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KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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MARCH 2026

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VOLUME 84 NUMBER 2



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Colusa Circle 5K Supports Richmond Youth



By Rae Quigley

The Colusa Circle 5K is back for its eighth year, bringing neighbors together for a meaningful morning of movement, community, and giving. Presented by Kensington real estate brokerage Zip Code East Bay, the 2026 Colusa Circle 5K takes place Saturday, March 14 at 8am. The event is designed to be inclusive and welcoming for all ages and abilities—participants are invited to run, walk, or roll.

Each year, the Colusa Circle 5K raises funds for a local charitable organization making a tangible difference in the East Bay. This year's beneficiary is Tiny Village Spirit, a Richmond-based nonprofit dedicated to building emergency housing villages as an innovative response to the housing crisis.

"We created this race as a way to bring people together and use that collective energy to do something positive close to home," said Josh Dickinson, founder of Zip Code East Bay. "We're proud to support Tiny Village Spirit and the important work they're doing for Richmond youth, and we hope the community will join us for a morning that's both fun and meaningful."

See Colusa Circle 5K, Page 8

KCC to Locals: "We Are All Ears!"

By Sylvia Elsbury, Kensington Community Council

Take five minutes to complete the Kensington Community Council's new survey. Help your neighbors and yourself.

KCC hopes for a thundering response to our first-ever public survey! Find it online, or keep an eye out for us at tables outside Young's Market and at the Kensington Farmers Market, where we will soon spread the word about our survey and offer aid to those who want help accessing it.

KCC is the local nonprofit that publishes the *Outlook* and offers enrichment and recreational classes to people of all ages. We also run the ever-popular summer day camp for kids entering first grade through those entering sixth grade.

Our programs are not limited to Kensington residents—so neither is our brief survey. The questions will cover topics such as program priorities, communication and outreach, and reasons folks do or do not participate in classes.

We'll also ask you about KCC's traditional events such as the annual parade/picnic and September's free movie night in Kensington Park. Got an idea for a new event we might sponsor? We'll ask you to share that too. You can answer our questions anonymously or provide your contact info if desired.

KCC needs to learn our community's priorities so that we can shape our future to serve you best. With more than 60 years

See KCC, Page 3

Are you flipping out over Zone Zero? Take an artist's approach, page 4

FIRST LOOK!

Exclusively presenting my newest listings.

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January Patrol Log

By Chief Mike Gancasz

Jan 2: Vehicle burglary on Arlington Ave.

Jan 2: A Flock Safety alert for a stolen vehicle led to the stop of a vehicle on Vassar Ave. Investigation revealed that only the license plate had been switched by an unknown suspect.

Jan 5: Non-injury hit and run collision on Beloit and Trinity aves.

Jan 8: Identity theft reported on Lennox Rd.

Jan 9: An intoxicated individual on Colusa Ave. was arrested and transported to the county jail.

Jan 9: Officers responded to Avon Rd. for a suspicious circumstance.

Jan 11: Theft reported on Lake Dr.

Jan 12: Identity theft reported on Yale Ave.

Jan 15: Identity theft reported on Sunset Ave.

Jan 16: Lost property reported at the police station.

Jan 19: Vandalism reported on Yale Ave.

Jan 19: Vehicle burglary reported on Arlington Ave.

Jan 22: Non-injury traffic accident reported on Arlington Ave.

Jan 22: Found property reported on Arlington Ave.

Jan 23: Traffic stop on Arlington Ave. and Lam Ct.; driver arrested for driving with a suspended license.

Jan 24: Found property reported on Coventry Rd.

Jan 25: Casualty report taken at Oakview and Colusa aves.

Jan 25: Vehicle burglary reported on Highland Ave.

Jan 26: Found property reported at the police station.

Jan 27: Grand theft from a vehicle on Arlington Lane. Officers used the Flock camera database to identify leads, including direction of travel, date and time and vehicle location in real time.

Jan 28: Lost property reported on Coventry Rd.

Kensington Expands Wildfire Resilience

By Johnny Valenzuela

The Kensington Community Services District is pleased to announce the third round of funding for the hazardous vegetation removal reimbursement grant, designed to help residents remove high-risk plant species such as bamboo and juniper. This year's program includes a higher reimbursement threshold and a cost-share component to stretch community dollars farther and increase neighborhood participation.

Applications will be accepted March 1 through May 31. Full program details, eligibility criteria, and application materials are available at www.kensingtonfire.org/grant.

In addition, the district is developing the Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP), a new initiative focused on reducing home ignition risk by preventing wind-blown embers from entering vents and vulnerable openings. More information on KEEP will be released soon.

Kensington's Firewise momentum continues to grow. Our 21st Firewise community was recognized on January 31, and our 22nd Firewise community (Trinity & Cambridge area) is currently pending approval.

