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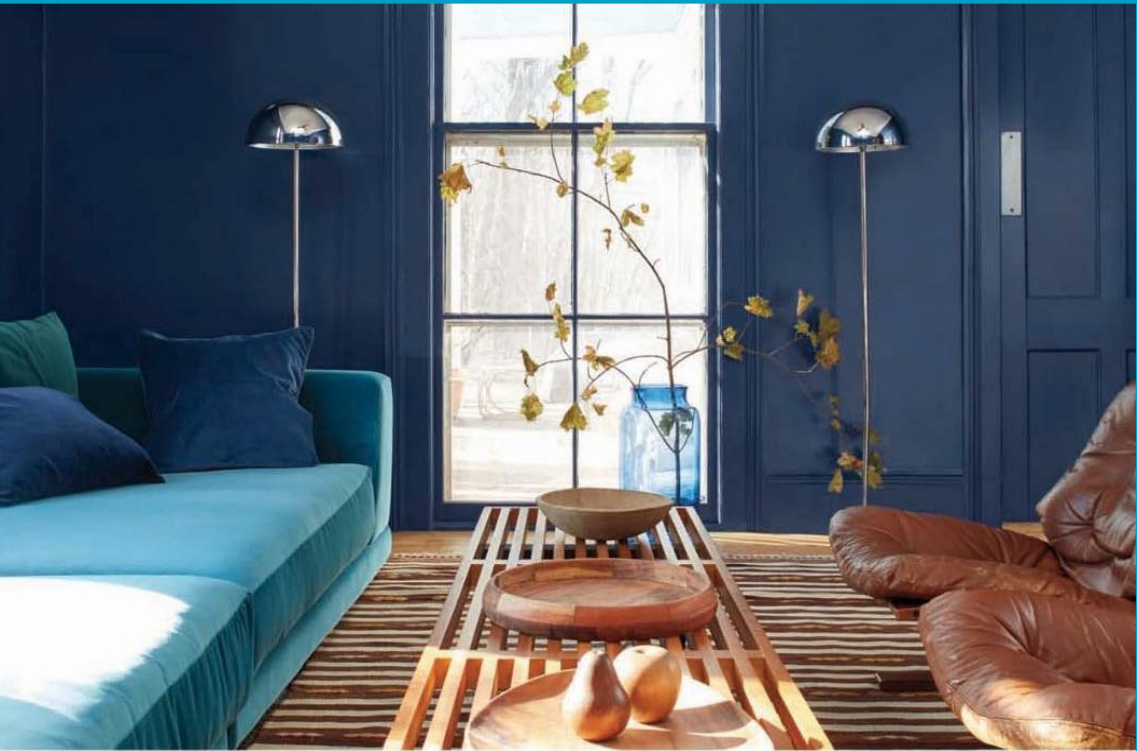
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NOVEMBER 2022

PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 80 NUMBER 9



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Captain/paramedic Brian Cheshareck superintends the flapjacks on the UUCB stovetop.
Photo by Sylvia Elsbury.

Flipping Pancakes in a New Setting: Firefighters Move to Temporary Quarters

By Sylvia Elsbury and Linnea Due

Kensington's firefighters cooked up a warm welcome for the community on Sunday, October 9. The department held a pancake breakfast in the fellowship hall of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB), adjacent to the Kensington Fire Department's new temporary quarters. By mid-October, the fire department had decamped to UUCB property, on Craft Avenue in El Cerrito, during the renovation of the Arlington Avenue Public Safety Building (Station 65).

Kensington's two engines have moved to a carport on the UUCB parking lot. The adjacent residential modular building occupied by firefighters has four bedrooms, one office, a living/dining/kitchen space, laundry room, and two bathrooms. Wrote Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) General Manager Bill Hansell in an email, "It's a bit cozy but the firefighters are making it work."

In describing the difficulties of the move, Hansell said by phone on October 14, "A household move is crazy, but then imagine you have to respond to emergency calls at the same time." Coordination by firefighters and police trying to move while doing their jobs was challenging, and so was dealing with utilities. Hansell said a particular problem

See Firefighters, Page 7

KCC Celebrates a Year of Growth and Kicks Off Annual Fund Appeal



By Sylvia Elsbury, board president,
Kensington Community Council

We have so many things to be thankful for in Kensington this November! So much community that was lost is being regained, now that we are gathering together once more: at public meetings and worship services, at the Garden Party fundraiser for Kensington School on November 5, and at KCC's Fall Picnic last month, to name just a few.

November brings the Kensington Community Council's Annual Fund Drive, and all of us at KCC hope you will give generously. Mindful that many important causes are deserving of your charitable dollars, we are so thankful when you choose to support KCC. But well before all the green envelopes and online donations have been received and tallied up, we already have gratitude to spare for the many good things KCC accomplished in 2022.

Thanks to the leadership of our recreation director, Jenny Parks, KCC can report diverse and significant program advancements this year. We reached new

See KCC, Page 11

Calendar Alert! KEF Fundraiser Garden Party back in person on November 5! See Page 7.

KENSINGTON, LET'S VOTE FOR CHANGE!

On November 8th, Let's Elect New Voices to Represent Us

Save Kensington's Future

(SKF) is endorsing six candidates for the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) and Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) boards. They bring creative solutions and fresh ideas to lead Kensington out of the current crisis that our divided and dysfunctional governance structure has allowed.

