

Community Center
...from front page

Forrest and the fundraising arm Kensington 360, all of which contributed significant funds as well as elbow grease. Hacaj said that the project is slated to take 156 days. “KCC should be offering KASEP classes here in January,” she said, and then smiled: “From my lips to the universe’s ears.”

After that came the ceremonial shovelful of dirt (hard hats in place) and the popping of corks. Champagne and sparkling grape and apple juice flowed, cookies were eaten, and the countdown starts to what promises to be the center’s third and most impactful iteration as the hub of Kensington’s community events.



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Shovels, Champagne, and Tears



Sylvia Hacaj pours champagne while Farhat Daud talks with Victoria Curtis about their past interactions with the Community Center—KASEP, family rentals, and more. Says Daud, "It's another example of so many of us that have an integral history with this building." All photos: Mark Altenberg

By Linnea Due

Groundbreaking ceremonies are often media performances. Not so in Kensington, where most of the fifty or so people who watched shovels slide into the dirt beside the Community Center’s cinderblock wall had worked for years to ensure that moment would finally come. As KPPCSD board director Rachelle Sherris-Watt remarked, “Sometimes it’s good that you don’t know how long something will take.”

The huge effort only made the ceremony, held on the breezy, gorgeous afternoon of July 22, all the sweeter. “I started in 2015,” Sherris-Watt continued. Many, she said, had been working far longer. Among others, she thanked past director Len Welsh, Gretchen Gillfillan, Jim Watt, Ciara Wood, Katie Gluck, Peter Conrad, and Paula Black, for doing “the lion’s share of work.” Kensington-based architects Bart Jones and Deborah Lane came to

meeting after meeting, while Gilda Puente-Peters, a specialist in ADA, laid the cornerstone for the successful application of WW funds to upgrade accessibility. Sherris-Watt complimented KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros and Rickey Hull (in his role as interim GM) for ushering the project along, while community support, she said, was amazing.

Sherris-Watt recalled that five architects vied for the project, each with ties to Kensington. The Building Committee chose Glass Associates Inc. unanimously. The project’s lead architect and liaison, Farhat Daud, spoke next, tearing up as she described how important the Community Center was to her and her family. “We bought our house in Kensington twentysome years ago, and we rented the Youth Hut for our daughter’s birthday party. Our daughter went to KASEP classes here, we attended meetings, I taught cooking classes here.” Daud mentioned that early on she realized how important the Community Center is to a broad swath of Kensington residents, how “this building really works.”

“People had so many hopes for the building,” she said, “and that’s been one of the disappointments. The seismic upgrade is so expensive, and we have to be on a budget. Still, we’ll have the glass wall in front. And in fact, the cinderblock wall it replaces is coming down tomorrow.”

KPPCSD director Sylvia Hacaj thanked contributors and organizations such as KCC, the fire board, KPOA, KIC, and Anne



Celebrants with purpose: Everyone here played a huge part in the Community Center remodel. From left, Gretchen Gillfillan, Rachelle Sherris-Watt, Peter Conrad, and Katie Gluck.

See Community Center, back page



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Letters to the Editor

Does Kensington Have Any Officers on the “Brady List”?

Dear Editor:

In California, to prepare for their defense, a criminal or civil defendant can ask prosecutors if any complaints have been made and for the result of the investigation of those complaints against a police officer who would testify. In many jurisdictions, a list, called the “Brady list,” is kept of police officers who have engaged in acts of moral turpitude and dishonesty. These lists usually don’t include a description of the misconduct, but they indicate which officers have engaged in misconduct, such as fabricating evidence or lying, that can imperil the prosecution of any case. So far this list has not been made public, though there is currently a suit before California courts asking whether the new police disclosure law would allow disclosure.

In the uproar after the Reno incident, a Kensington resident, who had worked as a criminal prosecutor, stated in the community meeting about the incident and in her comments and letter at the March 12, 2015, KPPSCD board that we had, because of that incident, at least one officer whose testimony would be called into question by the defense in any case they worked on.

Considering incidents that members of the KPD were involved in (such as Reno, West-Net, the Traffic Stop, the Saba case), I ask: Do we have officers in our department who are on that list? Why should we be paying for officers whose testimony cannot be used or would if used be discredited, or why we should be providing defense in suits involving their actions? What sort of liability do these officers pose to us?

Mabry Benson

Something Doesn’t Add Up

Dear Editor:

From 2017 to the present, \$72,694.50 was billed to the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District by one of two law firms for at least six different consultants. Bob Deis alone collected \$33,364.50, while \$23,205.50 was paid to William Zenoni. For the most part taxpayers have no idea what services the district received from these consultants.

The bills do not contain any itemization of the work done, nor do they identify the projects undertaken. The one exception is the \$1,380 paid to Howard Jordan, which has a handwritten reference to the CLETS investigation. One other bill apparently contained an explanation but that was redacted when the bills were provided pursuant to a PRA request.

This is, of course, in the new era after the board hired a part-time professional GM to whom we pay \$100,000 a year. However, from 2015-2016, when one person served as both GM and Chief of Police, it appears that the total consultant costs billed to the district was \$14,111.31, with details of the work performed.

Now that we have an independent GM, how is it that consultant costs have increased five-fold? What are all those consultants doing? That question was raised at a recent board meeting, generating an answer from the GM that contained very little explanation. The KPPSCD is a small district, yet we are, under the current board, generating huge costs for consultants who, for all we know, may be doing the work that was formerly done by the district's administrative staff for a lot less money. For a board that is touted as open, transparent, and fiscally responsible, this is very troubling. It would not seem unreasonable for the board to provide a more detailed explanation of the costs and why we need these individuals. Those who are so fond of complaining about the legal fees generated by past boards might want to take a serious look at these numbers.

Dane Gillette

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OCTOBER 2019 DEADLINES:

Advertising Deadline ❖ SEPTEMBER 8

Editorial Deadline ❖ SEPTEMBER 10

The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues.

KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.

