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KCC Fall Picnic, October 22, pg. 1. Photo by Mark Altenberg.

Garden Party, November 4, pg. 6. Photo by Leah Bishop.

Halloween at the Farmers' Market, October 29, pg. 5. Photo by Mark Altenberg.

FKL Fall Book Sale, October 22, pg. 4.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs, October 22, pg. 4. Photo courtesy of ATD

Fall Picnic: Big Fun for All

By Sylvia Elsbury

Don't miss Kensington's annual Fall Picnic, 12 to 3pm on Sunday, October 22! Presented by the Kensington Community Council (KCC) and many more volunteers, the picnic at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue, features a delicious BBQ lunch plus entertainment, including live music on the lawn. New

this year is a Halloween costume contest for ages 0-12, adding extra fun to a wonderful day of food and fellowship.

Burgers, franks, sausages and meatless burgers will sizzle on the grill manned by the Kensington Hilltop School Auxiliary (formerly Dads' Club). Meal tickets are sold on-site for the lunch, which includes sides and a drink, with proceeds going to

See Picnic, page 5

Even More Events! See Inside for the Blessing of the Animals, KIC Town Hall, Book Talk, and Much More.

Kensington and Beyond Update

SEPTEMBER 2023



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The truth about those ads, calls and mailers that state "We buy houses in any condition, all cash with a quick close, no realtor fees!"...

Unfortunately, most of these firms leverage the financial misfortune of others into selfish gains via cash for house buying scams.

Their efforts often focus on making offers below the fair market value to desperate or uninformed homeowners. Often they sell the contracts to other investors for a substantially higher price above what they offer you for a quick profit.

We are in a marketplace that homes are selling quickly, frequently for all cash and no contingencies, hundreds of thousands of dollars above what these no frills companies purchased the property for. Sure it sounds easy and quick but are you leaving a fortune on the table?

The bottom line as your Realtor my focus is protecting your interests. In all circumstances in my experiences the sellers would have been way ahead even with paying a commission. As a full time and full service agent I coordinate everything -clean out, clean up and fix up. If it makes sense for your situation with Compass Concierge you can get the funds in advance to prepare your home for sale and be billed to escrow. In every sale the circumstances are unique and we strategically figure it out what is best for your situation. The process is fast, and the result is the best possible outcome available specific to your needs. There are buyers who will buy your home quietly off market "as is" at market value and close in days or if you have time you can choose to make improvements to maximize the value.

Consider scheduling a confidential and complimentary meeting and find out what your options are before accepting a "We buy houses contract". These companies send out hundreds of communications waiting for someone to take the bait. Some are legitimate, but all of them are out for the cut rate deal.



Questions about real estate? Consider me your real estate resource. Specializing in residential real estate and trust sales for over 30 years, it would be my pleasure to consult with you.

RUTH FRASSETTO, CRS
510.697.8606
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Kensington Market Update

September 2023 to October 2023



Detached Single Family Homes

As the autumn market kicks in, I am very optimistic that it will be a vigorous Fall, and anticipate many buyers re-entering the market. Properties that are move-in ready and correctly priced are predicted to sell swiftly, regardless of the high prevailing interest rates. Inventory is low so those homes requiring renovations or those in tip top shape are selling at or above the offering price.

Bottom line-
Are sales are being made? Yes
Are there plenty of buyers? Yes
Are prices going up? Yes
Are homes selling quickly? Yes

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



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EVOLVE YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN WITH AGE

As we age, our preparedness plans should evolve with the changes in our lives. Evaluate your living situation, considering mobility and accessibility. Pay special attention to your medication plan: maintain a list of dosages, prescriptions, and allergies. Familiarize a trusted neighbor with your needs. Medications are often left behind when residents are evacuated. Don't be left without essential medicine for days. Work with your healthcare provider to establish a plan to cover your medical needs.

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.

NOVEMBER 2023
DEADLINES
Advertising Deadline ♦ OCT. 8
Editorial Deadline ♦ OCT. 10

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

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

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

Letters to the Editor

Questions Need Answers

Dear Editor:

Of the few original Kensington pathways currently disused or unusable, perhaps the most important is the path running from the corner of Princeton and Amherst down to Arlington Ave (labeled Princeton Path, #7 on the Kensington Pathkeepers Moran Engineering paths survey of 2013). This path was designed to continue the path perpendicular to Princeton that descends from the corner of Beloit and Cambridge (Beloit Path). It reaches the Arlington not far from the upper start of Ardmore path at the parking area on the west side of Arlington at the shops. Princeton path is thus a crucial lost link in the direct pedestrian route extending all the way from Grizzly Peak down to two blocks below Arlington on Coventry, whence descent to lowest Kensington is easily achieved.

It seems likely that the disuse of the Princeton path is partly or wholly the result of the construction of a manhole (marked M.H. on the Moran map) for sewage or storm runoff, along with its wooden protective fence, at the Princeton path's lower end on Arlington. So that we are all better informed, I wonder whether someone can comment on the decision to construct a manhole in this location. What is its exact purpose? When was the decision made to locate it at the path, and why? Was there any consideration given to the effect this obstruction would have not just on the path immediately above it, but also on the entire direct pedestrian route from Grizzly to lower Kensington?