To learn more or to start a Firewise community in your neighborhood, contact Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, at prepare@kensingtonfire.org.

Lithium-Ion Batteries: Powerful, Convenient and Worth Treating with Respect

By El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Chief Eric Saylor

Lithium-ion batteries power so much of daily life that it's easy to forget how much energy they store. They're in our phones and laptops, cordless tools, toys, power banks, ebikes and scooters—and increasingly, in home backup systems and electric vehicles. Most of the time, they work safely and quietly.

But when a lithium-ion battery is damaged, defective, mismatched with the wrong charger, or poorly stored, the results can be dramatic: intense heat, thick smoke, and fast moving fire. Safety agencies warn that lithium-ion batteries can “extremely overheat,” triggering “thermal runaway,” a chain reaction that can cause large, violent fires. Damaged, defective, or uncertified batteries carry greater risk.

Why This Matters in Kensington

Over the past year, our fire department has responded to multiple fires involving lithium-ion batteries, some with devastating effects. These incidents have produced extreme heat, rapid fire spread, heavy smoke, and significant property damage, in some cases extending well beyond the original room or device involved.

What has been especially concerning is that several of these fires were linked to everyday consumer items, devices many of us use and charge daily without a second thought. In more than one incident, battery damage or improper charging conditions were believed to be contributing factors.

These incidents reinforce an important message: lithium-ion battery fires are not theoretical or rare, they are happening here, and prevention at home makes a real difference. The good news: a few practical habits, especially around charging, storage, and disposal, can greatly reduce risk in homes, garages, apartments, and workplaces.

Why Lithium-ion Battery Fires Can Be So Severe

Lithium-ion batteries are popular because they pack a lot of power into a small, light-weight package. That same high energy density is why a failing battery can become dangerous quickly.

When a battery enters thermal runaway, it can release energy rapidly as heat, flames, and hot gases. Fires may start suddenly and spread fast, and they can reignite even after they appear to be out. That's why prevention is the best strategy.

Warning Signs You Should Never Ignore

If a battery or device shows any of the following, stop using it:

- A strange odor (sweet/solvent-like), smoke, or hissing; swelling/bulging, cracking, or leaking; discoloration or scorching; unusual heat, especially when not in use; odd noises during charging or operation.

Fire safety guidance is consistent: if you notice odors, shape changes, leaking, or odd noises, discontinue use immediately. If it's safe, move the device away from anything flammable.

Best Practices to Prevent Most Incidents

Buy safer: choose certified, reputable products. Not all batteries and chargers are created equal. Safety guides recommend buying from reputable manufacturers and vendors—and avoiding the “low price, low quality” option when it comes to battery powered devices. Look for products that are third-party certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory (such as UL, for example). Certification indicates a product has been evaluated against safety standards. This matters most for high energy items like ebike and scooter systems, where standards, such as UL 2849 for ebike electrical systems, are specifically designed to evaluate the battery/charger/system combination.

Charge safely: where and how you plug in matters. Charging is when many battery incidents begin. Follow these habits every time: Use only the charger provided or approved by the manufacturer. Plug chargers directly into a wall outlet. Avoid extension cords and many power strips, which can overheat or overload circuits. Charge on a hard, non-flammable surface (not on a bed, couch, or pile of clothing). Keep batteries away from anything flammable while charging and storing. Do not leave devices charging overnight or unattended, especially larger packs like ebike batteries.

A widely shared “never” list from fire safety guidance includes: don't plug into a power strip/overload outlets, don't overcharge or leave charging overnight, don't charge under a pillow/on a bed/near a couch, and don't leave ebikes or scooters unattended while charging. Keep temperatures in the safe zone. Heat and extreme cold can increase stress on a battery. Store batteries at room temperature when possible. Avoid charging in freezing or very hot conditions; guidance warns not to charge below 32°F or above 105°F. Don't leave batteries in direct sunlight or a hot car.

Handle with care — and don't “DIY” repairs. Lithium-ion cells are tough, but they do not like being crushed, punctured, dropped, or modified. If a battery is damaged, do not charge it. Do not attempt to alter a battery pack (for example, opening it or adding cells). Repairs to battery packs should be done by a certified repair facility, not improvised at home.

Apartment and Multifamily Living: Protect Exits and Neighbors

In close-quarter housing, one person's charging setup can become everyone's problem. Fire safety guidance emphasizes keeping ebikes, scooters, wheelchairs, and similar devices from blocking the primary way in or out of a space. If your building has rules about where batteries may be charged or stored, follow them, and if it doesn't, consider starting the conversation. A small change (like requiring charging away from exit routes and combustibles) can make a big difference.

Next month: What to do if a battery catches fire, how to deal with disposal, and carry-on rules for travel.

