

# Bringing the Community Together

# KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

SEPTEMBER 2022

PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 80 NUMBER 7



The front entrance is now the only point of entry for Kensington Hilltop during school hours. Photo by Megan Burnham.

## Kensington Elementary School Adopts New Safety Parameters

### *Your Support Is Critical*

By Megan Burnham, Principal, Kensington Elementary School

The start of school is upon us! While the anticipation of a new school year is exciting for our students, recent events at schools within our district as well as nationwide, have reminded us of the need to re-evaluate our systems to ensure student safety.

This will be my second year as the principal of Kensington, and I genuinely find myself counting my blessings to work in such a remarkable school and community. I would like to thank you in advance for your support and cooperation as we transition to a Single Point of Entry (SPoE) for Kensington School.

Last school year our focus was on protocols to ensure student safety from COVID. This year, while maintaining these COVID protocols, we now add another layer of necessary student safety precaution: an SPoE for our school. We must make this change so that we are aware of any visitor present on our school campus while students are in session.

Starting this school year, Tuesday, August 16, while school is in session between the hours of 8 and 3, there will be no public access through the back parking lot to get to or from



See School, Page 11

## Two Church Parking Lots in Play...or Not

By Linnea Due

A lot happened in Kensington's two special districts during the *Outlook's* summer hiatus. On July 13, the fire board (KFPD) authorized its general manager to enter into a contract with the lowest bidder, CWS Construction, for the demolition and reconstruction of the Public Safety Building. At the same meeting, the board authorized entering into a contract with the Unitarian Universalist Church for the fire department's temporary facility to be built on the church parking lot—on the condition that the City of El Cerrito approved a conditional use permit. Only three directors took these steps, as directors Janice Kosel and Julie Stein were absent. Later in the month, the El Cerrito City Council, after hearing concerns about noise, traffic, and pollution from Kensington and El Cerrito residents, approved the conditional use permit, allowing construction of the temporary facility that will house Kensington firefighters to go forward.

On July 14, the police board (KPPCSD) heard a presentation from the consulting architect, George Miers of Swatt Miers, about possible landing spots for the police department. Miers examined Building E (the Recreation Building occupied by the Kensington Community Council's recreation programs), the long-unused Annex, and the parking lot on the Arlington across from Arlington Community Church, the south half owned by the district and the

See Church Parking Lots, Page 10

Candidates' Statements and Upcoming Candidate Forums, pages 6-7



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# Kensington and Beyond Update

August 2022



**NEW LISTING | 1641 Arlington Blvd. El Cerrito** | 4 BR | 3.5 BA | 3528 sq. ft. (+/-)  
Built in 2019, inspired modern architecture, expansive home with golf course and Bay views.  
Open and airy floorplan with gorgeous finishes.  
**OFFERED AT \$1,798,000**



**NEW LISTING | 233 Yale Ave. Kensington** | 4 BR | 2 BA  
Monterey Colonial Style with a beautifully terraced garden and Golden Gate views.  
**OFFERED AT \$1,498,000**



**SOLD | 13 Marchant Ct. Kensington** | 4 BR | 3 BA  
1936 Santa Barbara Style sited on an expansive parcel with stunning Bay views!  
**SOLD AT \$2,600,000**



**SOLD | 131 Ardmore Rd. Kensington** | 3 BR | 2 BA  
Expanded Mediterranean Bungalow. Inspiring view of San Francisco. Great big rear garden!  
Once the home of Saul Zaentz of Fantasy Records, who became an Oscar-winning producer in the '70s.  
**SOLD AT \$1,400,000**

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# Kensington | Market Update

July 2022 to present



**Detached Single Family**

**3**

**New Listings**

**Median List Price**

**\$1,399,000**

**Median Sq. Ft.**

**1,760**

**9**

**Pending Sales**

**Median List Price**

**\$1,250,000**

**Median Sq. Ft.**

**1,836**

**6**

**Closed Sales**

**Median List Price**

**\$1,197,000**

**Median Sq. Ft.**

**1,950**

**Median Sales Price**

**\$1,327,500**

**2021 Comparison**

**18 Closed Sales**

**7/21 - 8/21**

**Median List Price**

**\$1,339,000**

**Median Sq. Ft.**

**2,100**

**Median Sales Price**

**\$1,752,500**

My market opinion, sentiment often is a key driver of markets. Current sentiment is probably more driven by headlines of averages and salacious price drops (on extremely overpriced property) than hard facts. It is critical when selling any property to ask your agent, how do you think this market compares with the previous market down turn ? If an agent did not experience the down turn starting in 2006 how can they give you accurate advice? There are so many newer agents and teams who profess their knowledge and success, they will just wing it in this new market. Since 2018, every listing sold easily, it took little skill just the preparation of the home. Anyone can parrot a script on Instagram and tout their successes, now we are in a different market and there is a lot at stake, your equity. Navigating this market takes practice, careful pricing and curated, specific data-driven insights and intelligence. A seller needs a seasoned local agent, with the latest technology and premier a Real Estate firm behind them to achieve the highest results and the strongest terms possible. Many do not know that the founder of Compass grew up in Berkeley/Oakland, and that his mother attended U.C. Berkeley. Compass may have started in New York, but the company has local roots, with a national and global presence all of which benefits our clients. Compass also developed the Concierge Program for our clients. This is an interest free loan to cover the costs of the preparing your home for sale, this includes improvements and staging at no interest that is paid back at closing. It is a fantastic program and one of many reasons I joined Compass.



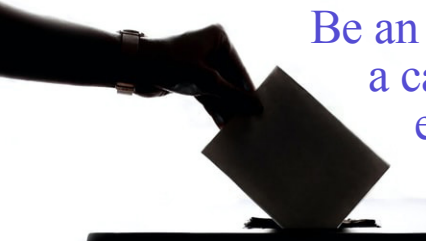
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Be an educated voter. Attend a candidate forum this election cycle. See forum dates on page 7.

Photo: Element 5 Digital/Unsplash

## SAFETY SCENARIO

Don't miss a critical alert – Add CWS to your contacts.  
If Kensington is ordered to evacuate, the alert will come from Contra Costa County's Community Warning System (CWS). During the test of the CWS signal during April's evacuation drill, we realized how important it is to save the CWS contact information as a known contact in mobile devices. Some residents did not recognize the number and ignored the test call. Some cell phone carriers flagged the emergency test call as "possible spam."  
Had this been an emergency, residents would have lost the critical time needed to evacuate their homes. Please take a moment to save "925-655-0195" (CWS) as a new contact on your mobile device. And if you need to register for CWS alerts, visit [www.cwsalerts.com](http://www.cwsalerts.com) or call 925-655-0111 for assistance.

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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.

OCTOBER 2022  
**DEADLINES**  
**Advertising Deadline ❖ September 8**  
**Editorial Deadline ❖ September 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](mailto: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.

## KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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# Letters to the Editor

## Loss of Parking for Community and ACC

Dear Editor:

Arlington Community Church (ACC) has learned that the parking lot across from ACC is considered by the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) to be the #1 remaining site option for use as a police building. This parking lot is co-owned by ACC and KPPCSD. ACC owns the north half, and KPPCSD owns the south half of the parking lot. Although ACC Council has not been officially approached since a meeting in May with the Interim GM of the KPPCSD, ACC Council wants to make it clear that the ACC-owned north one-half of the parking lot is not for sale, lease, or a swap arrangement.

The entire parking lot is used by library patrons, attendees of Community Center events, and staff and parents of the three schools housed at ACC. When events are held simultaneously at ACC and the other venues, which happened recently, all available parking lot spaces and those on adjacent streets are filled.

ACC regularly rents spaces for a variety of events—wedding receptions, dances, concerts, and exercise programs. ACC has even rented space to KPPCSD administrative staff and Kensington Community Council programs. Parking is a key feature for those selecting ACC for their events. ACC revenue will be significantly reduced without access to convenient parking.

