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Get Rid of Those Weeds!

By Brenda Navellier

Kensington is in a “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.” Both fire district ordinance and state law require that all home and property owners remove flammable vegetation around their residences. Protecting your home and our community from the devastating effects of wildfire is the property owner’s responsibility.

KFPD requests voluntary compliance and citizen involvement in the reduction of fire hazards. Fire department personnel will check for compliance with these standards beginning in May and will be issuing noncompliance notices to properties

in violation by mid-June. Non-compliant properties will be declared a nuisance by the KFPD board at its July meeting. If the non-compliant property is still not voluntarily abated, the district will abate the property for the homeowner and add the cost, including administrative fees, to the property owner’s property tax bill.

In the past, voluntary compliance by the community has been outstanding, and we look forward to everyone’s cooperation once again. If you need guidance in resolving a fire hazard, please call fire prevention officer Damien Carrion at (510) 215-4457 for assistance. To download a file of vegetation management guidelines, go to www.kensingtonfire.org/fire-hazard-reduction-standards.



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— Bringing the Community Together —

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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JUNE 2019

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VOLUME 77 NUMBER 6



New Adventures, Old Friends

Photo: Renee Hoyer-Nielsen

Kensington high school seniors off to new lives gathered on a sunny Sunday for the annual photo shoot for graduates. Filled with pizza and conversation, the seniors met friends, some of whom had not seen each other since their days at Kensington Hilltop. Let’s wish them the best of luck and continued adventures.

Front row, left to right: Shavase Shine, Albany High School, SCAD Art School; Coby Fan, Saint Mary’s College High School, University of Colorado, Boulder; Tyler Kavanaugh-Lynch, Maybeck High School, Emerson College; Haven Hibser, Oakland School for the Arts, Art Institute of Chicago; Tava Roby, Albany High, UC Santa Cruz; Tal Zvik, El Cerrito High School, enlisted into the Navy; Hannah Lane-Goldstein, ECHS, undecided; Jane Yarnell, ECHS, St. Andrews University; Flynn Cooper, Saint Mary’s College HS, UC Santa Barbara; Matt Garrison, ECHS, Cal Poly SLO; Isabella Mastevson, ECHS, UC Santa Cruz; Nolan Lojo, Saint Mary’s College HS, SF State.

Second row, l to r: Uma Owens, Albany High, Contra Costa Comm. College; George Miller, ECHS, Reed College; Amelia Meacham, ECHS, University of Puget Sound; Sophia Ortiz, ECHS, University of San Francisco; Eliana Tucker, Saint Mary’s College HS, UC Santa Barbara; Madeleine Daganzo, Saint Mary’s College HS, Chico State; Madeline Kaneko, Berkeley High, University of Washington; Elisabeth Wing, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Suzanne Nalle, Albany High, San Diego State; Grace Murphy, Albany High, College of Marin; Kalina Phillips, Saint Mary’s College HS, New York University; Georgia Thomsen, Albany High, Saint Mary’s College; Abigail Cain, ECHS, UC Davis; Nathan Magid, Jewish Community High School, Chapman University.

Back row, l to r: Jamaica Kalika, Albany High, Howard University; Nic Lauxman, Saint Mary’s College HS, University of Missouri @ Columbia; Will Blevins, Saint Mary’s College HS, University of Colorado, Boulder; Eamon Hartigan-O’Connor, Head-Royce, Brown University; Julian Holdenried, Saint Mary’s College HS, Denver University; Eamon Sherris-Watt, Saint Mary’s College HS, UC Santa Cruz; Noah Hattevick, Saint Mary’s College HS, University of Oregon, Aidan Ferguson, ECHS, Emerson College; Campbell Moco, ECHS, UC San Diego; Charlie Meacham, ECHS, San Jose State; Graham Adamson, ECHS, Boston College; Max Mueller, ECHS, Contra Costa; Taiyo Keilin, ECHS, UCLA; Reilly Manton, The Branson School, UCLA; Evan Quan, ECHS, UC Santa Barbara; Evan Garrison, ECHS, UCLA; Sebastian Dunn, ECHS, UC Santa Cruz; Beatrice Weier, Acalanes High School, Cal Poly SLO; Anna Weier, UC Riverside.

Not pictured: Luka Erdtmann, Berkeley High, Clearwater International Academy; Jack Flinchbaugh, Gunn High School, Tuffs University; Aaron Moore, ECHS, UC Berkeley.

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We welcome our new agents Angela Xu and Leigh Schneider to Marvin Gardens.