• For KPPCSD •



Alexandra Aquino-Fike

J.D. UC Berkeley, MPA Harvard.
Occupation: Philanthropic Professional.
"The current moment in Kensington will determine our town's future direction. It is time for new voices and changemakers like me to step up to protect the park for recreation and open space, find community-engaged solutions to house fire and police responders and create a unified governing structure that eliminates dysfunction and inefficiency. I ask for your vote."



Cassandra Duggan

M.S.W., UC Berkeley. Occupation: Therapist.
"If elected, I would work to have the KPPCSD find ways to preserve our park in perpetuity—for recreation only. The consolidation of our districts would safeguard taxpayers' interests and help steer us away from the dangerous financial territory."



Sarah Gough

J.D., UC Hastings. Occupation: Nonprofit Consultant and Advisor.*
"I love our little village, and I believe in our potential. If you elect me, I vow to find a permanent home for the police in Kensington that does not negatively impact our park or other services. I will work to preserve our recreation and open space and advocate streamlining our government into a single board. Let's build a stronger, more unified Kensington for the future."

*Please note that SKF inadvertently listed Sarah Gough's occupation incorrectly in the October Outlook ad.

SKF is endorsing only these six candidates because they each:

- Have an impressive record of leadership and real-world experience in managing change.
- Will ensure community participation in decisions impacting our community assets and quality of life.
- Will protect Kensington Park in perpetuity for recreation, children's programs, and open space.
- Commit to exploring options to house our police and fire responders in Kensington, including in a retrofitted and renovated Public Safety Building.
- Will create a sustainable fiscal path for Kensington taxpayers.
- Have pledged to unify our divided, bifurcated two-district boards through board consolidation.

ELECT
CHANGE!
VOTE FOR THE
FUTURE OF
KENSINGTON!

We ask that you vote for SKF's two endorsed slates to achieve a majority voice and effect change.

- ★ For KPPCSD: Alexandra Aquino-Fike, Cassandra Duggan and Sarah Gough.
- ★ For KFPD: Daniel Levine, Julie Stein, Jim Watt.

For more information on Save Kensington's Future and our candidates, please visit <https://www.savekensingtonsfuture.com/2022-election>

— Save Kensington's Future Steering Committee —

Derek Blevins • Paul Dorroh • Vida Dorroh • David Fike • Rob Firmin • Anne Forrest • Dane Gillette • Pat Gillette
Sylvia Rosales-Fike • Steve Simrin • Chris Sorensen • Lynn Price • John Price • Ciara Wood



Ad paid for by Citizens for Kensington's Future supporting Aquino-Fike, Duggan and Gough for KPPCSD Director 2022 and Stein, Watt, and Levine for KFPD Director 2022 FPPC #1452318
Not authorized by a candidate or a committee controlled by a candidate.



• For KFPD •



Daniel Levine

Ph.D. Chemist, UC Berkeley. Occupation: Research Scientist.
"Kensington is a fantastic place, and I know we can solve the challenges we face. Except for one director, the KFPD board incumbents have acted considering only the fire department's needs and not those of the Kensington community as a whole. If you elect me, I will work to strengthen our fire prevention system and ensure government serves as a responsible manager of the taxpayers' dollars and guardian of our local resources."



Julie Stein

Ph.D., Mechanical Engineering, UC Berkeley.
Occupation: Not-for-profit Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director. Incumbent.
"I am running for re-election in 2022 to work on a cost-effective and seismically sound solution to permanently house both fire and police in Kensington while protecting Kensington's open spaces and assets for community use."



Jim Watt

MBA SF State University.
Occupation: Finance and Real Estate Professional.
"The proposed Public Service Building remodel will saddle the Fire District and taxpayers with long-term debt and little, if any, available funds to prepare the community for a dangerous fire or earthquake. If you elect me, I will ensure KFPD meets its service obligations with financial transparency and accountability to Kensington taxpayers."



KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Lusu and Gather

By Ittai Shiu

With family recently in town for a short visit, it was a great excuse to visit Lusu Cellars, part of the growing community of wineries in the industrial section of southwest Berkeley. At this quaint tasting room, we met owner David Teixeira who shared his family's history of winemaking in Portugal and on the island of Madeira. Having also worked at many wineries up and down the coast of California, Teixeira makes his own wine, holding true to his deep connection to where a vine is grown and the wine it produces.

On Lusu's current wine-tasting menu was the 2021 Mokulmne River Campo, a red blend



that is mostly Cinsault and Aragonez, with a small percentage of Zinfandel and Carignan. Carbonically fermented, it was uniquely rustic and savory while retaining its fruit expression.

Reds and grilled meat typically go well together and David suggested pairing it with a meal that honored vegetables and perhaps featured something pickled. When asked where he'd bring a bottle of Mokulmne River Campo to dinner, his first response was Gather. His suggestion couldn't have been more perfect, especially with family in town.

Gather was a huge supporter of Kensington Eats and a community favorite during the pandemic. Their take-home roast chicken dinner broke records in January 2021 with almost 40 families participating.

Having more than just my family of four with us to dine, it was an excellent opportunity to order additional dishes to eat family style... so we basically ordered the bottom half of the menu, which included Gather's signature grain

bowl featuring seasonal veggies and carrot tahini, and a pan-seared ling cod with oyster mushrooms and smashed purple potatoes—both delicious and hearty.

The stand-out for the table, however, was the grilled bone-in pork chop with roasted vegetables, balsamic mostarda, and champagne grapes. A perfect bite as the savory char framed the sweet and bitter flavors highlighting Gather's dedication to staying local, seasonal, and sustainable. We sat outdoors where we enjoyed the meal, a glass of wine from Lusu, and the outdoor heat lamps protecting us from the early chill of the fall.