Our new pastor wishes to continue the tradition of ACC being a welcoming host for community events. ACC has hosted several events since her arrival in January and has more scheduled on a regular basis.

The entire parking lot is a community resource, not a space that exclusively benefits ACC. The damage that a sale, lease, or swap arrangement would cause ACC and the community cannot be compensated by a financial arrangement.

ACC is supportive of the police department but will vigorously oppose the use of the ACC-owned north one-half of this parking lot for a police department building and urges the KPPCSD board to reconsider another option.

**Faith Abel, Arlington Community Church President**

## Overdue for Change

Dear Editor:

The fact that tiny, wonderful Kensington has its own dedicated fire and police departments is an important part of why living here is so good. What totally does not make sense, however, is that we have two separate elected boards governing these departments.

What this current dysfunctional governance has delivered to the people of Kensington is a costly mess: a plan to increase our indebtedness for a remodel of the Public Safety Building that forces the police to move out without identifying a new location to house them. There are no good locations!

The many Kensington citizens who have raised concerns have been disrespectfully ignored by the fire board’s elected leadership. This is not an open, transparent government that listens to and hears the voices of the public they serve.

If you are not indignant, it’s because you haven’t known about all this. There is an upcoming election for Kensington in November. We are overdue for change!

**Laura N Chick**

## Strengthening the Whole

Dear Editor,

Here in Kensington, we have two separate entities tasked with our basic municipal functions, the KFPD and the KPPCSD. These two boards have separate mandates, management, finances, goals, and needs. As a result, the boards sometimes find themselves acting at cross-purposes. With such a structure, how can we expect them to work for the good of Kensington as a whole when neither of them is charged with considering Kensington as a whole?

We must consolidate our two boards to create a single governing body that would consider all of Kensington’s needs, rather than just one aspect. There would still have been a conflict over the PSB if the fire department and the police department were controlled by one board, but those conflicts would have been handled internally and with a consideration for the holistic health of Kensington. Instead, our current structure allows one group to act unilaterally, forcing the other board to respond. Rather than act in concert, they react in conflict.

With a unified board, the KFPD would likely not have moved forward with their renovation until the future home of the police was determined. With a unified board, the KPPCSD wouldn’t have needed to consider taking over Kensington Park space. Indeed, a unified board may even help resolve the PSB.

As recently circulated plans show, it may be possible to house both fire and police in an updated, seismically strengthened PSB if administrative offices were moved off-site. With a unified board, we would need fewer administrative personnel and thus reduce the footprint required.

We must initiate the process of consolidating the KFPD and KPPCSD. This conflict will not be the last time our two boards will be at odds. Let us act now so that the next time, we resolve the issue with consideration of our community’s needs for police, fire, green space, and financial best interest.

**Daniel Levine**

## Consolidation is Irrational

Dear Editor:

Consolidating the police and fire districts is a reckless idea. Many fire districts have combined with other fire districts, and the same for police with police. But no one combines police and fire districts because it makes no sense, and there is no economy of scale. Their staff jobs need to be handled by different kinds of knowledgeable people. Even if you combine two half-time generic accountants, you’ll have a full-time accountant who needs benefits and a retirement system. The work will not go away. No savings here.

Also, you’d need a GM and other staff who are familiar with both kinds of special districts. Such people are rare and they don’t come cheaply.

And the districts will not put up the money you’d need to negotiate consolidation with LAFCO, attorneys, surveyors, and financial analysts. Who’s going to pay for that?

Proponents say, “consolidate first; then work out details.” Nonsense. Get independent,

verified financial projections first. (And hold on to your wallets.)

It should be up to proponents of this idea to engage independent financial and governmental experts to show unequivocally that Kensington would benefit structurally and financially from consolidation of police and fire districts. If you see a proposition on the ballot before this is shown unequivocally, vote against it.

And anyone who runs this November advocating consolidation—as opposed to simply advocating looking into consolidation—do you really want to vote for them? If they haven’t done the math or the legal work, do they deserve your support?

Some proponents support consolidation because they think the police and fire boards are dysfunctional. If the directors can’t handle the workload now, what happens when it doubles? Currently, each board meets at least once a month for at least three hours. What directors would want to double their time and their paperwork?

And how many candidates would be knowledgeable about the problems and issues of two different districts?

Get satisfactory answers to these questions before you support consolidation, or its proponents. (I’m on the fire board, but I write as a private citizen.)

**Kevin Padian**

## Time for a Change

Dear Editor:

Now that the candidates for our two district boards have been determined, there is reason for hope that the controversies surrounding the Public Safety Building, Kensington Park, and our recent governmental dysfunction may be heading for a positive resolution, with the arrival of new candidates with fresh ideas and energy.

For KPPCSD, Alexandra Aquino-Fike, Cassandra Duggan, and Sarah Gough bring impressive resumes and records of business and professional achievement. All have demonstrated strong commitment to our community. And they represent the generation of Kensingtonians that for many years will have to live with, and pay for, whatever resolution of the Public Safety Building situation is finally reached.

For KFPD, incumbent Julie Stein has been a voice of reason and common sense and deserves another term of office. Jim Watt has years of deep experience in finance and construction, and Daniel Levine has the energy and smarts to bring a fresh and dynamic perspective to that board.

All six of these candidates have stated their support for a combination of our two districts into a single entity with one board of directors that is required to serve the overall best interests of the entire community, and not focus narrowly on a single service function. With no disrespect to other current candidates and their past and present service to Kensington, I believe these six, if elected, can set Kensington back on a rational path to progress.

**Vida Dorroh**

## Change Happens

Dear Editor:

Many of our citizens are very upset over the proposed changes in the housing of Kensington’s police and fire facilities. I realize that very few have been following this issue until recently. But now that “push comes to shove” time’ is here, they are realizing the consequences of the decisions that have been made. This process has been discussed and argued over for several years now. Ignorance of this process is no excuse. Where were all of you then?

For a long time I was not at all happy with the fire department’s conclusion that there was no room in their renovations to house police operations, thinking that many of the fire renovations were not necessary. However, after noting changes required by code, safety, and operating rules, the two chiefs agreed that the building can’t safely house both services. We owe it to our public safety workers to provide a building that is structurally safe. Their safety means that we will have our police and fire available to assist us when disaster strikes.

All along there has been a search by these boards for alternative building sites. Many suggestions were explored. It should come as no surprise that little was available and no one was happy. You can be sure that many people tried really hard to find something better than any of the solutions now on the table. And from those with the current objections I hear no solutions suggested. We have to work with what we have—a completely built-up small community of modest lots and narrow streets, situated mostly on hillsides astride an earthquake fault.

The reality—we have to renovate and build something. The only other solution means outsourcing to distant services for fire and police. Most of us don’t like change. But change happens.

I am greatly disturbed by the current misinformation campaign directly mostly to the Community Services District. Contrary to claims—it is not kicking out KCC and its programs. Like both our districts —we all have to adapt to change. So let’s all work to make the most of our upcoming changes.

**Mabry Benson**

## A Plan that Works

Dear Editor:

I engaged an architectural firm with considerable experience designing fire and police stations to lay out the Public Safety Building (PSB) so that it could accommodate both fire and police. This plan has been completed and sent to both the fire and police chiefs. Recently I met with newly hired El Cerrito/Kensington fire chief Eric Saylor for a building tour.

We discussed the plan and walked through Kensington Station 65. This station is clearly in need of repairs and seismic upgrades, all of which are included in the revised plan for both fire and police. I heard nothing in our tour of the existing premises that would indicate that revising the PSB to accommodate both fire and police would be unacceptable. The revised plan would reduce the costs of having separate facilities, and what is becoming a major concern of finding a location in Kensington for permanently housing the police.

It is time that our two boards worked together to solve the problem of housing both fire and police in order to avoid both districts incurring financial debt or requiring new taxpayer assessments. No other community in California would move forward with a plan that leaves its police department without a home. Kensington should not be the exception.