Xiaodong (Angela) Xu

We are proud to welcome Angela Xu to our Kensington office. Originally from northeast China, Angela worked in the tech industry before immigrating to the States in 2009, where she found a love of real estate. “I enjoy working with all different kinds of people. I listen and I care about your satisfaction.” - Angela
angela@marvingardens.com 510.621.8100

Leigh Schneider

We are proud to welcome Leigh Schneider as our newest Marvin Gardens agent. Formerly with The Grubb Company, Leigh is excited to be working locally in the area she has known and loved for over fifteen years. Her passion for homes and helping others realize their real estate dreams are what inspire her. Leigh shares her home with her two sons, both in our local public schools, and her Bernese Mountain dog, Lola. leigh@marvingardens.com 510.390.0857

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We Know and Love the East Bay

Letters to the Editor

Mapping the Paths

To the Editor:

A colorful, new pamphlet on the Kensington paths has been created that includes a beautiful map and information on steps our Pathkeepers group is taking to ensure public access to routes that are useful today but potentially lifesaving in the event of a wildfire. This free pamphlet can be picked up at Raxakoul Coffee and Cheese on Arlington Ave. as well as each Sunday at the Kensington Farmer’s Market on Colusa Circle. The map makes finding the paths easy and can be used for hikes throughout Kensington.

The Pathkeepers continue to seek accounts of residents who have used the paths before 1972. This information can help us make the case that the paths are a public resource to which we should all have permanent, legal access. You can get more information on the paths and subscribe to news updates on our website, KesingtonPathkeepers.org.

Rodney Paul

Moving Past Gas

Dear Editor,

Reading of the Delforge’s greening their Kensington home (“350 Reasons to Make Your Home Eco-Smart”) was inspiring. Of particular note to me was their transition away from natural gas, resulting in what they describe as a healthier and more comfortable home. We often associate such benefits with a financial cost, but the appliances to heat our homes and water and cook with electricity are now on par with their fossil fuel brethren, and these appliances are so efficient that one’s energy bill should remain the same. There are even aesthetically cozy options to replace gas fireplaces.

Beyond creating a safer and more comfortable home, moving on from natural gas is a very positive step forward for our environment. Methane, which makes up about 90 percent of natural gas, is thirty times more potent a greenhouse gas than CO2, and our natural gas extraction and delivery infrastructure is very leaky, as can be our own meters and internal plumbing. Meantime, our electric grid gets greener every day, and we in Kensington have the option of choosing 100 percent renewable electricity with our local procurer, MCE. Our household will be joining the Delforges. I urge my fellow K-residents to consider the same, and would be delighted to share what information I have (meldanheaslip@gmail.com).

Meldan Heaslip

Where Will Our Police Department Go?

Dear Editor:

I’m not talking about the outsourcing issue, but where the police will be housed in Kensington. Currently both our fire and police departments occupy the Public Safety Building (PSB) at 217 Arlington Avenue, owned by the fire district.

The PSB urgently needs renovation or replacement for safety reasons. To renovate the existing building to current seismic safety standards could reduce the space, leaving no room for the police. The fire district has identified what may be the only suitable location in Kensington for a new PSB for both departments on the park hillside adjacent to the library, a currently unused space. The police district owns the park. The lot requires an expensive seismic survey.

The fire district board has asked the KPPSCD for over a year whether it can and would be willing to make this location available, assuming it passes seismic muster. The police board has ignored these two straightforward questions. They need to answer soon, since the cost of construction is escalating at 10 percent a year.

No matter how we staff our police department, we need a home for them in Kensington. The KPPSCD board must stop avoiding this issue and give the fire district an answer. If the answer is no, we then need a plan to house our police.

Paul Dorroh

See Letters, page 6

JULY / AUGUST 2019 DEADLINES:

Advertising Deadline ❖ JUNE 8

Editorial Deadline ❖ JUNE 10

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

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

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

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O U T L O O K

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K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP

Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program

Congratulations on completing a successful school year! We are gearing up for summer camp as it begins on Monday, June 10th. We wish you a fun and adventurous summer and look forward to seeing you in the Fall! **Fall registration** is scheduled on **Tuesday, September 10th** and classes will begin **Monday, September 16th**.

