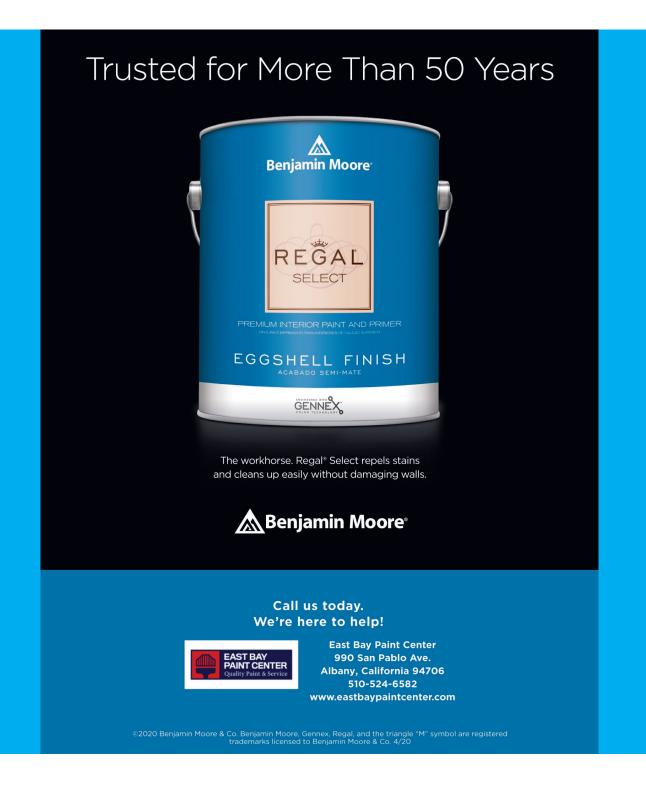
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VOLUME 79 NUMBER 7

Horror Hits Kensington: Toppling Heads, Exploding Bodies, and Plenty of Blood

By Linnea Due

When El Cerrito High shut down for the pandemic in the spring of 2020, junior Jack McDermott figured they'd have at most a few weeks off. Many juniors might spend the time playing video games or texting equally bored pals, but McDermott had a loftier goal.

In the 8th grade, McDermott and fellow Kensington teen Sean Okimoto founded their own production company, Screenager Productions (get it? teenager, screenager). Over the years, they've made several short films. "When the pandemic started, I'd been talking with Sean, and we thought it was time for another big project," McDermott said. "While we were off school, I figured I would have all this time to write a script. I'd really been getting into horror movies. I would watch a horror film a day. I know it sounds cliché, but the idea for *Satan's Servant* came to me one night right before bed."



Thinking he only had a few weeks, McDermott began writing furiously, finishing the script by the end of last May. "It feels so long ago that I was writing it," McDermott recalled. "It was an interesting process. I was thinking about what we could realistically do it at someone's house or at Kensington Hilltop. I knew we could get those locations." McDermott also wrote the script around props. "I tried to stitch together a story using things we could lay our hands on. It turned out having those constraints helped. It made me focus on how to work these weird things into the script. If I'd had unlimited money I wouldn't know where to start writing."

One day, McDermott and Okimoto teamed up with longtime friend and Screenager partner Ethan Gomez-Zahnley to read the script. "We read through it together. And we said, 'You know what? We could make this for a couple thousand."

McDermott admits that at that point, school faded into the background. The three began working more than full-time on the film project. There was a lot to docasting, props, costumes, special effects, scouting exact locations. The three codirectors cast two actors through a casting service, while the rest were drawn from friends and family. Okimoto has acted in all the shorts produced by Screenager, and he is one of several pivotal characters in *Satan's Servant*. His father, Mike Okimoto plays a police officer who, as is the unfortunate fate of many peripheral characters in horror films, gets the axe.

"As we kept working on locations and sets, we were worried about scheduling during the pandemic," McDermott



said. "We didn't want anyone to get sick. Originally we were supposed to start filming in mid-January. But that's right when the spike happened. We pushed it back a month. Everyone was so much more at ease. By then the numbers were going lower, and we had another month to prepare. The script benefited from that extra month."

All the filming took place in February and March, entirely at night and on weekends. "The good thing about filming in Kensington at night is that there weren't too many people out and about," McDermott said. "We told our neighbors

See Horror, page 6

Kensington | Market Update

July 2021 to present



Detached Single Family

3

1,580

Average List Price \$936,000 Average Sq. Ft.

New Listings

9

2,236

Pending Sales
Average List Price
\$1,464,111

Average DOM

Average Sq. Ft.

22

2,250

Closed Sales

Average List Price \$1,358,727 Average Sq. Ft.

Average Sales Price \$1,701,273

Average DOM

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The Proof is in the Numbers

Listing Updates



1300 Linda Vista Drive El Cerrito Hills

To view online visit: 1300lindavista.com Offered at: \$2,688,000.



20 Kerr Avenue Kensington | Pending

To view online visit: 20kerr.com Offered at: \$2.698.000.



834 Craft Avenue El Cerrito Hills

To view online visit 834craft.com Offered at: \$1,025,000.



6851 Snowdon Avenue El Cerrito | Pending

To view on line visit: 6851snowdon.com
Offered at: \$998,000

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Bay Area Green Business - NAIS Model School of the Future - Ashoka Changemaker School US Department of Education Green Ribbon School

PROTEC

PUBLIC SAFETY REMINDER

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM WILDFIRE SMOKE.

When wildfires create ash and smoky conditions, it's important to reduce exposure. Wildfire smoke irritates your eyes, nose, throat and lungs. It can contain dangerous substances including ultra-fine particles and toxic chemical residues from burning structures. Stay inside as much as possible. If outside, wear a well-fitted respirator (e.g. N95 or P100) and avoid strenuous activities. Use high-efficiency filters (HEPA) with central air and consider buying an air purifier. Monitor the air quality index (AQI) (purpleair.com).

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.

O C T O B E R DEADLINES

Advertising Deadline SEPT. 8 Editorial Deadline SEPT. 10

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

Use one space, not two, after all periods.

O U T L O O K

LINNEA DUE

ADVERTISING MANAGER
ALMA KEY

PUBLISHER
KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707.

Thank you!

Letters to the Editor

Thanks to Board, KPD Now a Quality Department Dear Editor:

In 2016, progressive members of the KPPCSD board began working to transform the chronic problems of the Kensington Police Department. Members of the board focused on working to put in place a series of important organizational and policy changes.