In recent discussions of the pathways, has any thought been given to whether or how this manhole might be relocated in order to facilitate the restoration of Princeton path? Is there an alternative to relocating the manhole, such as designing a workaround of steps that would allow it to be left in place?

Bob Coote

Kids Need Crossing Guards

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter to bring attention to the fact that there is no longer a crossing guard working at the corner of Arlington and Rincon assisting children who walk to and from school. As I understand it, the crossing guards were not employed by the school district but rather are funded by the KPPCSD, which opted not to renew the contract with the organization that employed the crossing guards. Please be alert when driving on the Arlington before and after school hours. Many kids walk to school themselves, and despite the existence of a traffic light, speed through the intersection. And to the KPPCSD—please reconsider your position on this and bring back crossing guards. We need them!

Sharon Rossi

Roll Up Your Sleeves

Dear Editor:

Thank you for publishing a report on the PG&E Hazard Center Tour in last month's *Outlook*. Fire season has been delayed this year in much of California, but we can't afford to be complacent. I urge my fellow residents of Kensington not to take the year off from hardening against wildfires. Overgrown gardens, dead or dying trees, piles of ignitable materials—these are all-too-common sights around town. Every property owner has his or her own aesthetic standards, but in this part of the world, untidiness can endanger the entire community. Folks who do yard cleanup and hauling are not hard to find. Let's put them to work, or roll up our own sleeves and get it done, in the name of public safety.

Sylvia Elsbury

Editor's Note: This letter was included in the September 14 KPPCSD board meeting packet. It is reprinted below.

August 15, 2023

To the Board of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD)

Dear Board Members,

Our UUUCB congregation and Board are committed to actively maintaining and improving our partnerships with the groups and organizations in our wider community. In this spirit and with this commitment in mind, the Board seriously considered your request to lease space on our campus. Over a three-month period, we engaged in robust discussions including a variety of stakeholders. We especially appreciate that three KPPCSD representatives, Alexandra Aquino-Fike, Sarah Gough, and Police Chief Mike Gancasz, attended our July Board meeting to answer our questions.

However, after further discussion of the many complexities associated with having a police department on site, the Board of Trustees voted in August against further exploration of the requested lease.

We note that at the July Board meeting, our Board and the KPPCSD representatives expressed interest in engaging in dialogue. We certainly would be open to that should the department wish to do so. We applaud your efforts and the progress made to date to be a community-focused, just police department. We hope that, in the near future, you are successful in finding a site that meets the needs of the Kensington community. **Tess Snook O'Riva**, Executive Director Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUUCB)
1 Lawson Road,
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August KPD Patrol Log

On August 1, at 1535 hours, officers took a report of theft by false pretenses related to an internet scheme with a loss of approximately \$300. The investigation is ongoing.

On August 4, at 1507 hours, officers responded to the 200 block of Lake Drive for firearms a citizen wished to surrender. The firearms were collected, secured, and are scheduled for destruction.

On August 5, at 1500 hours, officers responded to the 100 block of Kenyon Avenue for a computer scam. A report was taken, and the investigation is ongoing.

On August 7, at 2035 hours, officers conducted traffic enforcement near Franciscan Way and Sunset Drive. A vehicle was impounded for expired registration.

On August 8, at 1053 hours, officers responded to Eureka Avenue for a stolen vehicle report.

On August 8, at 2040 hours, officers responded to a residential burglary in the 600 block of Plateau Drive. The investigation is ongoing.

On August 9, at 1918 hours, officers received a fictitious medical emergency call requesting a welfare check 200 block of Purdue Avenue. Officers are investigating leads.

On August 12, at 0953 hours, officers took a report of a vehicle burglary. The investigation is ongoing.

On August 16, at 1115 hours, officers took a report of a catalytic converter theft.

On August 17, at 1500 hours, officers took a report of a vehicle vandalism.

On August 18, at 1600 hours, officers took a report of lost property.

On August 19, at 1545 hours, officers were dispatched to a report of a found wallet. Officers contacted the owner and returned his wallet.

On August 22, at 0729 hours, officers took a stolen vehicle report from Norwood Avenue.

On August 25, at 2120 hours, officers responded to 100 block of Arlington Avenue for reports of reckless driving. Officers located the vehicle and determined the driver was suffering a medical emergency. EMS responded to the scene and helped the victim.



Cat Rescue

This past Labor Day was not the first time that Juno attempted to join the order of Discalced Carmelite Nuns. In May, he had climbed a tree behind his house, at the Carmelite Monastery, but the family was able to rescue him. This time was even more urgent, as Juno had been very high up in a tree for nearly five days.

Neighbors heard a cat meowing, and alerted the owners, who had been searching for Juno without success. The fire department was able to rescue the kitty with the ladder truck. Juno does not appear happy about his rescue, but everyone else was ecstatic. The family thanks the El Cerrito/Kensington fire department for retrieving their wayward relative.



Kensington Democratic Club Hosts Leslie Reckler

By Kath Delaney

Join us for an enlightening evening with Leslie Reckler, West Contra Costa Unified School District Board Trustee. In recent times, our nation and communities have faced unparalleled challenges in the realm of education. From navigating the COVID pandemic to grappling with deep-seated cultural and political divides, our children, schools, and educators have navigated unimaginable obstacles and opportunities.