Gather Kitchen
2200 Oxford Street, Berkeley
www.gatherberkeley.com/

Lusu Cellars
805 Camelia Street, Berkeley
www.lusucellars.com/



RE-ELECT

LESLIE RECKLER

WCCUSD SCHOOL BOARD

Over the last two years I am proud to have:

- ✓ Reopened Schools During COVID-19 returning children safely to classrooms.
- ✓ Invested in Employees by lowering class size, hiring more counselors and campus safety personnel.
- ✓ Saved Older Adult Education from the chopping block.

Ballots mail October 10th.
Election Day is November 8th.

Paid for by: Re-Elect Leslie Reckler to West Contra Costa Unified School District School Board, 2022 FPPC #1426917. www.leslieforwccusd.com



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5724 CHARLES AVENUE, EL CERRITO
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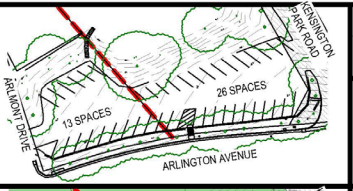



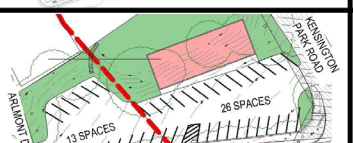



2719 DOWNER AVENUE, RICHMOND
Receiving multiple offers and selling over list price in 13 days!



Thinking of selling?
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Leigh Schneider • #2033564 • 510.390.0857 • leigh@redoakrealty.com

Options to House Police Narrowing Down: Parking Lot Now Top Candidate

KENSINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT AND DISTRICT OFFICE SITE EVALUATION									
SITE PLAN OPTIONS		EXISTING PARKING			PROPOSED PARKING				COMMENTS
		CHURCH SITE	DISTRICT SITE	TOTAL	AVAILABLE TO CHURCH & GENERAL PUBLIC	AVAILABLE TO CHURCH ONLY	AVAILABLE TO GENERAL PUBLIC ONLY	DEDICATED POLICE ONLY	
EXISTING		13	26	39	39	-	-	-	
OPTION 1		-	-	-	22	22	22	7	AWKWARD SEPARATION OF SECURED PATROL VEHICLES FROM PUBLIC ACCESS TO DISTRICT BUILDING.
OPTION 2		-	-	-	22	22	22	7	PREFERRED SEPARATION OF SECURED PATROL VEHICLES FROM PUBLIC PARKING.
OPTION 3		-	-	-	16	13	3	7	USING ONLY THE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY SATISFIES THE PROGRAM BUT REDUCES OVERALL AVAILABLE PARKING.
OPTION 4		-	-	-	32	13	19	7	A CUSTOM NEW BUILDING SET INTO THE KNOLL ALLOWS GREATER OVERALL PARKING FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE CHURCH.
OPTION 4A		-	-	-	27	13	14	7	SIMILAR CUSTOM DESIGN ON DISTRICT ONLY PROPERTY ALLOWS FOR GREATER GENERAL PUBLIC PARKING.
OPTION 5		-	-	-	27	13	5	7	PREFERRED PARKING DESIGN FOR DISTRICT ONLY SITE. BUILDING COST WILL BE HIGHER DUE TO ADDITIONAL EXCAVATION AND RETAINING WALLS.

KENSINGTON POLICE FACILITY STUDY **SWATT MIERS ARCHITECTS**

SITE COMPARISON

The chart above shows possible configurations of a police station on the parking lot below the Community Center. The red diagonal is the dividing line between the Arlington Community Church's section of the parking lot (on the left) and the police district's (on the right). The pink building in Options 1, 2, 3, and 5 is the modular that could be moved from San Pablo Avenue to Kensington, while the narrower building in 4 and 4a is a different configuration that may fit better on the site. Site comparison chart courtesy of Swatt/Miers Architects.

Separation of Church and State, Kensington-Style

By Linnea Due

In the seemingly never-ending search for a home for the police, choices have dwindled to the public parking lot nestled between the Community Center and Arlington Avenue, across from the Arlington Community Church. The church owns the north end of the lot, with its 13 spaces, while the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) owns the south end, with double the spaces. The graphic above shows options the architect hired by the district, Swatt/Miers, came up with to site either the modular the police have just moved into on San Pablo Avenue, or another building with a skinnier footprint than the blockish modular.

As one can see by the drawings, options 1 and 2 take up the entirety of the part of the lot the district does not own—the church's north side. Option 2 splits the difference in terms of the building site but the rest of the church lot is taken up by parking for seven patrol cars. Option 3 leaves only three spaces for general public parking (the library, Community Center, park, school events and Community Center rentals). Option 4 has no patrol car parking. Option 4a parks the cop cars and has more general public parking but does not use the modular the district just spent \$70,000 retrofitting. It also requires excavating into the hillside below the Community Center, necessitating geo studies and a retaining wall at yet unknown cost. Option 5, which seemed preferred by the architect, uses the remodeled modular but again needs studies, excavation, a retaining wall, and only leaves five parking spaces for the public.

“The problem is there is not a good location,” said KPPCSD Interim General Manager Tony Constantouros in a phone interview on October 14. “There are some new ideas for sites, but they’re all imperfect. You have to make the best choice of the options. We’re running out of time. The temporary building [the modular on San Pablo Avenue] is for one year with a one-year option. You have to move very aggressively with that sort of time frame.”