The first important change was eliminating a major conflict of interest by splitting the position of general manager from the chief of police. The board then obtained an assessment from the Matrix Group outlining the current department status and future needs. Steve Simpkins was hired in 2019 as an interim chief based on his experience as a turnaround specialist. He identified, assessed, and remediated long-standing problems with KPD leadership, discipline, and operations.

In 2020, the board hired Interim chief Walt Schuld to continue upgrading the department and to recruit staff and a permanent chief. Schuld put in place a series of performance standards for officers and addressed community issues such as traffic management, emergency evacuation, and de-escalation techniques. Using his network of law enforcement contacts, he provided the board with several viable candidates for a permanent chief of police.

Walt Schuld recommended that then-captain Mike Gancasz be promoted to permanent chief of police. Indicating how the department culture has changed, this year to date the KPD has received no complaints from the public and no major legal expenses were incurred as a result of officer behavior. Equally important, officers who could not comply with the new department professional standards are no longer on the force.

The current KPPCSD board members are to be commended for their successful efforts to improving the KPD. We must all continue to be engaged with the KPD if we are to maintain quality services and a motivated staff.

John Gaccione

Kensington Stellar Recyclers, Bay View Not

Dear Editor:

In 2019, KPPCSD replaced the five trash cans in the Arlington and Colusa shopping areas with ones of a better design, but it chose not to provide any for recycling—except it later decided on one, which was requested by Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese and partially paid for by contributions from customers. The reason given was that people put contaminated material in public recycling cans, which "leads to rejecting the entire recycling load" (i.e., truck load, including that from residents).

Kensington residents seem to know what should not go into recycling containers because since 2017, when Bay View started reporting information to the district, only 15 residential containers have been tagged for contamination—out of over 400,000 pickups. Apparently, it's people from other places that are causing the problem, and maybe Kensington should be "gated" with restricted access. Or possibly some signage might help, like "Please Recycle Right: No liquids and food waste, soiled paper and plastic, face masks, diapers, dog poop."

On a related note: Bay View's crew has been observed repeatedly combining material from all of the recycling cans in Kensington Park with that from the garbage cans. And it has been noted in residential areas as well. KPPCSD should not plan to require residents to pay higher rates so that food waste is kept out of landfill and yet allow Bay View to dump potentially recyclable materials in landfill without justification and approval.

A. Stevens Delk

Eighteen-inch High Trees?

Dear Editor:

I am a Kensington homeowner, and I was reading the www.Kensingtonfire.org/El Cerrito Fire Hazard Reduction Checklist https://www.el-cerrito.org/DocumentCenter/ View/14249/El-Cerrito-checklist, and an item under their Zone 2 requirements confused me. The Zone 2 requirements say: "All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground." However, in the picture titled "Defensible Space Zones," there appear to be normal-sized trees in Zone 2, much taller than 18 inches.

So are trees considered "fire hazardous vegetation" by those who wrote this document? According to the dictionary, "vegetation" certainly does include trees. So do they want us to cut our trees down to 18 inches? I don't think so. I think they meant shrubs, not trees. Healthy shade trees cool down our cities, hold moisture, create micro-climates that decrease wind and lower temperatures, anchor healthy topsoil, and may be more resistant to fire than our houses—especially live oaks which are common around here (I have two huge beautiful oaks on my property—in Zone 1, happily!). Unfortunately, folks reading these guidelines may cut all their healthy trees in Zone 2 to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground.

I wrote to the KFPD board of directors and staff to ask about this. Johnny Valenzuela, their emergency preparedness coordinator, wrote me back, but they have not yet changed this guideline. It seems like a good idea to revise this checklist soon, or we could be losing helpful healthy beautiful shade trees in Kensington and El Cerrito.

C. Duggan

School Supplies to Navajo Nation

Dear Editor:

Girl Scout Troop 30643 would like to thank all the donors who helped by taking their time to contribute to our school supplies drive. Thanks to your help, we received over 100 pounds of school supplies and were able to give Nenahnezad Community School, as requested, 58 backpacks full of pencils, crayons, glue, pens and highlighters, provide 200 students writing paper for the year and give every teacher dry erase markers for their classrooms.

We couldn't have done it without Eric Stephens, Eileen Nottoli, Mary Hammond, Loretta McNulty, Alan Stanek, Marcia Sherris, Anne Forrest, and the Corriea family. We deeply appreciate the generosity of Jacquelin Karkazis and the late Sharon Lazaneo, whose love of New Mexico will help children learn.

A special thanks to Marie and Raxakoul Coffee and Cheese and the Kensington Veterinary Hospital, for hosting collection boxes. We are excited to start sending out the supplies to the students! Thank you for your wonderful support!

Girl Scout Troop 30643, Lillian J, Eleanor PC, Flora SW, Guinevere T

Wily Coyotes Dear Editor:

Along with other towns, Kensington is having an increasing number of contacts with coyotes, from sightings to pet attacks. Some are magical, a silhouette of a coyote in the mist on the hill. It's poetic until a few "delinquent" coyotes result in a sorrowful event.

Without research on sightings, it is hard to tell what is going on. Coyotes are becoming habituated to humans and more threatening, mostly in the hills and now in the flats. UC Davis Pest Management Guidelines describes this "predictable pattern of change." When it reaches the point where pets are being attacked or coyotes are seen in neighborhoods in early morning or late afternoon, area-wide corrective actions are recommended to prevent an escalation to attacks on humans. If coyotes are seen near your home, teach your children to identify them, recognize the potential for danger, and know what to do if they come in contact with a coyote.

The seven signs of increasing aggressive behavior are as follows: increase in coyotes on streets and yards at night; increase in coyotes approaching adults and or taking pets at night; coyotes on streets, and in parks and yards, in early morning/late afternoon; coyotes chasing or taking pets in daytime; coyotes attacking and taking pets on leash

See Letters, page 10



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Get Prepared this September

By Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

The Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) encourages all residents to participate in September's National Preparedness Month. Throughout the month of September, opportunities and resources to improve emergency preparedness will be promoted through print, online, and in person. Each week, a specific focus will be placed on various topics related to the risks facing Kensington and how to proactively respond.

Kensington's campaign prioritizes the concerns of a wildfire driven by a Diablo Wind Event (DWE). As a wildfire could likely trigger a community evacuation, this campaign includes a Communication Toolkit specific to Kensington, which will improve the community's emergency response. You should have received a publication containing the toolkit, which was mailed to all residents to arrive late August. If it hasn't arrived yet, keep checking your mailbox.