KCC Summer Camp 2019- Online enrollments are available now and available on your mobile device as well, <http://kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org>

Summer is HERE! KCC summer camp is filling up. We have a wonderful, caring and charismatic staff this year, waiting to play, engage and keep your child safe. KCC Summer Camp is for children entering first grade in FALL 2019 up through 6th grade. This year's camp is filled with exciting field trips around the bay such as The Jungle, Oakland Zoo, Lake Anza, and the ever popular Scandia Center to name a few. Each week there is a new place to discover! New this year is paddleboard lessons at 101 Surf Sports in San Rafael and swimming at the pool at McNears Beach.

Camp starts Monday, June 10th and goes until Friday, August 16. You may enroll by the week. KCC camp offers tennis lessons, daily arts and crafts with an afternoon of sports & games along with a themed activity such as carpentry, hip hop dance, golf, STEM science projects, Legos, plus more!

Online enrollments are available now. <http://kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org>

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

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

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

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

Tai Chi Chuan

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

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

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

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am. Call the KCC office for info. Court Fees: 45-min. singles reservation: Residents: \$2; Nonresidents: \$5. Kensington Community Center

Rental Info: Please call Andrea at the KPPCSD (Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District) at 510-526-4141.



KCC Summer Camp Activities and Schedule 2019

\$310 per week; 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

July 4th (short week): \$248

Field Trips on WEDNESDAY

All Specialty Courses and Field Trips are subject to change

Week 1 June 10 - June 14

- Specialty: Carpentry with Sandy
- Field Trip: Pump it Up

Week 2 June 17 – June 21

- Specialty: Art/Cooking with Vicky
- Field Trip: The Jungle

Week 3 June 24 – June 28

- Specialty: SkyHawk Sports Medley with Victor
- Field Trip: 101 Surf Sports & McNears Beach

Week 4 July 1 – July 5

- Closed July 4, Short Week
- Specialty: Art/Cooking with Vicky
- No Field Trip
- Friday Activity: Jumpy Houses and Obstacle Course

Week 5 July 8 – July 12

- Specialty: Skyhawks Sport (Golf) with Victor
- Field Trip: Antioch Water Park

Week 6 July 15 – July 19

- Specialty: LEGOs Play-Well Teknologies
- Field Trip: Bladium

Week 7 July 22 – July 26

- Specialty: SkyHawk Sports Medley with Victor
- Field Trip: Scandia

Week 8 July 29 – August 2

- OLYMPIC Week
- Specialty: Ultimate Frisbee / Cooking with Vicky
- Field Trip: Oakland Zoo

Week 9 August 5 – August 9

- Specialty: Contemporary & Hip Hop Dance
- Field Trip: Bladium

Week 10 August 12 – August 16

- Specialty: Girls INC (STEM)
- Field Trip: Walnut Creek Clarke Pool
- Friday Activity: End of Summer Jumpy Houses and Obstacle Course

Morning Rotation: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

- Art and Crafts led by KASEP Teacher Vicky
- Tennis group lessons with Kim
- Self-Directed Time: camper can play games inside or be outside (soccer, ping pong, card games, baseball, etc.)

Specialty Teacher Activity: 1:00 pm

- Campers are broken into 3 groups, by age. Lesson is 1 hour for 3 days a week (Mon, Tues, & Thurs). When lesson is finished: friend time, tether ball, ping pong, lanyards, and friendship bracelets take over.
- 1:00-2:00 Grades 1st – 2nd
- 2:00-3:00 Grades 2nd – 3rd
- 3:00-4:00 Grades 4th – 6th



The Right Stuff

By Linnea Due

When Lewis Corriea needed a project to earn his Eagle Scout badge, he asked for suggestions from Scout Master Thomas Sherris-Watt. Sherris-Watt mentioned that the steps from the Community Center to the parking lot were pretty dodgy. A few days later, Corriea gathered up his father, who, he says, “is good with outdoor construction work,” and the two examined the staircase. “Those steps were really messed up,” Corriea concluded. He and his father discussed what was needed, and Corriea checked on the county



codes. He didn’t need a permit—but he did need a lot of volunteer help. “The first day we did the demolition, and that took ten or twelve people. After that it was maybe six or seven.” Other scouts helped out with the staircase work, and Corriea notes that you learn a lot from assisting on multiple projects throughout a scouting career. He says that he had built fences

before but had never taken on something as complicated as a staircase. The relationship of risers to landings is important in how comfortable the stairs are to climb. The biggest problem they ran into was a very large tree stump buried under the ground. “It was huge,” he reports. “And we saw the builders of the previous stairs, instead of cutting it out, they just put the step off to the left. We spent a whole day cutting the root out so the step could go where it’s supposed to be. We made sure we did it the right way.” After the stairs were finished, Corriea said the intention had been to put in a handrail similar to the old version. But then he thought about a flight of stairs at his house. “I thought it’d be cool to have solar lights mounted on each post.” He proposed the idea to KPPCSD director Rachelle Sherris-Watt, and she gave him the go-ahead. The finished staircase is not only far more comfortable to climb than its predecessor, which required billy-goat stamina, but the lights give it an elegance entirely new.