Letters to the Editor

Longtime Police Location Search Needs One Document

Dear Editor:

This letter was delivered to the Kensington Community Services District on February 12. No decision is immediately pending.

The plan for locating the Kensington Police Department is a high priority for the Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA) membership based on the initial review of our survey conducted in late 2025.

We believe that a majority of the community has not closely followed the work to date and remains loosely informed about the options that have been considered and the costs of locating the police department to a site in Kensington. As an organization we find it difficult to track all of the work that has been done over the last five years (or longer), including the work of previous boards that is spread across many meeting agendas.

Since the summer, our board has been discussing how to help KPOA members and the community understand where the district is on a location for the police. It would be immensely helpful for the community, and likely for many of the board members, to have a new report prepared by the district that compiles and clearly identifies all of the information that has already been completed in various staff and board reports, by putting them in one place.

As we envision this document it would include: all sites that have been reviewed to date; constraints and benefits of each site considered; cost estimates for locating at those sites; reasons why sites did not move forward as a location choice; all financial information that has been prepared on cost of site preparation, new build or modular siting; all information already available on financing a project for a police station; timeline established by the board (to date) of a planning process if any; and current lease for the modular office in El Cerrito, cost and term.

A compendium of the history of this planning effort will be very useful and help to educate and engage the community as future plans are discussed.

Rob Firmin, President KPOA & KPOA Board

Toxic Skies Should Raise Alarms

Dear Editor:

I choose to speak up against geoengineering, “chemtrails/weather modification,” not accepting the irresponsible label of “conspiracy theorist.” Sky operations have been going on for decades, ramped up during COVID, now normal to young people with no memory of blue skies, puffy white clouds, the smell of the earth with a thunderstorm on approach, a thunderstorm at all for that matter, wet fog cresting over the hills and tumbling into the low-lying regions rather than the gassy, dry toxins that appear out of nowhere (coming from ground and ships).

The young must identify as normal the milky white state of the skies that spread out as sky stripes join together to block the sun that everything desperately needs for good health. Unfortunately, most are unaware of that toxins/desiccants raining down into our water supply, the soil, plants/animals/insects and of course, us.

Also unnoticed, the Doppler radar that follows (zebra-like lines that appear in the toxic, milky white mess!) These microwaves enter our bodies, causing cells to collapse because the structured water within the cell is destroyed. Anyone can research this. There are films, videos, books, podcasts, articles, websites, military/government documents, leaked documents, studies, lab tests, university majors, whistleblowers, Freedom of Information Act Request responses, apps that track planes, companies who release the contents of their applications, their flight schedules, their contracts. This isn't rocket science. The information is all there, with the exception of the high altitude white planes laying trails that currently remains undisclosed.

How can anyone justify being sprayed like bugs, denying the impact on every single ecosystem? Why don't people take responsibility? Would people allow the government to come into their homes and spray all over the inside of their house? Essentially that is what is happening because the air from outside ends up inside.

Media outlets should be swamped with verbal and written complaints about why they fail to report on this. Companies and pilots should be put on notice! Government officials should be barraged by concerned constituents! People should not be putting up with this. It impacts literally everything!

Marcelina Cravat

Why Have Ordinances When Codes Are Unenforced?

Dear Editor:

Reading “KCSD Board Meetings Deal with Fire Threats, Possible Ordinances” (February 2026) left me perplexed. We need to enact ordinances so the police can issue citations? One suggestion was no drinking on the path. Drinking what, since it's already against the law to drink alcohol in public. A “no loitering” ordinance? Is that a “Move along, folks” ordinance? Has the “Kensington Street Scene” become too crowded?

And what's with closing hours in our park? We don't attract homeless people, getting here isn't easy, but if a homeless person slept in our park I would not want our officers disturbing her or him. And aren't new fire ordinances best proposed to the county?

We have state public safety laws that are not uniformly enforced by our county Department of Community Development. I suggest the KCSD petition the county supervisors asking that they appoint a professional and licensed zoning administrator, a certified building official, and at least one certified code enforcement officer.

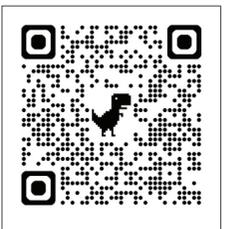
Anna Shane

KCC

...from Front Page

of service behind us, we have a great grasp of what has worked in the past. Now help us make the most of what lies ahead for the Kensington community and our surrounding neighbors.

Stop by one of our info tables in the coming weeks or use the QR code below. You can also find the survey at www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org. Or even stop by and complete the survey in person at our office in the Recreation Building at Kensington Park. No matter what avenue you choose, we look forward to hearing your thoughts.



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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.

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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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.