Leslie Reckler, a devoted Kensington resident and champion for education, will share her insights on these challenges and her ongoing priorities for our students and the district. Reckler brings a personal touch to the discussion as the mother of a WCCUSD graduate and a senior at El Cerrito High School.

The event will be held Wednesday, October 18, from 7:30-8:30pm on Zoom. Zoom ID is 83773125399. Passcode is 510756. We hope to see you there.

The 2024 election season is approaching, and we need all hands on deck to keep our local, state, and national offices blue. To join the KDC at \$20 annually, visit Kensington Democratic Club at kensingtondemocraticclub.org.

For further details or to volunteer, please get in touch with Kath Delaney kensington-democrats@gmail.com or call 415-531-1642.





The Friends of the Kensington Library's spring and fall book sales provide funding for popular programs at the library, such as this June's Conservation Ambassadors' Wild Things event, which brought in hundreds of visitors to see this young kangaroo, among other animal ambassadors. Photos by Charles Hargrove.

50th Anniversary FKL Fall Book Sale

By Jim Fisher

The annual Friends of the Kensington Library's fall book sale will be held Sunday, October 22 from 10am-4pm in the parking lot behind the library at 61 Arlington Avenue, in collaboration with the Kensington Community Council (KCC) Fall Picnic. Allowing for a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, this year's Fall Book Sale marks the 50th anniversary of the event, which was first held in 1973. At that time, the donated books set aside for the sale were temporarily stored in the garages of accommodating board members.

"After the first book sale, some people thought we'd cleaned out the community," recalled former board member and volunteer coordinator Barbara Nelson in 2015. "Not true! The donations just kept coming."

In fact, Kensington's prolific reading habits continue to provide the FKL with more than enough inventory to support two major book sales every year: the first in spring, and the second in fall. For each sale, a diverse roster of community volunteers steps forward to organize and run the event, raising precious funds for the Kensington Library and its programs, and ensuring that the books beloved by one household are given every chance to enchant another.

For decades, Boy Scout Troop 100 has provided scouts to help with table setup, box moving, and event breakdown. In recent years, the team has been joined by Girl Scouts from local troops, as well as middle and high school students. All scout and student volunteers receive a gift voucher that can be used to purchase books at the sale.

For as long as the Scouts have been involved, Kensington residents Paul and Darlene Fontaine have staffed a special cashier's table to process larger transactions, often from book dealers who recognize the sale as one of the best hunting spots in the Bay Area.

Regular book shed volunteers Melinda Harris, Anne Luree Tal, Dave Hampton, Lillian Fujimoto, George Judy, Maj-Britt Halstrom, Deanna Lyon, and Sarah Farquharson each put in typically two hours per week at the book shed behind the library. This is where the essential but unseen work of receiving, sorting, pricing, and boxing up donations for the book sale takes place during the six months between the annual events.

Board members Yvonne Chong, Marcia Crawford, Jim Fisher, Esther Hill, Pat Hosmer, Nancy Okasaki, Tina Rutsch, Laurie Schumacher, Jane Taylor, and Cathy Travlos each play key roles in overseeing financial, membership, and procedural compliance for the Friends of the Kensington Library, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has worked to improve library services in Kensington since 1959.

To join our group of dedicated volunteers, either on the day of the sale or during the rest of the year, send a note to Kensington.fkl@gmail.com with the word "volunteer" in the subject line, and a phone number where you can be reached. One of our volunteer coordinators will gladly reach out to you and help you find a good fit.

Finally, please be aware that by the time our twice-annual book sale comes around, it's often the case that our storage shed has reached capacity of just under 350 banker's boxes. We don't like to turn people away but if you're able to hold off donating your books until after the October 22 sale, please do so. We'll have plenty of space at that time.



Photo courtesy of ATD.

Picnic Hosts Therapy Dogs

By Ruth Robinson

One of the tables at the KCC Picnic October 22 will be "manned" by dogs—therapy dogs, that is. The Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) is an international registry of human and certified dog therapy teams. ATD provides testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal-assisted activities.

The objective is to form a network of caring individuals and special dogs willing to share smiles and joy with people, young and old alike. These fluffy canine healers not only provide comfort and support to those in need but also offer a reminder of the powerful impact of simple acts of kindness and empathy.

Therapy dogs provide a lesson in the art of nonjudgmental compassion and communication. No matter how shocking, therapy dogs do not judge a person based on their words or actions. They offer a safe space for people to be vulnerable.

Therapy dogs help remind us that sometimes our physical presence can be more impactful than our words. When someone is grieving or simply going through a rough time, they may not want to discuss it. Instead, we can take a cue from our canine friends and offer a compassionate heart and a comforting presence. Sitting in silence with a loved one can be one of the most important things you can do.

At the picnic, ATD teams will answer your questions about becoming a member or having a team visit a school, library, skilled nursing facility or other location. See you at the Community Center!