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

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June Police Log

1 VANDALISM, Kingston Rd.
Found Property, Arlington/Coventry. Large black backpack.
2 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Yale Ave. Loud dance music coming from a house on the uphill side since 0030 hrs , unk exact location.
ANIMAL CALL, Arlington Ave. RP had a verbal altercation with a male subj regarding his dog being off leash. Stated her dog started chasing his dog and ended up with a broken dog collar.
ANIMAL CALL, Yale Ave. Dead skunk on sidewalk.
3 REQUEST FOR EXTRA PATROL. Off-leash dogs at Kensington Park.
ENTER AND OCCUPY PROPERTY W/O CONSENT, Purdue Ave. WMA, 65 years, white hair and beard. Driving a red Prius. Drove up the driveway and walked around the back of the house.
5 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE. Camelot Ct. Dog started barking causing RP to believe someone is inside or around her house, RP has injured knee home alone in 1st floor bedroom door secured, husband is out of the area through Thursday. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.
BURGLARY, Ardmore Rd. RP says he was notified by RING services subject was walking in his driveway and in backyard but no one is there now- Male with baseball hat backwards long sleeve white shirt jeans.
6 ANIMAL CALL, KPD. Lost dog reported.
7 VEHICLE THEFT, Ardmore Rd. Vehicle stolen, last seen 2030 hrs.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Cowper Av. Noise complaint—motor tool or engine running all day and night. RP has noticed it off and on for about a month. RP is unsure of where the noise is coming from.
FRAUD USE OF CREDIT CARD, Highland Blvd. Victim of a phone scam. Sent \$6000.
RECKLESS DRIVING, Eureka Ave. Vehicle drag racing up and down Eureka, RP only heard it, did not see the vehicle. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.
8 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Cowper Ave. Noise complaint, motor tool or engine running all day and night. RP called yesterday and officers never came. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.
11 ALARM, HILLTOP SCHOOL. Rear door no responders, RP from Purdue reporting fire-works coming from area of school, second RP said they were down the hill from school.
12 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Arlington Ave. Noise complaint regarding idling police vehicles.
SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE, Westminster/Kenyon. Box-shaped red vehicle appeared to be following FedEx truck and had vehicle stopped in road. RP says when he made eye contact with driver he drove away. Light skin male with dark hair. Unable to Locate.
INFLECT CORPORAL INJURY-Spouse/Cohabitant/Parent of Child, Anson Way. BMA threatened to kill RP, choked and threw her up against the wall, subj has felony history, second dv incident between them, departed to work, known to carry gun in vehicle no weapons seen during incident. RP has child w/her, medical declined.
14 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Colgate Av. Verbal neighbor dispute.
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Highland Blvd. House to rear of RP's house, hasn't been activity for last 4-5 days, but appears sliding glass door open with lights on.
CITIZEN ASSIST, Arlington Ave. RP is janitorial staff and a male comes in and lets his dog drink out of the water fountain, ongoing issue and RP is very upset because she and her husband clean the water fountain for the kids on Monday.
16 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Wellesley Ave. Male subj on a blk bike riding thru the neighborhood for 90 mins. WMA, mid to late 30s, beard, blue coat.
ANIMAL CALL, Colgate Ave. Dead cat in garage.
17 ANIMAL CALL, KPD, Lost bunny rabbit reported.
19 ANIMAL CALL, Norwood Ave. Dead deer by gate.
ANIMAL CALL, Arlington Ave. 911 caller concerned about dog left in red vehicle. Advised RP that due to cool weather, Animal Control would likely not respond.
911 CALL, Anson Way. WMA, 30s, gray sweatshirt going into neighbor's yard, went into neighbor's car, fled on teal bike w/b towards EC. .
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Lake Dr. Blue box on the side of path.
22 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Ardmore Rd. WMA, late 20s, early 30s, beard, earth tone clothing, carrying a bag, walking in the middle of the street and didn't move for cars. LS walking SB on Arlington.
23 ANIMAL CALL, Arlington, 2 dogs running around off-leash. RP stated she had problems in the past with other dog owners regarding the same situation. Will be sitting on bench between the school and clubhouse. Situation Corrected by PD.
MISSING PERSON REPORT, Arlington Ave. RP's elderly mother-in-law has been missing from park by the community center since 1300hrs. Subj has dementia. Ls walking sb from the park wearing a maroon scarf and floral dress.
27 VEHICLE THEFT, Highland Blvd. Theft attempt only, items stolen from inside vehicle.
BURGLARY, Highland Blvd. RP is standing by at KPD.
ANIMAL CALL, Kenyon Ave. RP found two dogs. He has placed them in his back yard and the owners are not answering his calls from the phone numbers he got off their tags. RP has a shared back yard he is okay with leaving the dogs there until the owners are reached or Animal Control is contacted, but his neighbor is not... attempted to call various phone numbers for Contra Costa Animal services with negative results, most phone numbers had a recording that they were disconnected. .
Welfare Check, Norwood Ave. Dogs barking continuously and owner will typically yell out to them to be quiet and they calm down, the neighbor hasn't done that tonight and RP is concerned for her neighbor's safety.
29 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Ardmore Rd. Loud street work tree cutting or similar since 0920 hrs ongoing for last several weekends, thinks it's an ordinance violation.
30 RECKLESS DRIVING, Kenyon Ave. Aggressive driver heard yelling profanity at someone, then screeching of tires. Is headed left on Highland. Unable to Locate.
ASSISTANCE TO AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, Edgecroft Rd. Kensington resident heard female yelling or screaming for help to rear on Berkeley side, male heard telling female to calm down, Berkeley also enroute to the area.
CITIZEN ASSIST, Lake Dr. Smoke alarm stating smoke in the house, then 55 percent clear, but still showing yellow like it's not clear. No smoke or flames seen. While speaking with RP, alarm went off again. Advised she recently had new electrical work done thru-out the res.