Corriea says that he’s finished all his merit badges and now must put his application together and send it off. If he’s approved, he’ll become an Eagle Scout. He is a junior, attending high school classes at Contra Costa College; his aim is to go into mechanical engineering, possibly through a program with the Air Force. “I’m still thinking,” he cautions. KPPCSD funded the project, though Richmond’s Channel Lumber contributed at least half the lumber. Little Star Pizza and Fat Apple’s donated those all-important slices and snacks. Be sure to check out Lewis Corriea’s steps—you will be amazed at the vast improvement in function and form.

RFPs Authorized by Police Board

By Linnea Due

KPPCSD’s April 25 meeting must have disappointed those who hoped that a change of venue to the Arlington Community Church would encourage forbearance. On the docket was whether to authorize sending out requests for proposals to four police agencies: Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, and the county sheriff. Only the latter two are expected to respond to a “what can you offer us” smorgasbord of police services. Matrix’s Richard Brady said he would work with the board, KPPCSD general manager Tony Constantouros, and the agencies involved to craft the proposals: “This is an open-ended opportunity [for your neighbors] to provide you with ideas.” Brady said that Matrix would prepare the RFPs and evaluate responses for an agreed-upon \$12,000. Public comments ranged from “don’t waste more money on Matrix” to “let’s finish this process.” As part of a this-way-forward agenda, Constantouros revealed that he wants to hire an interim police chief to replace interim police chief Rickey Hull; this person would work no more than 960 hours (a retired annuitant would qualify) and would make no more than Hull, who would become a captain. This idea left some scratching their heads: Paul Dorroh asked why we would send out RFPs before we have the advice of this new hire, while Jim Watt asked why we would hire such a person at all, especially since in April we hired a new officer, and Hull had just informed the board in the chief’s report that another recruit is weeks into the background process, and he expects that to go through soon.

Gail Feldman, representing the Kensington Property Owners Association, read portions of a letter that recommended chatting informally with neighboring agencies to see if they might respond to RFPs before spending \$12,000 to formulate something that might garner no response. She also noted that KPOA did not support spending additional revenue on the department; all of Matrix’s options, in-house and out-, cost far more than we currently spend. Estimated costs of Matrix’s options are an additional \$420 or more annually per parcel, over the \$540 special tax already assessed for police services. In a later phone interview, Constantouros said that he had gone back and forth on KPOA’s suggestion. “There’s no harm in calling [the neighboring agencies],” he said. “But they’re very poor at returning calls. And you’re dealing in a changing environment. They could say they’re not interested, and a month later say they are—or the opposite.... Calling them isn’t going to matter much.” Constantouros explained the interim chief hire this way: “That person would provide an outside viewpoint and is someone who has past experience as a chief of police.” He said that he had contacted an organization that helps place retired chiefs. Of five possible candidates, three are still in the running. After many people commented, the board voted 4-1 (director Cyrus Modavi dissenting) to authorize Matrix to pursue RFPs. Asked later if it was not unusual to have such an undefined target for an RFP, Constantouros said, “We need to get actual dollars for these services. The cost will help drive the decision process. We don’t have proposals from them. Proposals could come in much higher than expected or lower. Or we may not get any proposal. The purpose is to gather information, and the only way to do that is to do the RFPs. It’s easy for [an agency] to say they’re interested, but when it comes to the bottom line, they could have a different answer.”

