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SEPTEMBER 2011

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 7

28th Annual National Night Out



NNO Coordinator, Officer Doug Wilson, joined other KPD Officers and resident, Carolyn Linnard and friends on August 2nd

Tuesday, August 2nd was the 28th Annual National Night Out event, and Kensington did it up right. There were fifteen events – with another two or three that, due to special circumstances, are scheduled to be held on different nights, proving once again that Kensington is a town that knows how to party.

Officer Doug Wilson, NNO Coordinator, says that this year's events were the best-attended yet; lots of great energy and interest in learning about Neighborhood Watch.

Kensington police officers gave presentations, and the Fire Department showed up at several parties to let the kids explore the fire trucks.

Chief Harman and Officer Wilson were on a marathon mission to make a stop at each and every gathering,

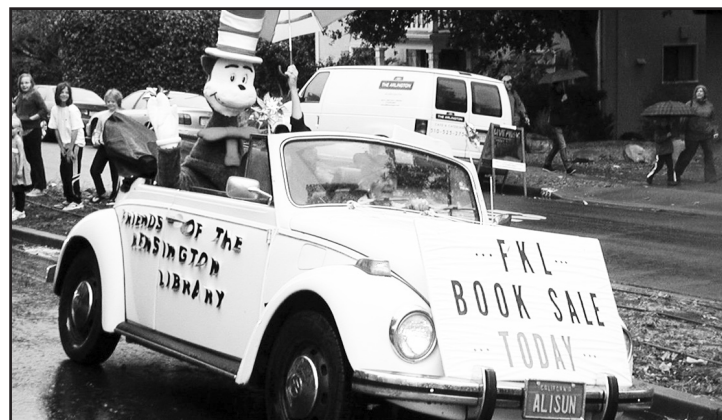
see NNO, Page 9...

Save the Date!

Kensington's Annual Parade and BBQ Picnic

Sunday, October 16th.

Delicious BBQ, live music, pumpkin decorating contest and more! Call 525-0292 if your organization would like to march in the parade.



Inside: KIC Requests 2 KPPCSD Directors Be Reprimanded – Page 10

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dare to Print the Facts

Letter to the Editor:

Joel: Get your facts straight.

I did not say, “Get outa my face” to Linda Lipscomb. As she came toward me, in what I determined to be a physically threatening way, I said, “Stay away from me.”

(The fact that you provide no context for this exchange is itself troubling.)

Furthermore, I am not the District designee to the Waste Management Committee, and I have never once been invited to a Waste Management Committee meeting.

I am tired of your sloppiness and lack of fact-checking.

I dare you to print this letter.

Sincerely,
Mari Metcalf

Mari Metcalf is on the Board of Directors of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD).

Joel replies:

1. In my capacity as editor of The Outlook, I was present at the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) meeting in question, and, while she may have also said, “Stay away from me,” I personally heard Director Metcalf say, “Stay outa my face,” to Director Lipscomb. It actually stuck in my mind in particular due to her use of ‘stay’ rather than ‘get.’ Even when Mari repeats it in her letter, above, she uses the more traditional (in what circles, I won’t hazard a guess) “Get outa my face,” as opposed to what she was heard to have said at the meeting – and which was printed in the referenced article in The Outlook (‘Directors Rumble...’ – July/Aug. 2011) – “Stay outa my face.” The content of Mari’s expletive has been confirmed by Linda Lipscomb, to whom the remark was directed.

2. While Director Metcalf’s feelings of being threatened are her own, Director Lipscomb is not generally known as a hostile or aggressive person – and, to provide the requested context to Mari’s remark, there were no apparent signs of physical threat visible to – nor prior verbal threat audible by – bystanders at the time of Mari’s outburst. The two parties were on either side of a line of banquet tables when the incident took place.

3. The minutes of the Jan. 13, 2011 meeting of the KPPCSD Board of Directors show a discussion of committee assignments for 2011: “Solid Waste: Directors Kosel and Metcalf.” These committee assignments were among those accepted by the Board on that date by a unanimous vote of all the directors – including Mari Metcalf.

According to KPPCSD Board President, Chuck Toombs, Director Metcalf is Director Kosel’s alternate to the Solid Waste Management Committee. While one or the other of the two KPPCSD representatives is charged by the Board to be present on behalf of the District at each of those committee meetings – to be arranged between them – despite having both been sent timely prior notification of such meetings (as per KPPCSD GM, Greg Harman), the minutes of those meetings show no record of attendance by either Director Kosel or Director Metcalf, during Mari’s then-seven months in office. (According to Greg, this is Mari’s only committee assignment.)

Lastly, I consider dares, like such statements as, “Stay outa my face,” to be counter-productive to mature discourse regarding community affairs – and unbecoming of an elected official.

It is The Outlook’s policy to print all the letters it receives, on a space-available basis.

In Case of Attack...

Dear Editor:

I have wondered for years, whether anyone can identify the function of the unsightly yellow pole and box that disgrace the center-strip of the Arlington at its intersection with Wellesley Ave.

I was once told that it was a device designed to warn Kensingtonians, and beyond, of any impending Soviet nuclear attack!

If anyone can enlighten me as to its more plausible function, I hope you will enlighten me via our Editor.

Sincerely,
Gerald Berreman

Kosel Worthy of Serving?

Dear Editor,

In the decade that I have been attending monthly meetings of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD), the last two meetings have been among the most difficult to witness.

The July Board meeting turned into an uncivilized shouting match when Director Cathie Kosel refused to defer to employee protection procedures described in the District Board’s Manual of Policies and Procedures. When instructed by President Chuck Toombs to pursue her questions in accordance with the well-established Board policy, Kosel defied the President’s authority. She also demonstrated a total disrespect for her fellow board members Linda Lipscomb and Tony Lloyd, and to the Kensington residents who dutifully attend District meetings.

At that meeting, Kosel questioned an employee’s use of District credit cards. Board policy requires that all such personnel matters be discussed in closed session only. To violate this important employee protection risks a lawsuit against the District. Although Kosel’s questions about certain line item expenses are appropriate, her approach is underhanded, destructive of employee reputations, and just plain unfair. Rather than submitting an itemized list of questions and allowing staff to respond in writing to each line item, Kosel (aided and abetted by Director Mari Metcalf) defied President Toombs’ gavel and repeated warnings about employee protection concerns. Kosel insisted on reading each line item aloud, essentially accusing staff of misappropriating District funds. We all want answers to these line item questions. But there is a lawful and fair way to proceed. Kosel’s approach was a disservice to the community she purports to serve.

Is Kosel worthy of serving this community? After watching Kosel’s version of governance since she was elected to the Board, I have come to my own conclusion. Kensington can do better and deserves better.

John Stein

More Letters, Page 7...