September's campaign is primarily informational, to help residents plan and prepare for a wildfire and/or evacuation. CERT block coordinators will participate, and expect to see banners and an information booth at the Farmers' Market. You can also find information at Kensington's markets and the Exxon station on the Arlington.

A challenge that we all face is to break through habits. You may find benefits in

changing certain habits during Diablo Wind Events, for example, backing into your driveway from the street so you're facing forward if you need to exit quickly. Also, staging items near an exit, such as a pet carrier and leash to efficiently evacuate with your pet without having to scramble. Now is a great time to plan for all those things you won't have time to do during an emergency.



KFPD directors strongly urge residents to visit www.cwsalerts.com to register their contact information. Registration enables residents to receive emergency notifications through Contra Costa County 's Community Warning System (CWS). CWS is the primary source of information during an evacuation or other emergency that may impact the region.

Although emergency preparedness is in the spotlight for the month of September, preparedness work in Kensington occurs year-round. In the most recent issue of the Fire Plug, we bring attention to the accomplishments made by the district, such as the installation of the new fire danger sign on the Arlington, fire surveillance cameras on Vollmer Peak, and steps made towards improving safety for schoolchildren during emergencies. These and other articles may be found by visiting the district website, www.kensington-fire.org.

The district now has a larger social media presence, too, where we share photos, videos, and articles related to safety and emergency preparedness on Facebook and Instagram. Posts from other agencies are also shared, such as CalFire's weekly 2021 Wildfire Report. You can find KFPD on both Instagram and Facebook by searching for the account name, "KensingtonFPD".

Meanwhile, the KFPD is collaborating with organizations across the community to address a broad range of safety-related concerns. For example, Kensington police and firefighters visited community block parties on August 3 for National Night Out. This nationally recognized event is held annually to strengthen relationships among citizens and their public safety agencies. The general theme of the night was that everyone can contribute to making Kensington safer, and there are many opportunities to promote awareness and preparedness.

To learn more about doing your part for Kensington, watch for messages and publications from the KFPD. You can also subscribe to receive emails directly from the KFPD by visiting kensingtonfire.org or email fire@kensingtonfire.org.

Highlights from July Police Log

Hit & Run Collision On July 1 Lt. Harms was dispatched to the 200 block of Colusa Avenue on a report of a hit and run collision that took place overnight. During the investigation, it was determined the Hit & Run Collision took place the night before at about 10:35 PM, when a white SUV type vehicle collided with the parked vehicle and fled the scene towards El Cerrito without stopping.

Possession of Narcotics Arrest On July 7, Officer Bang initiated a traffic enforcement stop in the 200 block of Arlington Avenue. During his stop, drug paraphernalia was located, and the driver was subsequently arrested. At the conclusion of the investigation, the driver was arrested for violation of Health & Safety Code 11377(a)—Possession of Narcotics and Health & Safety Code 11364(a)—Possession of Drug Paraphernalia

Non-Injury Traffic Collision On July 11, Officer Fajardo responded to a solo vehicle, non-injury traffic collision. The driver backed out of his driveway and "jumped" the curb and got stuck on a steep incline. A tow truck was needed, and the driver was issued a DMV Request for Regular Re-Examination of Driver form.

Possession of Narcotics Arrest On July 18, Officer Bang initiated a traffic enforcement stop in the 3200 block of Arlington Avenue. During his stop, numerous Xanax pills and a substantial amount of marijuana was located inside of the vehicle. At the conclusion of the investigation, the driver was arrested for violation of Health & Safety Code 11379(a)—Transportation and Sale of a Controlled Substance, Health and Safety Code 11359—Possession for Sale of a Controlled Substance, Health & Safety Code 11360—Sale or Furnishing Hashish and Possession of Narcotics and Health & Safety Code 11364(a)—Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. He was booked into the Contra Costa County Jail.

Hit & Run Collision On July 23, the Fire Department was dispatched to a broken fire hydrant that was shooting water in the air, near Coventry Road and Willow Lane. Both the fire department and Lt. Harms initially responded, and the fire department was able to shut off the water flow, which flowed

downhill and into a residence, flooding the house. At the conclusion, it was determined the fire hydrant had been sheared off after a vehicle collided with the hydrant. The investigation is ongoing.

Commercial Burglary On July 26, Officer Fajardo was dispatched to the Colusa Market on a report of an alarm at the business. Officers responded, set up a perimeter, and checked the interior. At the conclusion of the investigation, it was determined that the cash registers had been pried open and several items stolen from the business. The investigation is ongoing, and Investigations is working leads and processing evidence that was obtained at the scene.

Stolen Vehicle & Recovered Stolen Vehicle On July 30, an anonymous person called to complain about an illegally parked car in the 100 block of Edgecroft Road. The vehicle was located and initially given a 72-hour notice to move or it would be towed.

Officer Fodor drove to the registered owner's house on the other side of the district and confirmed the vehicle was an unreported stolen vehicle. The vehicle was entered and removed from CLETS, and the owner later retrieved the vehicle.

Mike Logan Takes Seat Vacated by Cyrus Modavi

By Linnea Due

On July 8, Mike Logan was sworn in as one of five Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) directors. Logan volunteered to fill out the term of Cyrus Modavi, who unexpectedly resigned as director May 12.

In an interview August 9, Logan, who ran for the board in 2018, said that most of the issues he had run on, which focused on improving the police department, had been figured out. "I wanted to see what I could bring to the board," he said, explaining his reasoning for applying for the vacant seat. "There is one major issue that was not part of my campaign. And there needs to be a full board and an odd number so



there would be no tie votes." That major issue, of course, is where the police will go if they cannot fit into the renovated Public Safety Building.

Logan created special effects for years on films and television shows; he also edited films. Later he became a financial advisor but ended that career about a year ago. "I'm entering my sixties," he explained. "I'm semi-retired. I am still doing some freelance work on films. There hasn't been a lot of work locally because of the pandemic. But I'll continue to do some freelance work in film and television editing."

Logan served on the KPPCSD's finance committee for two years until it was dissolved by board vote on January 14. "I believe the committees are there to aid the board of directors," Logan said. "You can get financial expertise that [board directors] may not have. And the hours to do this kind of work."

Logan explained that board directors would often suggest that the finance committee investigate a particular strategy and that someone from the committee would volunteer. That person would research the matter and then bring the issue back to the finance committee, which would debate the question before advising the board. "I can't speak for the board's reasoning," Logan said.