Before the vote, the meeting had its own mini-Pele event. Director Modavi explained that he had spent two to three weeks going over eight years worth of data—“not six months” like Matrix—and he emphasized that a lot of what the police do is not accounted for by calls for service, the standard Matrix used in its analysis. (Modavi’s report is on the district website as “25 CM Packet.pdf.”) Modavi’s myriad issues included Matrix’s billing, Kensington’s legal costs, and confronting Richard Brady about “When were you going to tell the community that Brown Taylor was associated with Matrix?” He held up a photo of a vacant space in a Kensington squad car where one of the “antiquated” onboard computers that KPD received from Albany would sit—except that it was out for service. Part of the pushback of Matrix’s figures is the study was done when unfamiliar software and over ten-year-old computers were frustrating officers trying to keep records of their calls. To his fellow directors, Modavi asked, “How many of you have sat in their cars and asked them what their days are like?” Director Rachelle Sherris-Watt responded that they each spent hundreds of hours in unpaid work to support community welfare and the department. When Modavi continued to talk, board president Eileen Nottoli banged the gavel and asked Modavi to “act like an adult,” which evoked both applause and shouts of “that’s rude.” Perhaps the most telling comment was Andy Gutierrez’s: “It may be that we keep our force. I don’t know that any agency wants to mess with us.”

CommUniTea Grows Unity



Photo: Mark Altenberg

By Linnea Due

When artist Keiki Fujita sees a need, she tries to address it. It’s a good strategy in which everyone benefits. Fujita works part-time at Raxakoul Coffee and Cheese on the Arlington, and she soon noticed that people needed a place to hang out. Then she checked out the single overflowing garbage can outside the shop. Plus she wanted Raxakoul to succeed as a going business. What to do? Start a monthly gathering for the entire community.

“People were coming in and staying a bit,” says Fujita. “I could see that this could be a real hub. First I thought tea tasting. Then I thought cheese and tea tasting. Then I realized it should have more of a focus, and that brought on CommUniTea.” The event started in February, and by now has morphed into an outdoor gathering with music and a purpose beyond interactions. With a percentage of proceeds and donations, Marie Raxakoul and Fujita are raising money for a recycling container outside the store. “Kids get drinks, and five minutes later they put it in that trash can,” Fujita says. “I want to raise awareness about recycling and garbage.”

Fujita’s idea landed on fertile ground. UC professor Tim Hampton came to one monthly tasting and suggested that perhaps his band could play. Now the Kensington Jazz Cats play at the CommUniTeas. “A mom came in, and she wanted to meet other moms in the neighborhood,” Fujita says. “I thought, let’s do a CommUniBaby group. We’re trying to make it a place people can gather, moms, teenagers, people having business meetings.”

Owner Marie Raxakoul brings her cheese and charcuterie platters. “One guy ordered twenty cheese platters,” Fujita says. “Once we all know what we each other does, we can refer one another. That’s what I call uplifting each other.” The CommUniTeas are held on the third Saturday of the month, from 4-6pm. “We live in such a hectic world that the tea is usually a calming tea,” Fujita says. “It’s important to take time for yourself and slow down for a minute.” Fujita has a larger mission—one as big as the earth. “When we work together we can do good things,” she says. “It’s time for the old ways to go out the door. No more competition. Let’s make this world a better place, starting with our own community. Kensington is such a cool place. I grew up here. We have such amazing people. Once you start talking to people, you realize how much talent people have. So don’t just talk to people on the Internet—get out and meet each other in person.”

Significant Gift Allows Coding and More

By Anne Forrest

The Kensington Community Council (KCC) gratefully acknowledges the award of a grant of \$20,000 from the Elizabeth E. Bettelheim Family Foundation of Berkeley to enhance the Kensington After School Education Program (KASEP) for the children of Kensington. The executive director of the Bettelheim Foundation, Ann Bettelheim, is a Kensington resident whose family members participated in past KASEP programs. With these funds, the KCC will be able to start a coding class for kids in the coming year, replenish our scholarship funds, and finally take care of much-needed maintenance to the nerve center of the afterschool program, Building E.

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Early Warning Systems

By Michael Pigoni, Kensington/El Cerrito Fire Chief

The threat of a fast-moving fire, major earthquake, or other large-scale emergency should no longer be a surprise to residents of Kensington. The Bay Area is no stranger to major disasters such as the Berkeley fires in 1923, Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, Oakland Hills fires in 1991, San Bruno Pipeline explosion in 2010 and even more recently, the devastating fires in the North Bay and Paradise.

Being notified early is a key element to survivability. The sooner you are alerted, the sooner you can take appropriate action. The Contra Costa County Community Warning System (CWS) is an extremely important service—and you need to register to get those warnings. At cwsalerts.com/registration/ click the Register button and follow the easy instructions. If your phone only accepts numbers in your contact list, save ten zeros (0000000000) to Community Warning System, as this is what the Caller ID will display.

Local residents should also sign up for NIXLE alerts. To register, text your zip code to 888777. This will opt your cell number into the system to receive vital information from the Kensington fire or police departments.