July Police Log

1 PETTY THEFT, Colusa Ave. Red 27" men's specialized mountain bike stolen from garage.
ANIMAL CALL, KPD. Lost dog, requesting PD help.
2 VEHICLE ACCIDENT, Coventry Rd. Moving truck into parked veh., neighbor made verbal threats against RP.
3 Suspicious Circumstance, Amherst Ave. Sounded like HS boys attempting to get into RP's apt. Vandalism, Arlington Ave. RP says he was out of town for a week and neighbor just informed him today that his vehicle was egged Sunday unk hours Sunday night. RP stated egg shells are still surrounding car. Temp plates on veh.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Hilltop School. RP is CHP. Noise complaint, sounds of fire-works. Original RP did not want to provide CHP with any details and actually cancelled request. CHP advised Confire and Confire wanted KPD notified. Unable to Locate.
SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Colusa Ave. BMA transient middle-aged with dark hair, med build, laying on bench. RP concerned for the elderly female who resides at above location and the transient's welfare. Warning given.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Edgecroft Rd. For past five minutes, heard what RP describes as possible thunder but may be fireworks. RP concerned someone may be setting something on fire.
ANIMAL CALL, Lenox Rd. Chocolate lab named Rocky missing since around 2000 hours. If seen, please contact RP. Dog is friendly.
4 PETTY THEFT, Beloit. RP says \$300 worth of lawn fixtures stolen from front yard during night.
ANIMAL CALL, Arlington Ave. RP says a small dog jumped into his vehicle and won't get out. Stated dog is small and friendly.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Sunset View Cemetery. RP states that there is someone setting off fireworks in the cemetery. She hears possibly cherry bombs coming from Colusa.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Coventry/Valley Rd. Neighbor's setting off fireworks, RP, his brother and their mother went to their residence to tell/ask them to stop, the neighbors then got in RP's faces threatening them, stating they are going to f.k them up and trying to attack RP and his family...RP declined to provide his name, he was concerned that the neighbors might come back to their house and vandalize their cars, brother got on the phone also declined to provide his name...I clarified if they wanted to speak to an officer regarding the threats made against them or just an area check for the fireworks. The 1st RP's brother stated he just wanted an area check, they didn't want to deal with the police.
5 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Kenyon Ave. RP says there are juveniles setting off fireworks at the corner of Kenyon. Unable to Locate.
FORGERY, Stratford Rd. RP is reporting a forged rental agreement check that was altered for a larger amount.
6 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Los Altos Dr. Unknown person using a flashlight to look into cars parked in the street. No description due to darkness.
Citizen Assist, Arlington Ave. RP frustrated and irate with dispatch, wants to speak with PD.
9 WELFARE CHECK, Highgate Rd. RP says stepmother killed father by pushing him down stairs three years ago. Stating that this is all over money. RP lives in Missouri, says she does not have any psychological issues, hasn't slept in days.
10 IDENTITY THEFT, KPD. Case report taken.
VANDALISM, ARLINGTON AVE. Case report taken.
11 PETTY THEFT, Rincon. Plants taken off front porch.
12 ENTER & OCCUPY PROPERTY W/out Consent of Owner, Amherst Ave. RP says her neighbor notified her that there were unk subjects in her backyard possibly working on a house on Yale which is accessible through backyard.
13 INFLECT CORPORAL INJURY-Spouse/Cohabitant/Parent of Child, Lawson Rd. Physical fight over keys to RP's blk Mazda rental car, suspect is lt complexion BMA scruffy beard 5'10" 200 lbs., blk shirt blue pants blue shoes departed in veh toward Arlington. 7yro and 4yro kids w/RP, RP requesting medical for shortness of breath.
14 PETTY THEFT, Lake Dr. Glove box rifled through, flashlight, reg and insurance cards taken.
15 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Willamette Ave. RP stated that this occurred Kenyon Ave. Believes that heavysset WMA took approx. 5 packages.
16 BURGLARY, Ocean View Ave. WMA early 30s, med build, unk clothing, victim's vehicle is Ford flatbed truck. Suspect departed in white full size Chevy Blazer. Loss tools and/or drills.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Highland Blvd. Loud argument father vs. son.
17 CITIZEN ASSIST, Arlington Ave. Contacted County Public Works. Spoke to Lynn and reported needed repair to the fence barrier separating north and south bound lanes in front of the Arlington stores. Lynn advised this was reported approximately 2 months prior and believed it should have been repaired by now. Lynn advised she would look into this issue. On 7/18/19 I contacted Public Works Senior Construction Inspector. I showed him the damaged barrier to which he photographed and advised he would make the proper notification to get it repaired.
18 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Oak View Ave. RP says he's a victim of cyber crime. Was told to purchase gift cards in place of money and feels it was part of a scam.
ENTER & OCCUPY PROPERTY W/out Consent of Owner, Colusa Ave. 10 mins ago. .Tall.. WMA, 5'9, white and orange shirt light yellow hat moving something from the basement. Subject may have entered from the garden to the basement. .RP is home alone, she is downstairs Burglary, Rincon Rd. Someone attempted to gain access to crawl space.
20 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Rincon Rd. RP has package delivered to her door that she did not order, no return label or company name on box. Wants officer to respond.
21 PETTY THEFT, Kensington Rd. Believes iPhone stolen out of unlocked car, tracked phone to Edgecroft Rd.
23 CITIZEN ASSIST, Ocean View Ave. RP feels she is the target of retaliation for calling KPD last week...RP was about to give me her cell number, but phone disconnected, I also advised RP this was about to happen.
24 BURGLARY, Benchmark Pizzeria on Oak View Ave. Cold.
ANIMAL CALL, Oak View Ave. Medium/ large brown dog running around the neighborhood, collar no tag. Foam in the corner of the mouth. Unable to Locate.
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Ave. 30 minutes ago. Small van driving around cul-de-sac, RP heard someone walking up to her house and then leave. RP heard another vehicle drive up 15 mins later. Unsure if it was the same vehicle but is requesting an area check.
25 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Franciscan Way. RP says a package ifo of the cemetery that possibly has been taken off someone's porch and opened.
26 VEHICLE TAMPERING, Amherst Ave. No signs of entry and no loss, RP says vehicle appears rummaged through with open glove compartment. Unk if he left doors locked.
26 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, York Ave. Car outside her home with door opened and passengers departed. She would like an area check.
27 HIT AND RUN, property damage. Colusa Ave. Auto, just discovered. Black paint marks left front, dent and wheel cover missing.
27 PERSON SEEKING ADVICE FROM PD, Ardmore Rd. RP wants to know if there is a festival on Ardmore since he can heard loud music and requesting PD to check it out and let him know in case he needs to make a 415 noise complaint.
30 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Young's Market, Arlington. RP believes her laptop (silver MacBook Pro) was taken from her vehicle while parked. No signs of forced entry.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Santa Fe. WMA went to the home of his friend to get dinner and was asked to leave by his friend's brother. When he did not leave, the brother got mad and used a baseball bat, in which he shoved into his brother's friend's face to prevent his entry. No visible injuries were seen.
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Stratford Rd. Subject came to door around 4pm, introduced himself as Max and said he had packages delivered to her address from a company, gave her his number and asked that she call him when they arrived also stated that he lived at 7 Stratford which he does not. The packages have arrived with someone else's name on them and are at her door. Advised RP to hold on to the packages.
31 WELFARE CHECK, Windsor Ave. RP's elderly mom received an email that she thought was okay because it stated her info was received from a friend. The email stated something about winning some prizes and she needed to go to Walgreens, but would receive a 2nd email telling her when to go. She eventually received the 2nd email advising her to proceed to Walgreens, but spoke with her daughter about the situation and was advised to stay inside her home. RP is requesting a call back.
VANDALISM, Hilltop School. Broken window at classroom, RP security guard.
DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Stratford/Richardson rds. Party getting kind of crazy, loud music getting louder every day. Warning given.

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CLETS Investigation Finished (Not)

By Linnea Due

Much of the news on the national scene concerns a certain Individual 1, who traverses the globe on Air Force One. Not to be outdone, we in Kensington have Subject 1 and her 2004 BMW convertible. Both 1s garner a great deal of attention.

Recently, CLETS searches regarding Subject 1’s vehicle were investigated by past Oakland police chief Howard Jordan, now a consultant with Sloan Sakai’s Management Strategies Group. CLETS is the acronym for California Law Enforcement Telecommu-nications System, which gives police officers access to DMV, criminal records, and FBI databases. As KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros said in a phone interview, “CLETS is a police tool and should be used within the legal parameters.” Those strict limits, the breaching of which carry administrative or criminal consequences, forbid fishing expeditions or personal detective work, no matter how tempting.

In the report Jordan submitted to Kensington counsel Ann Danforth, he found eleven CLETS searches of the subject vehicle, two more than were previously identified. Con-stantouros says the object of the exercise was this: “We knew five searches were made by KPD officers, but we didn’t know who the others were made by. Were there multiples by the same person? It turns out they weren’t from the KPD.”

Jordan found that four Kensington officers conducted five searches (one officer que-ried twice). Jordan expanded the search parameters to 2018 and also scoured Contra Costa County databases, where he discovered two additional inquiries, both said to be requested by Richmond PD. Of the original nine, two were unknown—one of these sup-posedly by El Cerrito PD and another from Richmond PD.

Jordan concluded that eleven CLETS inquiries were conducted on Subject One’s BMW from July 18, 2014 to May 1, 2016. Jordan writes, “All five KPD inquiries were appropri-ately investigated and appropriate actions were taken in connection with all inappropri-ate inquiries.” Besides citing how fitting everything was, including punishment, what does this mean? It implies that at least one search was not proper, but that impropriety was dealt with firmly, and with great restraint.

When I proposed that perhaps this not-exactly-kosher search was Officer Juan Ramos boning up before the IA investigation of the traffic stop of Subject 1 in October 2015 that sparked a brouhaha resulting in media and law enforcement attention, Constantouros said, “I have not looked into it because it doesn’t demand my immediate attention. It was handled professionally, and I have such a workload that I don’t need to look back. There’s no need for me to be involved.”

In 2016, the CLETS violation identified in the KPD’s internal investigation was referred to the Contra Costa County DA’s office, which found no evidence of a violation of the Penal Code. Thus the matter was handled within the department.