He noted that board director Rachelle Sherris-Watt had mentioned circling back in a year to see how it was going without the services of the committee. "I may ask her to make good on that statement and revisit it," Logan said. "But in the month I've been on the board I haven't addressed it even mentally. I assumed that with the staff that they'd added, they wouldn't need the committee. I'm OK with paying staff. But some people on that committee had financial chops that would beat out anybody. Their knowledge was good to have and to take advantage of."

So far Logan, with a month in, has not been overwhelmed by district business. But he's been busy working through the California Special District Association requirements. The CSDA requires directors to complete trainings on the Brown Act, California Public Records Act, Liability, Finance, Sexual Harassment Prevention, and more. Most courses need to be completed during the first year and some are required every two years. A Special District Leadership Academy Conference also has to be completed during the first year.

But the cloud looming over the board is the Public Safety Building. Who will end up there once the renovations are finished? "That's the number one issue," Logan said. "It does make me wonder if a single board would be better. It's unfortunate that you have two boards with this level of back and forth. I wish it were a little smoother. The decision-making and cooperation between the two boards doesn't seem easy. The fire board has said what the fire board is going to say. You can interpret it as a hard line in the sand."

Still, Logan feels like he's stepping into a good situation. "I'm very happy with the police department now," he said. "I don't know Mike [Chief of Police Mike Gancasz] very well, but from what I've seen he's great, I like him. I think it's a good spot where we are and where we're going. I just want to make sure we have a place for the department to be. They deserve to be in a good facility. And I want to make sure they get as much support as they need from our board."

Since Logan is taking on the remainder of Modavi's term, he will be up for election in just a year, in 2022. Three seats are up: Rachelle Sherris-Watt, Chris Deppe, and Logan. Three seats are also up for the fire district (Julie Stein, Kevin Padian, and Janice Kosel). How many decide to run for reelection and then go on to win could lead to significant turnover on the district boards.

Logan has lived in Kensington for 22 years; he has two adult daughters, the younger at UCLA. His wife Sally doesn't attend district meetings, but she's supportive of his public service. "I think most people at some point should step in and see if they can help their community," Logan said. "That was my idea, and that's my intention, to see how I can help."

Passings

Clavel Fender attained her goal of turning 100 with family, celebrating her milestone: May 28, 1921- May 28,2021. She surpassed her goal with her Sunset on July 4, 2021 amidst another celebration: Independence Day.

Clavel lived her life with passion and kindness, in pursuing whatever her chosen life ingredient was—from educational pursuits, class offices and a myriad of accolades, to a career at UCB. In the School of Optometry Department, she impacted students with her kindness and support. Add that to playing bridge and talking about every hand she played, to floral decorations, to the El Cerrito Garden Club, to fabric creations (quilts, wearable art) to reading, adult coloring, puzzles and Word Search games. She was fully inspired.

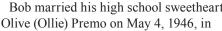


Clavel and Charlie especially enjoyed traveling to at least 32 countries and all 50 states. Their 78th wedding anniversary falls on the day of Clavel's Celebration of Life in September. They shared such a deep and full love, as well as a full life in their Kensington home from 1950 to the present. She has two daughters whom she inspired to be the best they could be in all arenas—Louise and Carole—and four grandchildren whom she adored, Skylar, Amber, Sierra and Byron. She introduced her seven great grandchildren, Kaleo, Malia, Jadyn, Lilian, Jocelyn, Jack and Luke, to adult coloring, Easter egg hunts, puzzles and the child-friendly home in Kensington which provided space to run, climb trees, and a playhouse for generations.

She is missed by so many, but the good news is her kindness and joy ripple to touch all of us who have her memory deeply imprinted in our hearts.

Robert (Bob) Shaner passed on to heaven on August 3, at the age of 97. Bob touched many lives with his creative imagination and will be dearly missed.

Bob was born to Sophia and Harry Shaner in Porterville, CA. He graduated high school in 1941 and entered the Navy in July 1943. He served as a first lieutenant on the *LST 475* in the South Pacific during WWII and retired twenty years later from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander.



Porterville. He completed a BA in criminology, graduating from UC Berkeley in 1948. The couple moved to Kensington after purchasing a lot from Bernard Maybeck. Since they had to promise to construct the house themselves, Bob built the family home after work and during vacations.

Bob worked to establish firebreaks in residential areas and was an advocate for maintaining native plant species in Wildcat Canyon. His birdhouses, metal sculptures, and other works of art are cherished. He loved to tell stories of Porterville, life aboard an LST, and the history of Kensington and Wildcat Canyon.

Bob started as a deputy probation officer, became director of Juvenile Hall, director of Institutions, and retired in 1983 as chief probation officer of Alameda County. He also lectured in Cal's School of Criminology.

Bob led by example, showing all what it means to be a true American, a Naval officer, a public servant, a loving father, a dedicated friend, outdoorsman, and a creative builder. He is survived by children Sue Zeiler and Doug Shaner, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. His wife, Ollie Shaner, daughter, Jana Shaner, and sister, Thelma Lagace, preceded him in death.

He will be missed by all whose lives he touched, but we can rest easy knowing he is watching over us from above. A Celebration of Life is pending. Donations may be sent to Porterville Historical Museum or Asotin County Historical Museum.

Longtime Kensington resident **Sharon Lazaneo** passed away on June 26. Born in December 1942 in Los Angeles, she was raised to be reflective, attuned to social and political injustices, and to follow a path of public service. Her loving parents' home was filled with music so Sharon learned to tap her feet to such artists as Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, and Duke Ellington.

College brought her north, and she began a career in Protective Services at the Alameda County Probation Department, where she met her partner Jackie Karkazis. Sharon was one of the four women who founded Inn Kensington in 1981; she managed the stove that turned out omelets, scrambles, and delicious home fries. During quiet moments, she'd do the NYT crossword. The owners prized hiring



a diverse staff; Inn Kensington's staff included refugees who fled wrenching political upheavals.

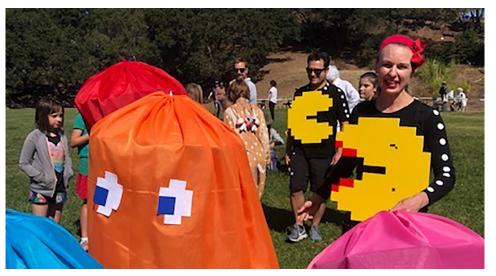
After the restaurant sold in 1994, Sharon worked for the next 22 years with Family Courts as a mediator and child custody evaluator. She retired in 2016, but continued in her hobby of hammering, sawing, and building, curious how pieces of wood could fit together in artistic ways. She listened nearly daily to "Democracy Now."

