

Bringing the Community Together

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

TM
OCTOBER 2025

Available Online at www.KensingtonOutlook.com

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 83 NUMBER 8

Painted Contest Pumpkin

Entry is easy! Email a photo to
contact@eastbaypaintcenter.com
Entries will be displayed and voted on in store
from 10/20 - 10/30
Prizes awarded on Halloween!



(Left) In a photo from 1968 or '69, Girl Scout Anne Forrest (left) rides her bike in the Kensington Community Council Fall Parade. (Right) Girl Scouts take to the street in the 2011 parade.



The Parade Is Back

*Cal Marching Band, BBQ, the Bubble Guy Headline
October 19's KCC Parade and Picnic*

By Anne Forrest

I have had the privilege and luck of growing up in Kensington and being able to continue to live here most of my adult life. At age 65, I can look back fondly to good memories of what it was like to grow up in our small village, surrounded by the larger Bay Area. As a child, one of the highlights of each fall was the Kensington Fall Parade up the Arlington. I participated with my Girl Scout troop for many years; that's me on the left in the photo.

The parade at that time included floats and flatbed trucks done up by the local business, many Scout troops, community organizations, and marching bands. To us young children it was exciting to ride up the Arlington on our decorated bikes and participate in something so big with friends and neighbors waving at us from the sidewalks.

Like it did so many things, the Covid pandemic put a stop to the parade and the KCC Picnic for a couple of years. The picnic came back in 2022, but this year we are reviving an over-60-year tradition by bringing back the parade that precedes the annual picnic.

We are pleased to announce that on Sunday, October 19, the parade will be led by the one and only Cal Straw Hat Band. Starting around 11am, the northbound side of Arlington Avenue will be temporarily closed to traffic so that the parade can proceed up the Arlington from the parking lot of the Ace Hardware store to the Kensington Community Center, where people will already be gathering for the picnic. Local community groups, children's programs, and organizations are invited to join the parade.

The Grand Marshals this year represent two major achievements in Kensington: the consolidation of our two governing boards and the district's acquisition of three major walking paths

Annual Halloween Harvest Celebration at Colusa Circle Oct. 26

By Karen Yencich

Come on down on Sunday, October 26 and join your neighbors for Kensington's annual community Halloween event, hosted by your friends, the Colusa Circle Merchants Association and the Kensington Farmers Market. It's an old-school party with lots of energy where kids can dress up to strut their stuff, fill up a Scavenger Hunt map for a free ice cream, and rock out at the bandstand. Kids can meet animals up close at the Fuse Fitness Garage, and everyone can "Guess the Weight of the Giant Pumpkin" at the Farmers Market. Visit with friends and neighbors and get to know the Colusa Circle merchants and your Farmers Market folks while you enjoy all they have to offer.

Don't miss these featured events: Suit up the kids for the Children's Costume Parade at 11am. We'll gather at the Colusa Circle entrance to the Kensington Farmers Market at 10:45am to line up. Family and pet costumes are welcome. The popular Animal Show kicks off at 11:30am in the Fuse Fitness Garage. It's hands-on fun!



See Parade, Page 6

See Halloween, Page 6

Kensington and Beyond Update

September 2025



NEW LISTING | 921 Clark Place, El Cerrito Hills
Incredible opportunity! One of the last remaining unobstructed view parcels 1.08 Acres! in El Cerrito Hills. Subdivide or build your private compound. Includes a Mid-Century architect-designed home.
3BR | 2BA | 1800 Sq.Ft. ±
Offered at \$3,750,000 (3 separate parcels & a home)



SOLD | 140 S Wildwood, Hercules
Lovely corner unit single-level townhome with garden
2 BR | 2 BA
Offered at \$549,000 | Sold at \$560,000



SOLD | 1355 Contra Costa Ave., El Cerrito Hills
Gorgeous residence, updated with head-on Golden Gate view.
4 BR | 2 BA
Offered at \$1,688,000 | Sold at \$1,875,000

Five Things I Recommend You **Don't** Do to Your Home

- 1. Convert the Garage**
Buyers value garages for parking and storage. Instead of converting it into living space, consider upgrading it with insulation, drywall, and organized storage solutions—so it remains versatile.
- 2. Follow Bold Kitchen & Bath Trends**
While trendy designs may appeal now, they often age quickly. Stick with classic, timeless styles and neutral finishes for cabinets and countertops. These appeal to a broader range of buyers.
- 3. Use Trendy or Inconsistent Flooring**
Flooring that's too bold or mismatched can be a turn-off. Opt for hardwood or engineered hardwood in natural, neutral tones throughout the home for a cohesive and enduring look.
- 4. Ignore Maintenance Issues**
In today's insurability climate, buyers are scrutinizing the condition of roofs, windows, electrical systems, plumbing, and HVAC. Regular upkeep not only protects your investment—it makes your home more marketable.
- 5. Over-Landscape the Yard**
Elaborate landscaping rarely brings a return on investment. Keep it simple, clean, and low-maintenance. Curb appeal matters, but so does ease of upkeep.