The church board appears to have no interest in either trading sides or giving up any of its property to the district. Talk of eminent domain has been bandied about, but where or how that might occur is unknown. “We have to get to a point that we start focusing and prioritizing ideas,” Constantouros said. “We need to work off a priority list. And I’m only around for a few more months.” At the October meeting, Constantouros’ contract as an interim was extended to the end of January. Given how long this process has taken so far, that’s the blink of an eye.

First Steps in Starting Firewise Groups

By Johnny Valenzuela

The Kensington Fire Protection District held an informational webinar October 11 on how to establish Firewise communities. The goal is for community volunteers to be named on the initial application filing to the National Fire Protection Association, which oversees the Firewise USA program. The fire department will handle the bulk of the application and risk assessment with the community representatives. CalFire Chief Shane Vargas explained the process and basic requirements. Vargas helped establish a Firewise community just south of the Summit Reservoir. See recording at www.kensingtonfire.org/kensington-firewise. If you want to get involved, contact jvalenzuela@kensingtonfire.org

CHECK OUT OUR UPDATED OFFICE ACROSS FROM MONTEREY MARKET!



As Red Oak continues to grow, advances in technology and the recent pandemic have changed our need for physical office space. That's why we're closing our Solano office and moving agents and staff into our other offices, including our newly remodeled office in Northbrae across from Monterey Market.

We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint as a green-certified and carbon-neutral company. **And watch for updates to our El Cerrito office, coming soon!**

RECENTLY CLOSED RED OAK LISTINGS



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The Garden Party is Back!



By Amy Draemel, Amy Mullarkey, and Brenda Lee

After being on a forced hiatus for two years, we are pleased to announce that the Kensington Hilltop Garden Party is back in person! The Garden Party is the Kensington Education Foundation's biggest fundraising campaign. We are so excited to once again be able to carry on this annual tradition, bringing families and community members together to socialize, eat, drink, and bid on items in a live auction, all to raise money for the kids of Kensington.

Preparations are underway for the 38th annual Garden Party, to be held Saturday, November 5 at the Rockefeller Lodge in San Pablo. This annual benefit raises funds for the Kensington Education Foundation (KEF), which supports Kensington Hilltop Elementary.

The Garden Party is truly a community event that brings together parents of Kensington students and members of the surrounding community for a mutual goal. This one event raises 40 percent of the funds that are used to provide students with hands-on essentials that the school district is unable to provide, including a science lab, a physical education curriculum, art and dance classes, a library that's open every day, as well as reading and math support. The parents of Kensington students are committed to providing their kids with a solid educational foundation. Doing so sets each child up for long-term success that not only provides personal benefit, but that elevates the broader community. KEF has also been able to assist the school community during the pandemic by providing personal protective equipment for students, such as classroom air purifiers and masks, to ensure a safe environment for all.



See Garden Party, Page 9

Firefighters

...from Front Page



Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Johnny Valenzuela is flanked by (left) Battalion Chief Joe Torres and Engineer Anthony Michalek. Photo by Sylvia Elsbury.

was communications. “There can’t be any delay in communications with other agencies. That’s been tricky today. We’ve been creative with ways to deal with delays by utilities. The current shift will sleep in the new quarters tonight.”

Those new digs have a limited amount of space, so Hansell said a good portion of equipment is going into storage, and some functions will be done at Station 72, farther along the Arlington in El Cerrito. “We’re just moving essentials to get through this period,” Hansell said, until the PSB is again up and running: “The contractor is already doing exploratory demo work today, mainly checking for hazardous materials. A lot of that was removed during previous renovations.” The contract stipulates an 18-month construction period, but Hansell said the contractor believes he can finish sooner. The department can vacate the UUCB parking lot if it can return earlier.

On the morning of the pancake breakfast, around 7am, the fire crew fired up the stove and began churning out scrambled eggs, sausages, and tasty flapjacks. Among the servers was Kensington’s Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Johnny Valenzuela, who estimated that around 1,500 pancakes were prepared. Members of the UUCB congregation hosted the event, greeting and serving breakfast attendees.

The pancake breakfast provided the opportunity for Kensington’s firefighters to connect with the community as they usually do at their annual Fall Open House, currently suspended during the PSB renovation. In the UUCB parking lot, fire department Engineer/Paramedic Adam Birdsell was spotted giving youngsters a tour of one of the fire engines. KFPD board president Larry Nagel manned an information table where attendees were encouraged to complete the “Preparedness Assessment” used by the district to improve its community outreach programs.

The Kensington Education Foundation invites you to the annual Kensington Hilltop Elementary

GARDEN PARTY

November 5, 2022

Rockefeller Lodge San Pablo, CA
5PM - 11PM

The Annual Garden Party and Auction is returning after a two year hiatus due to the pandemic, and we welcome you to join us for an evening of celebration, merriment, and charitable giving for a great cause! Enjoy an elegant evening of music and delicious food and wine while you browse and bid on artwork and prizes.

Proceeds directly benefit Kensington students.

Join us!

WE THANK OUR SPONSORS





KENSINGTON

Community Education



Check out our new website at
KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org


Kensington After School Enrichment Program (KASEP) classes are in full swing, offering more than 60 after school enrichment classes each week for grades K-6

Our small class sizes are a great opportunity for kids to learn and explore in a friendly and safe environment and are conveniently located just down the hill from Kensington Hilltop School. Our next session of classes begins January 3rd and Registration is December 6th at 7pm for Kindergarten and 7:30 for grades 1-6.