In her own family she shared in parenting Katrina Karkazis. As Katrina once wrote: "I burst with love for everything they've done to care for me and to send the most righteous, social justice-oriented, empathetic version of myself into the world."

Sharon was an avid reader, her bedstand always stacked. She treasured her friends, loved her array of pets, and was happy preparing meals. When she appreciated a meal prepared by another, a favorite line was "This is the best I have ever tasted."

Sharon is survived by Jackie, Katrina, her brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Pat Kirkpatrick, her brother-in-law Dennis Cuyler, her beloved pooch Kia, and a larger and devoted family of friends with whom she had deep and loving connections.





With Our Regrets...

By Anne Forrest

Like everyone else, the Kensington Community Council was hoping not to have to make the same difficult decision about the annual Kensington Parade and Picnic that we had to make in 2020. But, with the surge of the Delta variant, we find ourselves in the same position, even after more than a year of vigilance against COVID. Sadly, the KCC Board regrets that for a second year in a row, we feel that it is necessary to cancel the annual parade and picnic, traditionally held in October.

When I first agreed to head up the subcommittee for the event this year, it was early summer and our national COVID picture was much brighter, especially in the Bay Area. In the last couple of weeks, we have all been watching the increase of Delta variant cases with alarm, especially since children under 12 still have no means of protection with a vaccine.

Some of my neighbors were reluctant to come to our street's National Night Out last month because of how contagious this new variant is and how easily it spreads even among fully vaccinated individuals. Local theaters are postponing their openings, and even the Solano Stroll has changed its format this year to reduce the chances of spreading the virus.

After sixteen months of fighting the disease, there are still so many uncertainties. However, after taking an informal survey of members of the different K-Groups and of Kensington neighbors, one thing I do know is that folks are very disappointed that we cannot resume our normal community interactions after making sacrifices for so many months. People are itching for a party.

The Kensington Community Council was looking forward to hosting the first big community-wide party in the newly renovated community center and making the annual parade and picnic a lively celebration for the whole community. Ultimately, cancelling seemed like the most prudent decision especially after reading that other East Bay organizations are scaling back or cancelling their community activities this fall until everyone can enjoy the party safely. Let's plan to meet at the new community center in 2022 and have a safe celebration to remember for the right reasons.



Horror

...from front page



Horror film chic: from left, Sean Okimoto, Jack McDermott, and Ethan Gomez-Zahnley take a break while filming a short about ordering pizza during a zombie apocalypse. Photo by Ann McDermott.

that we were filming a horror movie for a couple months so don't get worried if you hear screams and strange noises. We let the Kensington Police know what we were doing. All we ran into was the occasional dog walker." (See McDermott's sidebar, "Staying on the Right Side of the Law," facing page.)

McDermott said keeping everything on schedule was difficult, with short periods when they could film. "We filmed it over fourteen nights. Once the sun was down enough, we'd start rolling and just go as fast as we could." He credits the actors with much of the crew's success. "Our actors came in really prepared. One day we had ten pages of script of Sean and Carlos [Norena] talking to each other. I was worried about that, but it turned out to be our fastest day, because they knew their lines so well. They made it pretty easy for Ethan and me."

Editing came next. "That was hard," McDermott said. "It's exhausting to watch the same thing over and over again." Some technical problems had to be solved frame-by-frame, partially because of the night filming.

"We did a casting crew screening about a month ago," McDermott said. "Everyone seemed kind of surprised about how good it was. That means a lot to me because they gave us so much of their time."

The film has what McDermott calls the Screenager Productions vibe—"We try to have people talk like actual teenagers. The dialogue doesn't sound realistic in other films. And we wanted to have character arcs, something we couldn't do in the shorts."

The film had its first showing at the Shattuck Cinemas on July 31. It will be on Amazon Video, and McDermott has been busy lining up other venues and of course—merchandise. "We got some awesome merch for it," he said. During an online fundraiser last June, the crew split some of the money with a charity. "Since that was part of how we got funded, we're going to continue that," McDermott said. "We're donating fifteen percent of the money the film makes to the Equal Justice Initiative."

McDermott will be familiar to KCC's summer camp attendees. McDermott and Okimoto attended summer camp as kids growing up in Kensington (the two have been friends since preschool), and both went to Hilltop. This year McDermott serves as the camp's head counselor. He said that directing the film prepared him to be a good man-

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ager. "I had to keep the movie on schedule, and I have to keep the camp on schedule." He said the kids are so happy to be seeing each other again. "A lot of them were in social pods, but they hadn't seen other friends for over a year. It's been very hard for them."

This fall, McDermott will attend Loyola Marymount University to study film production. "Ethan is going to UC Santa Barbara for film production, and Sean is going to UC Santa Cruz to major in psychology."

Kensington Hilltop plays a big part in the film. Once you see *Satan's Servant*, expect heads to roll…literally.

LED Road Flares an Upgrade in More Ways than One

By Mike Gancasz, Chief of Police
On July 1, the new Traffic Enforcement
Unit was deployed throughout Kensington.
The Traffic Enforcement Unit is equipped
with new neon yellow/green cones as well as
several LED road flares. We have recently
switched to the LED road flares in place of
incendiary road flares. The incendiary flares
pose a fire risk. The LED road flares are nontoxic, compact, durable, and even re-usable

The new cones illuminate at night with varying options to attract the attention of other drivers. This enhanced safety feature not only makes it safer for police officers and other drivers, but makes it safer for all residents in the district. Traditional flammable flares have been replaced with this new technology. With fire season approaching it only makes sense!

Additionally, each day, on-duty officers are encouraged to dedicate a portion of their shift to conduct traffic enforcement throughout Kensington to enhance safety. Thus, by the end of July, over 125 hours were dedicated solely to traffic safety concerns.

This contributed to nearly a triple increase in traffic enforcement stops from the previous month: from 44 to 110 self-initiated traffic enforcement stops with 64 citations issued.