APRIL - 2026 DEADLINES
Advertising Deadline ❖ MAR. 8
Editorial Deadline ❖ MAR. 10

Use one space, not two, after all periods.



High Tea for Women's Scholarships

By Candy Capogrossi

The Soroptimist International of El Cerrito is sponsoring British Tea Time March 15 at the Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave. from 1:30-4:30 p.m. Speaking will be Dr. Karen McNeil, a renowned expert on Julia Morgan, architect. Music will be provided by Natalie Cox and Dan Reiter on harp and cello.

In addition to the traditional tea, scones, jam, tea sandwiches, biscuits, there will be sweet treats. Purses, scarves and jewelry will be sold with all proceeds going to the scholarship funds for girls and women. Tickets are \$75 and can be purchased on Auctria. events/Soroptimist British Tea Time.

Members from Kensington, Albany, Berkeley as well as El Cerrito are welcome to join the club. An online auction opens March 1 and includes donations from restaurants, movie theater, music events, travel and more and can be found on Auctria.events/ Soroptimist British Tea Time.

Love Songs and Chocolate: A Community Event

By Charis Domador

Love Songs and Chocolate is a celebration of romance and delectable desserts. Many singers from the community will share beguiling love songs from the classics to Broadway to jazz in a relaxed, cabaret setting on March 1 at 1pm.

The show is an annual fundraiser for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. Tickets are \$20 regular, \$15 students, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Tickets are available at the door or online.



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Zone Zero: An Artisan's Approach



These local fire-smart landscaping projects integrate native plants with decorative rockwork. All photos by Ashley Barry.

By Matt Zimbalist

Kensington is a place defined by its edges, where the Berkeley Hills meet the bay breeze, and where thoughtful gardens often blur the line between a private sanctuary and the wilder reaches of Tilden Park. It is a neighborhood of craft and soul—evident in the hand-split shingles, winding stone paths, steep gables, and the ancient canopy that shades the streets.

With the arrival of stricter state and local fire-safety mandates and the critical need for Zone Zero (Zone 0) compliance, we are currently living through a shift in how we inhabit the California landscape—having to reevaluate how best to protect our homes and communities from fire danger. There is a fear that fire-hardening is synonymous with stripping away. We worry that to save our homes, and make our communities most resilient, we must first make our homes unrecognizable—replacing lush planted entries with monotonous gray gravel and architectural open eaves with cold, industrial siding and soffits.

The mandates are a nudge—albeit a firm one—to acknowledge that our homes are part of a larger, living system that is changing around us. And that we are all in this together... my neighbor's Zone 0 hardening makes my home safer. My eave protection reduces their risk.

As a general contractor and landscape construction contractor, I've always been inspired by craft and architectural features that define our homes and gardens, and as such, I have been viewing home fire-hardening in a new way. I believe that fire safety doesn't have to be a subtraction of beauty or architectural features. In fact, if we approach it with the eye of an artisan and the mindset of a preservationist, fire-hardening can actually enhance the architectural and ecological integrity of our properties.

Rethinking Zone 0

In the industry, we talk a lot about Zone 0—the five-foot immediate ember-resistant zone surrounding the home. This is the most critical area for protecting a home from wind-blown embers, and it is also the area that causes the most heartbreak for Kensington gardeners...and for good reason.

Zone 0, like Berkeley's new EMBER Initiative, asks us to remove all combustible materials within five feet of the home—mulch, woody shrubs, grasses, wooden fences and gates, even sometimes the welcome mat. If we view this as a purely regulatory chore, the stripping away is often the making of uncreative, barren space, and a process that can bring resentment.

But if we look at it through a systems-thinking lens, one where we exist within our landscapes and our communities, Zone 0 can be seen as a collective call to action and even as an opportunity for a thoughtful, non-combustible transition that is not only beautiful, but helps protect our homes and that of our neighbors. Zone 0 offers us a chance to showcase the ability to adapt our properties to fire danger with the same thoughtfulness and care with which our homes were built.

Instead of disinteresting gravel, imagine a well designed meandering path of local river stone and rough edged pavers that anchors the home to the ground. Instead of the pain of removing that wooden fence that touches the home, it's an opportunity to enhance the entry with a crafted metal entry gate. By using steel edging or hand-set masonry to define these boundaries, we create a fire-safe transition that feels intentional and permanent, rather than reactive.

Material Integrity

In the building trades, sometimes the best materials are those that serve multiple purposes: durable, beautiful, safe. When we talk about hardening the structure itself, we aren't limited to tacky and obvious solutions like over the counter galvanized vents or metal siding that can bring unattractive and out of place industrial elements to old, charming homes.