The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the contributors. They do not necessarily represent the opinion of The Outlook, its editor, or the publisher, the Kensington Community Council. Residents are invited to submit letters on matters of interest to the community. Letters must be signed and include the author’s address and telephone number. Publication is subject to space limitations. Letters of 250 or fewer words are preferred.

K E N S I N G T O N

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

WELCOME NEW KASEP TEACHERS

CREATIVE DRAMA – New!
Instructor: Lisa Klein
Location: Community Center
Mondays; Grades 1st – 6th

This class is a great introduction to creative play, writing and improvisation through theatre games and storytelling. Creative play can help young people gain confidence to speak up in different situations. This class is designed to inspire children to get to know the different aspects of their unique and individual self while working with an ensemble.

POETRY - New!
Instructor: Amy Torgeson
Location: Recreation Building
Tuesdays; Grades 3rd – 6th

Using a wide variety of activities, students will learn how to come up with ideas, translate those ideas into words and see what may be discovered about the world and ourselves along the way. Amy’s goal is for children to have a positive relationship with words and to gain confidence in what they have to say and how to say it.



Thank you families, campers and counselors for a creative, adventurous, playful, and safe KCC Summer Camp 2011!

JEWELRY DESIGN - New!
Instructor: Shelly Cournoyer
Location: Recreation Building
Wednesdays; Grades 3rd – 6th

This class offers students the environment to learn how to create their one of a kind jewelry while building individuality and confidence. Create earrings, necklaces, bracelets and pins.

CHORUS - New!
Instructor: Sarah Torney
Location: Recreation Building
Fridays; Grades 1st – 3rd

All around the world children love to make music and sing together. An introduction to music at an early age will help develop listening and memory skills, vocabulary, imagination, coordination and self-confidence. In this class, children will learn to use their voices while exploring tones, rhythms, volume and pitch.

KIDS AFTER SCHOOL

Fall registration will be held of Tuesday, September 13th, starting at 6:45pm for kindergarten students and 7:15pm for students in grades 1-6. The first day of the FALL KASEP session is Monday, September 26. The fall brochure is posted at www.aboutkensington.com, under “Children’s Services.” NOTE: lottery slips are due to the KCC Office by 9am, Sept. 12th.

Located in the East Bay hills at 59 Arlington Ave., the Kensington Community Council offers an After School Enrichment Program (KASEP). KCC office hours are Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm. Contact us at 525-0292 or kccec@yahoo.com.

ONGOING ADULT CLASSES

HOOPS:
When: Fridays, 8:30 – 9:30am
Where: Community Ctr/Youth Hut
Cost: \$12 per class, or \$40/month.
Regular clothes OK; Hoops provided.

HOOPS restarts this fall: Sept. 9th thru Dec. 9th. Classes held indoors on rainy days. No class 11/11 (Veterans Day) and 11/25 (Thanksgiving).

Fun and fitness, movement and meditation are all found in hoop-dance. We’ll start with basic waist hooping, moving on to more intermediate moves both on and off the body, all while discovering your own

dance in a hoola-hoop and the soothing, meditative aspects of hooping.

No experience needed. This is a beginning class. Wear comfortable clothes and bring water. Hoops provided for class and available for purchase.

Kaye Anderson is the founder and lead hooper of Hoop Power. She is also a clinical social worker who’s been working with children, teens, and families for 15 yrs.

Questions: kayelcsw@hotmail.com or 919-2783. Registration: 525-0292 or kccec@yahoo.com.

ACRYLIC PAINTING
Wednesdays, 9:45am - 1:30pm
\$32/month (\$36/nonresidents)
Community Center

Stan Cohen (533-3003) leads this informal but professional workshop for established and serious beginning adult artists. Mornings are devoted to developing painting, with assistance available. Afternoons are reserved for class critique. Enrollment is limited. Instructor approval required. To join this creative group, contact Stan directly. Fall art class will resume Wednesday, September 7, 2011.



Stan Cohen's Wednesday Artists

NEW ADULT CLASSES



Odile Atthalin
Certified Rosen Method Movement Teacher

THE ROSEN METHOD – New!
Movement class to Music for Every-body with DJ Odile

When: Wednesdays: 8:30am – 9:30am
Where: Recreation Building, Room A
Cost: \$12/class advance, \$15 drop-ins;
Regular clothes OK; Bring your mat.

This one-hour class is fun and easy, made for everyone, young and old, stiff and loose, female and male, long time movers and shy ones, open to all fitness levels.

You will be led through a sequence of movements all done to wonderful music, which supports the tempo and the intention of the movements.

- Warm-ups to lubricate your joints and hinges;
- Slow stretches to help your breathing become easier and deeper;
- Larger movements in a circle or across the floor for balance and coordination;
- On-the-floor exercises to increase flexibility and allow your body to assimilate what its learned in previous movements;

Unlike a work-out, these movements are not mindless repetitions, but done at a pace that allows you to pay attention to your experience. It’s a work-in, promoting self-awareness. By the end of the class, you will feel open, centered, whole and energized. Drop your student off at school and join me!

Rosen Method Movement as taught by Odile Atthalin, a Certified Rosen Method Movement Teacher. She brings to her classes her experience as a yoga teacher, many years of Continuum and Authentic movement practices, and her delight in a wide variety of music. She is also a Rosen Method Bodywork Practitioner and Senior Teacher with a private practice in Berkeley since 1989.

For more information, please call Odile 525-3805 OR email odile@lmi.net. Register with the KCC office or call 525-0292.

BEGINNING WATERCOLOR – New!
When: Thursday Evenings, 7-9pm
Where: Recreation Building, Room A
Cost: \$12.00 for Kensington residents per class (\$13.00 non-residents) paid in-advance; \$14.00 drop-ins.

Beginning Watercolor will meet eight Thursdays from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, Sept 22 through November 16th (no class September 29 in honor of Rosh Hashanah).

Simplify the world you see and learn how to draw it - life is not a bunch of straight lines. Join me in learning techniques for successful design and composition. Students will work with watercolor and pastels. No prior experience necessary, just enthusiasm for creativity! Bring a sketchbook and pencil the first night of class. A materials list will be provided.

To register, send a check made out to KCC to 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707 or call 525-0292 for more info.



New!
GREAT RELATIONSHIPS 4 LIFE
When: Tuesday Evenings, 7-9pm
Where: Recreation Building, Room A
6 Tuesdays: Sept 27, Oct 4, 11, 25, Nov. 1, and 8 at the Kensington Recreation Building. Cost: \$135 for Kensington residents or \$145 non-resident.

Are you butting heads with your child? Struggling with your spouse? Do you have a relationship with a sibling or parent that is not working well? Join this workshop by Janet Chahrour to build new skills for turning relationship frustration into happier connections. Expand your toolbox with practicalwaysto: set limits with compassion, understand what’s underneath the surface, and engage courageously in crucial conversations.