**Jim Watt**



# Police Log for June-July

**On Monday, June 6** a resident received a phone call from a person purporting to be Deputy Bobby Mann with the San Francisco County Sheriff’s Department. The caller knew some information about the resident, including their employment location. The caller told the resident that they missed a court date and a judge had issued two citations for Contempt of Court. To further deceive the resident, the victim was told to google the number, which showed it connecting to the San Francisco County Jail. The victim paid \$5,000 via Zelle and MoneyPak to avoid an arrest warrant being issued. Later, after contacting KPD, the victim then realized it was an online hoax and had been scammed of \$5,000. (Note: KPD and the courts do not call and ask for money. If in doubt, contact KPD in person and verify payment requests before you withdraw or send money.

**On Sunday, June 12,** at about 4:10am, KPD was dispatched to an interrupted catalytic converter theft in progress near Westminster and Kenyon avenues. KPD responded and tried to box the driver in, activating the overhead emergency lights and floodlights, but the vehicle accelerated around the patrol car, narrowly avoiding a collision, and sped off into the fog without stealing the catalytic converter, which was cut halfway.

**On Monday, June 13** at about 8pm, KPD took a report of a stolen catalytic converter in the 100 block of Edgcroft Road.

**On Thursday, June 16,** graffiti was discovered to have been spraypainted onto the Kensington tennis courts and equipment at Kensington Park.

**On Friday, June 17** at 8:22am, a driver pulled into the parking lot of Young’s Market and crashed into the wall. The driver was immediately contacted by concerned citizens to ensure the driver was not injured. Then, without explanation, the driver fled the area. KPD located the driver in Berkeley, and the driver was cited and released for misdemeanor hit & run. Had the driver parked further down the street to the right, the car would have crashed through the plate glass window.

**On Friday, June 17** at 11:49am, a suspicious vehicle was located near Ardmore and Coventry roads. When all was said and done, the sole occupant was arrested and booked into the Contra Costa County Jail for PC 1203.2-Probation Violation, Possession of Narcotics, Possession of a Controlled Substance, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, Possession of Burglary Tools and Appropriation of Lost Property.

**On Thursday, June 22** at 6:44pm, KPD responded to a disturbance in the 400 block of Yale Avenue. During the investigation, a handgun was located along with illegal psilocybin. The handgun was confiscated, and a member of the residence was arrested and transported to the county jail for Possession of Dangerous Drugs.



**On Wednesday, June 29** at about 5:25pm, a water main broke in the 600 block of Oberlin Avenue. The force of the water rushed downhill carrying mud and asphalt, which flooded the intersection of Arlington and Oberlin avenues. As a result of the water main break, a sinkhole was created and caused a vehicle to fall into the sinkhole and land directly on top of a gas main. Both lanes of Arlington Avenue were closed for hours until EBMUD and PG&E repaired the damage and removed the mudslide debris from the intersection. There was no gas leak and luckily nobody was hurt.

**On Thursday, June 30** at about 9:30am, a vehicle was stolen in a neighboring city and driven to Kensington before it ran out of gas at the end of Kensington Court. KPD responded and contacted a suspicious person who claimed the vehicle was his father’s vehicle. KPD officers detained the person but were initially unable to locate the registered owner. Not giving up, KPD was able to track down the owner who was camping somewhere near Denver, Colorado who in turn notified the local authorities. Once KPD received confirmation that the vehicle was reported stolen, KPD re-contacted the suspect who was caught trying to leave the scene. The suspect was transported and booked into the county jail for violation of Possession of a Stolen Vehicle and Probation Violation.

**On Friday, July 8** at about 11:45am, a large delivery truck was seen backing into a PG&E pole in the 100 block of Arlington Avenue. The driver fled the scene without stopping or notifying the police.

**On Tuesday, July 12** at about 12:15pm a vehicle pulled into the Ace Hardware parking lot and accidentally crashed into the retaining wall near the store. This is the third collision involving somebody slipping off the brakes and crashing into the wall in the past twelve months. Nobody was injured.

**On Friday, July 15** at about 3:45pm, an attempted fraud transaction was tried in the 100 block of Windsor Avenue. The homeowners received an alert from their Bank of America credit monitoring system, alerting them that somebody was trying to open an Alaskan Airlines Card in their name. The transaction was blocked, and the homeowner lost no money.

**On Saturday, July 16** during the middle of the night, a 1999, green Honda #8YQC778 was stolen from the 100 block of Ardmore Drive. While investigating the stolen vehicle, a gray Acura Integra was located with the engine running. Officers determined the vehicle had been previously reported as stolen. A DNA swab was conducted and submitted to the crime lab for processing. The two investigations are ongoing.

**On Thursday, July 28,** a local resident discovered that a personal check had been stolen in the mail, altered, and illegally cashed to an unknown person at a Mechanics Bank in Oakland.

**On Saturday, July 30** at about 5pm, a vehicle lost control on Windsor Avenue, crashed into numerous garbage cans, bushes and the curb before flattening the tires at the Kensington Park. The driver was transported to the hospital as a precaution and the cause of the collision is under full investigation. Luckily nobody was hurt.



## Swearing In and Awards at KPD

By Mike Gancasz, Chief of Police

On Saturday, August 6, the Kensington Police Department held an event to recognize exceptional service to the community on behalf of its officers. The event, originally scheduled for January, was delayed more than five months for every reason imaginable! Finally we were able to assemble 90 percent of the department in one place along with three KPPCSD directors and close family members of the officers. The Community Center was ground zero for the ceremony, and lunch was provided courtesy of Kinders Meats in Hercules. KPPCSD General Manager Tony Constantouros gave a welcome speech to start the ceremony off.

First on the list was Officer Megan Farley, who was officially sworn in with her family present. Megan’s father, a retired police officer, was asked to pin her badge. Next up was the issuance and pinning of a permanent badge for Officer Jose Fajardo. Jose recently completed 18 months of probation as a police officer.

Kensington officers on probation are issued a standard police badge with their employee number located in the center of the badge. When they successfully complete the probation period, they have the privilege of having their name included on the top of their issued badge. Most police departments do not offer this option. Law enforcement badges are typically recycled and issued to other officers during transfer, promotion, or after retirement.

Kensington’s policy of personalizing badges was introduced in 2021. If you see a patrol officer with his or her name emblazoned across the top of the badge, know that person definitely earned it. This policy is only afforded to officers and sergeants. Jose’s girlfriend pinned his badge, and his daughter and mom were in the audience to share the moment. Congratulations, Jose, you earned it!

### Several Earn Commendations and Awards

After the swearing-in and badges, several employees and officers were recognized for outstanding work. Retired Sheriff’s Captain J. Haynes, a part-time police consultant for KPD, was presented with a Chief’s Award for his extraordinary attention to detail assisting the Chief of Police with meeting the needs of the police department. Jason worked with the State of California Department of Justice to identify and dispose of dozens of departmental weapons, thus bringing KPD into compliance, He brought the Live Scan Fingerprint machine back on-line after almost three years of inactivity and completed many background investigations both sworn and non-sworn. Jason’s knowledge base and professionalism are second to none, and we are lucky to have him working with us.



Officer Megan Farley received a Chief’s Commendation for her work in the Patrol Division. Megan responded to a residential burglary in Kensington where several homes were ransacked. While collecting evidence, she was alerted to a suspicious person in the area. Megan contacted that person and through dialogue, determined the person was responsible for the burglaries. Megan recovered and returned stolen property to the victims and transported the suspect to jail. The District Attorney filed felony burglary charges based on Megan’s outstanding work. Megan was nominated for this award by her supervisor Detective Sergeant A. Nath.

Officer Jose Fajardo received a Chief’s Commendation for his work in the Patrol Division. Late at night, Jose conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for a moving violation. During his investigation, he determined the driver was unlicensed. Further investigation revealed the driver was carrying a loaded gun in his car. Jose didn’t stop there; he impounded the vehicle, arrested the driver and ran a check of the firearm. Turns out the gun was used in two separate homicides in Northern California. Jose contacted the detectives of those agencies to get them the evidence they were looking for. Great job, Jose!