Replacing old, combustible wooden vents with fine-mesh, ember-resistant vents is a small mechanical change, but it's an opportunity for a vent makeover, one that maybe considers decorative copper vent covers or patina hardware. Similarly, for the classic shin-



gle-style homes that define our hills, we can explore non-combustible fiber-cement products molded from real cedar, or explore creative prescriptive solutions to achieving fire ratings. It's about choosing materials that will age gracefully alongside our redwoods, rather than cluttering our views with disposable-feeling upgrades. Where we source these materials—and how they are installed—matters deeply for the longevity of the home and retention of its charm.



The Canopy and the Understory

A casual walk through the hills of Kensington reveals the community's connection to plants and the care residents put into their gardens. Fire-hardening does not mean clear-cutting, although more often than not that is the approach taken. It means limbing up and thinning out. It's about creating horizontal and vertical separation—industry terms that essentially mean giving our plants room to breathe and grow, in some ways mirroring what our neighboring forests need to be more fire and disease resilient.

If we remove fuel ladders—the dry, woody brush that allows a ground fire to climb into the trees—we actually can improve the health of the garden and improve the fire-hardening of the home. We can create attractive sightlines that weren't there before. We allow light to reach the floor of the garden, encouraging the growth of fire-resistant, succulent groundcovers and native perennials that stay green and lush even in the height of summer. It's reframing to becoming a fire-smart gardener.

Community Resilience

Protecting our neighborhood doesn't require us to surrender the aesthetic charm that brought the character and beauty to Kensington in the first place. Sure, it requires a more thoughtful, and at times a more costly and time-intensive approach, but it's one that meets the moment, pays respect to where our homes join the wild, and invests in our communities. We all share a new California landscape. To transition to fire-hardening gracefully, it requires us to invest in quality, durability, beauty, and fire-resistance over quick fixes.

We can have both: a home and garden that acts as a solid buffer from embers and flames and also a sanctuary for the home dweller and neighbor on an evening stroll. We need a holistic view, a reframing of a new responsibility in California, a bit of craftsmanship, and a respect for the materials we choose to surround ourselves with.

Matt Zimbalist is a licensed general contractor and landscape construction contractor (www.traditional-craftworks.com) specializing in home fire-hardening and fire-smart landscaping.

Flock Cameras Down for 90 Days

By Lin Due

At the February 12 Kensington Community Services District board meeting, Police Chief Mike Gancasz announced that the Flock license plate readers would be shut down for a trial period of 90 days. Gancasz said that Flock helped keep both the community and officers safe—"It gives us the best chance to find and arrest suspects"—but that Kensington had operated without it for decades. "We're going to reevaluate and take a look at things."

Director Dave Spath asked what would be gained by pausing for 90 days. "I know it's been misused in other states. I don't think any of our partner jurisdictions are misusing it."

Director Daniel Levine asked who owns the cameras, to which Gancasz answered, "We own the cameras and the data."

In an email following the meeting, Gancasz clarified several points. The cameras, he wrote, were shut down the day of the meeting and will remain off until May 12. "During this time," Gancasz wrote, "the cameras are not actively collecting or processing license plate data, or alerting officers when wanted/high-risk vehicles enter the district."

The purpose of the pause, he wrote, "is to assess system controls, policy safeguards, data governance practices, and public confidence. Recent media reports involving unauthorized access to camera systems in other jurisdictions have understandably generated broader concerns. While those incidents did not involve Kensington, it is prudent to review our safeguards and ensure our policies remain aligned with best practices and community expectations."

Gancasz said that the department would be reviewing access controls, interagency sharing agreements, and comparing Kensington's policies with those statewide. "At the conclusion of the 90-day review, a determination will be made based on the results of our policy and control assessment, any recommended improvements, and our confidence that the system can operate with strong safeguards and sustained community trust," he wrote. "The cameras have proven to be a valuable investigative and officer-safety tool, and our personnel have used the system responsibly and ethically. That said, public safety initiatives must be supported not only by effectiveness but by public confidence. This temporary

See Flock Cameras, Page 8

A Discussion with Leslie Reckler

By Katie Gluck and David Tuft

On Wednesday, March 4 at 7pm, the Kensington Democratic Club will host a Zoom meeting with West Contra Costa Unified School District Board Trustee Leslie Reckler for a candid discussion of our situation with the WCCUSD.

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Learn about the financial reality facing this district and what parents and especially Kensington Democratic parents can do about it.



What will be the ramifications of the district's budgeting problems? Join us in welcoming Leslie Reckler and bring your questions.

You may obtain the zoom link at kensingtondemocrats@gmail.com

Kung Fu Superheroes and European Street Theater

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, March 3, 6:30pm 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, March 3, 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, March 3, 10, 24, 31, 6:30pm Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome.