Enjoy your family! This six-week experiential workshop is an opportunity to create a shift in you to transform conflict into collaboration. This is not therapy. The focus is on the here and now in a fun and non-judgmental atmosphere.

Janet is a professional life coach and relationship coach with certifications from the Coaches Training Institute and the Center for Right Relationship. For more information about her, visit www.thrivingtogether.net. To register, send a check made out to KCC to 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707 or call 525-0292.

REGISTRATION

KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Building E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. Email: kccec@yahoo.com. Telephone: 510-525-0292.

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am. Call the KCC office for information. Court Fees: Residents – \$2 for a 45-min. singles reservation. Non-resident: \$5.

Kensington Community Center Rental Information: Please call KPCCSD (Kensington Police Protection & Community Services District) at 526-4141.

Neighborhood Notes

Indie Film With Gena Rowlands Shoots at RabbitEars

The idea for *Olive The Movie* was inspired by the animated film, *The Triplets of Bellville*. Not one word is spoken in the film. At its heart, the story is about the love a mother has for her son. Olive is a charming young girl who is able to convey her story with clarity and humor using her own creative methods. Without speaking, she transforms the lives of three lost and lonely people in need of help. Interestingly, the entire production is being shot on a state-of-the-art cell phone camera with a custom-built lens, which rivals the top high definition cameras currently used to shoot major studio feature films. The producers believe this project has the potential to revolutionize the film making industry and is the natural next step of evolution in the film making world – “shot on the most ubiquitous and important form of technology introduced since the light bulb.” RabbitEARS owner, Judy Hardin, friend to international movie stars everywhere, knew someone who knew someone who knew they needed a pet store for a scene in the movie, and viola! (*Next thing you know Angelina Jolie and Madonna will be adopting rabbits instead of children. And if they do, they'll know where to come.*)



RE volunteer, Ali Bock; actress, Gena Rowlands; and RabbitEARS owner, Judy Hardin, during a break in filming last month at Judy's shop.

High School Grad Update

Alberto Santos-Davidson was unable to attend the photo session in May and really missed the chance to see his former classmates again. He attended Albany High School and will be attending Whitman College in the fall. *Good luck, Alberto!*



Appreciating Shawn Lee • Photo: Lyn Wolter

Yipes, Stripes!

At the August Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District meeting, General Manager/Chief of Police, Greg Harman awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Kensington resident, Shawn Lee for restriping and general clean up of the Kensington Park/Arlington Church parking lot. *Good work, Shawn!*

Secret Stairs East Bay –

A Walking Guide to the Historic Staircases of Berkeley and Oakland. Best-selling author, Charles Fleming has designed individual hiking loops that link multiple staircases into what look to be fascinating one- to two-hour self-guided strolls. The circular walks, each calibrated by length, difficulty, and duration – and accompanied by detailed, easy-to-follow maps – are sprinkled with fascinating facts about historic East Bay staircases and, in some cases the notable homes along them. Invitingly designed, Fleming’s book has just been published, and includes two hikes in Kensington. Fleming began his research on stairways inadvertently in the course of a self-designed “walking cure” as an alternative to a third spinal surgery suggested by his doctor. His information appears to be current, with mention of the recently opened Sugar Cone Cafe and the steps added to some of the paths by the Kensington Improvement Club. This is his fifth book. More information is available at www.santamonicapress.com or 800-784-9553.



Speed feedback sign installed on Arlington Avenue at Rincon (Left). Work began on the Public Service Building (Above). Supervisor John Gioia spoke at August's Kensington Traffic Forum (Below, left). Chief of Police, Greg Harman, swore in newly appointed Reserve Officer, Quyen Duong (Below).



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KPPCSD Directors Challenge District Employee’s Use of Credit Card

One of the challenges of understanding what goes on in Kensington is the requirement that all KPPCSD personnel matters be handled in closed session – that is, neither Board directors nor the General Manager can comment on any personnel matter before the Board, nor are those matters allowed to be brought up in general session of the KPPCSD meetings.

If there is a complaint by a District employee, for instance, who has brought the matter to the Board, or who wants to bring the matter before the Board, the name of that employee and the details surrounding his or her complaint are strictly confidential. Likewise, those supervising District employees are constrained from discussing personnel matters in public meetings.

Police officers in particular, due to the nature of their jobs, are subject to more frequent complaints than are typical employees, and hence, receive greater protection from having their reputations potentially besmirched – protection that is codified in the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act.

And so, if you want to find out what has gone on regarding District employees over the last few years – any employee complaints about management, the reasons behind any employee having left the workforce, or employees investigated or reprimanded, you are probably out of luck. Those records are confidential.

The District has decided that, while open government is a value it holds, an even greater good is served by having personnel matters handled behind closed doors – and that is the rule in force, as delineated

in the KPPCSD Policy Manual, as well as dictated by California statute in the Police Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act.

At the July KPPCSD meeting, Directors Cathie Kosel and Mari Metcalf appear to have violated those rules by publicly calling into question the propriety of credit card usage by a District employee. (As a matter of policy, *The Outlook* is not publishing the name of the employee whose actions were challenged.) Board President, Chuck Toombs, advised Cathie and Mari that, since their questions involved District personnel, the matter would need to be discussed in closed session.

Despite that advisory, and Chuck’s subsequent gaveling demand for them to desist in their questioning of the employee, Cathie and Mari continued their interrogation. Chuck further advised them that, by bringing the matter up in a public meeting, they may be creating a liability issue and putting the District at risk of suit.

Despite such admonitions, the two directors continued to question the employee until Chuck threatened to either have them ejected or end the meeting.

According to Charles Burris, editor of local online media outlet, the *El Cerrito Patch*, Mari Metcalf called him prior to the meeting to notify him that this topic would come up, and provided The Patch with a list of the credit card charges in question in advance of the meeting. (In its coverage, The Patch quoted Mari as saying that she and Cathie had distributed a copy “to anyone who wanted one.”) The story was subsequently picked up by the *Contra Costa Times* and other print media stretching as far away as Southern California.

Should the implied charges of malfeasance prove baseless – and on the innocent-until-proven-guilty rights we all like to think we enjoy, we must assume that to be the case, unless and until proven otherwise – the broad and immediate dissemination of the charges, now associated with the District employee’s name, both in print and online, provide a good example of the reasons for

see KPPCSD, page 8...

Correction to the Record Requested

Following last issue’s article about the recent 218 Hearing regarding the solid waste contract with Bay View Refuse, (*Directors Rumble, Bay View Takes Toys and Goes Home...Rate Increase Denied* – July/August 2011), The Outlook was contacted by Bay View owner, Lewis Figone, who requested a correction regarding the mention of a large campaign donation claimed by Cathie Kosel when she was running for El Cerrito City Council in 1989.