Stick to neutral, timeless, and functional choices to help ensure top dollar when it's time to sell.

Representing Kensington sellers for over 30 years. Specializing in trusts and residential real estate.

If you are considering selling or simply wish to know the value of your home, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary. Consider me your real estate resource.

Ruth Frassetto, CRS | 510.697.8606 | ruth.frassetto@compass.com | DRE 00779030

Compass is a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Exact dimensions can be obtained by retaining the services of an architect or engineer. This is not intended to solicit property already listed.

COMPASS

Join Good Guest Kensington for Indigenous Peoples' Day

By Laura Callen

Good Guest Kensington invites you to participate in its fourth annual Indigenous Peoples' Day program. Each year, the program is different but the goal is the same: offer experiential learning that helps Kensington residents deepen their understanding about what it means to live as good guests in Lisjan Nation's homeland.

This year's program, on Sunday, October 12, from 2-5pm, explores that question using the artist book *Entanglement*. The book was created by three Kensington residents in consultation with Lisjan Nation, the Indigenous people of the place where we live. It is both a book and a piece of art. Each chapter weaves together the voices of Indigenous women, factual information about the place we call home, and the personal narrative of a Kensington resident grappling with living here in Huchium.

Space is limited. RSVP by 10/8 at www.goodguestkensington.org/events. You can also send an email to goodguestkensington@gmail.com.

The program is free but Good Guest Kensington asks attendees to give Shuumi, a voluntary financial contribution in support of Lisjan Nation sovereignty. If you cannot attend the Entanglement program, you can still give Shuumi in honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day. You can learn more about Shuumi at www.goodguestkensington.org/.



Natives, Pollinators, Succulents on Sale October 12

By Anna Frankfurf

The El Cerrito Garden Club is holding its fall plant sale, Sunday October 12 from 10am-3pm at the El Cerrito Library parking lot. Purchase edibles, native plants, worm juice to rejuvenate your soil as well as pollinator and blooming plants.

Succulents will include the ever-popular succulent pumpkins (pumpkultents). These are great living center pieces for your fall table and can be transplanted into your garden once the pumpkins deteriorate. All plants are propagated by club members so they will grow around here. Club members will be happy to talk to you about the plants and provide care instructions.

Cash or check only, exact change and small bills much appreciated! See you at 6510 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito. Plentiful parking is available.

If you're curious about the garden club, come check us out at our October 9 club meeting from 9:30am-noon. October's program is "Native Gardens" with Kelly Marshall. Guests are free. We have refreshments at 9:30am, a business meeting at 10am, and the speaker at 11am. The meeting is at the Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave, Albany.



SEMIFREDDI'S

RETAIL BAKE SHOP
FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

372 COLUSA AVE
KENSINGTON, CA 94707
(510) 596-9935

OPEN DAILY: 7:30AM - 3PM
VISIT US ON THE WEB @ WWW.SEMIFREDDIS.COM

BAKING WITH PRIDE SINCE 1984

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.

NOVEMBER - 2025
Advertising Deadline ❖ OCT. 8
Editorial Deadline ❖ OCT. 10

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

Use one space, not two, after all periods.

KENSINGTON
OUTLOOK

EDITOR
LINNEA DUE
ADVERTISING MANAGER
ALMA KEY
PUBLISHER

KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
59 Arlington Ave, Kensington, CA 94707-1307
Published ten times a year by the nonprofit Kensington Community Council. (Monthly, except for the combined July/August and December/January issues.) Available online at www.KensingtonOutlook.com. Non-Kensington residents can subscribe by mail for \$10 annually.

Editorial.....
editor@KensingtonOutlook.com
Advertising.....510-508-3241
advertising@KensingtonOutlook.com

Display and Classified Advertising

Classified ad rates are \$8 a line (45 characters or spaces) with a two-line minimum. Find the ad form online at www.kensingtonoutlook.com or use the QR code here. For display ad reservations and classified questions, please contact our advertising manager by phone or email listed above. See information about letters to the editor to your left. Other mail can be sent to 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707.



Letters to the Editor

Dangerous Crosswalk Now Even Worse

Dear Editor:

Last year, I walked my children to Kensington Hilltop almost every day, crossing Arlington Avenue at Rincon, up past the library and the park. My family will be making that same walk again this year. This crosswalk is an important community link, used daily by families heading to school, children visiting the library, and neighbors enjoying the park.