Wed, March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2-3pm - Speak Up! English Language Conversation Group Zoom only. Get comfortable speaking English and have some fun, all levels are welcome. Online every Wednesday. Those interested in attending should register online at ccclib.org to have access to the Zoom meeting link or email: dean.jones@library.cccounty.us for information on how to attend the meeting via Zoom.

Tues, March 10, 6pm Martial Arts Cinema Join martial arts and Hong Kong cinema expert Frank Djeng in a fun presentation on the history of martial arts movies from the past to the present, including action-packed clips! Frank Djeng, a Hong Kong native, helped bring hundreds of classic Hong Kong action films to North America while at Tai Seng Entertainment. Since 1998, he has co-hosted the Kung Fu Superhero Extravaganza at San Diego's Comic Con and is highly regarded as one of the top audio commentators for major labels including Criterion, Eureka, Arrow, Shout! Factory, and more.

Tues, March 17, 2-5pm Cloth Produce Bag Sewing Circle Join the Kensington Seamsters Union, local 94707, in transforming donated natural fiber fabric into bags, which will be given out for free at the Kensington Farmers Market. We need you to help measure, cut, iron sew and thread drawstrings, and create community.

Tues, March 17, 6:30pm Magical Moonshine Puppets Traditional puppet characters such as England's Punch and Judy, Germany's Kasperl, and France's Guignol, all evolved from humble folk origins. Come see Magical Moonshine Theatre's lively version of old school European street theater, in which the audience and puppets interact to create the play together! Recommended for children ages 4 and up.

Sat, March 21, 2-4pm California Fire Insurance and Firewise Communities Homeowners are experiencing a huge increase in insurance rates or getting dropped from coverage. Come learn about strategies to maintain affordable coverage and protect your property through fire mitigation and home-hardening. Guest speakers will be United Policy Holders Alan Siegel Firesafe Kensington (FSK), who will discuss our new Educational Ambassador program—a free service to assist Kensington residents with ideas and options for home and neighborhood safety.

Tues, March 24, 3-4pm, Read to a Dog Join us and a licensed therapy dog for a 15-minute reading session every fourth Tuesday afternoon. Same day, drop-in sign up starts 15 minutes before the read session.

Tues, March 24, time TBD Community Meeting about Kensington Library Renovation The Kensington Library is getting a makeover! Starting this summer, the library will be closed for at least one year, to get a new HVAC, electrical and lighting upgrades, ADA improvements, and interior renovations! You are invited to a community meeting, to share your input about the remodel plans with the architects and library leadership. Please check website or call library for time. An article concerning the renovations and closure will be in the April issue of the *Outlook*.

Tuesday, March 31, 6:15-7:45pm Kensington Library Book Club The club meets online via Zoom. The selection for March is *The Sound of Things Falling*, by Juan Gabriel Vasquez.

Art Exhibit Through the end of March, Quilts by Khristel Johnson, incorporating needlepoint, embroidery and authentic African fabric and beads in celebration of Unity and African History. Kensington's exhibit is a satellite show of "Art of the African Diaspora," in partnership with the Richmond Art Center. Website: Quiltsbykj.com

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Berkeley Baroque Strings Presents: In the Italian Style

By Rose Fujimoto
The Berkeley Baroque Strings invites you to its popular program of concertos highlighting the talents of the orchestra. Johann Sebastian Bach's Concerto in G Minor features harpsichordist Charlotte Gaylord. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat Major showcases two violas, two violas da gamba, cello, violone, and harpsichord. Soloists Titia Martin, Caroline Jou Armitage, Rose Fujimoto, and Kensington resident Arlene Suda perform Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto in B Minor for 4 Violins. Rounding out the program are works by George Frideric Handel, Georg Philipp Telemann, and Leonardo Leo.

The Berkeley Baroque Strings was originally initiated by Bay Area amateur string players with a passion for early music. The core founding group recruited Kati Kyme, a renowned Baroque violinist, as its musical director. A longtime member of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Agave Baroque, and a founding member of the Cantata Collective, Kyme's informed guidance and enthusiasm continues to be an inspiration to the musicians.

Members perform with Baroque style bows and instruments using gut strings. The 30-piece string orchestra has performed at every Berkeley Early Music Festival since its founding and twice at the Boston Early Music Festival.

The concert is Saturday, March 7, at 4pm at its new concert venue, the Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd, Kensington. Admission at the door: pay what you can. <http://www.berkeleybaroquestrings.org>

Kensington Community Education

Photo by Josh Kirk/Unsplash

KCC Summer Camp & KASEP

Join us for an amazing summer at KCC Camp!

KCC is thrilled to welcome campers back for an exciting Summer Camp 2026! Our program is open to children entering 1st grade in Fall 2026 through incoming 6th graders and runs for nine weeks, from June 15 through August 14, 2026. Families can enroll by the week, making it easy to build a summer schedule that works best for them.

