Normally meets on the 1st Monday of the month.

March 6, 13, & 27 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30 pm. Free.

March 8 El Cerrito Garden Club “Bouquets to Art” Program Garden club members display their own floral arrangements along with art that reflects and complements their arrangements. 9:30 am El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. Members free, guests \$3. For

questions call Bonnie (510) 237-4654.

March 11 Rev. Chris Schriner, Minister Emeritus of Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Received a Doctorate in Religion from Claremont School of Theology and an MS in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling from the University of LaVerne. “Bridging the God Gap: Finding Common Ground Among Believers, Atheists and Agnostics.” UUCB, 9:30am.

March 12 Seasonal Health Talk Join in at the Kensington Library for our four-part series hosted by a licensed acupuncturist to give you simple home kitchen recipes for promoting good health for the whole family throughout the year. One workshop will be held each season, spring, summer, fall, and winter. Free. Registration is requested but not required. 6:30pm.

March 12 & 26 Kensington Library’s Digital Docent will answer your eReader and digital library questions every other Monday by appointment at 1pm. This one-on-one 60-minute free appointment is intended for people seeking assistance with eBooks and eReaders. Sign up onsite at info desk. Please bring your device.

March 15 Person of the Planet Speaker Series: Andrew Gunther 7pm, ACC. Free. Climate scientist specializing in marine biology, Andrew Gunther, will speak to us about climate change and how it’s already affecting our planet.

March 15 Illustrated Talk by Beverly Ortiz This overview of the culture and history of the Huchiun, an Ohlone-speaking tribe in the place now known as El Cerrito, will take you on a journey spanning thousands of years. It will end with a brief summary of the contemporary cultural involvements of today’s Ohlones. Free, refreshments, El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Ave. 7pm.

March 17 Legal Issues for Non-citizens Eleni Wolfe-Roubatis of Centro Legal de la Raza will speak at the AAUW West Contra Costa Branch meeting. Topics include representing non-citizens who face criminal prosecution, been detained or have mental health issues. Christ Lutheran Church, 780 Ashbury St., El Cerrito. 10am. Free.

March 17 West County Winds Join our nonprofit community wind ensemble for an Ireland-themed concert featuring the works of Grainger, Sousa, Danyew and more. Reception and musician meet and greet to follow. UUCB, 3pm. Free admission!

March 18 Br. Bede Healey OSB Cam, PhD, Camaldolese Benedictine monk at Incarnation Monastery in Berkeley, clinical psychologist. He has a deep interest in the intersection between psychology and Christian spirituality. “The Psychological Roots of Believing.” UUCB, 9:30am.

March 19 Memoir Group 10am, ACC. Free Monthly Memoir Group led by Ruth Robinson in the Fireside Room.

March 19 UC Master Gardeners Present: Planting Summer Vegetables The UC Master Gardeners return to the Kensington Library to discuss the delicious topic of planting summer vegetables in the spring. Learn tips and best practices for laying the foundation for a bountiful garden come summer. 6:30pm. Free.

March 20 Owen Baker-Flynn—Comedian,

Juggler, Jelly Bean Spitter Join us here at the Kensington Library for a fun night of juggling, goofy stuff, balancing and maybe some accordion (if you’re lucky). 6:30pm. Free.

March 23 Bridge Night 6pm, ACC. Monthly potluck and bridge play at all levels for ACC’ers and new guests.

March 25 Dr. Shahara Godfrey, Buddhist teacher, graduate of the Spirit Rock Community Dharma Leadership and the Path of Engagement programs. A self-taught mixed-media artist, she has exhibited in the Bay Area, Oregon, Washington, Atlanta and Los Angeles. “A Celebration of Life through Accepting Grief.” UUCB, 9:30am.

March 26 Kensington Library Book Club Discussion of *The Overcoat* by Nikolai Gogol. Book Club normally meets on the 4th Monday of the month and is open to all. 6:30pm. Free.

Elite Car Service

Long-term Kensington resident providing reliable and courteous transportation for the entire East Bay. To and from SFO and OAK airports as well as transportation around town.