Detective Sergeant A. Nath received two awards, a Chief’s Award and a Meritorious Service Award. Sgt. Nath has been instrumental in helping the Chief of Police complete many duties to get the police department to where it is today. He developed new (federally compliant) police identification cards, overhauled the concealed carry license program for retired Kensington officers, implemented electronic report filing with the District Attorney’s Office, developed a new efficient fleet maintenance program, completed a DMV audit of license plates registered to the district, which eliminated dozens of vehicles from the records, and developed a new employee appraisal form to recognize officers for work performed critical to the safety of Kensington. This is just a snapshot of the work he performs on a regular basis and it is well deserved.

Sgt. Nath received a meritorious service award for his investigative skill apprehending a suspect wanted in connection with an arson in Kensington. Sgt. Nath responded to a home on fire in Kensington where the home was a total loss. Nath worked tirelessly with fire investigators, witnesses, and allied agencies to identify a suspect. He authored an arrest warrant, presented it to a judge, then took his warrant to a city where he believed the suspect might seek refuge. He was right, and the suspect was apprehended within days of fleeing the scene. The District Attorney reviewed the investigation and charged the suspect with arson and animal cruelty. This was a textbook example of quality police work.

Lieutenant Brad Harms was recognized with a Unit Citation for the excellent leadership he provided supervising the traffic division in 2021. Brad showed his experience by writing a grant for funds from the Office for Traffic Safety. They awarded the District of Kensington more than \$40,000 for equipment, traffic software, and employee time. Kensington now



Police Awards

...from Page 4



Photos by Rosa Ruiz

has the most up-to-date traffic reporting system. The new program allows officers to send collision reports directly to the state for accurate reporting. This new method of reporting will enable Kensington to apply for grants annually.

Brad also brought the team together by deploying a dedicated traffic car, equipped with LED road flares, high visibility cones, calibrated radar equipment, and new graphics. Brad provided education and training on traffic enforcement to KPD officers that resulted in a 100 percent increase in moving violations issued to motorists. This was accomplished even though the patrol division operated understaffed for the entire year. In the coming months, Brad will install in-car cameras throughout the fleet to enhance the overall traffic safety program. Great job, Brad!!!

At the conclusion of the ceremony KPPCSD director and board president Sylvia Hacaj recognized the staff and attendees and was sincerely appreciative of everyone who attended that day. Directors in attendance included Mike Logan, Eileen Nottoli, and Rachelle Sherris-Watt who congratulated the officers, talked with family members and enjoyed lunch.

None of this would have been possible without the help of support staff Rosa Ruiz, who began working on this project with the chief several months ago. Rosa was instrumental in the design and purchase of the awards, reserving the Community Center, sending emails to staff, selecting the backdrop and tablecloths, and preparing the schedule of events. Thanks, Rosa! Our department would not be where it is today without the support of the community, board of directors, and the general managers who’ve served these past few years.

A CHANGING MARKET...  
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Like all of the East Bay, Kensington is facing a shifting real estate market. Buyer activity began to slow in June as a result of increasing mortgage rates and lower consumer confidence (not to mention many were out of town on summer vacation). This has created headwinds for Kensington sellers, with a steady decrease in both median price and the percent difference between list and sale price.

MEDIAN SALE PRICE OF SINGLE FAMILY HOMES IN KENSINGTON 2022

Month	Median Sale Price
MAY	\$1,910,000
JUNE	\$1,500,000
JULY	\$1,327,500

\*Data is sourced from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). MLS data is provided by individual listing brokerages. These are sources we deem reliable. We have no reason to doubt their accuracy, but we do not guarantee them. Past performance does not guarantee future performance.

Even though interest rates will likely increase in the coming months, mortgage rates are likely to decrease, which should spur buyer activity in Kensington. This is welcome news as more inventory is likely to hit the market after Labor Day.

Reach out to obtain a custom analysis on your neighborhood and the value of your home.

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### Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

The mailbox in the lower Arlington parking lot was back in business... momentarily. The drive-by box at the corner of Ardmore, Coventry and the Arlington, across from the stores, was replaced following its removal earlier in the year. You didn't have to park and exit your car to mail your letters. After gulping mail for about a month, it disappeared again in July. Perhaps it may magically rematerialize. If so, give it some mail; it might decide to stick around if it's fed.

*Photo by Brent Green.*

Partner with Worms

By Linnea Due

If you haven't boarded the worm train to benefit your garden, now's the time to sign up for the county's free virtual worm composting workshop. Instructor Todd Sutton presides over this entertaining class that will teach you how to successfully set up a composting system to produce the world's best additive for your garden.

Besides helping your garden with worm castings and liquid fertilizer, courtesy of the worms, you're aiding the planet. An estimated 700 pounds of material is deposited in landfills annually—per person! According to a recent California study, more than a third of that waste can be composted.

The class, sponsored by the county's Department of Conservation and Development, is held online on September 10, from 10am-noon. You can register by calling Maureen Parkes at (925) 655-2909 or emailing at [Maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us](mailto:Maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us). The Zoom link will be sent to you after registration.

ACC Presents Four-Part Series about End-of-Life Planning

By Pastor Celestine Fields

Everyone is invited to attend Arlington Community Church's webinar series addressing concerns about end-of-life planning. Please contact Pastor Celestine Fields at [pastorcelestinefields@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcelestinefields@gmail.com) if you are interested or have questions.

The series will be led by Dr. Stephanie Marquet, MD, Hospice & Palliative Medicine Specialist, Hospice of the East Bay, and Pastor Fields.

Three Zoom sessions are held on consecutive Fridays from 4-5:30pm, starting September 23. The last session, on October 14, is in-person, in the Social Hall at ACC. Health and goal-oriented care, spiritual needs and grieving, and legal matters are addressed, as well as important documents.

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# KPPCSD Candidate Statements

## Nine Vie for Six Seats in November Face-off

In this election cycle, nine Kensington residents are running for six director seats—three on each special district board. Five are up for the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD), which oversees the police department, parks and recreation, and the garbage contract. Four are running for the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD). These volunteer posts are difficult, often contentious, and require an enormous amount of time and focus. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to serve our community in this way. Below are statements by each candidate; next month the candidates will answer questions geared to each board.



**Alexandra Aquino-Fike**

I am running for KPPCSD Board Director because I love this community and want to help build a unified Kensington. Unfortunately, after more than two years of a global pandemic, we find ourselves as a divided community. I was raised in Kensington by parents and neighbors committed to this community. I witnessed their successful effort to create Kensington Park and my father’s service on the KPPCSD in the 1990s. Their dedication to these and other policy issues influenced my decision to study law (UC Berkeley) and public policy (Harvard)

Our town is facing serious financial difficulties. If elected, I will bring financial acumen—honed earlier in my career as a corporate restructuring attorney—to help solve Kensington’s fiscal challenges. As importantly, I will bring skills developed over ten years as a philanthropic community leader in the Bay Area: working with diverse stakeholders across many communities, building collaborations, and delivering solutions for complex problems.

Supporting my community is central to my core values. The current moment in Kensington will determine our town’s future direction. It is time for new voices and changemakers like me to step up to protect the park for recreation and open space, find community-engaged solutions to house both fire and police responders, and create a unified governing structure that eliminates dysfunction and inefficiency. I want to work with you, my neighbors, to build a healthy place for my two children and all generations of Kensingtonians. I ask for your vote to represent you on the KPPCSD board.



**Cassandra Duggan**

As a 27-year Kensington homeowner and a former Hilltop School & KASEP parent, I am concerned about Kensington’s Fire Board ejecting our Police Department from our Public Safety Building, with no approved affordable plan for a new home. I believe it is essential that the KPPCSD Board fight for the police department to remain in our PSB, or find an alternative, cost-effective solution that does not oust our children’s fabulous KASEP program from its home in beautiful Kensington Park.