Other means to obtain warnings are purchasing an inexpensive “Weather Radio” that will broadcast emergency information, normally concerning weather, but the county has means to use it for any emergency. There are also a number of apps for Apple and Google phones that provide emergency alerts. And check out what the Red Cross has available for severe weather and earthquakes.


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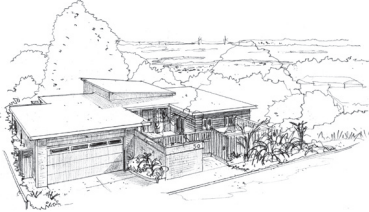
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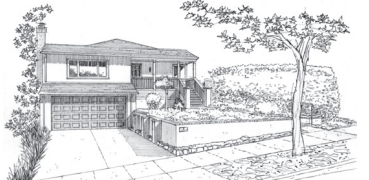
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PROSPECT SIERRA

Letters

...from page 2

Follow the Clues

Dear Editor:

We’ve been subjected to four anonymous mailings recently, the latest and most offensive attacking our Chief of Police in an arrest 16 years ago for which no charges were filed by the District Attorney and for which he was exonerated in an internal investigation.

Here are some clues to help understand where this may be coming from. The determined obfuscation—the envelope mailed from San Jose with an untraceable postal permit and the heavy redactions in the reply to a PRA request—itself provides a clue as to who or what party is responsible, i.e., who would be damaged or compromised if identified as the mailer. Another clue is the obvious expense, implying the message sent is of commensurate importance to the mailer.

Then there is what is hidden under the redactions. Here (via a resident’s PRA request) it’s revealed that the first PRA was requested by a private investigation firm—another expense, and some lawyers’ names familiar to those who follow police matters.

Bill Benson

Why Is Kensington Safe?

Dear Editor:

We are extraordinarily lucky to live in a town with very low crime and almost no violent crime. Of course, part of that is our location, but the hilly streets of Kensington are safer than the neighboring Berkeley and El Cerrito hills. The other big factor is our local police force.

For the past two years patrols are significantly up. Even though our department has been seriously understaffed and underequipped in terms of technology, they spend much of their shifts simply driving our streets, looking for something out of the ordinary.

As patrols have increased (shown by increase in fuel use for vehicles as well as anecdotal reports), crime has gone down. Much of what our local police do is crime prevention—for example, a few weeks ago, an officer came house-to-house on Edgcroft Road, alerting residents that there was a prowler seen in the area and reminding them to keep all doors and windows locked.

At the meeting recently in which the Matrix report was presented to the community, resident after resident got up and praised the response time for calls and the extra service we get to prevent the necessity of calls. Our police know our neighborhoods and are quick to spot something unusual and check it out. This is the kind of service we could only get from a dedicated force and why we have twice voted special tax assessments to keep our local Kensington police force.

It's not surprising that you see "Keep Our Police Independent" signs scattered around town. We have one of the safest places to live in the Bay Area, and I hope we can keep it that way.

John Stein

Why Not Hold a Vote?

Dear Editor:

At its April 25 meeting, the police board voted 4-1 to have Matrix prepare an RFP for submission to four agencies requesting their bids to provide some or all police services for Kensington. While responses to the RFP may provide invaluable information for the future of the KPD, this vote raises several questions that need to be answered as the process moves forward.

In October 2009, the board adopted an ordinance that any decision to contract out police services requires prior approval of the Kensington electorate. Will the board put the question of contracting out to a vote, assuming they receive a proposal, as required by the ordinance and if not, why?

Putting aside any questions about the enforceability of the ordinance, why would the board risk litigating that issue rather than allowing the residents to vote on a matter of such importance to the future of Kensington police services? Does the board majority feel, despite the strong opposition expressed at the Matrix information meetings and election of a director whose platform opposed contracting out, nonetheless believe the community wants to contract out its police services? If so, why not hold a vote?

This discussion may ultimately prove academic if El Cerrito, the only agency that expressed any interest in taking over the KPD, does not respond to the RFP. It is nonetheless important for the board to make clear its intentions and the reasons the majority seems so committed to eliminating the independent Kensington Police Department, irrespective of what many Kensington residents may prefer.

Dane Gillette

All Hands on Deck

Dear Editor:

While the question of how to manage police services dominates local news, what likely keeps more of us awake at night is the threat from wildfire. In the midst of a home remodel, I’ve become fairly obsessed with the fire threat for new reasons on top of all the old ones.