Now a Director of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Service District (KPPCSD), Cathie listed the source of the donation in her campaign disclosure document – under penalty of perjury – as Lewis Figone. Lewis says it wasn’t he, but his brother, Clyde Figone, who made that donation. (Clyde Figone is the owner of El Cerrito Refuse.)

Mr. Figone said that he and his brother have not spoken in 25 years, since the splitting of their family’s solid waste management company into two – El Cerrito Refuse, which has the contract to handle El Cerrito solid waste, and Bay View Refuse, which handles Kensington solid waste.

To date, The Outlook has been unable to verify the veracity of Mr. Figone’s statement. The City of El Cerrito only has the campaign disclosure document provided by Cathie, but no supporting documents. Clyde Figone is retired, and, according to his assistant, does not remember back that far; nor does his office have records stretching back that far. Lewis Figone maintains that, “I never met Cathie Kosel until 2007 or 2008 when I submitted a contract proposal to the (KPPCSD) Board, and I never gave her any money.” Director Kosel refused to speak to a reporter from The Outlook about the matter.

As pertinent records pertaining to the matter are apparently unavailable, and since one of the parties involved in the disputed contribution cannot recall details of the matter and the other party refuses to discuss it, it is unlikely that, at this remove, the definitive source of the campaign donation would be able to be determined.

Let the record show that Lewis Figone contradicts Cathie Kosel’s claim that he, named as President of Bay Cities Refuse Services, Inc., on Schedule A, Form 490, made a \$500 donation to The Committee to Elect Cathie Kosel to the El Cerrito City Council on September 16, 1989.

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 • NOON TO 3:30 P.M.

*Parade assembles at noon and starts at 12:30 p.m., Arlington & Amherst Avenues.
Festivities follow at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue.*



Stop by Mechanics Bank
Kensington office the week of
September 12 to pick up an entry
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...*Letters, from Page. 2*

Highland Pipe Dreams

Dear Kensington Neighbors,

We are writing to ask your help in urging the County to repair a drainage pipe has been a problem since at least 2001. Years of letter writing and lobbying by a small group of neighbors have been ineffective. The large pipe in question channels and connects the water from the Highland drainage ditch to the Kenyon Ave. drainage system. The pipe failure is damaging Kenyon path. During heavy rains it makes a slippery sidewalk on Kenyon Ave., and it inundates at least one downhill property, flooding the basement, crawl space, and backyard.

The County's position is that it never "accepted" the pipe or path, and thus takes no responsibility for the failed pipe, despite the pipe's central role in the County's drainage infrastructure. Local agencies like KPPCSD say they can't fix the pipe because they do not own the land. The Friends of the Kensington Paths volunteers support fixing the pipe, and have helped out with temporary patches.

Please write or email our County Public Works Director, Julia Bueren. Ask Julia to fix the drainage pipe before the 2011-2012 rainy season. Yes, it will cost the county a little money, but it is the right thing to do. Every home is important and deserving of protection.

E-mail: jbuer@pw.cccounty.us, and copy John_Gioia@bos.cccounty.us, gharman@kensingtoncalifornia.org, and cadeneergaard@gmail.com

Please add your voice to ours, Catherine de Neergaard, Bryce Nesbitt, Mari Metcalf, Jeff and Su Jin Jez, Marilyn Stollon, John Gaccione, and Randy Laferte

Compost Happens

Dear Editor:

I realize that the trash removal situation in Kensington is in a state of flux. Notwithstanding that, wouldn't it be nice to have community compost pick-up in our community? Many surrounding communities have this service. It makes sense. Yes, many people do their own composting. But, there is a limit as to how much compost one can use. There are only two of us, but we generate so much compost that we have to give it away. For the bulk of the Kensington population who do not compost, what is happening to that organic material? Well, it's either going in with the trash or down the garbage disposal. Community composting is something that we need. Just as recycling is a good thing, so is composting. We need action on this.

Bob Frankfurt

Speeding Laws Open to Interpretation?

Dear Outlook Editor,

I want to respond to a letter to the Editor, which was published in the June, 2011 issue of the Outlook. An "Anonymous" writer hammered the Kensington Police Department for issuing traffic citations to speeders around Kensington. Citing "a few loud malcontents who are probably retired and move more slowly" and "only dead people" on the west side of Franciscan Way is callous and rude.

I live in Kensington, and I welcome KPD's monitoring and ticketing of speeders. Much of Kensington has no sidewalks, and people like me who walk dogs regularly must be very aware of passing traffic. I cringe when cars zoom by, even five or ten miles over speed limits.

I would like to remind "Anonymous" that traffic speed laws in residential areas are made with children in mind. Safe stopping distance is crucial in the event of a child running into a street while chasing a ball or toy. We adults are community custodians of our children's safety, all children.

For "Anonymous" to state that "it is wrong to cite cars going over the speed limit" because "it is difficult to restrain a heavy car to under 30 mph without constant braking" is ridiculous. It's the law, not a gray area open to personal interpretation. I wonder how that person deals with much steeper grades like Moeser Lane.

"Anonymous" seems to have enough time to write a lengthy letter to the Editor, but not enough time to slow down and drive in a legal and responsible fashion.

Rob John
Kensington, CA

Kensington Property Values Dropping?

Dear Editor,

The value of my family's home has dropped by 34% over the last two years. How has this happened?

In 2009, the worst year the American economy has seen since the great depression, my husband and I independently listed our home for sale under my real estate agent license. After just 3 weeks of marketing we received 2 offers over a million dollars, the highest being \$1,100,000.

In the same week we took offers our north side neighbor began excavating a "driveway" on our property line without a permit. As a direct result, all buyer interest evaporated and thus began the deep drop of equity in our home and in neighboring property values.

Immediately we contacted the Chairman of KMAC, who lives directly behind the offending property, and inquired as to KMAC's knowledge of the neighbor's project. The Chairman had no official notice of plans to develop our adjoining neighbor's property. He contacted the County to look into it. Soon after, a county code inspector made a visit to our adjoining neighbor's property and informed the owner that the work he was doing required a permit.

A KMAC hearing was held to study the prospect of this project. Despite the fact that the excavation of the natural hillside was already undertaken, KMAC acted as if it hadn't occurred and suggested that the owners of the property request a "continuance" in order to provide KMAC required information; such as a soils report, engineering plans and a property survey.

see *Letters, Page 13...*

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SEPTEMBER 28
OCTOBER 5, 12, 19

SATURDAYS:
OCTOBER 1, 8, 15, 22
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



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‘4 Cats Arts Studio’ Opens in Kensington

Did you know Andy Warhol had 25 cats named Sam? Did you know Georgia O’Keeffe ate dirt? Did you know Leonardo da Vinci wrote his notes in secret code? Every month, curators at the new *4 Cats Art Studio* in Kensington tell captivating and inspiring stories in a fun and humorous manner about the life and work of the artist being introduced.