Meanwhile, Jordan stands ready, he wrote, to conduct inquiries on behalf of other Kensington residents who fear they were improperly searched. The investigation of CLETS searches into Subject 1, said Constantouros, cost \$5,607.50. “I did receive inquiries from other people,” Constantouros said. “It appears that they’ve already been investigated. I just want to verify it. Suspicion tends to last a long time, and people are not always satisfied with the answers. I want to give it a second review internally first.” As for Subject 1, Jordan’s report “concludes this portion of the investigation,” said Con-stantouros.

Yet we know from the national scene that nothing is concluded, ever. On August 7, Shannon Moore, from the Richmond City Attorney’s office, wrote in an email to Vanessa Cordova that “We are not finding dispatch records or incident reports for your vehicle.” Cordova also says that the El Cerrito search cited in Jordan’s report is not of her vehicle. Jordan did not respond to a request to comment.

Says Tom Dean, who served in law enforcement for 33 years, “In a sane and profes-sional world, Chief [Greg] Harman would have told [Subject 1] that it is at a minimum inappropriate for a sitting board member to drive around without a front plate and current registration. If she failed to comply, a fix-it ticket could have been issued in a non-dramatic fashion. In the end, this was a simple traffic enforcement situation, but the incompetence of Harman has brought us to this point.”

PG&E Shutoffs Key to Clever Scam Attempt

By Linnea Due

Hal Graboske is well known as the head of Kensington Area 6’s Community Emergency Response Team, training that evidently informed his better half, Patsy Jones. On August 19, Graboske received an automated call from PG&E, informing him that power to his house would be shut off that afternoon at 2pm. He was surprised, as there seemed no weather-related reason for the shutoff. PG&E has been announcing for the past couple of months that shutoffs that might last as long as a week will occur in high-risk areas such as Kensington during Diablo Wind events.

Graboske says, “When I called the number given for response to this announcement, I asked why and how big an area would be affected and was told it was not due to a public safety power shutoff—but because of a several-months’-long unpaid bill!” Graboske pro-tested that his bills were always paid on time.

“After a lot of back and forth with the PG&E manager, I was told that the only way to delay the shutoff was to make a cash payment today at a nearby PG&E kiosk. The amount was hundreds of dollars more than any bill we’ve ever received, but the manager said they would initiate a case study and determine the correctness or error.” Graboske was told that he would be refunded any overpayment, but that the study would take at least two to three days.” But Graboske was told that the only way to prevent a shutoff that afternoon was to go pay at the kiosk.

“I was ready to go make this payment when my wife asked a simple question: ‘Is this a scam?’ And I instantly realized it was.” Graboske relays how convincing the ruse was: the caller had his name, phone numbers, address, and even his PG&E account number.

He reported it to the Kensington police and to PG&E. The PG&E representative told him that this was the second such call she had handled that day, and that she knew that few people who get these calls ever report them. She suggested that he alert his friends and neighbors that scammers are starting to use planned safety power shutoffs to frighten people.

“They called many times when I didn’t show up at the kiosk,” Graboske says. “One left a voicemail in which I hear a conversation from across the room with another scamster talking to a woman who was also being convinced she needed to pay them. Of course, I couldn’t warn her.”



Huge Healthy Pines in Danger from PG&E

By Cassandra Duggan

Kensington has long been a gorgeous and shady haven, beautified and cooled by the many lovely tall trees that bring privacy and majesty to its neighborhoods. Unfortu-nately that seems to be changing.

About a month ago, a few residents on Berkeley Park Boulevard were informed that PG&E planned to cut about twenty large trees within a woodsy property belonging to East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), because the trees are within thirty feet of a very small PG&E substation (approx. 5’x7’) located on EBMUD’s property. PG&E is of course embattled because of the recent California fires, so the agency has increased perim-eters around their equipment. The trees in PG&E’s crosshairs include a stand of four enormous and beautiful mature Monterey pines, home to hawks and other species. These trees are three to four feet in diameter and very tall. Other trees that are targeted include live oaks and deodar cedars.

Meanwhile, EBMUD is in the process of replacing a large structure on the same site, and has already cut upwards of forty trees, so the community is up in arms that PG&E now wishes to cut more, especially these extremely large and beautiful Monterey pines, visible from miles around. Tree cutting done by EBMUD last fall resulted in erosion and the creation of a new streambed during the winter rains, which flooded Coventry Road’s sidewalk several times. Erosion and wildlife habitat destruction go hand-in-hand with the cutting of healthy trees.

To make matters worse, about eight months ago, this community lost five other historic trees in Kensington’s downtown area. After one of those trees fell during a rain storm, a Kensington official (whose judgment has been questioned) ordered the instantaneous cutting of all other trees on the same triangle of public land at the top of Coventry Road, which shocked and dismayed many residents. That formerly beautiful tree-shaded corner now appears blasted—leveled and covered entirely with wood chips, with three scrawny young trees surrounded by wire mesh.

In addition, at Sunset View Cemetery nearby, large trees are also being cut frequently. Last fall, they cut two large trees that were the night roosting place for wild turkeys. Within the last month, they removed the only remaining tree from a large ugly empty lot across from their entrance. Thus, the prospect of PG&E cutting down even more of our most large and beautiful trees has many Kensington residents very upset.

An impromptu meeting was held about the tree-cutting a month ago, between PG&E and residents near the EBMUD property. At that time, PG&E had planned to cut the trees immediately, but residents were able to persuade them to postpone the cutting. Residents asked for EBMUD to also be involved in the process, and to hold a public meeting for the community. Residents suggested the building of a firewall around the substation, or just clearing the area of underbrush and limbing the trees up.

PG&E then scheduled a public meeting held on Thursday, August 15. Sadly, residents were told at this meeting that PG&E had not considered the idea of a firewall at all, and still had intentions to cut at least one of the enormous pine trees and ten to fifteen oaks, cedars and other trees nearby. Residents requested that PG&E seek the counsel of its CEO, and consider the firewall idea or move the substation to an area without trees within the EBMUD property. Residents requested another meeting, which is to be announced.

In this time of global warming, it behooves all of us to think well before removing more trees from urban communities—especially large, historic and beautiful trees that create habitats for hawks, deer, squirrels, other birds, and rodents. We are destroying these animals’ habitat.

Many residents have already seen a huge influx of rodents, fleeing from the EBMUD territory due to the tree-cutting and construction that has been happening there for six months. If PG&E is now allowed to lay waste to one of the few remaining acres of woodland in the EBMUD territory, residents can expect more rodents and further destruction of their homes and yards. Wouldn’t it be smarter to preserve what few wild urban areas we have left?

Clearly, at issue here is the question of fire safety versus maintaining a judicious amount of historic and beautiful greenery in our communities. In our panic about the increased California fire danger caused by climate change, let us not eradicate the beau-tiful natural resources that make our cities humane. Trees like these take a century to grow. Much research has been done about the positive effects of greenery in cities. Let us not let the pendulum swing too far, lest our urbanized children grow up with no appreciation of nature whatsoever. This planet will not be saved by people who have no understanding of natural science.

Residents who are interested in helping to save these trees are invited to weekly public meetings to be held on Tuesdays at 6:30pm, starting August 27, on the sidewalk next to the trees, which stand opposite 307 Berkeley Park Blvd. Please bring picket signs and songs to sing about trees! If you wish to email PG&E, contact Chanell Robinson at C7ML@PG&E.com. The EBMUD Community Affairs person to contact is Sharla Sul-livan at sharla.sullivan@ebmud.com.