Even before the current roadwork, the crossing was dangerous. Drivers too often sped through the flashing-yellow light, and I have seen cars run the red light that appears when a pedestrian presses the crossing button. Many of these drivers are likely passing through town—Arlington is, after all, a major thoroughfare—without realizing how often children and families are in that crosswalk.

The recent construction has only made matters worse. The timing of the pedestrian signal changed suddenly during the work, without any apparent notice or communication, leaving those of us used to the old model, including my children, confused. And because traffic slows during construction, cars frequently accelerate once they're past the work zone—right where families are crossing.

When a crossing guard was stationed there, Arlington Avenue felt safer for pedestrians and children. I understand that position was cut for budget reasons, but I'd ask the town leadership to explore ways to protect this crosswalk, whether by restoring the guard, installing speed bumps, or some other solution. I know speed bumps can be inconvenient, but the extra margin of safety may be worth it.

With the school year well underway, and months of roadwork ahead of us, we should take a careful look at this problem now.

Tejas Narechania

Artists Rise Up to Support Social Justice Charities

Dear Editor:

Kensington residents can help three worthy charities during the Artists Rise Up! event, taking place October 10-12. Come buy donated art on October 10, in front of Abrams Claghorn Gallery, 1251 Solano Ave., Albany, from 11am-4pm; October 11 from 11am-3pm at the Arlington Community Church; and on October 12 from 9am-2pm at the Kensington Farmers Market at Colusa Circle.

In addition to the in-person art sale, you can also make direct donations to the three benefiting organizations—the ACLU, Trans Lifeline, and Democracy Forward—through October 15. Thanks to generous matching pledges, both direct donations and art sale proceeds will be matched 2:1, up to \$4,000, tripling your impact! To ensure your donation is included in the match, simply forward your confirmation email to me at marksed9902@gmail.com.

Why did I choose these three charities? The ACLU and Democracy Forward have had recent successes litigating for social justice (including immigration) and Trans Lifeline is a vital resource for the Trans community and their families. All proceeds from the event will go toward the three charities.

This fundraiser came about in an unexpected way. I'm part of the five-person team that launched and now coordinates Potters Rise Up, and through that experience I was inspired to organize my own event. Our group is united by a commitment to supporting organizations that stand up for social justice, each of us contributing in the ways we can. It's truly inspiring to see so many people come together for this cause—especially in a country that feels so divided. You can find more about our efforts and other fundraising events on the Potters Rise Up Facebook page.

Ednalee Warnecke

KPOA Annual Meeting Saturday, November 1

Dear Editor:

The Kensington Property Owners Association Annual Membership and Community Meeting will be a celebration of the new unified Kensington government in recognition of the successful merger of the two independent special districts into one district that will provide services more effectively to Kensington.

KPOA has been a longtime advocate for district unification because a single district creates a more efficient form of the government that significantly affects our lives. Planning and decision making is now coordinated across of all services, and it offers residents a single government and board of directors to follow and contact.

The celebration is part of the KPOA Annual Meeting, which will include speakers who will describe the composition of the new Kensington Community Services District and its services. Attendees will enjoy a sit-down luncheon afterward. This event is an opportunity for KPOA members and all Kensingtonians to speak informally with district directors, ask questions and for new residents to meet them. It will be informative and friendly—a fun mid-Saturday time.

The meeting and luncheon is November 1, from 11am-1pm at the Kensington Community Center.

KPOA is a membership organization that has been a trusted, independent voice in the community since 1972. We provide analysis and insight on a range of civic issues that directly affect all Kensington citizens. Our website is www.kpoa.net

The KPOA celebration is an opportunity to meet the directors who made unification possible. They are the ones who govern the new single district in which we all live. You can then enjoy a delicious healthy sit-down buffet lunch following the meeting.

Rob Firmin, President KPOA

Concert Benefits the Black Wealth Builders Fund

By Sara Laferte

Talented local musicians and church choirs will present music in a variety of styles in an afternoon concert Sunday, October 5, at Arlington Community Church. Admission is free; we are asking for donations to benefit the Black Wealth Builders Fund. This fund provides down payment assistance to first-time Black homebuyers in the form of zero-interest loans to be paid back when the property is refinanced or sold. The fund began in 2021 at Arlington Community Church and has thrived with the support of many other local churches, East Bay Association of Realtors, and generous individuals. The fund has made 46 loans, and there is a waiting list of applicants.