Check out our new website at
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Adult Art classes are back in person in the Kensington Recreation Building

Join us Saturday, November 12th, 2-4pm for Beeswax on Canvas art with Elaine Chu



BEESWAX COLLAGE ON CANVAS

Create beautiful art on canvas, using melted beeswax, mulberry paper, tissue, sewing patterns, and found images.

You will complete one 8x10" canvas. Participants are encouraged to bring a photocopy of a personal drawing, photo, or quote which they can incorporate into the composition! Fun process— Adults/Teens: all levels welcome!

To view additional art, log onto EGChuGHandcrafted.etsy.com or Instagram: @egchu1

2-hr workshop fee: \$75/person includes all materials.

For participants ages 12 and older

Keep checking our website for updated adult class schedules.

Adult Yoga Class at the Community Center

Strength & Balance Yoga -Tuesdays 8:30am

Gentle Yoga -Thursdays 11:30am

Teacher Anja Borgstrom

Cost is \$20 drop in or register online

Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi

Wednesdays 9:30-11:00am

Fridays 9:30-11:00am

Drop-in fee is \$15

Class teaches Tai Chi for better health, improving students' strength, balance, flexibility, and dexterity. A gentle martial art, Tai Chi is a safe, rewarding activity for people of all ages and levels of health. Tai chi emphasizes the mind and body working in harmony. Relaxing the body and calming the mind help reduce stress and increase the flow of energy.

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

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only.

KPPCSD Court Fees: 1 hour reservations- residents: \$7 non-residents \$10.

Community Center and park rental info: Please call Rosa at KPPCSD (510)526-4141

The Kensington Outlook can now be found at: KensingtonOutlook.com

Archive copies can also be found on our website dating back to 2003.

KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg. E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: Info@KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org, or call 510-525-0292. Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

 Follow us on Instagram @KensingtonCommunityCouncil



September Police Log

- On September 1, KPD took a report of Identity Theft in the 100 block of Ardmore Road involving an online scam that defrauded the homeowner of \$99.99. The victim was able to close their bank account before any more withdrawals were completed. Investigation determined the scam originated in Buffalo, New York and Buffalo PD was forwarded the report for follow-up investigation.
- On September 2 at 9am KPD was dispatched to a residential burglary in the 200 block of Yale Avenue. While the homeowner was gone, the house was ransacked, with prescription medication and cash stolen from the residence. The investigation is ongoing.
- On September 3 a Honda Civic was stolen overnight from the 100 block of Franciscan Way. The vehicle was recovered within 48 hours by Albany PD and returned to the owner.
- On September 5, at 9:03am, the homeowner reported that their Toyota van had been stolen overnight. Within hours of reporting the theft, the van was recovered by Oakland PD and returned to the owner.
- On September 10 at 6:02pm, KPD responded to a fight in the 100 block of Arlington Avenue. Upon arrival the suspects were gone, and medical was not required.
- On September 11 at 12:01pm a vendor at the Farmer's Market reported that his vehicle had been burglarized with numerous items stolen.
- On September 14 at 3:30pm, a homeowner in the 100 block of Eureka Avenue reported that somebody had used their identity to illegally purchase merchandise.
- On September 20 at 10:04pm, KPD was on routine patrol and spotted a suspicious vehicle in the 300 block of Coventry Road. The vehicle took off before KPD could contact the driver. The next morning an attempted catalytic converter theft took place in the general area. It is unknown if the two incidents are related.
- On September 23 at 10:20pm, officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of Arlington Court.
- On September 26 at 10am a "cold" catalytic converter theft was reported in the 300 block of Coventry Road.
- On September 28 at about 5:06pm, two vehicles got into a road rage incident in the intersection of Arlington Avenue and Amherst Avenue. During the altercation one driver pulled a knife on the other driver. The incident was investigated, and two videos were located of the incident. Even though neither party wanted prosecution, the case was forwarded to the DMV Office of Traffic Safety for a recommendation to suspend the driver's license in order to avoid another occurrence and to ensure the safety of other motorists.

Garden Party

...from Page 7

In addition to this event, parents at Kensington Hilltop contribute to the school's annual Fall Pledge, which raises half of the annual budget for KEF. The Garden Party is a wonderful opportunity for the larger community to show their support for a school that bolsters our town (and our property values) in a major way.

We could not have this event without the support of our local business sponsors and the generosity of our community. Josh Dickinson, president and byroker of Zip Code East Bay, Arlington Wine & Spirits, Tracy Zhou & Yun Tong of Golden Gate Sotheby's, Ruth Frassetto of Compass, Campbell Green Law LLP, Ruth Stroup of Farmers Insurance, Toolbox Design LLC, Matt Judd of Abbey Pet Hospital, and Dr. Nick Ching of Children's Dentistry have been key supporters of this year's Garden Party. We thank all of them for their generous support!

It's not too late to show your support. Simply buy your ticket and come join us for the party! Tickets are on sale at <https://auctria.com/auction/2022GardenParty>. Enjoy an evening with good friends and delicious food, try your luck at winning great prizes, and dance the night away to upbeat music. We hope to see you there!

Catalytic Converter Prevention Tips

Posted by Kensington Police Department

There has been a rise in catalytic converter thefts from vehicle exhaust systems throughout California and the East Bay. Toyota Priuses are the most common vehicle type being targeted right now. Catalytic converters contain valuable metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium that thieves can sell at scrap yards for hundreds of dollars. Meanwhile, the cost to vehicle owners to replace a stolen or damaged catalytic converter is typically at least \$2000. Catalytic converter thefts tend to increase when the price of valuable metals increases in value.