KEF’s Garden Party Kicks Off Fundraising

By Joy Dey and Brenda Lee

Preparations are underway for the annual Garden Party, to be held Saturday, November 2, at the Richmond Country Club. The party raises funds for the Kensington Education Fund (KEF), which supports Kensington Hilltop Elementary.

"The Garden Party is truly a community event that brings together parents of Kensington students and members of the surrounding community for a mutual goal," says KEF President Kerry Sylvester. "This one event raises forty percent of the funds that are used to provide students with hands-on essentials that the school district has cut." These include computer classes, a science lab, a PE curriculum, art and music classes, and a library that's open every day. "The parents of Kensington students are committed to providing their kids with a solid educational foundation," Sylvester continues. "Doing so sets each child up for long-term success that not only provides personal benefit, but that elevates their community as well." KEF also supports every teacher at Hilltop with a budget to supplement the cost of classroom supplies.

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

How can you get involved? The Garden Party Committee is actively seeking donations for live and silent auctions. Individuals and local businesses donate all kinds of goods and services to the auction: beauty treatments, exercise classes, home services, movie passes, restaurant meals, and gift certificates. Stays at a family vacation home or time-share are always a big hit, as are unique experiences like a day of sailing on the bay.

Not only does your donation support a great cause, it’s also an effective way to get the word out about what your business has to offer. To contribute, email kefgardenpartyauction@gmail.com or go to kensington.schoolauktion.net/gp2019/. Donations will be gratefully accepted until October 4.

You can also give your business greater visibility by sponsoring the Garden Party! Ruth Frassetto of the Grubb Company, Arlington Wine & Spirits, Mechanics Bank, Derek Suring of New Leaf Realty, El Cerrito Martial Arts, Kensington Vet, Hibser Yam-auchi, Marvin Gardens, Josh Dickinson of Zip Code East Bay, and Dr. Nick Ching of Children's Dentistry have been key supporters of the Garden Party for years. We'd also like to thank our newest supporter, the Richmond Country Club.

Another way to show your support is to buy a ticket and join the party! Buy tickets at www.kensingtonhilltop.org/gardenparty and enjoy an evening with good friends and good food, try your luck at winning great prizes, and dance the night away to live music.

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Offered at \$1,028,000



1145 ARLINGTON BLVD, EL CERRITO
Just Sold! All on one level modern updated CA Ranch style home. Walls of glass, updated kitchen facing garden, open dining room and spacious living room.
Originally offered at \$1,198,000



1020 VILLA NUEVA, EL CERRITO
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1 HIGHLAND BLVD, KENSINGTON
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Richmond, CA 94806

FOR EVENT INFORMATION
Visit our event website
kensingtonhilltop.org/gardenparty



Our thanks to Ruth Frassetto & Grubb Co. Realtors for their generous support!



Photo: Nan Phelps Photography

Let There Be Lights!

By Camden Richards

The Colusa Circle Merchants Association (CCMA) is pleased to announce that the Light Up Colusa Circle campaign achieved its fundraising goal. With the help of neighbors and local businesses, CCMA raised more than \$20,000. Funds collected through this effort will bring electricity to the neighborhood’s community anchor, Colusa Circle. Electrical service will extend to the median, powering year-round landscape lighting in partnership with the Kensington Improvement Club and the tree lighting during the holiday season.

The final fundraising goal was reached through an anonymous donation made in Julie Moore’s name. Moore, owner of the Circle Salon, a Colusa Circle mainstay, passed away unexpectedly in March. In total, Julie’s friends and relatives donated more than \$6000 to the effort in her name. A plaque of remembrance will be placed in the median in her honor.

CCMA has contracted with PG&E and an electrician; construction and installation is underway and will proceed throughout the summer. The merchants association would like to extend a huge thank you to all donors. We look forward to sharing light with the entire Colusa Circle community for years to come. For more information about this project or other upcoming community events, visit ColusaCircleMerchants.org.

A Timely Message from Battalion Chief Joseph Grupalo

Diablo Winds? Take a Hike

A Diablo wind event is an extreme fire hazard condition. (Those of you from Southern California know of these hot winds, which usually occur in the fall, when vegetation is crispy, as Santa Ana winds.) These winds only happen a few times a year.

When they do occur, consider simply packing up and moving out of the area for a few days. Use this as an excuse to visit friends or family until the weather changes.

There is a high probability that PG&E will shut off the power anyway. This is more incentive to relocate until the threat has passed.

Those who would have difficulty evacuating or moving pets and people on crowded roads are especially encouraged to take this step. Remember, Diablo winds are infrequent—and if you are out of the area, your safety is assured.





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Bring a Blanket for KCC’s Free Family Movie Night

By Anne Forrest

The Kensington Community Council (KCC) is proud to present Disney-Pixar’s Incredibles 2 at this year’s family movie night on Saturday, September 14. Movie night is sponsored by Marvin Gardens Real Estate and Mechanics Bank. The movie will start at 7:30pm (dusk), but we’re encouraging families to come at 6 with a picnic dinner—or you can purchase food at the show and join neighbors and friends for the fun.

Bring everything you’ll need to be comfortable in the evening air, especially jackets, blankets, and beach chairs. KCC will be selling hot dog or sausage dinners, popcorn, movie candy, bottled water, and coffee or hot chocolate. A raffle will be held before the movie with fun and delicious prizes. Raffle tickets, which help pay for the event, will be sold at the KCC office from September 9-14 at five tickets for \$5 or twelve tickets for \$10. For more information, call the KCC office at 525-0292.

Bring Your Questions to the KIC Town Hall

By Linda Lipscomb

The Kensington Improvement Club’s annual Town Hall and meeting will be held Saturday morning, September 28 in the Social Hall of the Arlington Community Church at 52 Arlington Ave. After a brief meeting of KIC members, representatives will speak and take brief questions. This year’s speakers include Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, KPCCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros, Interim Police Chief Rickey Hull, and El Cerrito Fire Chief Michael Pigoni. Representatives from the Kensington Municipal Advisory Council, the Kensington Community Council, and the Kensington Library have also been invited to address the group. Coffee and treats will be served at 9am, and the program begins at 9:30.

Founded in 1921, KIC has been a vital public advocate for our community, working on projects of public improvement for Kensington. This year, KIC contributed \$10,000 toward the Community Center remodel and provided \$2,000 toward the Colusa Circle electricity and lighting project. Board members also worked on getting new “Welcome to Kensington” road signs and on the design for a new public kiosk at Colusa Circle. Projects also included the selection of new trashcans for public areas, monitoring public landscaping, and managing the kiosk and signboard on Arlington Avenue.

KIC has spearheaded volunteer cleanup efforts for the Kensington paths. KIC has long advocated for public ownership of the paths, which are a significant historical recreational asset. The paths also provide ingress and egress in case of an emergency. KIC also wrote and published the book, Kensington, Past and Present, which provides an in-depth historical analysis of our community and its governmental structure. The updated Centennial edition will be available at the meeting at a discounted price of \$10 for KIC members. (KIC annual dues are only \$5!)

The KIC Town Hall is a popular event and an informal setting for citizens to meet with their local representatives and community boards. All Kensington residents are invited to the Town Hall meeting, and there is no charge. KIC will provide coffee and light refreshments, so come early and meet your neighbors!