The Black Wealth Builders Fund is a way to help make long-lasting systemic change in the way Black communities can build real wealth and pass it along to their heirs. Come and enjoy great music, greet your neighbors, and support this effort.

We hope to see you October 5 at 4pm. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

Passings

Joseph Adler, beloved husband, father, grandfather, educator, lifelong learner, and 56-year Kensington resident passed away on August 17, 2025, at the age of 93.

Joseph will be remembered for his brilliant intellect, gentle spirit, and kind personality. He had a deep love for teaching, singing folk songs, listening to opera, traveling the world, and nurturing his lifelong thirst for knowledge. He was an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley in Kensington and performed numerous times at the Kensington Library.

Born on June 15, 1932, in the Bronx, New York, Joseph was the eldest child of Sadie and Benjamin Adler. In 1945, his family relocated to Los Angeles, where he graduated from Los Angeles High School, Los Angeles City College, and UCLA. He later earned a master's degree in History from USC. Joseph married Esther on Christmas Day, 1955—a union that blossomed into a lifetime of love and partnership.

Joseph's teaching career spanned decades and touched countless lives. He taught United States History and Biology at Sierra High School in Whittier, California for 10 years. He then spent 37 years at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill where he taught U.S. History and Folk Guitar. He also taught Folk Guitar for 15 years through the University of California Extension programs in Irvine and Berkeley. Joseph's approach to teaching was uniquely engaging—he often brought his guitar and costumes to class, singing songs and wearing costumes from the historical periods he taught, making history come alive for his students.

He authored three books during his teaching at Diablo Valley College: *Guitar for a Singing Planet* (1976), *America's Heritage Through Song* (1980), and *History of the United States* (1990). In his final years, Joseph authored three more books: *Memoir of a Singing History Professor*, *A Nation Divided: Electing Abraham Lincoln*, *the First Anti-Slavery President*, *Erupts Into a Brutal Civil War Ending Slavery in America*, and *The First Americans*—a testament to his enduring passion for education and storytelling.

Joseph is survived by his wife Esther, sons Lincoln and Franklin, Franklin's children, and his brother Louis, along with Louis's children and grandchildren.

Handling the Holidays

By Rev. Jen Chapman

For many of us, the holidays bring both delights and dreads. Join us for a discussion of ways we can lighten the load while we light the season with joy. "Holidays" here includes the great variety of celebrations coming in the next few months. Everyone is invited to the discussion at Arlington Community Church on Thursday, October 16, from 6-7:30pm.

We'll begin with a meal provided by our church members and some intergenerational activities. Childcare will be provided during the second half of the event while parents, grandparents, and others discuss ways to alleviate stress and create meaningful traditions. Come along and let us explore together creative ways to approach the holidays.

PROSPECT SIERRA

Making a Positive Impact

Immersed in a joyful school community, Prospect Sierra students think and feel deeply, develop a lifelong love of learning, and are prepared to make a positive impact on the world.

Campus Tours for Fall 2026
Now Available



LEARN MORE
TODAY!

TK-8 School

Unique Fundraiser Features Art

By Ednalee Warnecke

Three sales in mid-October support three nonprofits, each targeting social justice issues. For sale at Artists Rise Up! will be beautiful handmade art—paintings, pottery, glass, paper and photography art, and more. Proceeds from all sales will be donated to the three nonprofits, each of which scores high on Charity Watch and Charity Navigator: American Civil Liberties Union, Trans Lifeline, and Democracy Forward.

Many thanks to those who have already given their artwork or financial support to this event. We have a great start and still have two weeks to go!

Sale dates are October 10, in front of Abrams Claghorn Gallery, 1251 Solano Ave., Albany, from 11am-4pm; October 11 from 11am-3pm at the Arlington Community Church; and on October 12 from 9am-2pm at the Kensington Farmers Market at Colusa Circle.

The art sales are an offshoot of a pottery group called Potters Rise Up, created three months ago to use art as a form of activism. The group now boasts over 1,500 members on Facebook.

For questions or to donate, please email marksed9902@gmail.com



A New Firewise Community in Kensington

By Catherine Mercurio
Kensington's College District Firewise community had its kickoff gathering and potluck on Yale Avenue on Thursday, August 28. This newly formed Firewise community of 104 homes is comprised of Yale, Stanford, and Cambridge avenues to the Beloit Path; Vassar and Rugby avenues to the Berkeley border; and Yale Circle. We had a great turnout of about 27 percent of residents with folks of all ages in attendance.