An experienced thief can remove a catalytic converter from a vehicle in approximately one minute, using basic power tools. The component is very portable. While many catalytic converter thefts occur at night, due to the ease with which they can be removed, it is not uncommon for thieves to take them during broad daylight, including in the parking lots of busy shopping centers.

The Kensington Police Department is doing all that it can to detect, deter, and interdict catalytic converter thieves. We would like to share some prevention measures you can take to make it more difficult for thieves to take your catalytic converter.

Whenever possible park in well-lit areas or in a garage with the doors closed. If you have to park your vehicle outdoors, park as close to the entrance of your home or building as possible. On public lots, park as close to the nearest access road to increase exposure to pedestrian traffic.

A range of security devices is available to affix to your catalytic converter. Some are cages that can be welded directly to the converter. The goal of these devices is to make it more difficult and time-consuming for a thief to remove the catalytic converter from the exhaust system. Well-calibrated car alarms can also be used to detect vibration from the cutting and alert owners and neighbors.

Video surveillance around your garage, driveway, or the street where you park your car can both be a deterrent to catalytic converter theft and help the Kensington Police Department solve a series of thefts by providing valuable information about suspects and the vehicles they drive.

Install motion-sensitive lights to illuminate the area where you park your car at night. Paint your catalytic converter to deter buyers of stolen devices and/or etch your VIN in the converter to alert scrap dealers that the catalytic converter might be stolen. Talk to your neighbors and watch out for each other's vehicles. Good communication can be key to catching a crime in progress, quick reporting, and obtaining good witness statements.

If you are the victim of an attempted or completed catalytic converter theft please call the Kensington Police Department as soon as possible at 510-525-7573. Provide the best possible description of the suspected getaway vehicle and suspects so KPD officers can be on the lookout for a suspect as they respond to your call.

Classified Ads

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ACC’s Black Homebuyers Program Moves Ahead

By Dr. Celestine Fields, Pastor

Arlington Community Church’s Black Wealth Builders Fund, designed to help first-time Black homebuyers with down payments, is moving ahead quickly this summer. Five new homeowners have received loans and are in the process of moving in.

“We have provided \$105,000 in loans so far,” according to Susan Russell, one of the founders of the fund at ACC. “It is such a joy to see our Black neighbors gain access to this major source of wealth.”

ACC launched the fund in 2021 to help repair a small portion of the financial damage of racism and white supremacist policies—in particular, the longstanding barriers to Black homeownership in the East Bay.

The church began to raise money during Lent in 2021, inviting other local churches and organizations to contribute. “We were hoping to raise \$50,000,” says Russell. “By the end of the year, we had raised \$250,000. The support has been overwhelming.”


ACC’s partner in the project is Richmond Community Foundation (RCF), where the fund is housed. RCF is a leader in funding housing projects in the East Bay and has attracted several major contributions.


ACC chose this project after several months of research into how the church could make a long-lasting, systemic difference in helping Black communities build wealth and pass it along to their heirs. The church discovered that a major barrier to homeownership, especially in the high-priced Bay Area, is lack of a down payment. This is especially true for Black homebuyers, who may have good incomes but no access to the additional capital they need for a down payment.

“The rate of Black homeownership is 44 percent nationally, the lowest of all groups,” says Russell. “Seventy-four percent of white families in the US own a home.”

The Black Wealth Builders Fund operates as a zero-percent-interest loan fund, to be paid back only when the home is refinanced or sold. Because it is a loan fund, it can continue for many years, as loans are paid back and others borrow. ACC and RCF work through local organizations to identify potential Black homebuyers who are on the journey to home ownership but lack a down payment.

Contributions to the fund can be made can be made by sending a check to the Richmond Community Foundation, 3260 Blume Dr., Suite 110, Richmond, CA 94806. Be sure to indicate Black Wealth Builders Fund in the memo line. All contributions are fully tax-deductible. To learn more about the fund and to donate online, visit Arlington Community Church’s web site: <https://www.arlingtoncommunitychurchucc.org/bwb>.

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Letters

...from Page 3

Back on the Right Track

Dear Editor,

Sarah Gough is an extremely qualified candidate for the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District Board (KPPCSD). She is supported by many Kensington voters and endorsed by Save Kensington’s Future (SKF). In the October SKF *Outlook* ad, Sarah’s occupation was incorrect. Sarah is a nonprofit consultant and advisor who earned her JD at UC Hastings.

We hope many Kensingtonians watched the Candidate Forum on October 1 and recognized the caliber of experience and wisdom that Sarah and the other five SKF-endorsed candidates offer Kensington. Together they will unify our government structure, encourage more community participation and transparency, and protect our park in perpetuity.

These extraordinary candidates pledge that the remodel and retrofit of the Public Safety Building is both cost-effective and ensures that fire and police services are permanently housed together.

What Kensington needs is leadership. Our community deserves a new vision of what’s possible. We need elected directors with the courage to make the right decisions informed by respectful community participation.

Let’s give this multi-generation of leaders the opportunity to put us back on the right track of governance. Please vote for our two slates to ensure a majority vote on both boards to effect real change. Let’s end the irresponsible and divisive decisions that have put the future of Kensington at risk. Vote for Gough, Aquino-Fike, Duggan for KPPCSD; and for Levine, Stein, and Watt for KFPD.