► **Call Tim**
at
(510) 926-0121
TCP: 28594

Town Meetings
Kensington Community Center
59 Arlington Ave., Kensington
KCC-Mar 5, Kensington Community Council 1st Mondays, 6:30pm. 525-0292
FKL-Mar 6, Friends of the Kensington Library, 6:30pm (at the Library) 1st Tuesdays
KPSC-Mar 12, Kensington Public Safety Council Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness 2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165
KARO/ECHO-Amateur Radio Operators 2nd Mondays of odd months, 7:30pm. 524-9815
KFPD-Mar 14, Fire Protection District 2nd Wednesdays, 7pm. 527-8395
KPPCSD-Mar 8, Mar 22, Police Protection and Community Services District 2nd & 4th Thursdays 7:30pm. 526-4141
KIC- Kensington Improvement Club 4th Mondays, 7:30pm. 524-7514.
KMAC (Tent.)-Municipal Advisory Council Last Tues. 7pm. (Call Supe. Gioia’s office to confirm: 231-8691)
Kensington Farmers’ Market Live produce & live music every Sunday, 10am-2pm, Colusa Circle.



WE’RE MAID FOR THIS.
NEED SOME HELP? WE’RE HERE FOR YOU.
On special occasions or a regular cleaning schedule.
The most trusted and reliable team in house cleaning.
Call for a free, in-home consultation and estimate.
510-527-2200
© 2017 MollyMaid, Inc. Each franchise independently owned and operated.
• Visit us at **MollyMaid.com** to learn more •



D’Jour Floral will have your spring flowers.

Need a spring bouquet? **D’Jour Floral** offers ready-made bouquets available seven days a week at the following Kensington locations:
COLUSA MARKET, 406 Colusa Avenue
and at
RAXAKOUL COFFEE & CHEESE MARKET, 299 Arlington Avenue.

D’Jour is a full-service florist offering quality flowers and design for your floral needs for birthdays, parties, receptions, holidays, small weddings and decor for your home, as well as sympathy tributes.

D’Jour delivers locally to Kensington, North Berkeley, Albany and El Cerrito. Delivery to other areas are available by special arrangement.

D’Jour Floral of Kensington Gardens
Judy Pope, Designer/ Owner
To place an order, phone: 510-525-7232
or you may place an order on the web at www.elcerritoflowershop.com.
See our gallery of flowers and services at www.djourflowers.com.





Barbara Park
NKBA Certified Assoc. Kitchen Designer
and CCIDC Certified – Lic. #6375
Free In-home Consultation

REMODELS ■ KITCHEN/BATH DESIGN
WINDOW TREATMENTS ■ FURNISHINGS

PARK PLACE DESIGN
NEW SHOWROOM
By Appointment Only

1918 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WAY, BERKELEY, CA 94704
SHOWROOM: (510) 647-9000 ■ CELL: (925) 818-1473
EMAIL: PARKPLACEDESIGN@COMCAST.NET

Local Kensington Resident • Certified Interior Designer
WWW.PARKPLACEDESIGN.COM



Serving Kensington
For Over 15 Years

web development
online marketing website management
hosting seo social media
domain name management
wordpress database programming

www.pagepoint.com 510.558.1534

Ani's Kitchen
• Party Chef/Catering •

**Mediterranean and
Middle Eastern Cuisine**

Custom-designed menus • Organic, fresh ingredients
Bringing the party to your home



Check out our website at www.aniscatering.net
for pictures of the various meals we prepare.
Yelp reviews offer comments from our many customers.
Looking forward to talking and meeting with you.

Phone: 510-234-5349 • Email: atoroyan@prodigy.net
www.aniscatering.net

Chime in about Kensington’s options for policing.
March 17, 10am, Community Center

You Can Help. Share Your Home.



Do you have extra room in your East Bay home?
Please help a person or family facing a housing crisis.
Short-term and safe. Visit **SafeTimeHost.org**.

Help Prevent Homelessness



January Police Log

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave. Auto. Cold. Window smash. RP on her way back home to meet w/ officer.