At the recent Kensington Property Owners’ Association annual public meeting, fire chief Mike Pigoni and fire district board president Julie Stein had much news on this front. “The wheels of government turn slowly,” as Pigoni said, but they do appear to be turning in the direction of emergency readiness.

Among Stein’s many updates on board projects was the promise to hold a community forum later this year on the question of the long-overdue retrofit or full-blown replacement of the Arlington Avenue police and fire station, known as the Public Safety Building. This is a terribly complex challenge, and I hope everyone in town will take an interest. State-of-the-art fire services should be our top priority, and that can’t happen without the right physical plant.

A few qualified residents may also have the opportunity to serve alongside fire board directors on their Emergency Preparedness Committee, a welcome development for a board that traditionally excluded members of the public from its committees. There are reasons to be hopeful about Kensington’s wildfire readiness, but all hands on deck are essential. Please get involved in any way you can. Train for CERT. Reduce fuel load on your property. Go to meetings. Sign up for alerts. See Kensingtonfire.org for more.

Sylvia Elsbury

Town Meetings

KCC-June 3, April Kensington Community Council, 6:30pm. 525-0292 Building E

KPSC-June 10, Kensington Public Safety Council Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness 2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165

KARO/ECHO-June 10, Amateur Radio Operators, 2nd Mondays, 7:30pm. 524-9815

KFPD-June 12, Fire Protection District 2nd Wed., 7pm. 527-8395

KIC-June 24, Kensington Improvement Club 4th Mondays, 7:30. 524-7415

KPPCSD-JUNE 13, JUNE 27, Police Protection and Community Services District 7:30pm. 526-4141

Kensington Farmers’ Market Live produce & live music every Sunday, 10am-2pm, Colusa Circle

What You Can and Cannot Expect in a Disaster

By Katie Gluck

The Kensington Public Safety Council (KPSC) will host a presentation to help you better understand what you may be facing and dealing with in a disaster. Come to the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue, Saturday, June 29, from 10am-12noon.

To help explain what you can and should not expect we have as guest speakers Interim Police Chief Rickey Hull, Fire Marshal Dave Gibson, Rex Delizo, district manager of Stege Sanitary District, Mona Favorite-Hill, EBMUD spokesperson, and Pamela Purdue, PG&E senior public safety specialist.

During a disaster, things happen fast, and you should be as well informed and prepared as possible in order to ensure your safety and survival. We will also have members of CERT and other emergency response people on hand to help advise and guide you through your preparations.

Please RSVP to Kensingtonpsc@gmail.com so that we have an idea of how many will be attending. This presentation is free and open to all. Bring your friends, neighbors, and your questions.

Passings

Irwin Dennis Horowitz was born January 4, 1953, in New York City. He arrived in California as a small child and immersed himself in California culture. He attended EC High School where he wowed his fellow students with his acting ability, perhaps most memorably in his role as Walter Hollander, the ugly American tourist in *Don't Drink the Water* or as the Spider King. Although Irwin was accepted to study acting at The Julliard School, he could not shake his love of the Bay Area and chose to attend SF State.

In 1977, Irwin married the love of his life, Helen Kopp, which added three sisters to his life—Maxine, Julia, and Lisa—as well as a lifelong love of boxer dogs. On Veteran’s Day in 1980, Irwin & Helen’s son Jay joined the family. The Stork delivered Evan three short years later.

Irwin and Helen were over-the-moon when Evan married Thao Nguyen in 2010. Westley, Marshall, Kaila, AKA the gang of three or the Horowitz grandchildren, are a blessing.

Irwin’s commitment to public service was second to none. He was a Scouter Extraordinaire for over twenty years. He served as district commissioner of Herms District and Eagle Scout advancement advisor. He enjoyed teaching scouting classes such as Leave No Trace and leadership training.

Irwin left the world better than he found it. We were all enriched by his generosity and sense of humor. He will be missed dearly.