As Kensington is designated a high-risk area by Cal Fire due to its proximity to Tilden Park, neighbors and friends shared concerns regarding the potential for wildfires in our community and the very real cancellation of homeowner's insurance policies. Some neighbors had the opportunity to discuss their concerns with Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Kensington Fire Protection District, at a Kensington shredding event on May 3. Subsequent emails, phone calls, a Zoom meeting, and completion of an application to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) led to the creation of the College District Firewise community—the 11th in Kensington to receive its Firewise recognition.

Once recognized as a Firewise community, the NFPA provides a certificate that can be given to your insurance carrier. There is a possibility that this certificate might lower your homeowner's insurance rate, but no guarantees!

Kensington's Redtail Ridge group, formed about a year ago, was the third Firewise community. Lori Gomes and Anne Forrest of Redtail Ridge attended our College District gathering and are a great resource for Firewise communities like ours that are in their infancy.

Firewise communities are created by clustering homes within a continuous geographic area, some with similar topography and similar risks for fire, along with shared evacuation routes. As part of the Kensington community, it is in our best interest to minimize the risk of damage from wildfires and to maximize the safety of our neighbors in the event of a wildfire. We need to be prepared to evacuate via our narrow and often crowded streets.

Valenzuela is working to improve communication through Firewise groups. Good resources are available at kensingtonfire.org including the Wildfire Preparedness Workbook. Residents can sign up for alerts on Red Flag Days at www.kensingtonfire.org/red-flag. At our gathering, Valenzuela unfurled the new red flag banners that will be placed in prominent Kensington locations on Red Flag Days. And on October 11, Kensington residents are invited to attend the Red Flag Ready Fest from 11am-2pm at the Kensington Community Center.

If your neighborhood hasn't started a Firewise group, and you are interested in participating in the effort to form one, email jvalenzuela@kensingtonfire.org.



Legal Thriller by Local Author Grapples with Right and Wrong

By Linnea Due

Screenwriter and producer Jon Cowan grew up on Highland Boulevard, close to Kensington Hilltop, where he attended elementary school before transitioning on to Portola and El Cerrito High. His parents still live in the house in which he was born, and he and his family visit frequently from their home in Los Angeles.

Now Cowan has just published his first novel, *Proof*, which is garnering cheers from the likes of James Patterson and Kathy Reichs. Not surprising, as in his screenwriter guise, Cowan recently adapted works by Patterson and John Grisham. He has written for *Suits*, *LA*, *Bones*, and more in his career in television.

But *Proof* is his first novel, started during the pandemic and finished in 2022. It follows attorney Jake West, son of the head of a formidable LA law firm. Jake has a myriad of problems: he led a legal attack on his own firm and failed, he's separated from his wife, he had an affair with a paralegal, but most of all, he can't stay sober for more than a minute. And then his best friend is shot dead right in front of him, and the cops figure him for the shooter.

Can things get much worse? Oh, so glad you asked!

In an August interview, Cowan said he always wanted to write a novel, but just never had the time. "I've had a very fortunate career in TV and worked on a lot of shows," he said. "In TV, you write a pilot, the first one-hour episode of a possible new series. I've made a very good living selling a lot of those."

Cowan explained that you create the characters and lay the foundation for the beginning of a story. "They might buy 200 scripts but only produce 12," he said. "About the time of the pandemic, all work dried up, and I had just finished a show that wasn't going to come back. I'd never before had the time to focus on writing a book."

Writing a novel had a big appeal to Cowan: "I could take a story and actually finish it," he said. "I wanted to see the characters through the beginning and end of a story."

Cowan wrote the first 100 pages and sent it to his parents in Kensington. After they assured him that it sounded like a book, he continued to work on it, even after the TV business went again into overdrive. "I really enjoyed the process," he said. "You can explore characters and jump around to different points in time. And you don't have to rely on actors."

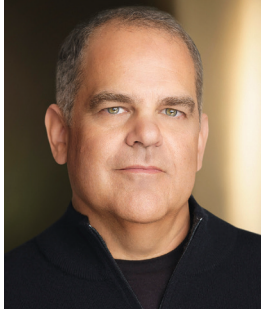
He got another chunk of time in 2022 and took four months off to finish the novel. Then he sent it out, which provoked a bidding war (the daydream of every writer). He ended up selling a two-book package and now is working on the second Jake West legal thriller.

Jake takes frequent restaurant and taco truck breaks, all described in loving detail. Asked if the places he describes are real, Cowan said that every single one is, and that before *Proof* was published, he updated a couple to replace spots that did not survive the pandemic. If you're planning to travel down to SoCal, *Proof* also serves as a perfect guide to delicious food.

Why a legal thriller? "It's a forum that brings good and evil and right and wrong up against each other," Cowan said. "Characters are forced to look at what's the legal thing and what's the right thing. Jake had broken the rules. He was doing it in the name of trying to find justice. There's a constant quest to figure out what's right and wrong, moral and not moral."