Highly trained 4 Cats curators are dedicated to cultivating children’s natural ability to see and think like artists. 4 Cats kids create imaginative works using professional quality art materials. Kids get to work in a variety of mediums, taking inspiration from the works of famous artists. If they’re studying Andy Warhol, they silk screen and make ink blot paintings; if they’re studying Picasso, they create acrylic on canvas cubist paintings and ceramics; if they’re studying Frida Kahlo, they make paper-mache and paint acrylic on canvas self-portraits; if they’re studying Robert Mapplethorpe, they...well, they don’t study Robert Mapplethorpe – you get the picture!

Els Quatre Gats (Catalan for “The Four Cats”) was a café in Barcelona at which Pablo Picasso and his friends used to hang out in the late 1890’s, and for which 4 Cats Arts Studio is named. Local franchisee of this Vancouver-based company (the Kensington location is one of only two in the United States – the other being on Potrero Hill), Sarah Chester, takes the company credo and runs with it to create an environment where kids want to come and talk about – and make – art.

4 Cats is a professional art studio for kids 2-15 years of age. Sarah and her husband and business partner, Danny, have transformed the long-empty storefront next to the previous RabbitEARS location on Colusa Circle into a colorful, bright, and airy space that would cause anyone to want to make some art. 4 Cats had its

grand opening in late June, and Sarah says their summer camp program has been very popular with both parents and kids.

Sarah and Danny said there are three things make their studio unique: “We try to expose children to all different mediums, not just painting or clay; and since it’s a professional studio, all the supplies are professional grade. We have a pottery wheel, a kiln, acrylics, canvases, and also do stop motion animation. The other thing

that makes it really unique, is that we’ve made it a learning environment where students can learn about famous artists that have gone before. Georgia Okeefe, Andy Warhol, Vincent VanGogh, etc. Our goal is to expose kids to the art movement from which previous artists have come.

“We’re excited to be here in Kensington,” they continued enthusiastically, “we have lots of exciting fall classes coming up, and we’re looking forward to working with the children in the community and to creating some beautiful art pieces

together.”

In addition to weekday classes, 4 Cats also offers weekend workshops and birthday parties. Sarah says some parents have been dropping their kids off while they forage at the Farmers’ Market on Sundays. Now there’s an idea!

4 Cats Arts Studio is located at 379 Colusa Avenue. You can reach them at 525-1655, or check out their fall schedule at www.4cats.com/berkeleyhills.



4 Cats Arts Studio co-owner; Sarah Chester

... KPPCSD, from Page 6

the District’s confidentiality policy.

Judging from the number of people attending the recent Kensington Improvement Club meeting, where this issue was discussed (*see Open Letter to KPPCSD, page 10*), for many residents, this act not only calls into question the potential financial liability to the District and to the taxpayers of Kensington, but also the motivation of the two directors who appear to have violated District policy and direct orders from the President of the Board by pursuing their public interrogation of a widely respected employee.

Directors Kosel and Metcalf were performing their diligence as board directors – their inquiry was well within their purview as overseers of the KPPCSD budget. The manner in which they conducted their inquiry, however, directly disobeyed orders from the Chair, appears to have been outside the rules of the KPPCSD Board of Directors Policy Manual, and was also in possible violation of California Statute.

Following the July meeting, Directors Lipscomb, Lloyd, and Toombs reported having received copies of the list of credit card charges under examination – documents which included the actual account numbers for the District credit cards used by its employees. Director Lipscomb reported having found the documents in her mailbox, in an open, unstamped envelope with no return address or accompanying correspondence. Since it is not known how widespread the dissemination of these account numbers has been, nor the identity of the party, or parties, who distributed the information, the District thought it advisable that the accounts be canceled to prevent unauthorized charges by parties unrelated to the District.

The District has hired an outside auditor to investigate whether its employee used District credit cards correctly.

The employee who was questioned about credit card usage at the meeting has filed an official grievance, due to violation of the employee’s rights as per the KPPCSD Policy Manual and the Police Officer Bill of Rights. Civil litigation by the employee is also under consideration at this time.

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Happy Birthday
Zosia

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...NNO, from Page 1

and were successful in their quest.

National Night Out is an annual event designed to strengthen our communities by encouraging neighborhoods to engage in stronger relationships with each other and with their local law enforcement partners. The goal is to heighten crime-prevention awareness, build support and participation in local anti-crime programs, and most importantly, send a message that our neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

And so it came to pass. Porch lights were lit, neighbors gathered and became friends; one night turned into many – and those who would do evil, warned.

If you're interested in hosting a NNO event next year, contact Officer Wilson at dwilson@kensingtoncalifornia.org

–Submitted by Officer Doug Wilson

Happy Birthday

Leslie!





‘The Fuse Fitness’ Opens in Kensington

We caught up with The Fuse co-owner, Kristin Rios, the other day, and asked her to tell us a little about her new fitness studio located in the storefront recently vacated by RabbitEARS, on Colusa Circle.

We’ve been pleasantly surprised by the incredible community that Kensington is, the word of mouth that we’ve received from everyone, and that people are really happy to have us as part of the community.

KO: How is Fuse Fitness different from other fitness studios?

KR: We set ourselves apart by being a fusion of all the components of total body fitness – strength training, cardio vascular training, interval training, flexibility, power, agility, and speed. A full-body workout with creativity and fun. Good energy and positive attitudes.

KO: How did you happen to choose Kensington?

KR: We were attracted to the idea of being part of a small community, and there was no other fitness thing going on here. My partner, Pasha, and I were previously working as independent contractors in a fitness training studio in Albany. We’ve been in business here just over two months.

KO: What’s surprised you most about your venture so far?



The Fuse Fitness co-owners Pascha Brown and Kristin Rios demonstrate their ‘slings but no arrows’ approach

KR: It feels really good to be welcomed into the neighborhood. We were hoping that would happen and it has.

KO: How often does one need to come in to get in shape?

KR: We offer personal training as well as group classes. We try to provide a fun way for people to be active every day – which

is what it takes to get – or stay – in shape. You don’t necessarily need to come here every day, but you can! We offer really fun, great classes and want to encourage everyone to take care of their health and fitness. We have something to offer to everyone no matter his or her level of fitness or income level.

Kristin makes sure getting a grueling workout doesn’t mean you can’t have a good time. Want proof? Check out her Monkey Ninja Boot Camp fitness class.

Kristin’s business partner, Pascha Brown, has been her own best client – dropping more than 45 pounds in only four months following the birth of her child. Her specialties include functional training, core conditioning, athletic training, weight loss, and special populations – the elderly, pre/post natal, and youth.