With the help of KCC, childcare for kids 3 years and older will be provided in the Church Fireside Room to help parents attend this important meeting. The number to call to reserve a childcare spot is (510) 525-0292 and 24-hour advance notice is required. We hope to see you there!

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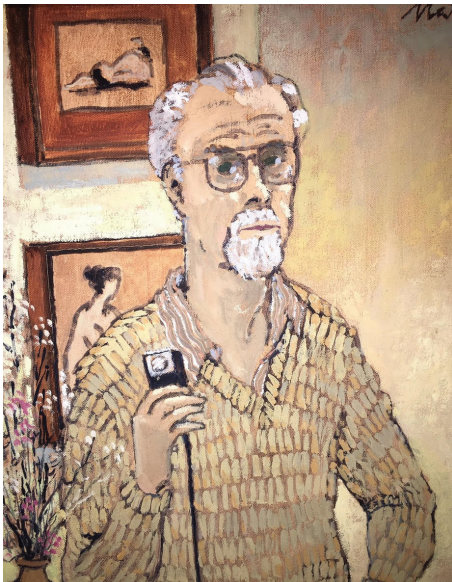
Kensington Calendar

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

Ongoing:
Jazzercise with Kevin Knickerbocker
Mondays-Fridays, 9am \$20 class or \$55 unlimited per month. ACC.
Kundalini Meditation, Mondays, 7-8 pm, (1st-timers: req'd intro by appt at 6:30. RSVP amrita@heartofc.org). \$15 per class, \$10 sr/std. ACC.
Mindful Yoga with Wendy Beckerman
Tuesdays, 9:15am, bring yoga mat. \$18 drop-in or discount for series. ACC.
Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Building E at the park, \$10
Israeli Folk Dance Wednesdays, \$6, lessons/beginners 8pm, request dance party starts at 9pm. ACC.
Tai Chi Chuan Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Building E at the park, \$10

September Events
Sept 1 Bill Garrett, retired Professor of Philosophy and Religion. "The Enemy of the People," UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
September 3, 10, 17 & 24 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
September 4 Kensington Unit of the League of Women Voters meet at 1:15pm at 44 Beverly Road to discuss

local issues. RSVP 510-524-6071.
September 5, 12, 19 & 26 Baby & Toddler Storytime Stories, songs, puppets, scarves, shaky eggs, and loads of fun! Kensington Library, Two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free.
September 9 Kensington Library Knitting Club "The Castoffs" All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. We will provide support, encouragement and help. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. 6:30pm. Free.



September 15 Art Exhibit and Reception celebrating the work of longtime Kensington resident Rip Matteson. Paintings, drawings and cartoons will be exhibited. 683 Oberlin Ave., 2-5pm.
Sept 15 Rev. Christian Schmidt, co-minister of UUCB since 2016, will explore the intersection of religion, the public sphere, and government in "Church/

State/Politics." As campaigns begin (already!) to ramp up for the 2020 elections, many of us are concerned about politics. Longstanding law has required religious organizations to be careful about how they interact with the elections process, but it's never been more important for us to engage. We'll talk about how we can engage politically and why we must! UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
September 16 Kensington Library Movie: *Pick of the Litter* Co-directors Dana Nachman and Don Hardy's "dogumentary" follows a litter of five puppies as they embark on an intensive training process to become guide dogs for the blind. Over the course of their first two years of life, each dog's ability to protect a blind human is rigorously refined by professional guide dog mobility instructors. However, only a select few will make the final cut! 6:30pm Free.
September 21 Tech Trek Camp Meet our Tech Trek campers who will talk at the AAUW West Contra Costa Branch meeting about their experience this summer at the Tech Trek Science and Math camp. Christ Lutheran Church, 780 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito. 10am. Free. All are welcome.
Sept 22 James O'Hara is a former math instructor, massage instructor, dream worker, and a Brother in a Catholic religious order for 30 years. He is the author of a book about his experiences living in India and Nepal for seven years, where he came to question his vows and beliefs and left the Brotherhood and the Church. Jim is currently writing a second book and will talk

about the topic of his book: *Accidental Soul Work*. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
September 23 Make a collage! Cut out your favorite images from a variety of magazines and arrange and glue them to a poster board. Pick a theme such as "my summer," animals, horses, motorcycles or anything else you'd like. Probably best for ages 5 and up. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
September 23 Kensington Library Book Club Discussion of *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay* by Elena Ferrante. Open to all. 6:30pm. Free.
September 28 Kensington Improvement Club (KIC) Annual Town Hall & Membership Meeting. Featuring local governmental and community board speakers with updates affecting Kensington. Coffee & refreshments. Call 24 hours in advance for childcare provided by KCC: 510-525-0292, ACC, 9-noon. Free.
Sept 29 Rev. Dr. Jay Atkinson, Minister Emeritus, UU Church of Studio City; writer and teacher. Rev. Atkinson will discuss "Living Agnostically." UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
September 30 Where Have All the Butterflies Gone? Are butterflies disappearing? Is the insect apocalypse really happening? Is planting milkweed enough? Learn about the state of butterflies with Arthur Shapiro, a distinguished professor of evolution and ecology at UC Davis, who has been monitoring butterflies in north-central California for 47 years. For teens and adults. Kensington Library 6:30pm. Free.

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K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP

Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program



Fall KASEP

Our Fall KASEP brochures will go home in student backpacks the 2nd week of school, August 26th - 30 and our website will be updated with the Fall schedule and classes by late August.

www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org

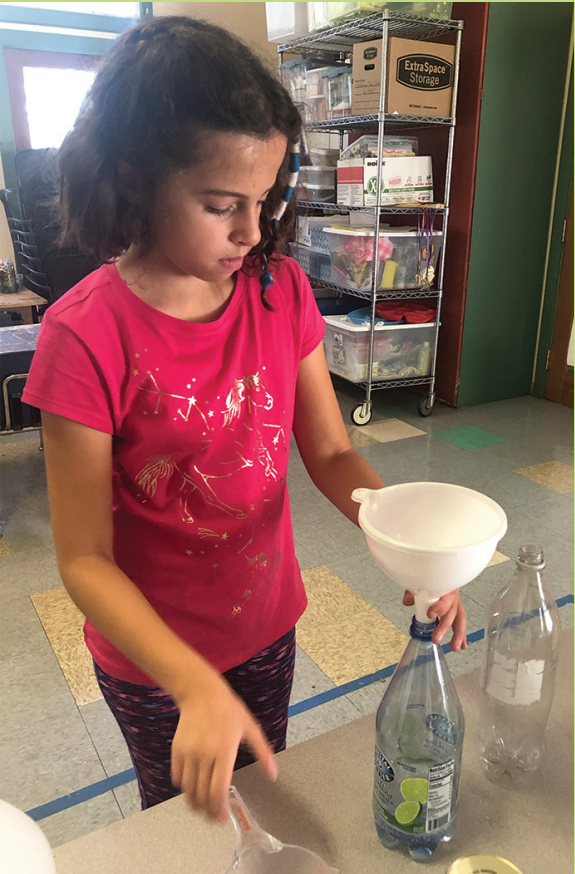
Please make sure you already have an account created BEFORE September 10th because some classes fill up in the first 5-10 minutes of registration. If you've forgotten your password, please request a new one and do NOT create a new account. Families with multiple accounts create accounting woes. Our office is always open on Registration nights to help families.