Wildcat Firewise Members Walk with Firefighters

By Johnny Valenzuela

In a remarkable display of community spirit, over 50 Wildcat Firewise residents, accompanied by children and dogs, took to the streets September 9 to assess wild-fire risks in their neighborhood. Guided by Wildcat Firewise lead Alan Siegel, this walk through the community focused on areas where work has been completed and where work still needs to be done. Kensington Fire Protection District Board Director Larry Nagel joined the walk to discuss initiatives meant to increase Kensington's safety and emergency preparedness.

The walk was a crucial opportunity for residents to engage with Kensington's firefighters and gain insights into effective wildfire prevention measures. Nagel's presence underscored the shared commitment of residents and elected officials to safeguard the community from potential fire threats.

Wildcat Firewise actively seeks resources to support removing hazardous trees and vegetation. Contra Costa County's Measure X funds offer a promising avenue to finance these critical efforts, ensuring the community's resilience against wildfires.

Notably, this event drew the participation of community members from neighboring areas, eager to pursue their own Firewise designation in Kensington. They are capitalizing on the momentum generated by Wildcat Firewise, hoping to fortify their own neighborhoods against future fire risks. To learn more about how Kensington residents prepare for emergencies, visit www.kensingtonfire.org/volunteer.



Picnic

...from front page



fund KCC's classes and programs. The renowned jazz band of Fred T. Korematsu Middle School, under the baton of Tiffany Carrico, will entertain during lunch. Other participants include the Alliance for Therapy Dogs and the Kensington Boy Scouts. Performer/creator Sterling Johnson will astonish and delight us all with amazing bubbles!

An arts and crafts table, staffed by KCC teacher Vicky Brodt, promises fun for the kiddos, as does Mechanics Bank, KCC's leading picnic sponsor. Mechanics Kensington branch employees will host a table with treats and games, and will choose costume contest winners in four age groups: 0-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Mechanics Bank will award each winner a \$25 gift card.

KCC is thrilled to welcome back to the picnic a fabulous local band, the Great Space Coaster. Their music was a highlight at last year's picnic, as anyone who was present can attest. "We love playing the Kensington picnic! It's our hometown gig, in a beautiful setting before an audience of friends and neighbors," says band member Eliza Sarasohn.

If you have questions or wish to volunteer at this event, please email president@kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org or call the KCC office at 510-525-0292.



It Started with a Pair of Poodles

Halloween at the Farmers' Market Is a Family Affair

By Karen Yencich

The Kensington Farmers' Market kicked off its first Halloween celebration event thirteen years ago with two standard poodles in formal dress (their escort was wearing a tux), culminating last year in brunch with an adolescent rhinoceros.

"It was the Sunday before Halloween," said market manager Chris Hall, recalling the poodle event, "and we were standing around talking about how cool it would be to come to the Market in Halloween costume. The next week the dogs showed up."

The following year a few more people wore costumes, including some of the vendors and some of the kids, "so we decided that a kids' parade would be fun, and we ran a best costume contest for the vendors." The winner got a free booth that week. The tricked-out vendors made shopping on the Sunday before Halloween something of a party.

Soon prizes were added for the best costume. Hay bales, initially for atmosphere, were a magnet for kids to climb on, so more bales were added, making the area both a play structure and a seasonal photo op. Along with free pumpkins for all the kids.

The celebration built on itself. Barbara Chavez, who operates Al Chile Kitchen, set up a Day of the Dead altar. The Colusa Circle Merchants Association jumped in with their own events to take advantage of the parade-day crowds, centered around a "Where's the Witch" activity to introduce kids and their families to the surrounding businesses. Kids pick up a card listing all of the participating merchants. Each merchant has a "witch"

hidden at their business, and when a child finds it, they get a stamp on the card. Most of the merchants have a special prize or activity on tap for the visiting kids. When all of the witches have been located, the child turns in his or her completed card at Benchmark Pizzeria for an ice cream cone from Straus Family Creamery, the good stuff. Kensington Vet pitched in to foot the bill for an interactive animal show, an instant hit that has become an annual tradition.

Last year brought a new twist to the celebration. Hari at Colusa Market outdid himself by donating a gigantic pumpkin. The Great Pumpkin (and it truly was great) was the centerpiece of a "Guess the Weight of the Great Pumpkin Contest," as well as one of the best climbing structures, ever. When the party was over, the Market was left with several hundred pounds of pumpkin and no ideas. Calls to a few local zoos found a home for the pumpkin. Boone, a young rhinoceros at the San Francisco Zoo, was delighted to accept it (as both food and a toy) as a gift from the children of Kensington. There was still the matter getting a 1,223-pound pumpkin across the bridge. But you already know that story.

Colusa Market has stepped up with another giant pumpkin for this year's celebration. And, new this year, the Costume Contest winners—best costume, best family costume, and Pet Parade winners—will be selected by "people's choice."

Look for ballots and a ballot box at the children's parade assembly point at the Colusa Circle entrance to the Market. Participants assemble at 9:45, and the parade starts at 10am.



A Night of Enchantment at the 39th Annual Garden Party

By Rae Quigley

The Kensington Education Foundation invites you to step into an enchanted garden at the 39th annual Garden Party on November 4. The Rockefeller Lodge in San Pablo will be transformed into a magical garden for an evening to connect, socialize, enjoy delectable food and drinks, and most importantly, make a difference in the lives of our local students. There will be raffle prizes and unique items and experiences in our auction. From exclusive getaways to priceless artwork created by our talented young artists, there's something for everyone.