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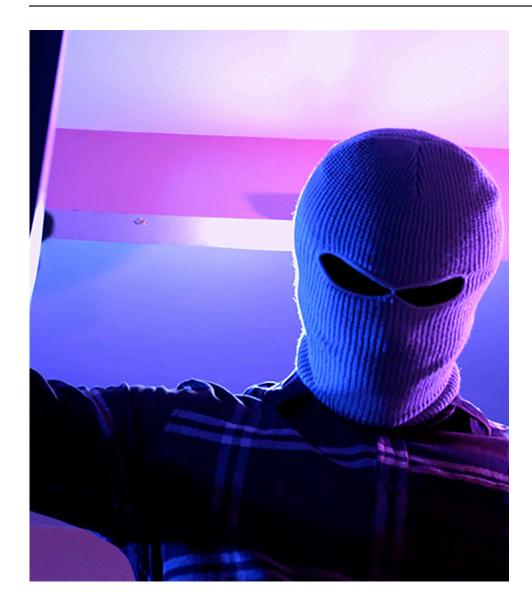
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Staying on the Right Side of the Law

By Jack McDermott

When I was 14, a Kensington police officer caught me, some friends, and a wooden katana on top of the roof of Kensington Hilltop Elementary. We had been filming *Kibo*, a coming-of-age samurai tale that also happened to be our first short film, for a middle school project.

We'd managed to scamper up onto the roof to get one final shot when suddenly, a police car pulled up, and we realized we were in big trouble. Luckily, after explaining our side of the story with my camcorder as evidence, our only punishment was a phone call home

Despite this unfortunate encounter, my friends and I continued to make movies everywhere we could and posted them on our YouTube channel, Screenager Productions. We filmed an intense action movie on the hill next to Kensington Park, a post-apocalyptic cannibal thriller on Ye Olde School Trail, and a comical music video at the parking lot above Mechanics Bank. We didn't have permits, so we stayed out of everyone's way and steered clear of private property. Apart from a couple of brief encounters with the KPD, these shoots all went off without a hitch.



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1656 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley, CA 94709 510.848.1950 100 Grand Ave. #112 Oakland, CA 94612 510.339.4200 Then, four years after *Kibo*, we were preparing to shoot *Satan's Servant*, our first feature film. This film would be the pinnacle of our Kensington filmmaking careers since all but three scenes would be filmed in Kensington. Much of the film would be shot at and around my house, so before we began filming, we went around to my neighbors and explained that they should not be alarmed by bloody people or cop cars on our street. They were all very understanding.

This time, unlike with *Kibo*, we *wanted* a police car to come to our shoot since a critical scene involves a police officer. After some online research, we found someone who could rent us a fake police car for our film shoot. We informed the KPD, and they were supportive and helped us stay on the right side of the law.

We wanted to film the action centerpiece of *Satan's Servant* at Kensington Hilltop. The scene was set at night, and we couldn't afford to have our shoot shut down for trespassing on school property. We explored alternative settings, but the scene had been written specifically to fit Hilltop's geography, so we decided that we had to film there.

I looked on the West Contra Costa Unified School District website and saw that all films shot on WCCUSD property had to be insured. Since our budget did not have room for insurance, I began to worry that we wouldn't be able to film there. On a whim, I reached out to Principal Judy Sanders, who had been holding that position since before I attended Hilltop, and asked her if there was any way we could film without insurance. She responded quickly and said that since we were WCCUSD students, we could film at Hilltop for free if an El Cerrito High School faculty member supervised us. Ms. Sanders then went above and beyond by helping us file the necessary paperwork and even finding a faculty member who could help. The scene at Hilltop ended up becoming one of my favorite scenes from the entire film. After what had happened while filming *Kibo*, filming there 100 percent legally meant that our Kensington filmmaking careers had come full circle.



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KCC summer camp has come to a close after a fabulous return to the Kensington Park. We had 9 weeks of fun activities, games and making new friendships.

Thank you families for your support of the KCC Summer Camp Program.

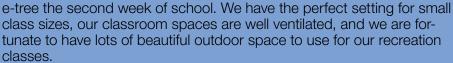
A special thanks to our Camp Director, Kelly Barry for an awesome job keeping the camp running safe and creating lots of fun for all of the kids, our Head Counselor Jack McDermott and our super team of camp counselors Anna Thomsen , Will Diego, Sahara Andrews, Finn Hartigan-O'Connor, Jake Abt, Cole Wallace-Wayne, Natalie Beban, Kaleb Paige,

Maddie Heath, Sierra Parks, Ayaz Earley, Aidan Ferguson, Helen Stephens, Leah Forrest and Lior Zvik And we can't forget our fearless CITs and master lanyard makers Sylvie Diego, Brenna Moore & Cooper Heath.



Fall KASEP

Online registration for the Fall 2021 classes will begin August 31st and the first week of KASEP classes will begin the week of September 13th. A list of all our KASEP classes will be sent home through the Hilltop



We are excited to have some of our long time teachers return. Sandy Thacker will be back in the Carpentry room on Wednesday afternoons and Bindy Baker will be back with Gymnastics on Tuesdays for K-6 classes. Also returning to the Community Center kitchen, Vicky Brodt will be teaching Muffin Madness and Chocolate Creations. Check out a complete list of Fall classes on our website KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/KASEP





KCC Adult Classes are now happening inside the Kensington Community Center

Yoga Classes

Tuesday evenings 5:30-6:30pm with Dani and Joanna Wednesday mornings 10:00-11:15am with Barbara Voinar Drop-in fee is \$15

Community Yoga, refine your practice of the fundamentals of yoga, including mindful breathing and individualized alignment in poses. This practice builds strength, flexibility, and balance to relieve stress, counter injuries, and develop a calmer state of mind. All levels welcome.

Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi

Fridays 9:30-11:00am

Drop-in fee is \$15

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

Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/adult-classes

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am.

Call the KCC office for info. * New KPPCSD Court Fees: 1 hour reservations- residents: \$7 non-residents \$10.

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. Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

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Rip Matteson Open House Cancelled

By Linnea Due

With regret, Rosary Matteson announced that her annual open house celebrating the life and work of her late husband Rip is postponed because of the uncertainty surrounding the Delta variant. However, a new exhibit of Matteson's work can be viewed by appointment from this September 19 to August 19, 2022. For a viewing, contact Rosary at 510-524-3022.

Rip Matteson, a longtime Kensington resident, painted every day after he retired from teaching. He was an avid reader of literature and poetry and often turned to his favorite poets for inspiration. He taught at Laney College beginning in 1964 and was a member of the Carmel Art Association for 62 years.

Available for purchase are paintings, drawings, and cartoons. Also available is *Rip Matteson: A Life in Art*

1920-2011 by Janet Howell, owner of J. Howell Fine Art in Healdsburg, as well as three books written and illustrated by Matteson.