If elected, I would work to have the KPPCSD find ways to preserve our park—in perpetuity—for recreation only. I believe we should consolidate Kensington’s two boards, to enhance financial efficiency and reduce division or territorialism between our public safety services. The consolidation of our districts would safeguard taxpayers’ interests and help steer us away from dangerous financial territory.

As a small business owner and professional therapist, I will bring financial management and excellent listening skills to help find paths that overcome Kensington’s financial challenges and that build collaborative, solutions-oriented coalitions. I fix messy and difficult situations for a living. I ask you for your vote for KPPCSD to enable me to do the same for Kensington.



**Gail Feldman**

Kensington is a unique community that needs directors who understand the complexities of local government and who will implement priorities that the community needs and supports. My 25-year career in municipal management makes me well equipped to find workable solutions to issues facing the KPPCSD. I hold a Master’s degree in Public Administration and worked in senior management positions for county administrators and city managers advising elected officials on fiscal and policy matters and conducting community engagement.

As a Director of the KPPCSD (1996-98), I kept the Bay-view Refuse contract under KPPCSD control, not county control, and implemented rate reviews to keep costs fair, adopted the Park Master Plan, negotiated a financially feasible compensation and benefit agreement with the Police Officers and negotiated the initial agreement with the KCC for use of Building E.

I was an appointee to the first Kensington Park Committee (1996) and Ad Hoc Committee for Governance and Operations Structure (2015-2016). I served as the President of the Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA) for over twenty years and continue to serve as a director.

I’m driven to serve on the KPPCSD again to ensure we are a well-run community, hire a permanent General Manager with the skills to move us forward, find a community acceptable solution to housing our police, maintain recreation facilities in the park, and pursue consolidation of our two districts (KPPCSD and KFPD). I believe that one elected government body for Kensington, the same model used by a majority of towns and cities, will improve decision-making, financial management, planning, and communication.

Additionally, consolidation will reduce the high costs of duplicate district administrations. I am endorsed by County Supervisor John Gioia; Eileen Nottoli, KPPCSD; Rachelle Sherris-Watt, Sylvia Hacaj, KPPCSD; Rob Firmin, KPOA; Kristine Hafner, KPOA; Dave Spath, KPOA; Candy Capogrossi, KPOA; Rick Artis, KPOA; Lisa Caronna, KIC (partial list). Please connect with me at Feldman4KPPCSD@gmail.com



**Sarah A. Gough**

Nonprofit Consultant/Advisor  
I am running to be a KPPCSD Board Director because I offer a fresh perspective and the determination to lead our community forward. I am a licensed California attorney with a law degree from UC Hastings where I graduated with a Public Interest Concentration. I have spent the vast majority of my career immersing myself in nonprofit and community related work. I co-founded a charitable foundation and launched another nonprofit in Hong Kong, my family’s home for 9 years. I have worked as a consultant, coach, caseworker, fundraising strategist, advisor, grant writer, and mentor to women internationally.

Over the years, I have also developed budgets and business plans, facilitated meetings with professional teams and communities, and forged compromises and solutions among people with diverse priorities. As Vice-President of the Kensington Improvement Club, I led the initiative to improve the parking lot on Arlington Avenue and the park on Coventry Road because I refused to accept a declining Kensington. We can do better and we can do more.

If elected, I will work with stakeholders to find a sensible, permanent police home in Kensington that does not negatively impact our park or other services. I will also collaborate with the Fire District and the County, propose modest but impactful improvements to Kensington Park, engage residents, and prioritize sustainable waste management. Finally, I will advocate for streamlining our government into a single board to more efficiently address the issues most important to Kensingtonians.



**Mike Logan**  
Incumbent

I respectfully seek your support to continue my work on the KPPCSD Board. I stepped forward to join the Board following a vacancy in 2021 to continue the progress the KPPCSD has made and address the many challenges that lie ahead. Those challenges include finding a permanent home for the police and a permanent General Manager. I’ve served on the Finance Committee, am on the Community Emergency Response Team for my neighborhood, and volunteered for Kensington’s recent emergency evacuation drill.

Over the past year as a Board Member, I have worked to find possible locations to site the police and administration and advocated for additional resources for the park. I worked with our General Manager on repairs to stairs in the park and with the Kensington Improvement Club to renovate the newly named Elsie Neilson Park. I support the growing community interest in consolidating the KPPCSD and the KFPD. I am open-minded and ready, willing, and able to find solutions that meet both the District and the community needs.

My wife and I chose to live in Kensington 25 years ago after looking at many communities in the Bay Area. Our two daughters grew up in Kensington, attended Kensington Hilltop Elementary and took many KASEP classes. I enjoyed volunteering at the school, especially with the Dad’s Club. Now that I am semi-retired from film work and financial advising, I am enjoying the opportunity to serve our wonderful community on the KPPCSD Board. Thank you for your vote.

## League of Women Voters Discuss Ballot Propositions

By Pastor Celestine Fields  
Come to Arlington Community Church on Thursday, September 29, at 7pm to learn from a representative of the League of Women Voters about the upcoming election. The presentation will include pro and con information concerning propositions on November’s ballot.



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# KFPD Candidate Statements

## Season’s First Forum Gives Residents Opportunity to Meet District Board Candidates

By Irene Tait and Catherine de Neergaard

The Kensington Democratic Club [KDC] will host the KDC Candidate Night on Tuesday September 13, at 7pm. A virtual meeting over Zoom, this is a time where KDC members and the public can discuss local issues with candidates running for our two Kensington district boards who are being considered for endorsement by the KDC membership.

The Kensington Police Protection and Community Service District [KPPCSD] board has three out of five seats up for grabs in November, as does the Kensington Fire Protection District [KFPD] board.

The KDC is an official club of the Democratic Party. Started in 2019, it is currently led by KDC board president Irene Tait. The KDC endorsement process starts with the KDC board interviewing qualified candidates for the two special district boards. According to the KDC bylaws, approved by the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County, the KDC can only endorse registered Democrats.

Members of the public interested in attending must RSVP by contacting [info@kensingtondemocraticclub.org](mailto:info@kensingtondemocraticclub.org) to receive a Zoom link for the September 13 meeting. You can also submit questions for the candidates at the same email address. Kensington residents are welcome to participate in the KDC Candidate night. To become a member of the KDC, go to [kensingtondemocraticclub.org/join-us/](https://kensingtondemocraticclub.org/join-us/).



**Janice Kosel**  
Incumbent

**Reduced Operation Costs.** I supported the Fire District’s initial contract for services with El Cerrito resulting in significantly reduced operating costs. We have one of the lowest operating expenses of any fire station in the Bay Area. The District has received many compliments on its service—and not a single complaint since 1995.

I supported having at least one paramedic on each medical response team. Our average response time is less than five minutes

**Lowered Fire Risk.** I supported the water system improvements program to increase water supply and hydrants throughout Kensington. The result is that there is now sufficient water flow to serve two engines on the ridge, and this spring the national insurance industry rating agency raised the District’s fire safety rating to a 1; only 1 percent of communities in the nation have earned that rating.

**Fiscal Excellence.** Under my leadership, the District prefunded all medical obligations to its retirees and their families, and the District also set aside cash reserves for replacement engines. This means that when Kensington needs a new engine, there is money to pay for it.

**Public Safety Building.** I voted against every proposal to put the PSB in the Park, and I supported the essential seismic renovations of the PSB to provide a safer work environment for our firefighters and better ensure their ability to respond in the event of a natural disaster.

I respectfully ask for your vote to continue my efforts to improve our Fire District’s ability to meet community needs.



**Daniel Levine**  
Research Scientist

I want our town’s future to be marked by effective government that serves as a responsible manager of the taxpayers’ dollars and guardian of our local resources. After completing my PhD in chemistry at UC Berkeley, my wife and I settled in Kensington for what we hope are many decades and we want to see Kensington continue to thrive. As a scientist, my job is to find new solutions to difficult problems, and, currently, Kensington faces several challenges.