Cowan has fond memories of growing up in Kensington. "It remains an idyllic community," he said. "We'd walk down to what used to be the variety store on the Arlington. We spent our lives biking around the streets, playing on the elementary school playground, riding our bikes to Tilden Park."

Jake went to law school at Boalt, so there are plenty of Berkeley references. Kensington remains a secret. A spot so idyllic isn't believable—and paradoxically, believability is the touchstone of good fiction.



Ardmore Path Cleanup October 25

By Denise Van Kuiken

The Kensington Pathkeepers invite you to roll up your sleeves and help care for one of our treasured community paths now owned by the Kensington Community Services District. Together we'll rake, trim, and sweep our way down both sections of Ardmore Path, making it safer, more beautiful, and more enjoyable for everyone.

Come out Saturday, October 25 from 10am-noon to get some fresh air and exercise, meet neighbors and share stories, and most of all, show your appreciation for Kensington's paths.

Meet at the top of the Ardmore Path stairs next to the Arlington parking lot. Bring gloves, a hat, and tools if you have them (rakes, clippers, brooms). Don't worry if you don't have tools—extras will be provided.

Water and cookies will be waiting for volunteers!

Want to stay connected for future cleanups and adventures? Join our mailing list at KensingtonPathkeepers.org. Questions? Call Denise at (281) 723-3782.

Experience Makes a Difference

"I had to fix up and sell a home while being 450 miles away. TTL Team was a lifesaver for my anxiety. They knew all the companies and contacts necessary for everything, from an estate sale to staging. All the individuals they recommended were competent and reasonably priced. They knew what to do, what not to do, and got it all done professionally even though I was not present. I was truly impressed with their high level of integrity. I would highly recommend TTL Team in a heartbeat for any realtor needs." – S.C., Seller

Contact us now for a complimentary consultation. 510.206.2686 • TTLTeam.com

TANIA BALAZS • TODD HODSON • LISA ROBESCH

REALTORS® • # 1469906, 909437, 2081605

OCTOBER 2025

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

Page 5

Friends' Book Sale, Altar for Dia de los Muertos

By Jenny Rockwell

Enjoy free programs offered by the Kensington Library at 61 Arlington Avenue. Call 510-524-3043 with questions.

October 1–15: Lotería Scavenger Hunt Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with our Lotería scavenger hunt game. Look for hidden cards in the library and note the numbers found on the cards. Bring your completed card to the front desk for a small prize.

Oct. 1–31 Día de los Muertos Community Altar (Ofrenda) During the month of October, all are invited to bring in a photo, poem, or memento to honor a loved one, who has passed. We will display it amongst the display's marigolds, skulls, and papel picado.

Tues, Oct. 7, 6:30pm Friends of the Kensington Library Friends of the Kensington Library, a 501c (3) nonprofit organization, has worked to improve and financially support library services in Kensington since 1959. Open to all Kensington residents.

Tues, Oct. 7, 6:30pm Castoff's Knitting Club Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Open to all levels of knitters. Bring your own yarn!

Tuesdays, Oct. 7, 14, 21, 28, 6:30pm Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome.

Wed, Oct. 8, 10am Advanced Care Directives Clinic Facilitated by a representative of Contra Costa County Legal Services, get help creating an Advance Health Care Directive.

Sun, Oct. 19, 10-4pm Friends of Kensington Library Book Sale Books and media, huge inventory. The Friends of Kensington Library sale raises money for the library, which is used to pay for books, programs, and more. In the parking lot behind the library.

Tues, Oct. 21, 2-5pm Cloth Produce Bag Sewing Circle Join the Kensington Seamsters Union, local 94707 in transforming donated natural fiber fabric into bags, which will be given out for free at the Kensington Farmers Market. We need YOU to help measure, cut, iron sew and thread drawstrings, and create community.

Sat, Oct. 25, 2pm Yesteryears: A Golden State History Book Club In partnership with the Kensington Public Library, the El Cerrito Historical Society presents Yesteryears, a book club about the Golden State's past. This meeting is *Ishi in Two Worlds* by Theodora Kroeber.

Tues, Oct. 28, 6:15 -7:45pm Kensington Library Book Club The club meets online via Zoom, usually on the fourth Tuesday. The selection for October is *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya.

Tues, Oct. 28, Read to a Dog Join us and a licensed therapy dog for a 15-minute reading session every fourth Tuesday afternoon, 3-4pm. Same-day, drop-in sign-up starts 15 minutes before the read session.

October Art Exhibit Artwork by Amy Zheng: www.amyzheng.net

First grade class pictured on the brick steps of the old lower school in 1942. Photo courtesy of Gail Martin.