Their staff includes a total of five certified personal trainers, two yoga instructors, and a certified kickboxing instructor – just in case!

The Fuse is located at 377 Colusa Avenue, and can be contacted at 415-672-2812 or www.thefusefitnessstudio.com.

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and the pure silliness

of a middle school

student.”



Information Day Programs coming this fall:

Elementary School (K-4)

Sunday, October 30th

12:30-4:00pm

510-236-5800


Middle School (5-8)

Sunday, November 6th

12:30-4:00pm

510-528-5800

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Open Letter to: The Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District

August 22, 2011

The Kensington Improvement Club (KIC), representing the interests of its broad constituency of Kensington, CA residents, recommends that the KPPCSD Board adopt a resolution to reprimand KPPCSD Board members Cathie Kosel and Mari Metcalf for their objectionable actions and behaviors that have been in clear violation of the KPPCSD Board Policies and Procedures Manual.

Violations by Ms. Kosel and Ms. Metcalf have resulted in:

- 1) Creating potential and significant legal liability risk for the KPPCSD and Kensington taxpayers;
- 2) Putting the KPPCSD and the Kensington taxpayers at risk for extensive extraneous financial costs;
- 3) Instigating incivility with their disrespectful attitude toward fellow Directors whose opinions differ from theirs;
- 4) Offending the Kensington citizens whom they represent, with abusive and condescending responses to their comments;
- 5) The dereliction of their Board duties; and
- 6) Obstructing the proper functionality of the Board, by not honoring the President of the Board in his efforts to keep the Board working in a productive and civil manner.

Specifically, members of the KIC Board and a number of other citizens of the Kensington community have expressed their deep concerns at KIC meetings, regarding both the violations and lack of civility by these two Directors. Many have observed the following objectionable actions and behaviors in clear violation of the Policies and Procedures Manual, by KPPCSD Directors Cathie Kosel and Mari Metcalf:

- The identification of specific KPPCSD personnel in open public meetings with accusations of wrongdoing, which not only violates the KPPCSD Policies and Procedures Manual, but is also in violation California State Law;
- Failure to execute their responsibilities as Board members, to regularly attend and participate in assigned sub-committee meetings;
- Refusal to honor the authority and directions of the President of the Board in the context of KPPCSD Board Meetings;
- Abusive responses to Kensington Citizens who voice their opinions at the podium during KPPCSD Board meetings; and
- Willful disregard of the facts and professional opinions, in reaching balanced and thoughtful decisions that impact this

community.

What is of the greatest concern to the KIC Board and the Kensington community at-large, is that KPPCSD Board Directors Cathie Kosel and Mari Metcalf have persisted in repeating their objectionable actions and behaviors, even after being advised by the President of the Board and fellow Directors that they were in clear violation of the Policies and Procedures Manual, and even after the President had made every effort to control the meetings. This appears to be a conscious refusal to abide by the established rules of conduct for KPPCSD Directors, all of whom were elected and sworn to serve this community as a whole.

For examples that clearly substantiate the violations that we have listed in this letter, KIC suggests that all KPPCSD Directors review the publicly available tape recordings of the June and July 2011 KPPCSD meetings as well as the Meeting Minutes from the June and July meetings, that were in the respective July and August agenda packets.

Finally, KIC requests that at future KPPCSD Board meetings, when any Director fails to abide by the rules of the Board, that the President of the Board should immediately make it clear that civil order is mandatory. To this end, the President of the Board should call to order any errant Director to cease his/her objectionable discussion, and then ask the Secretary to record the objectionable behavior or language. Finally, if any Director continues with violations while willfully ignoring the President of the Board, then the President should level a penalty on that Director. The penalty for continued violations should be up to and including the removal of that Director from the meeting by the Sergeant at Arms.

KIC makes the request to the KPPCSD Board, to reprimand Directors Cathie Kosel and Mari Metcalf so that the entire KPPCSD Board can quickly get back to working together, civilly and professionally, on the business of the community.

Sincerely,

The Kensington Improvement Club, on behalf of its significant constituency. (Linda Lipscomb, who presides on both the KIC and KPPCSD Boards, recused herself from the KIC Board discussions of this issue and the writing of this letter.)

Recordings of KPPCSD Board meetings are at www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/kppcsd-board/board-meeting-recordings. Meeting minutes (included in agenda packets) are at www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/kppcsd-board/board-agendas-3, and videos of the KPPCSD meetings can be requested through Officer Kevin Hui at the District Office, at 526-4141. – Ed.

From the Files of the KPD

Excerpt From July 2011

- 2011-4398 – Officer Wilson and Reserve Turner responded to the 700 block of Coventry Rd. to a report of residential burglary.
- 2011-4560 – Officer Wilson and Reserve Turner responded to the 500 block of Beloit Ave. to a report of auto burglary.
- 2011-4612 – Officer Wilson responded to a non-injury hit & run accident in the unit block of Garden Drive.
- 2011-4904 – Officer Wilson and Reserve Armanino initiated a traffic stop that resulted in a DUI arrest on Franciscan Way.
- 2011-5023 – Officer Wilson responded to a non-injury hit & run accident in the 600 block of Oberlin Avenue.
- 2011-4435 – On 7/7/2011, Acting Sergeant Hui responded to the unit block of Arlington Ave. on a report of a theft of a scooter.
- 2011-4621 – On 7/14/2011, Officer Martinez responded to the unit block of Highgate Rd. on a report of a grand theft.
- 2011-4657 – On 7/15/2011, Officer Martinez responded to the unit block of Arlington Ave. on a report of vandalism to a vehicle.
- 2011-4788 – On 7/20/2011, Acting Sergeant Hui responded to the unit block of Richardson Rd. on a report of an identity theft.
- 2011-4818 – On 7/21/2011, Officer Ramos responded to the 200 block of Stanford Ave. on a report of vandalism to a vehicle.
- 2011-4831 – On 7/22/2011, Officer Martinez responded to the 100 block of Kenyon Ave. on a report of a petty theft.