I am running for the KFPD board to bring a new perspective and a spirit of collaboration. Rather than work in concert to ensure our municipal functions operate safely and effectively, the KFPD has acted considering only its own needs and not those of the Kensington community as a whole. I strongly support consolidation of our two boards into one so that major decisions are made holistically. I would work with the KPPCSD board to find their best location, within the Public Safety Building or elsewhere if that can be done in a fiscally responsible way without impacting other Kensington services.

At the same time, I will also work to improve our preparedness in the event of wildfires or earthquakes, including pursuing untapped state and federal funding for vegetation man-

agement and early warning systems. Emergency preparedness will benefit from improved cooperation between our police and fire departments.

A unified Kensington government will be more efficient, capable, and responsive than our current fractured structure. With your vote, I would work to make this a reality.



**Julie Stein**  
Incumbent

I have lived in Kensington for 32 years and have raised my children here, relying on KASEP classes and KCC summer camp located in Kensington’s beautiful park. When I ran for election in 2018, I focused on revitalizing emergency preparedness and public engagement. Now I am running in 2022 to secure a permanent home for the Kensington Police Department before commencing any renovation or remodeling work on the Kensington Public Safety Building, while preserving Kensington Park for recreation and ensuring that Kensington’s combined financial reserves will support our town’s needs during and after a major disaster.

As Chief Operating Officer for a nonprofit publicly funded company, I have 27 years of experience managing finances and taxpayers’ resources. With a UC Berkeley PhD in Engineering, I am trained to find creative and sustainable solutions for the tough problems facing Kensington.

During my first term, I brought innovation to the KFPD with modern business technology that freed staff to focus on the District’s core mission. I voted “yes!” to make Kensington an early adopter of prioritized evacuation zones and for a revitalized Emergency Preparedness Committee. I have strongly disagreed, however, with the fire board’s current plan to eliminate the police from the Public Safety Building.

Now, Kensington faces serious challenges with a costly renovation of this building, which has housed fire and police services since 1970. I will pursue a fiscally responsible solution to ensure that both agencies have a safe, effective home in Kensington, while protecting Kensington’s open spaces for community use and preserving crucial financial reserves to ensure disaster resiliency and pursue emergency warning systems, aggressive fuel abatement, and partnerships to underground utilities.

With limited revenue to support modernized public safety service delivery, we must explore reorganizing Kensington’s two districts into one unified district. This will enable a resilient and efficient staffing structure, flexibility to allocate resources for shifting demands, optimized budgeting, and, most importantly, improved coordination and cooperation between fire and police in a disaster.

I respectfully seek your vote to build better solutions for Kensington’s future and to ensure that the voices of Kensington residents are heard!



**Jim Watt**  
Finance, Local Politics

I've resided in Kensington most of my life, and, with my wife, raised two children. I was the local scoutmaster and led groups on week-long Sierra trips for 25 years. I've followed Kensington politics for 10 years, attended most board meetings and served on the KPPCSD finance committee. With a background in real estate and finance, I am very familiar with Kensington's financial issues.

I’m concerned about Kensington’s pending economic problems. With separate boards representing fire and police, the Fire Board is planning a costly Public Safety Building remodel with no room for police. The proposed PSB remodel will saddle the Fire District with long-term debt and little, if any, available funds to prepare the community for a fire from Tilden Park or a Hayward fault earthquake. The KPPCSD has not identified a relocation option for police that is acceptable, and has limited funds to complete its own relocation. Because of our bifurcated governmental structure both boards are facing significant economic costs and revenues increases limited by Prop 13.

It does not need to be this way. If elected I would attempt to find a solution for locating both fire and police in the PSB, and would only consider otherwise if a suitable and cost-effective plan for a separate police department could be found. I strongly favor consolidating the two boards for economies of scale and creating a government that is unified, like all other California communities. I would greatly appreciate your vote to accomplish these objectives.

## KIC Town Hall Features Candidate Forum

By Linda Lipscomb, board president, KIC

The Kensington Improvement Club’s annual Town Hall, membership meeting, and Candidates Forum will be held on Saturday, October 1, by Zoom from 10:00am-noon. County Supervisor John Gioia will speak at the meeting and a Candidates Forum will follow. The Candidates Forum will be jointly sponsored by KIC and the Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA). On November 8, Kensington residents will be voting for candidates to fill seats on both the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District Board (KPPCSD), and the Kensington Fire Protection District Board (KFPD). Candidates will make presentations, and questions, including from the community, will be presented to candidates by the moderator.

The KIC Town Hall Meeting is a popular event that provides an informal setting for citizens to meet local representatives and community volunteers. All Kensington residents are invited. Speaker presentations and candidates forum will be preceded by a short meeting of the club membership. Zoom link will be sent via direct mail to all residences, on Next Door, and by email to members.

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K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education



Check out KCC’s new website at  
KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org

Welcome back Families! Fall KASEP is here and we are very excited about the fall KASEP line up of afterschool classes.

- Registration opens Tuesday, August 30th at 7:00pm for kindergarten classes and 7:30pm for Grades 1-6. Online registration is at KensingtonCommunity-Council.org
- The class schedule and brochure was sent in the Hilltop e-tree on August 25th. There are hard copies available at the KCC office, Hilltop office and the Kensington library.
- Classes start the week of September 12th.

We are thrilled 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. New this year we have partnered with Kassirer Sports to provide some engaging sports classes at the park. They will bring Track and Field, Pickle ball and Basketball to KASEP. We also have a new Martial Arts instructor Fernando Gutierrez who you may know from his instruction at Growing Light preschool. Another local artist, Nikki Sund will be teaching Hula Hooping class for grades 1-4. Check out a complete list of Fall classes on our website KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/KASEP

KCC Fall Picnic Returns Sunday October 23rd

Join us for this long time tradition at the Kensington Community Center with music from the Fred T. Korematsu Middle School jazz band and BBQ lunch.

Parent Toddler Yoga Class is Back

**Family yoga** (for parent/caregiver plus kids aged 2 to 5)  
Tuesdays @ 10:00am starting September 20th

Come join Lori Hess with Way to Glow Kids Yoga for some family yoga time where parents and kids will playfully explore yoga poses, breathing exercises, and mindfulness activities together. Family Yoga (kids aged 2 to 5) on Tuesdays @ 10:00 - 10:45 on the lawn outside the Kensington Community Center and Family Yoga on Saturdays @ 10:00 - 10:45 (kids aged 2 to 5) and 11:00 - 11:45 (kids aged 6 to 12) on the lawn outside the KCC office/Recreation Building (past the tennis courts). Tuesday classes run 9/20 - 10/25 and Saturday classes run 9/24 - 10/29. If possible, please bring a waterproof blanket/tarp, two yoga mats (we will have extra mats available if you need), warm layers in case it is chilly, and a water bottle. Masks are optional. Suggested cost: \$25 per parent/child pair plus \$5 for each additional family member. Sign up for the 6 week session or drop in as you are able. Contact waytoglowkidsyoga@gmail.com with questions about the class.

**Adult Yoga Class at the Community Center**  
Tuesdays 8:30am Teacher Anja Borgstrom  
Cost is \$20 drop in or register online

**Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi**  
Wednesdays 9:30-11:00am  
Fridays 9:30-11:00am  
Drop-in fee is \$15

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

KCC SUMMER CAMP

Thank you for your support of the KCC Summer Camp Program. We had lots of fun this year with visits from Circus of Smiles, The East Bay Vivarium, a petting zoo and the local fire and police departments. We had an amazing group of camp counselors that created a fun and safe environment for more than 60 campers each week.