Important Dates for Fall 2019

- Tuesday, September 10th Fall KASEP Registration - 7:00pm for Kindergartners and 7:30pm for Gr. 1-6
- KCC office will be closed from August 19 - September 2nd
- Website will be updated by late-August with Fall classes
- Saturday, September 14nd KCC Family Movie Night

Farewell KCC Summer Camp 2019

Thank you families for your support of the KCC Summer Camp Program. A special shout-out to this year's new director Marshall Doty and Hannah Parks as head counselor. We had an outstanding staff of college age, recent high school graduates, and high school students. We can't forget about CIT's--our next generation of awesome counselors! They each made the summer full of fun, magic and memories. The campers enjoyed a smooth running camp by this dedicated staff. We had a great time!



Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, RECREATION BUILDING - ROOM A \$10* New location due to the community center construction

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

For further information, contact Nobuo at: nnishi50@gmail.com

Tai Chi Chuan

Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, RECREATION BUILDING ROOM A, \$10

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

KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg. E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccrec@yahoo.com, or call 525-0292. M-F, 1:00-5pm.



Letters...from page 2

Is Kensington Safe Because of our Police Force?

Dear Editor:

Pundits for the police status quo often argue scare messaging at meetings of the KPPCSD that Kensington is safe because of our police force, and to emphasize their point they compare our crime statistics with those of neighboring Berkeley, El Cerrito, Albany, and Richmond. While this comparison may be comforting to these folks, the comparisons are bogus: our neighboring communities are much larger and have a diverse economic, educational, and racial makeup with attendant social and crime problems. In contrast, Kensington is an affluent community nestled away from these socioeconomic problems; it has a high level of education and is more comparable to the hill areas of Berkeley or El Cerrito where crime statistics are also low.

Furthermore, it is interesting that despite our police force operating at between sixty to eighty percent of staffing (ten officers max) for several years, our crime statistics remained low. Additionally, the Matrix analysis of the KPD found that the KPD was far below best practices and that it had eighty percent proactive time that could be spent on patrol and other activities that did not occur.

A meaningful analysis parse out the factors that contribute to crime rates in these different areas—to make gross comparisons with neighboring communities as entities is ignorant and designed to mislead the voting public as the KPPCSD attempts to fix the dysfunctional KPD (see www.fixourKPD.org). On the bright side, I was pleased that these pundits didn’t include San Quentin in their bogus comparison—it showed a modicum of honesty.

Andrew Paul Gutierrez

Board Ignores Public Input

To the Editor,

As someone who has been attending KPPCSD board meetings periodically for the last year, I am baffled by several pressing questions, which the board never seems to address.

First, why is the board refusing to cooperate with the fire district to explore reasonable spots for a new Public Safety Building? Why does the board continue to postpone recruiting and hiring a police chief? How many lawsuits against Kensington involve Rickey Hull?

Although I have posed many of these questions (and others) in the public comment section of the meeting, the board seems to ignore any public input. The only way to get answers is to go through the formal process outlined in the Public Records Act, which makes more work for district staff.

I look forward to a time when involved residents can participate in our district meetings in a meaningful way.

Meryl Natchez

New Website Seeks Participants

Dear Editor:

Our KPPCSD board has made commendable progress towards stabilizing and professionalizing the Kensington Police Department. They’ve worked hard to clean it up after years of turmoil and scandal.

The board has demonstrated a commitment to fiscal responsibility and public safety. They’ve taken bold action to address taxpayers’ exposure to the risks and liabilities inherent in a small, in-house police force. They’ve pushed through reforms despite strong resistance to change and restrictive laws governing officer employment and confidentiality.

The next step in reform is critical for our community. The board has sent out an RFP for police services to enable a decision: Do we keep the department as it is? Do we contract out policing as we do our fire services? Or do we have a hybrid: keeping some services in-house and contracting out others?

After years of claims and counter-claims about Kensington’s options, we will finally have facts to consider. Facts about costs, service providers, risks and benefits.

Our best decisions will be made if we are open-minded, objective and fully informed. With this goal in mind, FixOurKPD is a grassroots group in Kensington seeking to reform and professionalize police services to meet our public safety needs. Our approach is data-driven, collaborative and transparent.

Our website provides analysis, investigation, history and commentary. It links you to Kensington policing in the news. Importantly, it offers ways for you to take action and participate in this important community decision. Please visit us and subscribe - Fix-OurKPD.org

Paula Black

Farcical Board Meetings

Dear Editor:

Attending meetings of local governing bodies is one way to get to know one’s community, especially if one is a newcomer. I have now attended quite a few Kensington police board meetings and observed what best can be described as farcical dysfunction at play.

For example, at a recent meeting there was heated rhetoric about the current interim chief of police, Rickey Hull, and his qualifications to continue in that capacity. Unfortunately, KPPCSD's efforts to recruit a retired chief to serve as Kensington’s part-time chief have not been fruitful, and RFPs sent out to four jurisdictions for bids on providing contract police services have received replies from just two that were "not interested." So as the district awaits a suitor, another short three-month extension of I-COP Hull's contract seems in order.

It is my understanding that Hull has served as I-COP for much of the time since the last chief left some years ago and was effectively “assistant to the chief” for many years prior to that. But it seems that he has not passed a proper background check, although he is a twenty-year veteran of the small KPD.

The district recently updated its employee job descriptions. The chief serves at the direction and pleasure of the general manager, and one unwritten duty seems to be to care for legal counsel’s dog while she presides at the dais during board meetings. I suppose that might be considered financially expedient since she is paid \$150-200 per hour, and his salary comes to about one third that—and he cannot even get overtime for attending the evening meetings.

Dr. John Beheathland

DOA

Dear Editor:

The Declination written by Sheriff-Coroner David Livingston, Contra County Sher-

iff’s Department, to our Kensington Police Protection Community Services District’s Request for Proposals (RFP) is a clear indictment of our KPPCSD and all Kensington.

In his letter, Livingston mentions the April 25 board meeting. At this meeting, the board perpetuates the misconception that the purpose of the RFP is to gather information. This is wrong! The board continually describes a Request for Information (RFI) but presents it as an RFP. Who would take Kensington seriously if we can’t even master Business 101? Is the KPPCSD playing a shell game with the people of Kensington? With Contra Costa County? I wonder what the cc’d Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors are thinking.

The arrogance of this Lookie-Loo board asking the Sheriff’s office to invest valuable resources into drafting a formal proposal makes my head explode. Especially after it’s been publicly stated by our general manager that we have no intention of contracting with the Sheriff’s Office. Burn a few bridges, why don’t you? Now we have articles in the *Chronicle* advocating giving control of the Fire Department to this clown car through consolidation.

Sheriff-Coroner Livingston makes it clear that one of the reasons the Sheriff’s office will not present a proposal is because the RFP does not discuss the Dorroh Ordinance (a law requiring a vote on contracting services). Politics aside, a potential vote nullifying a contract is vital information to potential contracting partners. To not include it in the RFP is deceptive. It’s like forgetting to mention the belfry has bats to a potential home-buyer.

The Sheriff-Coroner took the pulse of the KPPCSD and declared Kensington Dead on Arrival.

Kevin Fitzsimmons

Recognizing Racism

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my concern about racism at KPPCSD meetings. At the July 11 KPPCSD board meeting, during a discussion about making a correction to an incomplete sentence in the audit proposal from Lamorena & Chang, CPA, Rachelle Sherris-Watt postulated, “...perhaps the writer’s first language was not English?” When some in attendance protested, she chastised them, stating, “...we want to be kind and aware.”