The Garden Party is more than just a gathering; it's a community event that fosters connections among Kensington parents, local residents, and friends who share a common goal—to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our children. This single event alone has historically contributed a staggering thirty percent or more

of the funds required to provide our students with essential programming that state and local funding doesn't cover.

These vital resources include top-notch enrichment programs designed to provide hands-on learning experiences for our students with Art, Science Lab, STEAM (K-3), Reading & Math Support, Library, PE, Performing Arts (Grades 4-6), Music & Rhythm (TK-3), and Playworks (recess support). It's our way of ensuring that every child in Kensington has access to a solid educational foundation that sets them on a path to long-term success, benefiting not only them but our entire community.

Don't miss out on this unforgettable evening! Secure your tickets now at tinyurl.com/2023-garden-party. We are currently seeking donated items (gift cards, holiday rentals, wine, etc.) for the online auction, which begins on October 21. Please reach out to us at kefgardenpartyauction@gmail.com.

Thank you to our early sponsors, Josh Dickinson from Zip Code East Bay, Anastasia Levitansky from The Grubb Co, and Tracy Zhou from Golden Gate Sotheby's. If you're interested in sponsoring this wonderful event, please contact brenda.lee.lau@gmail.com. Together, we can ensure our children have the resources they need to thrive and succeed!



Photo: Jeremy McKnight Unsplash

Mechanics Bank Costume Contest New Attraction at Picnic

By Sylvia Elsbruy

The Halloween fun begins early this year! Mechanics Bank will hold a costume contest at Kensington's Fall Picnic, starting at noon on October 22. Kensington Branch Manager, Melanie Bardales, invites kiddos to "visit our table at the picnic, provide your contact info and let us get a good look at your costume.

Winners will be announced before the picnic wraps up at 3pm, but you need not be present to win." \$25 gift cards will be awarded to winners in four age groups: 0-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. "Mechanics Bank's Kensington team is very excited to see your costumes!" adds Financial Services Manager Diane Marieiro, who had a great time at the 2022 Fall Picnic and will host the bank's activity table at this year's event.



New ACC Pastor Embraces a Vision Big as the World

By Linnea Due

For Arlington Community Church's new pastor, Reverend Jen Chapman, a struggle with the tenets of the faith she grew up in led to a greater understanding of her role as a pastor and member of the world community. Chapman grew up in Fort Worth, Texas in an evangelical tradition. She attended Southern Nazarene University in Oklahoma, a small private Christian school. From there, Chapman says, "It was a long journey, a long practice of transformation. As I grew in faith, especially at college, our professors did a great job of expanding out worldview to see a bigger picture." During high school, Chapman had made a mission trip to Mexico, which had provoked a similar expansion.

"As I studied my courses and then started serving as a pastor, I was digging into scripture every week, trying to make sense of the community I was living in and the life I was living," she says. "I just came to understand faith and Christianity differently."

After seminary, Chapman first served as an assistant pastor and then became a lead pastor in 2011, in Dallas, in the Church of the Nazarene. "I stayed there for seven years. And when it was time to leave that church to take on a new position, I was already considering whether to stay in the denomination." She decided to investigate other traditions.

"When people face particular traumas in life or when their life experiences come in conflict with their faith or what they've been taught, sometimes people leave behind their tradition or religion," she says. "Or it becomes a separation, less a part of their life." But as a pastor, ministering to others is Chapman's life. "For me, because it's my work, I had to adjust my understanding of my faith in order to keep moving forward. I think that really helped me come to a place in faith that makes a lot more sense with my life experiences and how I see God working in my life and in the world."

Switching denominations as a pastor is no easy task. "It can be a pretty tedious process," she says. "I took classes, wrote papers, met with committees." She also did a Clinical Pastoral Education stint, a supervised internship under a mentor. "A lot of people do it in hospitals. I ministered to the unhoused."

She first thought of moving to the United Methodist Church. By then she and her family had relocated to Pasadena. "The Methodist Church where I was serving shared space with a United Church of Christ congregation. I got to know the ministers and started asking a lot of questions. I ended up transitioning into that denomination."

Kensington attracted Chapman for several reasons: "I think that we're on the same page theologically. People are open-minded here and accepting of other faiths. They're interested in science and want to care for creation, they're learners who read books and want to learn new things. I believe we're headed in the same direction."

Both of Kensington's churches, ACC and the Unitarian Church, have older congregations. Chapman says, "I think part of the reason they chose me as their pastor, someone significantly younger than the average age, is that they hope to reach a younger part of the community. I think that they are ready to expand who they are and what they do. This church was once full of families. Now it's time for a new cycle. We have to be creative in what it is that younger families need from the church. How can we attract young families is the wrong question. The right question is what do young families need from the church. And that may not have anything to do with Sunday morning attendance."

Church leaders went on a retreat in September, and Chapman talked about what she hoped would emerge from that focused time. "The purpose is to ascertain some goals the church and I will commit to for three years. It's not me coming in with my vision and my goals. The people are the church. It has to be their vision and where God is calling us together. These particular people are being called to serve the needs of this particular community at this time."