A special thanks to our returning Camp Director, Kelly Barry for an amazing job keeping the camp running safe and creating lots of great activities and games for all of the kids, our Co-Head Counselors Jack McDermott and Madison Heath and our super team of camp counselors Anna Thomsen, Ailish Smith, Will Diego, Leah Forrest, Finn Goodman, Jake Abt, Cole Wallace-Wayne, Natalie Beban, Kaleb Paige, Ari Henry, Sierra Parks, Ayaz Earley, Aidan Thornton, Helen Stephens, Sacha Fenczik and Lior Zvik. And we can’t forget our fearless CITs and master lanyard makers Sylvie Diego and Brenna Moore along with Cooper Heath, Ethan Goldstein, Jack Macky-Williams, Pasha Azar, Owen McMurtrie & Kyle Chan.



We had a record number of campers on our waitlist this year. We tried hard to accommodate as many as we could. Mark your calendars and register early for summer camp 2023. Camp registration opens Tuesday, February 28th, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Puppy Training-1 Class (4 weeks)

Tuesdays 5:30-6:30pm beginning Sept. 6th  
Basic Puppy Training for dogs under 6 months of age. We will be in a secure space restricted to 10 dogs. There will be times of free play and times of structured (training) play

Puppy Training-2 Class (4 weeks)

Tuesdays 6:45-7:45pm beginning Sept. 6th  
Basic Puppy Training for dogs over 6 months of age. We will be in a secure space restricted to 10 dogs. There will be times of free play and times of structured (training) play

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

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only.  
KPPCSD Court Fees: 1 hour reservations- residents:  
\$7 non-residents \$10.

Rental info: Please call Rosa at KPPCSD (510)526-4141

The Kensington *Outlook* can now be found at: KensingtonOutlook.com  
Archive copies can also be found on our website dating back to 2003.

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









Letters

...from Page 3

Our Kensington Park

Dear Editor:

As a child growing up in Kensington, and now as an adult raising a child in Kensington, I highly value both the police/fire and the recreational and park space. They are not exclusive, and one does not win out over the other. However, my son’s childhood experience will be fondly remembered by both of us as weekends and evenings playing in the grass with friends, the breeze coming up the hill, the sunsets, the laughter and the freedom that the free space of the park allows.

When I’m older, and no longer have a child to watch playing in the park, I want nothing less than the freedom of space, play, camp, summer fun, and friends for those who come after us. The sounds of laughter and pure childhood freedom should be enough to leave this space to our children and those who come after us.

Megan Arganbright

Scrambling Eggs

Dear Editor:

The June Citizen Forum piece, “It is Time to Consolidate Into One Efficient District,” presented seemingly compelling arguments, but some were supported by misleading statements. For example, the authors emphasized the unequal distribution of “property taxes” to Kensington’s two districts, with “over two times as much for fire as for police, parks, and refuse” and pointed out that the single district would get “all property tax revenue and additional special fees.”

It is true that fire (KFPD) gets over twice as much ad valorem property tax revenue as police (KPPCSD). However, after passage of Prop 13 in 1978, each district levied a special tax on property owners. The fire tax is still \$83 per single-family property, whereas the police tax was increased from \$45 to \$300 in the ‘90s and a second \$200 tax added in 2010. KPPCSD’s special taxes are now almost \$600 per property.

The argument about the disparity in property taxes was deceptive because it only addressed the 1% property tax — and tried to disguise special taxes as “fees” although they are identified as taxes in both districts’ documents and account for nearly half of KPPCSD’s tax revenue.

The article stated: “Unification will increase efficiency and transparency.” A single consolidated district should be more efficient and might be more transparent, but that will only happen through sound management and good governance, and not by simply combining all the eggs in one skillet for a jumbo-combo scramble.

If you are interested in how your own tax dollars are split between the two districts based on the assessed value of your property, go to <https://kensingtonca.org/fiscal-issues-pension-benefits-calpers-taxes/> and look at “Distribution of Ad Valorem and Special Property Taxes and Assessments to KPPCSD and KFPD.”

A. Stevens Delk

Kensington Contributes Big to Ukraine

Dear Editor:

To all those who volunteered, attended, donated and otherwise supported the Kensington Benefit for Ukraine, my deepest thanks—especially to the volunteers. The benefit went well. Approximately 80 folks attended. This was in the context of a busy day for Ukrainian benefits: at least two other major events were held simultaneously in the Bay Area. I was pleased to see an engaged, high-quality crowd. I was also pleased to be able to have a Ukrainian cultural exhibit, ‘Art of Ukraine,’ attend.

The hour-long amphitheater presentation went beyond my expectations and included the playing of the Ukrainian national anthem, a performance by the Zoloti Maky Ukrainian Dance Ensemble, and presentations by the charities, detailing their respective efforts in Ukraine.

Regarding donations, \$55,387 is known to have been contributed. More, particularly mailed-in checks, have not been listed on the four KB dedicated charity web pages. My “ballpark” guesstimate is that approximately \$60,000 was raised.

Finally, thank you all for your involvement. On a personal level, it was wonderful to do.

Michael Baar

Mark Your Calendars for the Return of Kensington’s Fall Picnic

By Sylvia Elsbury

Kensington community volunteers are coming together to restore a treasured neighborhood event: the annual October picnic in Kensington Park. Suspended since 2020 by the COVID pandemic, the fall picnic has been a Kensington tradition for over 60 years.

The Kensington Community Council (KCC) is thrilled to announce that together with the Friends of Kensington Library and the Arlington Community Church, we are planning a fall picnic, Sunday, October 23 in Kensington Park!

The beloved annual Blessing of the Animals, presented by Arlington Community Church, will once again welcome neighborhood pets to the fall picnic. Festivities will take place in and around the Kensington Community Center; this will be the first opportunity for many community members to enjoy the building since its renovation. One of its nicest features is a wall of glass doors that opens up the building to the lawn, providing ample room for crowd flow and plenty of fresh air circulation.

Music to accompany this festive gathering will be provided by the amazing Fred T. Korematsu Middle School jazz band under the direction of Tiffany Carrico. KCC will sell picnic lunches that typically includes sausages, hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers.

Also on picnic day, October 23, in the library parking lot below the Community Center, the Friends of Kensington Library will hold its annual fall book sale — another beloved Kensington tradition.

**Did You Notice Something Missing?**

Okay, it’s true, there is no parade this year, just the picnic (and the blessing and the book sale and jazz and lunches!). In recent years, there’s been a dearth of viewers—fun for participants, but few to watch as the parade goes by. We have decided to put the parade on hold for this year, but if there’s a huge public outcry, we may bring it back in ’23. But meanwhile...

Whether you are reconnecting with old friends or discovering the fall picnic for the first time, KCC and its community partners all look forward to seeing you and yours (two-legged and four-legged) October 23!

Church Parking Lots

...from front page

north half by ACC. Miers listed goals he addressed in his study: parking for seven patrol cars, a public entrance and a secure private entrance, around 2,800 square feet for police and district administration. By the end of the meeting it seemed clear that Building E, standing above the end of a residential cul-de-sac with no parking, was a bad fit, the Annex only marginally better, and the parking lot on the Arlington a possibility.

Miers elected to advance designs using the modular building that will house the police and district administration during the reconstruction of the PSB. That building now is sited on San Pablo Avenue near El Cerrito City Hall. The police district is spending almost \$70,000 on modifications to the modular, with the idea that in the end it would be most cost-effective to buy or lease that building to move to a new location in Kensington.

Miers presented three options to site the modular in the Arlington parking lot. But those drawings made it clear that the location has serious problems, some of which the board directors tried to address in follow-up questions. Miers’ preferred location uses almost the entirety of the church parking lot, the north side, for about half the modular building and all of the department’s patrol cars. Scuttlebutt around town opined that the church wouldn’t allow any of its lot to be used by the district, much less all of it. (See Letters to the Editor, page 3; sometimes rumors are correct.)