- 2011-4973 – On 7/28/2011, Officer Stegman responded to the unit block of Kenyon Ave. on a report of a petty theft.
- 2011-4980 – On 7/28/2011, Officer Ramos responded to the 300 block of Colusa Ave. on a report of a hit and run collision.
- 2011-4621 Theft from a vehicle and unauthorized use of credit cards. On Thursday, July 14, 2011, a purse was stolen from an unlocked vehicle in the 00 block of Highgate Road. Two suspects were seen driving a late 2000 four-door Nissan Altima and were using the victim's credit cards at numerous locations along San Pablo Avenue. The first suspect was described as a white or Hispanic female adult, 5'5" to 5'7" tall, and 130 to 150 lbs., with dark brown hair. The second suspect was a white or Hispanic male adult, 5'11" to 6'01", thin build, with dark hair. The female was seen driving and the male was seated in the front passenger seat. The suspects may have been involved in other recent thefts within Kensington. If you see the suspects or have any information concerning this case please telephone Detective Barrow at 526-4141 or call police dispatch at 236-0474.
- 2011-4980 Hit and Run. On Tuesday, July 28, 2011, officers responded to a hit and run vehicle accident in the 300 block of Colusa Avenue. Through a good initial investigation by KPD Officer Ramos, Det. Barrow was able to contact the suspect in Berkeley. Case closed – to be submitted to the Contra Costa D.A. for prosecution.

Kensington Library Presents 'Kensington Reads: One City, One Book'

Join your friends and neighbors in Kensington for a six-week book-sharing event and read together from September 10th through October 24th. Borrow a copy of Mark Twain's classic tale of American childhood, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. If you have never read this book before you are in for a humorous ride. If you have read it, it is well-worth revisiting.

As Twain writes in the introduction: "Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked..."

Thanks to a grant from the California State Library, the Kensington Library is offering a month of programs in September centered around Twain's life, with a focus on his time spent in California. For details

please see the calendar section. Book discussions will take place in October.

The book is available in print, downloadable audio, on compact disc, and as an e-book. The library is also offering a "Classic Starts" edition for younger readers. Please visit <http://guides.ccclib.org/onebook> to reserve or download a copy and for details on programs and book discussions.

A limited number of paperback copies will also be available at participating local businesses to read, discuss, and then pass on to friends, family, or neighbors. Participating locations include: the KCC office, 269 The Arlington, Mechanics Bank, 4 Cats, and the Sugar Cone Café. Thanks to the Friends of the Kensington Library, the Kensington Community Council, and the Kensington Improvement Club for contributing towards the purchase of the books for the program.

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KENSINGTON KALENDAR

Sept. 1, 8, 15 Baby & Toddler Story Time. Stories, songs & action rhymes for young children and their caregivers. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. Two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 3-9 “Things in Bold.” 13 mixed media works by Kevin Proctor, presented EC Arts and Culture Commission. City Hall Gallery Space, EC City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Ave. MWF 8am-4pm; TTh 8am-6pm. www.el-cerrito.org/gov/arts_culture_commission.html or 215-4318.

Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25 Farmers’ Market, every Sunday, rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Colusa Circle at Oak View Ave. Live music and live produce. 847-0801 or KensingtonFarmersMarket.org

Sept. 5 “Castoffs” Knitting Group. All levels welcome and some help provided. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 7 pm. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 7 The Kensington Unit of the League of Women Voters meets to discuss local issues. Guests are welcome. 1:15pm, 50 Avon Road. Please call 527-8683 to confirm.

Sept. 7 World Premiere of “Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup,” at the Tony award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Through October 30 in the Roda Theatre. Expect another breathtaking performance from the woman who won all four of the most



Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup at the Berkeley Rep in September (Shown here with makeup)
Photographer: Michael LaMonica

prestigious awards in show business: the Oscar, the Tony, the Grammy, and two Emmys. (Low-cost previews take place on Friday, 9/2; Saturday, 9/3; Sunday, 9/4; and Tuesday, 9/6. Free culinary tastings, opening night post-show party, docent presentations, and other special events in conjunction with the production, throughout the run.) Information and tickets at berkeleyrep.org. 2025 Addison Street, Berkeley. 647-2917

Sept. 8 Women’s Fellowship at the Arlington Community Church at 6:15pm. Potluck with wine and good conversation followed by a presentation on community disaster preparedness. Call the office at 526-9146.

Sept. 8 El Cerrito Garden Club meets at the EC Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane, from 9:30am-Noon. This will be ECGC’s own version of the Bouquet to Arts exhibit which took place at deYoung Museum earlier this year, with members displaying their own arrangements and designs. Professional judges will evaluate these design and horticultural displays and will share comments and criteria for the awards given. Visitors \$3. 233-9365.

Sept. 8 A Conversation with Israeli Activist, Dorothy Noar. San Francisco native and Israeli resident, Noar, is a member of New Profile, a pluralist feminist organization that seeks to transform Israel from a militaristic society to a “civil-ized” one – ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories through non-violence. Sponsored by the BFUU Social Justice Ctee. Thursday, Sept. 8, at 7pm, at Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists’

Hall, 1924 Cedar, Berkeley. Admission \$5-10. No one turned away for lack of funds. Wheelchair accessible. Info: www.bfuu.org or 841-4824

Sept. 10 Linda Rugg, U.C. Berkeley professor, will give a talk “Yours Truly, Mark Twain,” on Twain’s literature and performance. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 2 pm. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 11 Knitting at the Arlington Community Church at 11:30am. Knit shawls, hats, scarves, and mittens for those in need. No experience needed. Info: 526-9146

Sept. 12 Bob Hirst, General Editor, Mark Twain Project, will present “Getting to Know Mark Twain: Forty-four Years in the Mark Twain Papers.” Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave., 7 pm. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 12 El Cerrito Art Association Monthly Meeting presentation: Printmaker and painter Shari Arai DeBoer on how to present artwork beyond framing and matting. Garden Room, El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane, EC. 7:30-9pm. Free. 526-6241

Sept. 13 Guirao-Howard-Dorman Trio performs at the Berkeley City Club. 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. \$25. HS students, free; post-HS students, \$12.50. 525-5211. W/chair accessible. www.berkeleychamberperform.org.

Sept. 15 Author Talk & Tasting. Award-winning local author of “Fresh & Fast Vegetarian: Recipes that Make a Meal,”

and Bon Appetit columnist, Marie Simmons, shares her love of food, cooking, and big bold flavors. 7pm, El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Ave. 526-7512

Sept. 18 El Cerrito Trail Trekkers Hike: Hillside Nature Area South. Meet at the corner of Schmidt Lane and Navellier St., near the recycling Center. Steep trails, great views, live oaks and memorial groves. 11am. Free. 524-1737 or www.ectrailtrekkers.org

Sept. 19 Pat Kaunert, Mark Twain Re-enactor, presents Twain’s humor, wisdom, and adventures. All ages. Arlington Comm. Church, 52 Arlington Ave., 6:30pm. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 22 Men’s Fellowship at the Arlington Community Church; 6:30pm. Steak, salmon, and good conversation. By advance reservation at 526-9146.