Kensington Library News

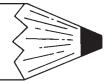


By Kara Sheetz

The library is open! Please remember to bring your library card or photo ID to check out. Masks are required (again) regardless of vaccination status for everyone over the age of two. Have you tried our personalized picks reading recommendation service yet? Ask us for a form in the branch or visit us online.

Upcoming online programs for fall include a KonMari Workshop and a Nature Journaling Workshop with John Muir Laws. Call the library for details. 510-524-3043, ccclib.org And don't forget that beginning August 16, you can drop off your ballot at the secure county-maintained ballot box at the back of the library building. The walk-up drop box is open 24/7 until

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CITIZENAFORUM

The High Cost of Separation

Kensington's two special districts, fire and police, are governed by the fire (KFPD) and police (KPPCSD) boards. Those boards are about to embark on a renovation of the Public Safety Building (PSB) that will exclude police services, resulting in costly economic consequences to Kensington property owners. In this fiscal year, Kensington homeowners will pay an average of \$4,000 in property taxes for fire and police services, while those who purchased homes recently may pay \$7,000 or more. Expect these costs to go up if current plans are not shelved.

Before discussing what should be done to save costs, let's examine a brief history of the PSB. The need for a new building to house both departments, fire and police, commenced in 1947 when both boards decided to buy the two parcels now occupied by the PSB. Why it took 23 years to complete construction is not clear, but the use of the future building for both fire and police was always the intended goal.

The existing PSB was constructed in 1970 to replace the inadequate and separate facilities then used by the fire and police departments. Following construction, Kensington operated its own fire station, employing a staff of twelve firefighters plus three to five volunteers. The new PSB totaled 5,762 square feet (SF) with 1,200SF for police, primarily on the second floor. The total building costs came in at \$232,000 (how times have changed), and was financed by fire with a ten-year \$250,000 loan. The police district paid the costs to build out the police department's part, and there is no evidence that it paid rent in a landlord/tenant relationship.

Starting in 1998, as a result of necessary seismic and ADA upgrades, the fire district entered into a ten-year "Lease Agreement" with the police district, requiring it to pay its pro rata share of the upgrades. Subsequent lease agreements based costs on expected periodic maintenance and other upgrades.

It is important to realize that this agreement, while called a "Lease," was actually a cost-sharing arrangement. The agreement stated that the use of the PSB for purposes other than police and fire personnel was subject to the approval of both the fire and police chiefs.

This agreement has been extended five additional times and is the agreement currently on a month-to-month basis. If terminated, as planned by the fire district, this agreement would only end further cost-sharing arrangements, not terminate the police lease as explained below. The following facts are relevant to the use of the PSB:

- 1. Public records indicate the PSB was built for the intended use of both fire and police. I submitted public records requests to both districts. Then-GM Marti Brown, on the verge of leaving, did not fulfill my request. The fire district's Bill Hansell met with me, and we examined documents together. He forwarded several items but further information is still needed. Notes from fire board meetings during the PSB's construction state that the police department would be housed in the building.
- 2. The fire board's policy manual specifically states the PSB is "for the benefit of both police and fire functions." Police are named as responsible for the building's security. The policy manual says that the building's "main functions are police and fire services," and that the police will share in the costs of maintaining the building. It is only the maintenance clause that would be eliminated if the fire board terminates the month-to-month "lease."
- 3. There is no legal document between the two districts that would allow the fire district to expel the police, as such an agreement would require the police to have at least three years prior notice in order to find a replacement facility. Any lease would have a lengthy termination clause, particularly if it meant building a new facility for the police. We have seen how long it takes to renovate an existing structure, much less build a new one—or to remodel an existing building not owned by the district, which could leave the police in a tenant relationship, an awkward position for a public agency.
- 4. The El Cerrito fire department does not need to increase its current 4,500SF to 6,200SF to operate effectively. If the department had needed 6,200SF as is proposed in the latest drawings, that expansion would have been mandated as part of the new fifteenyear contract entered into with El Cerrito one year ago (the contracts run ten years with a five-year extension). Instead, nothing was said about the PSB.
- 5. The PSB conforms to all building codes. However, it should be updated to current seismic safety codes. The codes indicate that if only seismic upgrading is undertaken, then bringing the building into ADA compliance, to include an elevator, will not be

What is the appropriate course of action? Contrary to the prevailing understanding of both boards: 1. The police have a legitimate right to use the PSB; 2. The expansion and enhancements of the building are not required by code; 3. Those enhancements and added space are not required (or even mentioned) under the new El Cerrito contract, and 4. The cost savings of doing only the essential seismic upgrades will save Kensington taxpayers well over \$7 million in extra enhancement costs, thus preventing possibly significant tax increases.

It is time both boards agree to focus on a program of seismic upgrades. When that is completed, reasonable modifications can be embarked upon that would further modernize the existing 5,800SF building.

Citizen Forums are guest editorials written by Kensington residents. To submit a Citzen Forum for consideration, email editor@kensingtonoutlook.com

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Letters

...from page 3

or near owners, chasing joggers, bicyclists, other adults; coyotes seen in and around children's play areas, school grounds and parks in midday; coyotes acting aggressively towards adults in midday.

From recent experiences posted on ND, we are at five of the seven signs. What do we do? Do we wait until a toddler is attacked or prevented from an attack as in GG Park, or do we wait until someone is ambushed when walking their dog, as in SJ?

Or do we seek a solution through our representatives, perhaps imperfect, but something that prevents these encounters from occurring regularly.

Marilyn Stollon

Finally, the Book Sale!



Cashier's table volunteers Carol Carman, Evelyn Loughran, and Joan Peters are familiar faces at the FKL book sales. Photo by Jim Fisher.

By Jim Fisher

Skip your Zoom meeting. Cancel your Netflix. The Friends of the Kensington Library Fall Book Sale returns Sunday, October 17 from 10am-4pm in the library parking lot, with more screen-free reading material than ever before.

It will be two years since the last Fall Book Sale. As evidenced by the FKL's bursting book shed, many residents dealt with stay-at-home uncertainty by culling shelves. The FKL has never filled so many boxes with trade fiction, travel, and physical sciences! Safety first. The sale will take place outdoors, in the library parking lot. Masks will be

required and social distancing in place, following county guidelines. There is the possibility of an early-bird entry fee in order to minimize crowds during the busy first hour. The FKL can always use strong lifters to help with moving tables before and after the event. But lifting is not the only way to volunteer. Send an email to kensington.FKL@

gmail.com or call volunteer coordinator Marcia Crawford at 510-526-8951 to help out. Come to the sale—but save your donations until November. Due to storage limitations in the book shed, the FKL cannot accept any more donations of books before the sale.