Directors asked Miers if a long, narrow modular couldn’t be sited against a dug-out hill beneath the Community Center, solely on the district half, which would also hopefully maintain some public parking on the west side of the district’s lot. Other questions asked why the police needed parking for seven patrol cars (not to mention private vehicles), if administration could be housed elsewhere to reduce building size, what next steps were needed to determine if a modular could be built into the hill and what kind of retaining wall would be needed, whether Kensington Park Road could be narrowed to allow more space for parking and/or building. In the end, all five directors decided to focus on the parking lot rather than on the Annex or the Recreation Building.

**Another Solution?**

In late July, Jim Watt submitted alternative plans he had commissioned that would keep the police (not administration of either district) in the Public Safety Building, drawn up by an architect with a resume of over fifty public safety structures. Reactions to those plans were to be discussed during the August meeting of the fire district, and perhaps the police district as well, but both meetings were cancelled. The fire board cited the absence of its general manager, who was attending to a family emergency, while police board president Sylvia Hacaj said by email that the closed meeting planned for August 11 was likely to go long and that “The Aug. meeting has often been cancelled if nothing required action by Aug. 30.”

**Ten File for Directors’ Seats**

The county elections office fielded a slew of filings for the six special district seats up for election this November: three seats on each district board of five directors. In the October *Outlook*, the special elections issue, candidates for each district will have the opportunity to answer a set of questions geared to each board. In this issue, readers can examine the candidate’s statements, published in full. Stay tuned for a spirited campaign season.

Ten candidates made the initial filings with the county, with nine completing the process to run for office. Candidates for the Kensington Fire Protection District are incumbents Janice Kosel and Julie Stein; joining them on the ballot are Jim Watt and Daniel Levine. Only one incumbent tossed his hat in for the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District, Mike Logan. Also running for the police board are Sarah Gough, Cassandra Duggan, Alexandra Aquino-Fike, and Gail Feldman.

Incumbents Rachelle Sherris-Watt, Chris Deppe, and Kevin Padian chose not to run. We thank them for their service during a fractious time for our district boards.

Cuban Dance Music, Ice Cream

By Pastor Celestine Fields

The final mini summer concert at Arlington Community Church is Sunday, August 28 at 1pm. Come see Javier Naverette’s Socially Distant Trio perform a 45-minute set of Cuban dance music, Latin Jazz standards, and a mix of Brazilian/Jazz. Cool down with ice cream for all ages and a picnic basket raffle. Beautiful handcrafted jewelry will also be for sale. We hope to see you there!



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School

...from front page

Ye Old School Trail. No visitors will be allowed on campus unless they havechecked into the front office first. Please see the map that delineates the areas that are now off-limits during school hours. The public can still access Ye Old School Trail from the front of school entrance.

We are working through a process with the district officials and our own emergency prep team to ensure clear signage is in place on and around our campus. As we work through this process we ask that the community respect these new boundaries for the safety and security of our school community.

Please reference the photos that show our SPoE as the front office entrance of Kensington School. This is the only location for entering or exiting Kensington School during school hours.

Two additional items that need your attention: If you witness any suspicious activity on or near Kensington School, the “See Something, Say Something” signs provide a phone number or QR code for you to use. Also, please make sure all pets are on leash and under control at all times when walking them in front of the school or along the available trail access near the school.

Thank you so very much for your cooperation and care for our school community. Together we can make choices that keep everyone safe.



Library Hosts Math Club and More

By Kara Sheetz

On Fridays at 10am, Baby and Toddler Storytime is going full blast! Fun stories, songs, action rhymes, shaky eggs, and more! Great for increasing early literacy skills, making friends, and just having a great time! Older siblings are welcome. Free. No registration required.

Tuesdays at 6:30 is Family Storytime. Expect lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Free. No registration required. Another event for kids is on Saturdays at 11:30am. Math Club is for grades 3-6. Kids who love puzzles should join the club! No math skills needed. Each meeting will cover a different math topic using puzzles and activities. The club will expand on math concepts students are already learning at school—in a fun way. Free. No registration required.

Adults can score one-on-one tech help with the library’s Tech Docent. Get help with library resources or build basic computer skills. Bring your own device or use one of the library’s computers. Contact the library to schedule an appointment.



Still on Zoom is the book club, which meets every 4th Monday. The club is open to all and alternates between classic and contemporary literature. For club selections and how to join the Zoom meetings, call the library at 510-524-3043. You can also visit online at [ccclib.org/events](http://ccclib.org/events).

**Library Closed First Two Weeks of September**

The Kensington Library will close for two weeks from Monday, August 29 through Monday, September 12 while the building undergoes roof repairs. The library will reopen on Tuesday, September 13 at noon.

The last day to pick up holds will be Saturday, August 27. Holds not picked up before then will remain on the shelf through Saturday, September 17. Book drops will not be available during the closure. The library is fine-free, and books returned after the due date will not be charged daily fines.

Patrons may place holds for pick-up and return books at the nearby El Cerrito or San Pablo branches or at any other Contra Costa County Library.

Finding Peace in a Pandemic

By Linnea Due

Artist Diane Rusnak has a wealth of dream material underpinning her art; she has kept a record of her dreams for most of her life and belongs to a dream-sharing group of fellow artists, a group now in its thirtieth year. Her new show, “Inner and Outer Images During the Pandemic,” at Kensington’s library, combines dreams of the past couple years with drawings of flowers that provided calm while she was locked down.

As a child, Rusnak says she always “did art. Where I lived, art was copying things, and I was a good copyist.” In sixth grade her regular teacher was an art teacher: “I was the class artist.”

Years later, when she began teaching art, she channeled those childhood experiences. “I tried to encourage everyone,” she says. “Almost everyone has the potential to create original art at any age, whether they’re a kid or ninety years old.”

She went to Ohio State, where she “entered the world of abstract expressionism and art history. I was an abstractionist in oil painting for years until 1971.” That was the year she returned to California after a sojourn on the east coast. The change in venue provoked a new direction in her art.

“At that point, I started to work with dreams and symbols in acrylic instead of oil. I went into feminism and feminist art. I began to research and teach about women artists. We created collectives, ran galleries.” Anyone who lived through the early ‘70s remembers this heady time of unlimited possibilities, of locked doors bludgeoned open with moxie and sheer energy.

“That changed my art life in a big way,” she says. “It could be more personal and expressive of women’s experiences. I used dreams as an entry into deeper knowledge. I think there are many ways to get in touch with the deeper self. In this culture dreams are not honored. Dreams are full of metaphors, and you can learn more about yourself and the wider world if you have a therapist or a dream group.”

Rusnak soon joined the International Association for the Study of Dreams, serving as a juror for the conference’s art shows. “I thrive with being in groups, being in touch with other artists, being a community art teacher rather than isolating with my own art process.” Rusnak taught at Vista College, Contra Costa College, and JFK University, mentoring thousands of students before she retired.

“This show,” she says, “is about reaching out to the community, creating the inner and outer imagery that I worked with during the pandemic. I’m showing flowers for the first time.” While staying home, she rediscovered her Prismacolor pencils in storage, and soon she began drawing the spring flowers blooming outside her studio. She wrote in her artist’s statement: “It was meditative to imitate their contours with the pencils, an act that felt like touching them.”

“Everyone can learn how to do contour drawing,” she explains. “You’re training yourself to focus on the edge of shapes very slowly. The color is done very lightly deliberately. You have to step up to see the work.”

The show is mounted until September 14. Come by and stand close to fully enjoy these thoughtful, quiet drawings.



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To make recycling easier, we're bringing a Zero Waste Art Supply Recycling Box to our community again this year. **WHICH SUPPLIES ARE RECYCLABLE?** Drop off pens, pencils, markers, paints, art brushes, empty paint tubes, watercolor palettes, crayons, charcoals, sponges, notebooks and tape.

A Zero Waste Art Supply Recycling Box will be on the sidewalk outside the Zip Code East Bay office, at 388 Colusa Ave, each Sunday in September. Swing by anytime during the Kensington Farmers' Market from 10am-2pm to recycle your used art supplies.

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