Week 1 June 15- June 18 (no camp Friday 6/19)
Theme: *Rainbows Makers Camp*
Mid-Week Activity: *Animal Show* Specialty: *Fun w/ Food Creations*

Week 2 June 22 - June 26
Theme: *Dino Discovery*
Field Trip: *Oakland Zoo* Specialty: *Sports & Games w/Csilla*

Week 3 June 29- July 3
Theme: *Fireworks & Fun*
Field Trip: *Blake Gardens* Specialty: *Cooking around the World*

Week 4 July 6- July 10
Theme: *Treasure Hunters*
Field Trip: *Lawrence Hall of Science* Specialty: *Creative Art w/ April Schlanger*

Week 5 July 13 - July 17
Theme: *Enchanted Forest*
Field Trip: *Blake Gardens* Specialty: *Sports & Games w/Csilla*

Week 6 July 20 - July 24
Theme: *Under the Sea*
Field Trip: *California Academy of Sciences* Specialty: *Chocolate Creations*

Week 7 July 27 - July 31
Theme: *Olympic Week* Specialty: *Team Olympics*

Week 8 August 3 - August 7
Theme: *Animal Adventures*
Field Trip: *Exploratorium* Specialty: *Cooking w/ Vicky*

Week 9 August 10 - August 14
Theme: *Camp Carnival*
Mid-Week Activity: *Sterling the Bubblesmith*

Online Camp Registration opens February 24th at 7:00pm

Hiring Summer Camp Counselors - Applications Now Open!

We're excited to begin hiring summer camp counselors this March! We're looking for responsible, energetic individuals who love working with kids and are ready to be positive role models. Counselors must be at least a high school senior (or older).

Students entering 9th grade are encouraged to apply for our **Counselor in Training (CIT)** program, a great opportunity to gain experience and build leadership skills while supporting our camp staff.

Applications and more information can be found on our website at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/Summer-Camp.



KASEP- Kensington After School Program

Spring KASEP starts March 16th and is open to children in TK through 6th grade! Brighten your child's days with fun and engaging classes like chess, judo, gymnastics, and yoga. Explore something new with flag football or ultimate frisbee, or discover delicious creations in one of our many cooking classes.

Mark your calendars:

- Summer Camp Registration, Tuesday, February 24th -7:00 PM
- Spring KASEP Registration , Tuesday, March 3rd -7:00 PM TK & Kindergarten & 7:30 PM Grades 1-6
- Spring KASEP classes begin week of March 16th
- HS Senior Photo Date May 3rd @ 3:30pm

Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/KASEP

Winter Schedule for Adult and Family Classes

Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi
Wednesdays & Fridays from 9:30-11:00am
Community Center - Drop-in fee is \$15

Yoga with Anja Borgstrom
Strength & Balance Yoga
Tuesdays at 8:30am
Community Center - Cost is \$20 drop in or register online

Chair Yoga with Angi Love
Thursdays 10-11am
Community Center - Cost is sliding scale

Family Yoga in the Park with Lori Hess
Family Yoga will take place on rotating weekend days @ 10:00-10:45 (kids aged 2 to 5) on the grassy lawn outside the KCC Office/Recreation Building (past the tennis courts). If possible, please bring a waterproof blanket/tarp, two yoga mats (we will have extra mats available), warm layers, and a water bottle. Spring dates: **Sunday 3/1, Saturday 3/14, Sunday 3/22, Sunday 4/12 and Sunday 4/26**. Suggested cost: \$25 per class; Please contact Lori Hess wayto-glowkidsyoga@gmail.com with questions about the class.

Slim Chance Circus School - All-Ages Unicycle & Juggling Class
Thursday evenings, 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM
Recreation Building Classroom A (Kensington Park near the flat upper lawn)
Cost: \$20 per person (drop-in). Family discounts available!



Meet Mah Jongg!
Join us for a fun and engaging Beginner American Mah Jongg class designed especially for adult learners! This four-week series will introduce you to the fundamentals of American Mah Jongg, including tile identification, understanding the National Mah Jongg League card, Charleston strategies, game play, and basic tactics for building winning hands.

Classes will be held Tuesday evenings from 6:00-8:00 PM, April 28 through May 19, at the Kensington Community Center in Kensington. Each session builds on the previous week, so attendance at all four classes is required to ensure a strong foundation and confident game play.

Whether you're brand new or have always wanted to learn, this is a welcoming and supportive environment to start playing American Mah Jongg!
Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/adult-and-family-classes

Photo: Ness Fu/Unsplash

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KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Café Etoile: A Sunny Blend of Croffles, Korean Favor, and All-Day Brunch
By Ittai Shiu

Located just close enough to UC Berkeley’s campus to draw in students searching for strong coffee and reliable WiFi, Café Etoile effortlessly bridges two worlds: weekday café regulars and leisurely weekend brunch-goers. On any given morning, the space hums with energy—students tucked into communal tables with laptops, friends gathering over long meals, and neighbors stopping in for a quick coffee and a people-watching session.