This is racist because her statement assumes that Asian Americans are foreigners. Would she make a similar assumption if the proposal were written by a white person? Would she make these comments if the accountant’s last name were Smith?

Her use of “we” to describe Kensingtonians in this context presupposes that “we” are all born in the US and white. This comment erases and marginalizes Asian American residents.

Stating “we want to be kind and aware” implies that Asian Americans are somehow less intelligent or competent than white people. It implies we need the charity of enlightened white people to succeed.

Why does board president Eileen Nottoli allow blatant racism and paternalism at board meetings to go unaddressed? Considering the president’s abuse of the term, “Immaculate Conception” (a term of significance to Catholics), I guess she wouldn’t recognize racism when she sees it.

In light of recent attacks on immigrants nationally, it’s frightening to see similar racist attitudes locally.

Khoi Dang

Slow Start to Contracting RFPs

By Linnea Due

During the third week of July, the KPPCSD sent out requests for proposals to four agencies: the county sheriff, Berkeley’s police department, El Cerrito PD, and Albany PD. The parameters were open-ended and might range from fully contracting out Kensington’s police department to contracting out only the evidence room, for example. The district already contracts out dispatch, as it has for many years.

So far only two agencies have responded, both negatively. Berkeley PD said that after internal discussion, it was not in a position “to create a response”; Sheriff-Coroner David Livingston wrote in a letter to KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros that “It is my view that responding to the RFP is not advisable at this time.” Livingston said that he had watched a board meeting in April where RFPs were discussed and had received a letter from two residents noting that a 2009 ordinance mandating voter approval of contracting out Kensington’s PD had not been disclosed in the RFP.

The legality of that ordinance is a matter of controversy, but of greater note is that Livingston copied the letter to all county board of supervisors and to the police chiefs of the other three agencies.

Explained Paul Dorroh, one of the residents who sent the letter to Livingston: “Requests to include a disclosure of the existence of the ordinance were made during public comments at the board meeting and in a follow-up email to Matrix. When we learned that the final version of the RFP was silent on the ordinance, we felt that in fairness to Kensington and the potential contracting agencies it needed to be brought to their attention. Hiding such a fundamental issue until after an agency had spent significant time and resources responding to the RFP would be a poor way to start a relationship with a police services provider.”

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Important Public Meeting November 16

Fire Board Directors Explain Decision to Renovate PSB

By Linnea Due

At the August 14 Kensington Fire Protection District board meeting, Public Safety Building committee board members Don Dommer and Larry Nagel announced that architects had advised the committee that because of California and ADA code requirements, there would likely not be room for the Kensington Police Department in a renovated building. On September 11, at the fire board meeting, the architects will present the space analysis for board review. The parallel analysis to determine whether the building can be retrofitted to meet essential services seismic safety standards was not yet complete as of the August 14 meeting. Police board director Rachelle Sherris-Watt explained that the board had discussed options to house the police elsewhere in Kensington and said that even if the department were partially or fully contracted out to another agency, Kensington’s police force would still be housed in Kensington.

At the November 16 fire board meeting at the Arlington Community Church, board directors will present to the community the full seismic and space analysis of renovating the existing building and the conclusions the board has reached. Directors will discuss other sites and why those have not been considered. Police board directors will talk about their plans to house the police in another location and how finances played a role in their decision not to participate in constructing a new Public Safety Building. If feasible, renovations would be substantially less costly than constructing a new building: starting at \$2-2.5 million opposed to \$10-12 million for a new building.

Prior to the November 16 meeting, the fire board will hold an open house at the Public Safety Building to demonstrate the constraints that the architects—and the firefighters—have worked with. That date is tentatively set for November 2.

Questions and concerns from the audience will be addressed at the November 16 meeting. Please put it on your calendar.

The October issue of the *Outlook* will contain stories on the Public Safety Building by both fire board and police board directors.



Popular Firefighter Downed by Stroke

By Janice Kosel

Captain Joe Gagne, a longtime firefighter assigned to the Kensington fire station, recently suffered a serious stroke. Joe is our primary drone pilot. And he is an extraordinarily sweet guy. Joe is working hard on his rehabilitation and making a good recovery. He is only 44.

If you would like to send him your best wishes, please do so at 217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707. If you would like to make a contribution, you may do so at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/captain-Gagne-strong>

Town Meetings

KCC-Sept.9, Kensington Community Council, 6:30pm. 525-0292 Building E
KPSC-Sept.9, Kensington Public Safety Council Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness 2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165

KARO/ECHO-New time, new location! Sept.9 Amateur Radio Operators, 2nd Mondays, 7pm. Now at Arlington Clubhouse next to Arlington Park in El Cerrito 524-9815



KFPD-Sept.11, Fire Protection District 2nd Wed., 7pm Building E, 527-8395

KIC-Sept. 23, Kensington Improvement Club 4th Mondays, 7:30. 524-

7415
KPPCSD-Sept.12, Sept. 26, Police Protection and Community Services District 7:30pm. ACC. Check website for updates 526-4141

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Funds collected through this effort will extend electrical service to the Colusa Circle median, powering landscape lighting in partnership with the KIC and the holiday season tree lighting.

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Brown pelicans are a common sight along East Bay shorelines—but no less magnificent for their prevalence. Photo by Ford Whitefield-Brewer.



Lewis Corriea, who built the much improved steps from the Community Center to the parking lot, was awarded his Eagle Scout rank in June.



El Cerrito High School graduate Cian Chee will attend UC Santa Cruz this fall.



Live Music at Raxakoul

By Keiki Fujita

Please come join us up on the Arlington for our next CommUniTea Neighborhood Tea Time & Talk, coming up on September 21! Every month, Mairie Raxakoul of Raxakoul Coffee and Cheese and I host a monthly gathering for community members to get to know and uplift one another, find out what’s happening in town, and get to know Raxakoul’s shop as an upbeat place to meet and hang out.

CommUniTea is usually held on the third Saturday of each month (subject to change) from 4- 5pm. We taste teas and Mairie generously puts out a beautiful array of treats that feature products from the store, new items, and those on sale.

We want to thank everyone in the community, as we have been successfully fundraising for new trash and recycle bins out front of the store, so we can beautify the area for all. More news on that coming up!

Local musicians have generously volunteered to play live music. We feature a different group or individual each month, from 4:30-5:30pm. We’ve been lucky to be inspired by Tim Hampton and the Kensington Jazz Kats as well as Oscar Reynolds, Andean Music. On September 21, we will have Sunanda Gaskins, guitar and vocals, who writes her own uplifting music and also performs covers.

And check this lineup: October 19, guitarist and vocalist Ari Cohen; November 16, Jesse, who plays acoustic guitar in a variety of styles. We also add special guests—and have fun with themes. For example, July was Plastic Free Challenge month, and we are having an artisan trunk show on November 16, featuring one-of-a-kind hats by Lezlie Kinyon of Downtown Alley Hats. If you would like more information and/or to be on our CommUniTea news email list, please email keiki227@gmail.com. See you at the CommUniTea!

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More from the Community Center Groundbreaking



KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros (left) stands with Dave Spath and Lisa Caronna.



KPPCSD director Chris Deppe pours some sparkle. All photos by Mark Altenberg