Chris Sorensen, on behalf of Save Kensington’s Future

High Praise

Dear Editor,

I want to give praise to the Kensington Police Department for all of their dedicated service to the residents of this community. In late September, we had a disturbing trespassing issue on our property. In the 13 years that we have lived here, this was the first time that I did not feel safe.

After I sent one simple email, the Chief wrote me back with a lengthy and detailed response within minutes. He also sent two of his officers to my home the same day, and his nightly patrol officer came over that evening to reassure us that he would come by and keep a watch on our property.

I definitely see the value that the police provide to Kensington residents. I always see them driving around the neighborhood, and it makes me feel like they are watching and keeping us safe. The response time, in our case, was incredible, and we definitely cannot lose this department under any circumstances. I’m saddened that they have moved to a new location far away from Kensington, and I hope that they will have an opportunity to move back closer someday. For those of you who are on the fence about any future votes as to keep our own police department or contract out, I highly suggest you consider keeping our wonderful department.

Judy Bolstad



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KCC

...from Front Page



cohorts within the Kensington community by adding puppy training and toddler classes. A second weekly session was added to the tai chi schedule by beloved teacher Nobuo Nishi, and local legend Anja Borgstrom now offers yoga twice a week. Kensington artist Elaine Chu will teach “Beeswax on Canvas Art” in a special adult class scheduled for November 12, 2-4 pm. Gratitude abounds for these classes and their wonderful instructors, extending KCC’s offerings to more members of our community. At present KCC offers more adult and family programs than prior to the pandemic.

Our core program, KASEP (Kensington After School Enrichment Program), has also grown this year to a record high number of classes per week. The range of interests supported is amazing: for kindergarteners alone, classes range from sports (track and field, tennis, soccer, basketball) to “STEM Using Lego” and “Muffin Madness.” Browse our online brochure—you’ll wish you were in kindergarten again! Grades 1 - 6 are equally well served. 66 KASEP classes are running this session, Monday through Friday, in the Recreation Building and the Community Center, both located in Kensington Park.

Another KCC bedrock program, summer camp, was enjoyed by hundreds of happy campers during a Kensington summer to be grateful for, with cooling fog, few heat waves, and no smoke days! Camp sessions ran all summer long in Kensington Park, uninterrupted by the lingering effects of COVID thanks to protocols designed to minimize exposure and spread.

2022 saw the completion of a KCC project long in the works: our website was rebuilt from the ground up, improving ease of navigation and accessibility. Our scholarship application, for families in need, is now available online. And the *Outlook*, published by KCC, was moved, archives included, from another online location to our own site, kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

Kensington is a unique place, and in 2022 events led our program participants, friends, and neighbors to reflect upon and affirm KCC’s role as a trusted partner in Kensington life—past, present and future. We found great inspiration in the outpouring of public support that showed our recreational and enrichment programs are highly valued by the community.

Fundraising remains vitally important to KCC’s continued success. Many expenses rose this year. Among the costliest changes are those resulting from ABS, the state law that made many of KCC’s instructors full employees. In light of KCC’s growing need for donations, and reflecting the widespread community affirmation we experienced this year, our goal for this year’s Annual Fund Drive is to increase participation. Please support recreation programs in Kensington by using the green envelope, enclosed with this month’s *Outlook*, to send us your check. Or make your online contribution, of any size, with the greatest of ease at <https://kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org/support-kcc/>.

KCC’s 2022 Annual Fund donors will be acknowledged in the February 2023 *Outlook*. Is there someone whose name you’d love to see in the local paper, or a special someone you wish to publicly honor? Donate in their honor! Or donate anonymously, if you prefer. Please give what you can, knowing that KCC re-invests all of its funding into enriching and bettering our Kensington community.



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Slow Policing Comes to Kensington

By Linnea Duce

When Richmond police officer Sergeant Brian Lande met officers from Kensington’s department, he was impressed. At the time, Lande was detailed to Contra Costa County’s Mental Health Evaluation Team, partnered with mental health professionals and social workers. The idea is simple: intervene to stop an already difficult situation from becoming disastrous. The MHET team investigates frequent complaints, calls for an ambulance, concerned callers to see if it can, as Lande says, “get to the bottom of the problem” before that problem explodes into violence or other harm. He calls his work on the mental health team “the best job I’ve had in law enforcement.”

So why is he now Kensington’s newest hire? Lande explains that he knew his time on the team was limited. He wanted to grow professionally, using expertise that he’s gathered with five different agencies and roles. After getting to know Lieutenant Brad Harms and Sergeant Amit Nath through his work with MHET (the district began using the team’s services this year), Lande felt that he could contribute to the mounting excellence within the department.

Lande’s official start was September 12. “I’ve been a police officer for many years,” he said during an interview. He started off as a reserve officer in Walnut Creek, served as a deputy sheriff in Lake County, the same in Santa Cruz County, and spent his last seven and a half years in Richmond.

With all that experience at different agencies, he was good at assessing a department’s leadership team and thus its likely trajectory. “A lot of law enforcement agencies are trying to deal with skeleton staff, with leadership teams hollowed out,” Lande said. “They’re unable to tackle challenges. I’ve been in law enforcement for more than 15 years. I’ve gained experience in recognizing what a competent leadership group would look like, and this was it.”

The KPD force returns the sentiment. Chief Mike Gancasz, together with Harms and Nath, judged Lande a good fit. (Harms and Gancasz joke about Lande’s doctorate in sociology from Cal—“He’ll fit right into Kensington.”)