Chapman brings her French bulldog Lucy with her every day—"She's kind of a sidekick." Her husband John runs a YouTube channel and a podcast called 49ers Rush. "He'll be doing tail-gating at home games," Chapman says. "I'll be there the few times it doesn't happen on a Sunday." Their son Michael is a sophomore at El Cerrito High and plays on the JV football team, and their older son lives and works in Texas.

Wrote Chapman on the ACC website: "We are enjoying the Bay Area and looking forward to exploring it more, especially the hiking trails! And I also look forward to meeting many of you and your pets at the annual KCC Picnic this October for the Blessing of the Animals!"

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Book Talk about an Unthinkable Tragedy

In *Who Killed Kenzo? The Loss of a Son and the Ongoing Battle for Gun Safety*, longtime Kensington resident Griffin Dix tells the story of how his son was killed by a friend of his in an unintentional shooting. Dix details the lawsuit his family brought against Beretta USA over the firearm's lack of safety features. It was the first such suit lodged against the industry. Dix will appear on October 11, 7pm, at Books Inc., 1491 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. An interview with Dix will appear in the November issue.

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New UUCB Minister a Justice Seeker from the Start

By Linnea Due

When Marcus Liefert was seven, the minister of his church, the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, told him he would be a minister. He loved ritual and song—and the acceptance of that community. Liefert was one of the first cohort of babies born to lesbian parents, and he was aware from an early age of prejudice against gay people. "We started going to church because of the family I was in daycare with. We wanted to be close to them. My moms weren't prepared for a church to celebrate our family. One of my moms had grown up in a Presbyterian church with a minister father, and that was a really different experience."

That Liefert's family was welcomed was "huge for my moms. Church became a second home for me. I was invited to learn the skills of church at a young age. I even led worship at the age of ten or eleven."

Liefert was always one to speak out. He and his parents and younger brother attended gay pride events and a summer camp for gay families called Camp It Up.

"I was aware of the difference from a young age," Liefert says. "There was one other student who had two moms. I knew there was pride and celebration but also pain and danger. In the fourth grade, I was concerned about kids saying 'That's so gay.' I felt we just needed to educate people. I made a dictionary of gay and lesbian terms and tried to bring that around to every classroom. Because I did think that there was something in my own sense of heartbreak that was calling me to do something about it."

He marveled at how things have changed since his own experience growing up in the early '90s: "Now my kid gets to talk about what pronouns to use starting in kindergarten."

Siefert went to Berkeley public schools through ninth grade and then to Maybeck High School, a private college prep school. He attended Vassar before transferring to New College in San Francisco. "It shut down while I was there. And I thought, why do another BA when I know what I really want to do is go to seminary?"

He started at Starr King, a Unitarian Universalist seminary in Oakland, when he was 21. "I was set pretty young on that path." He knew much of what to expect since one of his moms began seminary when Siefert was in high school. Siefert loved working with kids: "I worked at the Exploratorium and also at the Mosaic Project," a nonprofit that focuses on building peaceful communities. "And theater was a passion."

Siefert met his wife Caitlyn through theater, at an Oregon Shakespeare Festival program for high school juniors. "Caitlyn is a second marriage. We dated in our early twenties, then fell back in love during the pandemic." The two were married this April in Tilden Park. Siefert shares responsibility for parenting his seven-year-old son Henry, and their family also includes effervescent pup Merlin. Caitlyn started a new job this fall as the drama teacher at Berkeley High.

Siefert conducted a developmental ministry in Marin before returning to the East Bay. "We started the project of developmental ministry for congregations that felt like they were stuck in some way," he says. "The congregation identified five goals to work on in five years. I came in to support those goals. It freed my sense of how to do ministry. It felt like a very successful five years. We did a lot of work on understanding past challenges and hard endings with past ministers. And we launched a capital campaign, which they had never done."

Siefert's first mission at his new church "is just to get to know the community. I'll be hosting a series of conversations, centering on the ground of the past and the horizon of the future. My goal is to help articulate a sense of mission for the future. No one knows what we need to do to adapt to the changing culture. We can work on figuring out how we are together, how we practice our spirituality that will equip us to live faithfully in relationship with the challenges ahead."

Siefert has a big head-start on settling into his new community. During seminary, from 2011-2013, he served as an intern at UUCB with Bill and Barbara Hamilton-Holway. "They were wonderful mentors for me," he recalls. "This church was always on my mind, where I wanted to be next. This is the place where people know what it means to love people and to love the world. Our newsletter is called the Beacon on the Hill. We have a big potential for offering something with this great location and really wonderful facility. And this is a community with strong roots of asking big questions and not coming to pat answers."

He plans to carry on one of the Hamilton-Holway traditions, greeting the congregation as people enter. "You'd be amazed at how meaningful it is, standing outside the church and welcoming people on Sunday morning. Sometimes I think it's the most valuable fifteen minutes of my week."