Kensington Elementary School Turns 100

By Maya Melcer Greenfield

2025 marks the centennial year of Kensington's public elementary school as well as the hundredth year of the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The milestone will be recognized on Thursday, October 9 from 5-7pm at the school during the annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) night. The event will feature food trucks, STEAM fun for all ages, and a display of Kensington Elementary photos and memorabilia. Alumni and community members are encouraged to attend!

In 1925, the school was started in two portable classrooms to meet the needs of the growing school-age community who had been attending Berkeley schools. By 1930, there was a need for a more permanent structure, so a two-story red brick schoolhouse was constructed on what is now the "lower yard" at the current site. To accommodate the post-war baby boom, the school needed to expand yet again, and another building was developed on the current "hilltop" site. Lower grades moved into the new school in the fall of 1950, and the brick building was demolished in 1957 due to seismic safety concerns. Since the '50s, the school has had a number of updates, most recently the 2005 addition of the current library, science, and art spaces and renovation of the multipurpose room and kitchen.

Many past students have fond memories of "hot dog days" where the PTA sold hot dogs to students for just a few cents. The funds were originally used to help build the Youth Hut (now the Kensington Community Center). That tradition lives on as "pizza Wednesday" where students can purchase a slice of pizza for \$3 to help support the Upper Grade Fund.

The recent transition of the Kensington paths to local ownership was also a reminder to those who walked to school. Kemper Stone noted, "Our walking route was up York patfrom Arlington, left on Windsor, then Westminster and Kenyon to Highland" when he was an elementary school student 70 years ago! Gail Martin connected with her sister, Adele, who was in first grade at Kensington Elementary in 1942 and shared a photo from that era.

See 100th Birthday, Page 8

THINKING ABOUT SELLING YOUR HOME IN THE EAST BAY?

Navigating the selling process in today's market can be complicated. You deserve to sell your home with ease.

At Red Oak Realty, we have 50 years of experience, access to hyperlocal data, and a modernized marketing strategy that will guide you through the process.

READY TO MAKE YOUR MOVE?

Schedule an appointment with a Red Oak agent

Be expertly guided through the home selling experience

Sell your home successfully with greater confidence

Let our local experts do the heavy lifting. You'll feel a sense of relief and pride in successfully selling your home while being well-prepared for your next chapter.

REACH OUT TODAY!

redoakrealty.com

KIDS COLORING CONTEST

All Submissions due to the Kensington Branch by Friday Oct. 17th before the Picnic.

Winners will be contacted for prize. Please list: name, age, and phone number on the back of your submission.

Proud to support the Annual Kensington Community Picnic!

Kensington Branch

279 Arlington Avenue
510.527.2223
mechanicsbank.com

*No purchase necessary. Visit our branch or our booth for details.

Mechanics Bank®

Where Relationships Matter

MKT320V0925

Halloween

...from Front Page

A Full Day of Fun All Around the Circle

At the Farmers Market from 9am to 2pm, everyone can try their hand at guessing the weight of the giant pumpkin, with a prize for the winner. Kids can get free pumpkins, and as always, there will be lots to choose from. The hay bale play structure with skeleton and friends will be back for clambering and photo ops. Cynnamon, the face painter (she's fabulous!) will make a special appearance. And the Elmwoods (our favorite Halloween band!) will be back again this year at the bandstand, rockin' out with their "Wheel of Music" that kids can spin for tunes. Dancing optional but encouraged.

Around Colusa Circle from 10am to 1pm, kids can set off on a Scavenger Hunt adventure—starting at Zip Code East Bay and ending with a sweet ice cream treat at Benchmark Pizzeria. Strike a pose at the Photo Booth in the parklet by Benchmark Portavia, and cheer on the little ones as they take on the exciting Obstacle Course inside Fuse Fitness. After the 11am parade around Colusa Circle, gather at Fuse Fitness at 11:30am for the highlight of the day—the beloved Animal Show—where kids can get up close, discover, and delight in meeting amazing animals.

Take a look at the schedule at colusacircle.org/events and plan a fun-filled day at this annual get-together. There's something for everyone. And just so you know, there's no age limit on fun!



A Legacy of Serving our Community

Albany | Berkeley | El Cerrito
Kensington | Oakland | Piedmont

grubbco.com

The GRUBB Co.