Sept. 23 Bridge at the Arlington Community Church, 6:15pm. Potluck dinner. No experience req’d. 526-9146

Sept. 26 Book Club. Discussion of “Elegance of the Hedgehog” by Muriel Barbery. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 7pm. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 26 Annual Dynamo Golf Scramble Fundraiser. 8am at the Tilden Park Golf Course; includes lunch, raffle, and awards ceremony. All caliber of golfers welcome. Benefit for the David Hunter Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Open House Senior Center. 559-7000

Sept. 30: Dedication of the Tree of Life Mosaic & 50th Anniversary Celebration. Free. 7pm, Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. www.uucb.org 525-0302



Outlook Editor, Joel Koosed’s ‘50’s band, Dream Lover, shown here at April’s Kensington Car Meet, rocks the El Sobrante Stroll, Sunday, Sept. 18th, Noon-4pm. Free! Listen at www.DreamLoverOldies.com

Town Meetings

Kensington Community Center
59 Arlington Ave., Kensington

FKL - Sept. 6th
Friends of the Kensington Library, 7pm at the Library, 61 Arlington Avenue. 1st Tuesdays.

KPPCSD - Sept. 8th
Police Protection and Community Services District
2nd Thursdays 7pm. 526-4141

KPSC - Sept. 12th
Kensington Public Safety Council
EQ & Disaster Preparedness
2nd Mondays 6:30pm. 501-8165

KARO/ECHO - Sept. 12th
Amateur Radio Operators
2nd Mondays of odd months.
7:30pm. 524-9815

KCC - Sept. 12th (Due to holiday)
Kensington Community Council
7:30pm • 525-0292 • 1st Mondays

KFPD - Sept. 14th
Fire Protection District
2nd Wednesdays 7:30pm. 527-8395

KIC - Sept. 26th
Kensington Improvement Club
4th Mondays 7:30pm. 527-3062

KMAC - Sept. 27th
Municipal Advisory Council
Last Tuesdays 7pm.

KPOA
Property Owners Association
Meets quarterly. 559-8232

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August Traffic Forum

Last month at the Community Center, the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) welcomed Supervisor John Gioia, County traffic engineer, John Fahey, and Kensington residents to a discussion of local traffic issues.

Supervisor Gioia summarized the purpose of the meeting as an attempt to clarify the roles of the County and the police department in traffic management, and to determine how those two agencies can best work together with the community to improve traffic safety.

Kensington is an unincorporated area, so the County is responsible for the roads. Usually in unincorporated areas, traffic and law enforcement are handled by the Sheriff’s office. Kensington has its own

police force, however, so its police department handles local law enforcement and works in conjunction with the County to handle traffic. The traffic control speed feedback sign installed on the Arlington at Rincon, and the chevrons installed just south of that sign at “Dead Man’s Curve,” are recent examples of that cooperation.

Jerry Fahey, the County traffic engineer, offered examples of County responsibilities: road striping, controlling speeding, parking, stop signs, speed bumps, pot-holes, drainage, and visibility.

KPPCSD General Manager, Greg Harman pointed out that the “Zero Tolerance Policy” instigated in 2010 has made it easier for officers to enforce traffic laws across the board. In the absence of such a policy, the indeterminate nature of a police stop for an infraction in a small commu-

nity such as ours can sometimes make it difficult for officers to write tickets for residents they may know.

These six Kensington traffic “hot spots” were also discussed:

- 1) Arlington Avenue: Signs were installed and road striping was changed. Since the installation of the speed feedback sign last month, County-monitored average speeds were reported to be down from 24 mph to 20 mph. (Anecdotal reports from various neighbors were not consistent in their impressions of the effectiveness of the sign.)
- 2) Franciscan Way: Speeding is reported to be down since the zero tolerance policy was put into effect. Neighbors are not in agreement as to the advisability of installing sidewalks and speed humps. (Installation of speed humps is neighborhood driven, and 67% of the neighbors need to agree, with all neighbors whose property fronts the humps needing to sign off on them.) Typically, sidewalks on both sides of the speed humps are advised in order to keep people from going around humps, which creates a worse situation.
- 3) Along these lines, neighbors on Valley and Coventry near Colusa circle have yet to come to agreement on what they’d like to see done in their neighborhood.
- 4) Highland Avenue near Hilltop Elementary: One way in and one way out was reported to have worked well.
- 5) Highgate Road: A request has been received to downgrade the speed limit from 25mph to 15mph; the County can’t do that.

6) Colusa Avenue between Fairmount and the Circle: This is a high speed area, with distracted drivers, and cross walks with low visibility. According to Supervisor Gioia, part of this is in El Cerrito, with whom the County would need to cooperate to make any improvements. (Not that that’s a bad thing!)

Supervisor Gioia suggested that small group discussions focused on each of the identified hot spots would be productive in improving traffic safety and having the concerns of neighbors ultimately heard and addressed.

In response to a concern expressed by some residents that all the focus on traffic would impact other aspects of law enforcement, Chief of Police, Greg Harman assured everyone that the department has the discretion to focus its efforts where they are needed at any time. There is always at least one officer circulating in the neighborhoods, and more if needed.

In response to one resident’s concern that our streets have become thoroughfares for other people trying to get somewhere else, and the concomitant suggestion that we start thinking about “installing things to impede traffic through our community,” Supervisor Gioia replied that we need to calm the traffic and make it safe – not prevent the traffic. “We need to solve the problems here, rather than transferring the problems somewhere else,” he suggested.

Fun fact you may not have known: Speed signs with black lettering on a white background are posted enforceable limits; those with black lettering on a yellow background are advisory signs only.



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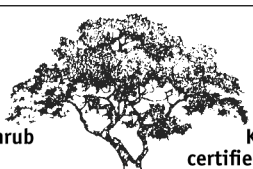
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...Letters, from Page 7

Instead of adhering to the request of KMAC, the offending property owners withdrew the variance request – effectively bypassing KMAC all together.

You may be wondering what the county building department and Supervisor John Gioia have done to stop a Kensington family's home from being destroyed. The building department says that it has never inspected the excavation, despite the fact that the inspectors have literally stood in its shadow over the last year and a half. Gioia's office feels this is a civil matter that should be handled in the court. In the mean time my family is treated as if we're wearing the scarlet letter, by other neighbors who misunderstand what has happened.

In this instance, and under direct appeal, KMAC did not help our community, Deputy Director Jason Crapo did not help, and Supervisor John Gioia did not help. We continued to demand that Supervisor Gioia live up to the promise of his elected office. Is it because Kensintonians place our trust in elected officials who do not live in our community that there is a disconnect and abuse of KMAC and Kensington owners property rights?

Now, after utilizing the best agent/broker in the area, escrow has closed on my family's home resulting in a loss of \$375,000.

Soon, this sale at an unreasonably low price per square foot will begin to affect the value of Kensington homes. Drive by and see why for yourself. If you have any questions, look up the Kensington Protection Ordinance and study your rights just in case you need to exercise them...but be warned, knowing your rights does not guarantee them.

Angela Cadogan

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