Fear Purple Days

By Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

As we transition from summer to fall, our fire risk does not diminish as we usher in a new season. Kensington residents should maintain a heightened sense of awareness and preparedness for wildfires since dry vegetation and the possibility of strong wind from Diablo Wind Events (DWEs) remain ever-present.

These wind events are rare, but hot, dry wind from the northeast that have been attributed to California's most destructive fires in recent years. It is important that Kensington residents stay informed of Red Flag Warnings issued by the National Weather Service. These Red Flag Warning communications will be passed through Kensington Fire Protection District social media accounts, which include Nextdoor, Facebook, and Instagram. During Red Flag Warning periods, burning, outdoor grilling, and power tool operation are usually prohibited. The prohibition on these activities is intended to mitigate the risk of accidental ignition of fuels that would put the community at risk.

Our daily regional conditions maintain a high risk for wildfire, but not every day is a Red Flag Day. In 2020, there were 25 Red Flag Days in our area, but only two were considered Extreme Fire Weather Days.

	Sustained Wind	Sustained Wind	Sustained Wind	Sustained Wind
	6-11 mph	12-20 mph	21-29 mph	30+ mph
Relative Humidity				
Daytime Min: 29-42% and/or Nighttime Max: 60-80%				
Relative Humidity Daytime Min: 19-28% and/or Nighttime Max: 46-60%		2018 Ca	Tho Fi	mas re 2017 Tubbs Fire
Relative Humidity Daytime Min: 9-18% and/or Nighttime Max: 31-45%	Red Flag We	2017 /10	Extreme (2 day	Fire Weather ys in 2020)
Relative Humidity Daytime Min: <9% and/or Nighttime Max: <31%	(25 days in 2	199	91 Hills Fire	

The attached diagram from Berkeley Fire illustrates how sustained wind, low humidity, and available dry vegetation create an opportunity for destructive wildfires. Note that the most destructive fires, those with loss of life, occurred during the purple zone. Generally there are only two or three days per year that fall into that category. Those with limited mobility or anyone who cannot evacuate quickly should consider leaving town during those few days.

Kensington Fire Protection District is monitoring weather forecasts for Fire Weather Watch alerts and Red Flag Warnings issued by the National Weather Service. You may have seen recently the notifications that went out during an anticipated dry lightning storm that luckily did not materialize. If you are currently active on Nextdoor, Facebook, or Instagram, be sure to follow Kensington Fire Protection District at "Kensington FPD."





The Weather Alerts communicated from KFPD will look like the following photos. Kensington faces additional risks other than the dry vegetation in our adjacent canyons. Our streets are narrow and our routes out of the community can easily experience congestion. We urge all residents to know all possible routes from their own home and to register for Community Warning System alerts to stay informed of directives issued by Kensington Fire or Kensington Police during an emergency. Visit www.cwsalerts. com to register. If you have trouble registering, contact CWS directly at 925-655-0111. Additional information on the communication tools available to you have been mailed to you. See your Wildfire Preparedness Workbook from KFPD.

Households with residents who have mobility challenges, small children or pets, necessary medical equipment or other devices to transport, are strongly encouraged to have a plan and be prepared to accommodate their individual needs in advance. If you or a family member has mobility challenges that require extra assistance during an evacuation order, you are encouraged to notify us so that your needs are considered by our first responders. Please email fire@kensingtonfire.com to inform us of your situation.

Please ensure you are using all the tools available to stay informed and prepared. For more information check your Wildfire Preparedness Workbook that was mailed to your home and visit www.kensingtonfire.org.





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KCC Summer Camp Successful Thanks to Parents and Community

By Jenny Parks, KCC recreation director

Our summer camp planning began back in January, with registration starting at the

end of February. As with everything these days, the planning for summer camp was difficult to navigate. Our typical camp week always highlighted an exciting field trip in the middle of each week, but this year we knew right away that the bus trips to the Jungle and to miniature golf amusement parks were not going to happen.

Our top priority was ensuring that the camp was safe and healthy. We are fortunate that our East Bay weather tends to be pretty mild in the summer, with very little chance of rain or extreme heat. Most of the camp activities took place outdoors at Kensington Park



or on the Community Center's lawn. Our classrooms are well ventilated with open windows on one side and multiple open doors on the other side.

We started by hiring a great staff of teachers and counselors who had all been vaccinated and were trained on the Covid-19 cleaning and safety protocols. Following Centers for Disease Control Camp Guidelines, we assigned the campers to pods of fourteen and

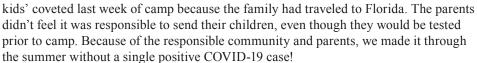


kept the pods together for any indoor time or rotations to tennis and art classes. We required all campers and staff to wear masks as much as possible; they were allowed mask-free time when outdoors and socially distanced. We had anticipated that the continual mask wearing would be an issue, but it turned out to not be an issue at all! I credit the parents for this. The masks have become second nature to the kids.

Each week we sent home updated COVID-19 protocols to parents that included a daily symptoms evaluation and a reminder not

to send children to camp if they were feeling sick. They were also asked to let KCC know right away if a camper or family member had been exposed to anyone with a positive test. And if the family traveled out of state the week prior to the child coming to camp, we asked families to provide proof of a negative COVID test.

We encountered each of these scenarios during the nine weeks of camp, and again, the parents came through with flying colors, getting kids tested before they came to camp and keeping KCC informed. We even had a parent cancel her





No Field Trips, Plenty of Fun

The camp days were filled with structured games and activities playing tennis, volleyball, soccer, and even some golf. At daily art and cooking classes, campers made homemade soaps and jams and salsa. And of course there was also lots of free time for the kids to do their own things. Many lanyards and friendship bracelets were made, foosball, ping-pong, and card games were won and lost.

Even though we could not do the field trips, we were able to bring entertainment to camp. Circus of Smiles performed in the amphitheater, and the Vivarium brought creepy crawly creatures to learn about and pet. All in all, it was a fantastic summer for the kids and the counselors. Credit good planning, kids excited to see friends, and parents who stepped up to make sure that everyone stayed safe.



growing community through real estate

KENSINGTON MARKET UPDATE

We continue to reflect on the unprecedented impact that the pandemic has had on the East Bay housing market. We've seen record low interest rates, record high housing prices, and relatively few days on the market. Let's take a closer look at how this has impacted the housing market here in Kensington.

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