Jan 2 VANDALISM, Anson Way. 04:30hrs. Veh stopped in front of res and something hit her window. Looks like a bullet hole. Didn’t hear a gun. Large picture window facing Eureka St.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave. Window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave. Window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Willamette Ave. Window smash. RP will call back when she’s ready to make report.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Highland Blvd. Window smash. RP wait at gate.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Los Altos Dr. Window shot with pellet and also in body of car. RP has video.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Willamette Ave. Window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Beloit Ave. Veh parked near her res w/ window smash. RP is not the veh owner. I swept up broken glass from the road-way and left a Marsy’s Pamphlet and my business card on windshield to contact KPD when discovered.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave. Veh window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave. Window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Yale Ave. Veh window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Yale Ave. Window smash. R/O was not home at this address. I left a Marsy’s Pamphlet (explains due process and rights to crime victims) and business card on the windshield to contact KPD when discovered.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Yale Ave. 2 vehs. Window smash. #1 Acura MDX. #2 Tesla Model S. RP standing by res to make report.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Los Altos Dr.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Arlington Ct. Cold case. RP’s visitor had car window broken out on 12/25. Would like to file report.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Beloit Ave. Veh window smash.

Jan 2 BURGLARY. Arlmont Dr. Attempted residential burglary. Front home window broken out occurred sometime yesterday.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Beloit Ave.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Yale Ave. Vehicle was hit by unknown object. Will come in and report incident on graveyard shift when he gets off from work.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Highland Blvd. Vehicle window smashed out over-night. CALLER WAS OUT OF AREA AND ADVISED SHE WOULD CALL TO FILE REPORT UPON HER RETURN.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Arlington Ave. Request to speak to on duty officer.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Highland Blvd. Vehicle hit by BB gun.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Kenyon Ave./Westminster Ave. RP noticed friend’s vehicle window appears to be smashed out, garbage bag over a window, friend is out of town for a few more days.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Willamette. Auto was vandalized via window smash.

Jan 2 VANDALISM. Officer-initiated activity at Kensington Police Dept.

Jan 3 VANDALISM. Grizzly Peak Blvd. Window smashed via BB gun.

Jan 3 VANDALISM. Highland Blvd. Vehicle damaged.

Jan 3 VANDALISM. Yale Ave. Chry 200 and Nissan Armada damaged.

Jan 3 VANDALISM. Beloit Ave. Vehicle window smashed out.

Jan 7 PARK AND WALK. Officer-initiated activity on Arlington Ave.

Jan 7 VANDALISM. Beloit Ave. Found card on his car from KPD, driver’s window shattered.

Jan 8 VEHICLE THEFT. Purdue Ave. Vehicle stolen between last night and now.

Jan 10 RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLE. Purdue Ave. Parked for 3-4 days.

Jan 10 VANDALISM. Franciscan Way. Just returned home to find vehicle window smashed out.

Jan 10 Stanford Ave. Residents at location put out orange cones to block off parking for themselves.

Jan 11 VEHICLE ACCIDENT. Colusa Ave. No injury.

Jan 14 VEHICLE THEFT. Purdue Ave.

Jan 17 PETTY THEFT. Colusa Ave. Bike stolen out of garage Sunday night.

Jan 17 EMBEZZLEMENT Kensington Circus, Colusa Ave. Employees possibly stealing from the business. RP would like an officer to come to the business.

Jan 17 BURGLARY. Kenilworth Dr. RP’s babysitter got to the residence broken glass everything inside turned upside down.

Jan 18 TOWED/STORED VEHICLE. Rincon Rd. Officer-initiated activity.

Jan 18 ANNOYING TELEPHONE CALLS. Receiving scam calls every 30 minutes, has a phone number from one caller.

Jan 19 THEFT. Kensington Ct.

Jan 20 BURGLARY. Franciscan Way. Two vehicles with window smashed just discovered. First vehicle white sedan, second gray truck. Possible suspect vehicle blue or green jeep. Occupied by BMA/HMA. License plate covered.

Jan 25 PETTY THEFT. Arlington Ave. 2 bikes taken out of garage some-time overnight.

Jan 25 IDENTITY THEFT. Windsor Ave. Reported at station.

Jan 28 RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLE. Officer-initiated activity at Arlington Ave.

Computers
tamed and tuned.

Macs, PCs,
iPads & more

Setup & Repair • Business & Home
Great local references • We come to you

 May Technology • maytc.com • 932-4021



5K RACE-March 17
Colusa Circle
Race starts at 8am