KASEP Teachers Get Crafty

By Marty Westby

Kensington After-School Enrichment Program (KASEP) teachers are not only great after-school teachers, but they are also amazing artists as well. Join Kensington KASEP Crafters at their first-ever craft show and sale. Mark your calendars and load up on home-made elegant crafts for your holiday shopping, unique host gifts, and treasures to enjoy in your home. A donation from the show's proceeds will go to the KASEP Scholarship Fund and to KPPCSD for park improvements. The event is open to all local crafters and artists. If interested in being a crafter selling handmade wares, contact April Schlanger and

KIC Town Hall Back to In-Person Meetings

Insurance Commissioner and Local Leaders Featured

The Kensington Improvement Club's annual Town Hall and KIC membership meeting will be held in person at the Community Center on October 21, for the first time in three years! This year's speakers include state Deputy Insurance Commissioner Julia Juarez, who will give us information on insurance issues affecting California. County Supervisor John Gioia will update us on county issues. Police Chief Mike Gancasz will speak about department recruiting, retention and public safety issues, as well as a recent CHP grant awarded to Kensington. Fire Chief Eric Saylor has also been invited to address the group on fire issues. KCC President Sylvia Elsbury will update us on recreation programs, classes and KASEP. Jim Fisher, President of Friends of the Kensington Library, will report on library programs and upcoming events. A representative from KMAC (Chair, Lloyd Cowell) will discuss the important role the council plays in the ongoing development of Kensington. The Town Hall will be held at the Community Center October 21 from 10am-noon.

KIC has been a vital community advocate since its founding in 1921 and continues its mission to advance and create various projects of public improvement for Kensington. The generous contributions and dues paid by members of the club have enabled KIC to contribute toward the Community Center remodel, Colusa Circle irrigation and lighting improvements, landscaping, and road and path signage.

Board Members also provide ongoing Landscape and Lighting District input and oversight and are currently helping to fund and oversee implementation of a new public kiosk at Colusa Circle. Current projects also include discussing plans for revitalizing the Arlington medians, and KIC monitors County discussions of path acquisition. KIC also manages the kiosk and signboard on Arlington Avenue.

Along with volunteers and supporters, KIC played a central role in creating our new Neilson Park. KIC Board members wrote and published the book, *Kensington, Past and Present*. The updated edition is available at a discounted price of \$10 for KIC members. (KIC annual dues are only \$10.00!) Our members make it all possible!

The KIC Town Hall Meeting provides an informal setting for citizens to hear from their local representatives and community boards. All Kensington residents are invited to the Town Hall meeting, this year in person! Come a little early for coffee, tea and treats. We hope to see you there!

Shreds and Meds October 28

By Johnny Valenzuela

Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) and the Kensington Police Department (KPD) will host a paper shredding and pharmaceutical collection event on Saturday, October 28, from 10am until 12pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church's North Parking Lot at 1 Lawson Road. We do not accept any household hazardous waste.

The KPD, in coordination with the DEA, will facilitate the National Prescription Drug Take-Back campaign to safely dispose of all unused or expired medications, including narcotics, pills, syrups, inhalers, etc. It is important not to flush your unwanted medications down the toilet as they pollute our drinking water and soil. For more information about this event, please visit the KFPD website: www.kensingtonfire.org.

request an application at happyfoodwine@gmail.com.

You'll find the KASEP Crafter's Craft Show at the Arlington Community Church, right across from the library, with easy parking off Arlington Avenue. We're lucky to have three days of art in Kensington! Dates are Thursday, Oct. 19 6pm-9pm; Friday, Oct. 20 3pm-7pm; and Saturday Oct. 21 noon-5pm.

Whether you are picking up kids after school, checking books out at the library, or dropping someone off for soccer practice, remember the KASEP Crafters first annual show is in town for your enjoyment!

Good Guest: Kensington Hosts Workshop on Our Watershed

By Laura Callen

How will you mark Indigenous People's Day this year? Consider joining Good Guest: Kensington for Kensington's Waterways, a free program at Blake Garden, 70 Rincon Road, on October 9 from 10am-noon.

Author and educator Dr. Beverly Ortiz will talk with us about Indigenous understandings of and relationships to water. Horticulturist Timothy Cole will lead us through Blake Garden where several stretches of Cerrito Creek flow above ground, helping us learn about the Cerrito Creek watershed, where nearly all of Kensington is located, and the forces that have been shaping it. We'll also talk about how we can play a role in tending to our waterways.

This is a unique opportunity to engage with the land, extraordinary educators and our neighbors. Building a connection to our town's waterways and understanding Indigenous perspectives about water guides us towards being good guests on Lisjan Ohlone land.

All ages are welcome. Capacity is limited to 25 people. Registration is required. To register, fill out the form at bit.ly/IDP-Kensington or email goodguestkensington@gmail.com. The registration form includes accessibility information.

Kensington's Waterways is organized by Good Guest: Kensington, hosted by Blake Garden and supported by the Honoring Indigenous People's Group of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley. The workshop will be followed by a potluck lunch.



Timothy Cole



Dr. Beverly Ortiz

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AC Transit Increases Service on the Arlington

By Ray Barraza

On AC Transit's #7 bus, weekend service has been restored, and service now operates until 10pm seven days a week.