“I’m not talking about just the basic bread and butter work of doing patrol,” Lande explained about his role in his new department. “I can do the value-added work of working with other institutions and building relationships with the public. I’ve built relationships with people who are not going to do well—but they [Gancasz and others] saw the opportunity for me to do that with people who are doing well. The district coffers aren’t so impoverished that you can’t have a police force. You have the opportunity to do policing the way it should be done but rarely can be. There’s a certain enticement to be able to do that work. Let’s call it the Slow Police version of Slow Food.”

Lande worries about the future of policing, describing the Richmond PD as one in crisis mode. “You go from call to call to call. I knew that once my time was up at MHET there would be no more opportunity for me to provide services. Kensington offered the ability to bring the way I police to Kensington. We have newer officers that need mentoring. I’m thinking about how can I best be a supervisor. Where can I make the most impact? Probably in Kensington. Is that fair? I wrestle with that. I can finish a career knowing that I can help a whole community rather than one person at a time. I think I can make a big impact here, with training, helping with retention. Hiring and retention are huge issues.” The salaries Kensington can pay are not competitive with neighboring cities. “How can you compete with a Richmond salary, an El Cerrito salary? There are things that I can do as part of the leadership team to make it enticing. Kensington’s a unique place. You want to hire people at my stage of career. We bring years and a variety of experience to the force.”

Lande’s PhD focused on areas of social psychology. “How social interactions take place in law enforcement,” he described. “How we interpret interactions. Why things go wrong and why things mostly go right. Policing is very much like diagnostics in medicine. Officers have to interpret a cluster of cues like doctors look at X-rays. By differentiating experts and novices, you can find training methods, and that can stem failure.”

Lande’s medical analogy has legs. “We invest an enormous amount of time in doctors, but we don’t do the same with law enforcement. We don’t invest in the institution, the profession. Police training is decentralized—there are 680 police departments in the state, and they march to 680 different drums. Community expectations aren’t high enough. We don’t expect enough, so we don’t give enough as a public. We don’t send officers to a four-year program or invest in professional development. It’s very frustrating for someone like me who is invested in my personal development and in training others.”

He praises Chief Gancasz’s approach. “He looks at what it is about an organization that can cause failure. There are ways to try to prevent the normalization of accidents. Part of my perception with this department is that someone gets it.”

The police have been working 24/7 on the move to the temporary station on San Pablo Avenue and on getting the rented modular that will serve as a temporary home outfitted as a functioning police station, dealing with contractors, vendors, IT folks, volunteers. “I can’t overstate the amount of work the chief and other officers have had to do to keep services going here. Not taking days off, this is mission critical. The chief has no choice but to maintain continuity of service. People are exhausted.”

Yet the difficulties of the move convinced Lande that he made the right choice. “In fifteen years of government service, I’ve never seen a project come together more efficiently with the limited resources they had. It’s unreal. I know people are nervous about our not being up the hill, but I hope that’s resolved. I think the community will ultimately be proud of what a small under-resourced department can pull off. It helps me trust the leadership to see how it happened.”

Lande’s wife is a social worker, and the couple has two young children. “I do masters level bike racing in what spare time I have,” he said, adding that every year he does the Diablo Hill Climb Challenge run: “It’s my favorite competition of the year.” His time is mostly spent on his family and research; he publishes frequently in academic journals and before COVID, lectured at UC Berkeley. Indeed, he should fit right in.





Photos by Robert Becker

Blake Garden Envisions A New Story

By Laura Callen

Blake Garden is always evolving. As a teaching facility owned and managed by University of California Berkeley’s Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, its mission invites change. Plantings, trails, and structures shift by design. The garden’s staff is now envisioning a different kind of change: acknowledging the Indigenous people of the land.

Blake Garden, like the rest of Kensington, is located in the territory of the Lisjan Ohlone people. They call the land Huchiun (hoo-chin). Beginning in 1769, Indigenous people throughout California endured three waves of colonization: Spanish, Mexican and U.S. Huchiun was stolen by settlers. Despite more than 200 years of violence, including land theft and genocide, the Lisjan Ohlone live here today. Through projects like the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust, they are working to re-matriate their land and revitalize their culture.

When visitors learn about Blake Garden, however, the story often begins in the 1920s, when the Blake family purchased the property for their homes. The Lisjan Ohlone people, the original stewards of the land, are not the focus of the narrative. Garden manager Meghan Ray wants to

change that. “We would like to find a meaningful way to acknowledge the connection of the Lisjan Ohlone people to this site and to educate our visitors about the history of the land here.”

What will the new story be, and how will it be told? Meghan Ray and her team hope that the answers will emerge through a proposed collaboration with the Lisjan Ohlone people. If the project moves forward, Lisjan Ohlone voices will mingle once again with the sounds of birdsong, creeks, and wind in a 10.5-acre piece of land overlooking the bay.

To learn more: goodguestkensington@gmail.com, www.sogoreate-landtrust.org



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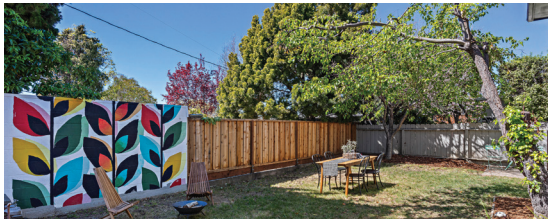
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- SOLD 121 Windsor Ave, Kensington - 4BR, 2BA - \$1,600,000
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