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

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

June
June 1 Anti-Child Trafficking Seminar with Lucia Ray-Gullien, Anti-Human Trafficking program manager and Gordon Jackson, director for Protect Prevention Education. UUCB, 10am-1pm, free.
June 2 Youth Spirit Artworks representatives, who work with youth 18-25 developing job skills, will bring a Tiny House and talk about their housing project for homeless youth. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.
June 3 Build with Keva Planks These small blocks are only ¾” wide by 4 ½” long and all the same size. Amazing structures and designs can be made with them! Fun for both individual and group projects. Kensington Library, 3-4pm. Free. Best for ages 5 through grade 6.
June 3 Kensington Library Knitting Club “The Castoffs” All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. 6:30pm, free.
June 4 & 25 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
June 6, 13, 20 & 27 Baby & Toddler Storytime Stories, songs, puppets, scarves, shaky eggs, and loads of fun! Kensington Library, two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free.
June 6, 13, 20 & 27 Read to Dogs! Each week one to three calm & gentle therapy dogs will be at the library, waiting for kids to read to them (or parents of younger kids can do the reading). 2:30-3:30. Free.
June 8 Kensington Symphony Orchestra Concert: Symphonic Scandinavia. UUCB, 7:30pm. \$25 general, \$20 seniors over 65 and students.
June 9 Rev. Dr. Phil Lawson, former minister of Easter Hill Church, co-founder of GRIP, and Richmond social activist, talks on social justice. UUCB, 9:30 am. Free.
June 6 Are You Recycling Wrong? Greg Christie of Bay View Refuse and Recycling answers recycling questions. All are welcome. ACC, free. Potluck supper at 6pm and program at 7:15pm.
June 9 Person of the Planet Speaker: Dr. Robert Epstein, 7pm, free, ACC.

Dr. Epstein will discuss California's accomplishments and goals in addressing climate change in the coming decade.

June 10 Author Talk and Book Signing. Local author Mark Schapiro will discuss his book *Seeds of Resistance*, on the state of the world’s food supply and the people dedicated to saving heirloom seeds worldwide. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.

June 10 Woodblock artist Tom Killion shows a selection of prints and discusses his artistic inspiration. Presented by the El Cerrito Art Association, 7pm, El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane.

June 11 Sterling Johnson the Bubble-smith Sterling Johnson has performed versions of his remarkable hand-blown bubbles for over 45 years. He is the only person to ever put a bubble inside a bubble inside a bubble onstage without any tubes or straws, and the first person to walk completely through a bubble film! Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.

June 16 Anna Rabkin, author of *From Krakow to Berkeley, Autobiography of a Survivor* talks on social justice. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.

June 17 Create a Pollinator Habitat in Your Garden Want to create a buzz-worthy pollinator garden? Think Mason bees live in jars? UC Master Gardeners will discuss the basics of creating a pollinator habitat. We’ll take a broad look at the key elements required to attract pollinators and a “hands-on” exploration of native bee habitats you can create to attract Mason and Leafcutter bees. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.

June 18 Family Art Night! Green Art Workshop's "Space Crafts." Three...two... one... liftoff! Travel to the moon and back with us in this cosmic art program. Learn about the atmosphere beyond our planet and contemplate navigating these extreme environments. Inspired by scientific discoveries, explore the depths of our galaxy and your imagination to create a three-dimensional up-cycled galactic scene. Best for ages 8 and up, but the whole family is encouraged to attend. Kensington Library, 6pm. Free.

June 20 Bridge Night, 6pm, ACC. Monthly potluck and bridge play at all levels for ACCers and new guests.

June 23 Nadya Tannous, education & advocacy coordinator at Interfaith Peace-Builders (Eyewitness Palestine) and general coordinator of the transnational Palestinian Youth Movement, talks on social justice. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.

June 24 Kensington Library Book Club Discussion of *Framley Parsonage* by Anthony Trollope. 6:30pm. Free.

June 25 DIY SOAKERS! An event so amazing we had to capitalize it. Come in and build your own super soaker. Parent help gladly welcomed. After everyone has built their soaker we will go outside and test them by squirting everyone except the librarian. (Okay, maybe you can squirt him too.) Kensington Library, 1pm. Free.

June 29 What to Expect in a Disaster Kensington Public Safety Council puts on a show with police, fire, Stege Sanitary, PG&E and others. See story in centerfold. 10-noon, ACC.

June 30 Social justice talk by Dr. Gail Simpson, UUCB member and Opera Frontier artistic director, “Return to Ethiopia: An Opera-Circus Collaboration.” Ethiopian coffee will be served. UUCB, 9:30am. Free.

June 30 Installation of Reverend Nate Klug as pastor, 2 pm, ACC. The community is invited to join us for this festive occasion. A reception will follow.

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We thank community members who have already stepped up and financially supported the upcoming renovation, which will start this summer. If you can help, please visit the Kensington 360° website: www.kensington360.org to donate online or checks can be mailed to Kensington 360°, 59 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707. Your friends and neighbors who have already donated and/or pledged:

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See April/May police logs next issue.

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