In addition, as a one-year trial, the line has been extended from downtown Berkeley to Elmwood, Ashby Ave., and the Emeryville Amtrak station. This makes available a through service between Arlington Ave. and the medical facilities around Ashby and Telegraph in Berkeley as well as an easy way to get to Amtrak.

ARE KENSINGTON HOMES APPRECIATING?

Just like the Inner East Bay as a whole, Kensington real estate inventory has been low in 2023: higher interest rates - and thus higher mortgage rates - have kept sellers on the sidelines. While this has driven down the number of sales in the community - only 40 between January and August - prices remain stable. In July and August, the Kensington median price was \$1,450,000, up 73% since 2013. We find that homes that are prepped well, are move-in ready, and are priced competitively, are attracting high levels of attention. **Reach out to see how Kensington's state of the market affects your real estate goals.**

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\$1.4M		\$1,410,000				
\$1.2M						
\$1.0M						
\$0.8M						
\$0.6M						
\$0.4M						
\$0.2M						
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	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2
						JUL & AUG 2023

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KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Kensington Eats Out at Moeser Square

By Ittai Shiu

Almost every Kensington resident passes Moeser Square daily, whether on their way to work or running errands. We frequently make a visit to procure sushi-grade sashimi from Yaoya San, an exceptional Japanese goods store, and, without fail, we notice the long line for ice cream at Baskin Robbins, no matter the season.

Zomsa, established in 2019, is a proud family-owned Himalayan and Nepalese kitchen. During our visit on a Sunday evening, the restaurant was bustling with large families celebrating the end of summer, and we had the opportunity to sample their finest offerings.

Establishments specializing in Himalayan or Nepalese cuisine often find themselves in competition with Indian restaurants due to shared elements like korma and masalas. However, there are distinct differences, such as the use of leaner meats, reduced reliance on cooking fats, fewer carbs, and the absence of cream. We are fortunate here in the Bay Area to have places like Moeser Square where this type of cuisine can thrive.

Momos are steamed Nepalese dumplings, known for their slightly thicker skins compared to wontons or potstickers. Typically served with tomato-based chutneys or spicy chili sauces, they come in meat-based and vegetarian options. Zomsa's Buff Jhol Momo stands out, featuring rich and earthy buffalo meat in a cashew and peanut sauce that highlights its sweet and nutty notes.

Wai Wai Chatpatey is a popular Nepali snack and a fun addition to the Zomsa menu. Comprised of crushed dried noodles tossed with red onion, green chili, cilantro, tomato, soybean, and lime juice, we appreciate this dish because Zomsa doesn't hold back on the spice, making it a guilty pleasure for those who enjoy a fiery kick, especially when paired with any of the cold beers they have on tap!

In my opinion, Zomsa's star dish is unquestionably their Thakali Thali. In Hindi, the term 'thali' translates to 'the plate,' and traditionally, it refers to a large metal tray with smaller metal bowls that offer a balanced meal. While Thali is a common feature in Indian restaurants, the Thakali Thali is a staple in Nepali cuisine. In this case, a takeout experience simply doesn't do it justice, so I strongly recom-



mend taking a seat and indulging in this culinary delight in-house.

The Thakali Thali at Zomsa offers a choice of chicken or vegetarian options, but my personal favorite is the goat. Cooked in a rich sauce, the meat is lean and carries a nice gamey flavor. It is accompanied by a crisp wafer made from dried lentils known as papad, which adds a satisfying crunch without making you feel overly full. The meal is beautifully balanced with a lentil soup that warms your palate and sautéed mustard leaves that impart a pleasant bitterness. To round off the experience, there's pickled daikon that refreshes taste buds before going another round.

Before you depart, try the Kearney Street exit from the parking lot and savor a moment to admire the frequently overlooked yet enchanting mural. This masterpiece whimsically celebrates the diversity of El Cerrito and this unassuming business park. Crafted by Nigel Sussman (@nigelsussman), the talented illustrator renowned for his intricate isometric murals across the Bay Area, you'll find a vibrant representation of every business and culinary style in the vicinity. Very Kensington Eats!

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FALL UPDATE

from zip code east bay



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UPCOMING COLUSA CIRCLE EVENTS

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RECENT SALES

from zip code east bay

We're passionate about helping people find their dream home and making the process as easy as possible. Whether you're preparing to sell your home or curious about what it takes to compete in this market, we're here to assist you every step of the way. Here's a snapshot of our most recent sales:



SOLD

5249 Cochrane Ave, Oakland - 3BR, 2.5BA - \$2,300,000



SOLD

324 Forest Street, Oakland, 4BD, 2BA - \$1,800,000



SOLD

2714 Downer Ave, Richmond - 3BR, 3BA - \$825,000



SOLD

701 35th Street, Richmond, 2BR, 1.5BA - \$675,000



SOLD

1701 Spruce, Berkeley - 5BR, 4.5BA - \$2,850,000



SOLD

8155 Terrace, El Cerrito - 4BR, 4BA - \$1,550,000



SOLD

133 Windsor, Kensington - 2BR, 2BA - \$1,400,000



SOLD

125 Windsor, Kensington - 3BR, 2BA - \$1,500,000



SOLD

315 Rugby, Kensington - 2BR, 1 BA - \$1,385,000

Curious about the market? Get in touch, we're here to help!

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