The bright, spacious interior offers a thoughtful mix of high-top tables, cozy square tables for small groups, and a large communal table that welcomes both solo diners and busy-hour overflow. Its corner location at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and University Avenue lets sunlight spill onto the sidewalk seating, making the outdoor tables an especially inviting place to linger.



At the heart of Café Etoile’s appeal is its playful, well-curated menu, designed to deliver food that feels both exciting and comforting. That philosophy comes to life most clearly in the croffle—a signature hybrid of croissant and waffle that’s crisp on the outside and light and flaky on the inside. It works equally well as a sweet treat or as the foundation for a hearty, savory meal.

The Chicken & Croffle is a fan favorite, pairing fried buttermilk chicken with a buttery croffle base, finished with powdered sugar and a side of spicy syrup that strikes a crave-worthy sweet-and-heat balance. On the sweeter side, the Cream & Berries Croffle layers fresh whipped cream, blueberry compote, mixed berries, powdered sugar, and a drizzle of dulce de leche.

For those craving something classic and filling, savory options like the Bacon & Egg Croffle or the Salmon Eggs Benedict—served with roasted potatoes—offer satisfying portions and thoughtful execution.

Beyond croffles, Café Etoile blends French comfort food with Korean-inspired dishes that add boldness to the menu. French staples like the Croque Monsieur and Croque Madame are executed with care, featuring rich béchamel sauce, Swiss cheese, ham, and a parmesan finish, with the Madame topped by a perfectly fried egg and served alongside a fresh side salad.



The Korean dishes bring standout flavor and personality. The Bulgogi Sandwich layers tender Korean-marinated beef with melted Jack cheese and pickled red onions, tied together with house sauce and garlic aioli on warm ciabatta bread. The Kimchi Fried Rice leans into comforting simplicity, with rice infused with kimchi and topped with a fried egg—breaking the yolk adds a creamy richness that balances the spice and acidity.



Drinks are just as thoughtfully curated. Even a straightforward coffee order comes out strong and flavorful, while the expanded menu tempts regulars with iced matcha lattes and traditional masala chai. The peach lemonade stands out for its refreshing, authentic flavor.

Service follows a relaxed, efficient café model: order at the register, seat yourself, and pick up your food when the pager buzzes. While patience may be required during busy hours, the payoff is made-to-order food and a welcoming experience. With its warm brunch vibes, friendly staff, and a menu that balances comfort, creativity, and global flavor, Café Etoile feels right at home in Berkeley’s food scene.

Café Etoile (510) 898-1475 1930 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Berkeley

Colusa Circle 5K

...from Front Page



Funds raised through the race will directly support Tiny Village Spirit’s work with unsheltered youth ages 18 to 24 in Richmond. “This support comes at a very important time for Tiny Village Spirit as we raise money to finish the youth Village and move our residents in,” said executive director Sally Hindman.

Once finished, the project will double the number of dedicated emergency housing units available to young people in the community, offering not only

shelter but stability, dignity, and a path forward.

In addition to fundraising, the Colusa Circle 5K will host a shoe and sock drive. Gently used running shoes and new socks will be collected for people and communities in need. Donations may be dropped off at Zip Code East Bay prior to the event or brought to the starting line on race day.

To learn more or register, visit colusacircle5k.org. Not interested in running but want to help out? Volunteer opportunities are available! Email hello@zipcodeeastbay.com. To learn more about the beneficiary, visit TinyVillageSpirit.org.

Flock Cameras

...from Page 5

pause reflects an abundance of caution, not a presumption of wrongdoing.”

Proposed ordinances were also discussed. Aranda said the police would give the citations for whatever ordinances the board decided upon; he had attached a list of ordinances enforced in the regional parks, such as no nudity. Director Alex Aquino-Fike said that she was still uncomfortable with the proposal of ordinances: “Very often, ordinances cause discrimination.”

Aranda responded that if there’s an ordinance that says you’re not allowed to sleep in the park, it applies to everyone across the board. Aquino-Fike said that the issue is not with ordinances themselves but with how they are implemented. Hacaj noted that our chiefs and officers have gone through bias training, but that she shared Alex’s concern.

“I do think it’s important that we know what we’re trying to solve here. If someone is setting up a tent in the park, we can’t kick them out because we don’t have an ordinance.”

Aranda then suggested that the board wait for a new general manager. “I don’t think I can write what you all are looking for.”

In the end, the board decided to move ahead with creating the administrative structure for issuing citations and deal with what those ordinances might be at a later date.

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