REALTORS

1960 Mountain Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94611
510.339.0400

3070 Claremont Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94705
510.622.2133

1636 Shattuck Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709
510.848.1950

ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

Design/Build

Earthquake Strengthening
Foundation Repairs
Retaining Walls

Drainage • Remodels • Additions
Leak Investigations
Property Purchase Inspections

510.524.8058

www.IronwoodEngineering.com
License B444427

Made to Order

Sara Jaffe Bakes
Cookies, Cakes & Pies

Local girl "makes good"...desserts

92 1/2 Purdue Ave.
Kensington, CA 94708
510-528-4412
sarajaffebakes.com

Made in a Home Kitchen
Class A Registration 76838
Issued in Contra Costa County

Parade

...from Front Page

by the district. In one car, the Grand Marshals will be David Spath, president of the old KPPCSD board and Daniel Levine, president of the old KFPD board. (The reorganized board is more simply known as the Kensington Community Services District, or KCSD.) A second car with more Grand Marshals contains members of the Pathkeepers organization that worked so hard for so many years towards the path acquisition.

Once the parade participants have made their way up Arlington Avenue to the Community Center, the party will truly begin with live music provided by the Korematsu Middle School Jazz Band led by Tiffany Carrico. They'll be followed by the Great Space Coaster, which plays everyone's favorite music from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

A BBQ lunch will be on sale to enjoy while listening to the music. There will be information tables with community resources about recycling, Good Guest Kensington, Kensington's Firewise groups, and emergency preparedness. Families can enjoy arts and crafts and the ever-popular Sterling the Bubble Guy.

Come and join us. Or better yet, get involved! We are looking for volunteers to take part in our team of safety guards along the parade route and volunteers to help out at the picnic. Contact the KCC office to sign up to be a part of this continuing tradition. Email info@KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org or call 510-525-0292.

Classified Ads

AESTHETIC GARDEN DESIGN/CARE-20 years plus experience.Knowledgeable, motivated, responsible. Local, Not mow blow. Brian 510-912-8910

AURORA PAINTING & DECORATING- Interior, exterior, waterproof coatings, wood restoration, color consultation, License #721226, Kensington references. 510-655-9267 for free estimate.

DESIGN-BUILD LOCAL CONTRACTOR-with 46+ years experience remodeling/renovation with creative solutions for handicap accessibility, kitchens,baths,ADU.Lotsof local references. Learn more at www.baywoodbuilding.com or Yelp. Lic 357706-B Call Robert at 510-595-4231

HOUSECLEANING-Every Week, Biweekly, Monthly. Excellent References. Free Estimate 510-467-9395

KENSINGTON CONTRACTOR-Kitchens & baths, expert home repairs, painting, waterproofing. Reliable. Lic#606634 Thomas Cuniff Construction 415-378-2007

KENSINGTON DEYLIVERY- Affordable delivery service for community residents. John Dey 510-610-4638

PERSONAL CHEF-cooks with local ingredients. Call 510.847.4743 for scrumptious details.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER-Quality Headshots to Family Portraits. Nan Phelps Photography located at 398 Colusa Ave. Learn more at nanphelps.com or YELP. Contact: nan@nanphelps.com or phone 510-528-8845

YOUR GREEN GARDEERS-Unique, Beautiful, Sustainable Garden Designs. Garden Maintenance, Clean-Ups & Tree Pruning. Email: yourgreengardeners@gmail.com. www.yourgreengardeners.com

Classified Ad Placement:
Monthly rates \$8 per line (two-line minimum),45 characters or spaces per line. Ad form at www.kensingtonoutlook.com or scan this QR code. Classifieds must be prepaid and received by the 10th of the month preceding publication.You can also mail an ad to PO Box 2212, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

Your Neighbor. Your Local Real Estate Expert.

What My Clients Are Saying

"Tracy did a phenomenal job from initial contact to final contract. This was my 12th real estate transaction (buying and selling) utilizing various realtors. Up until now, my experience with previous realtors usually didn't live up to my expectations. However, Tracy is a game changer and delivered! Tracy far exceeded my other realtor experiences, outperforming my expectations and meeting the needs of our family. She delivered over the asking price and completed the process on time as promised. She was patient, knowledgeable, helpful, engaging, and informative. I would definitely use Tracy Z. again and again; she truly understands customer service and real estate."

— Julian B.

Tracy
Zhou
Robbins
周曉嘉

English, Mandarin, Cantonese
415.503.7363 | tzhou@ggsir.com
tracyzhou.goldengatesir.com
LIC #: 01896893
1559 Solano Avenue, Berkeley
Each Franchise Is Independently Owned And Operated.

As a proud Kensington resident since 2013, I remain committed to supporting local schools, businesses, and giving back to the community in every way I can. I am truly grateful to all those who trust me as their real estate advisor, and allow me to continue giving back to the community I love. If you are looking to make a move, don't hesitate to call. **All consultations are free and confidential**

OCTOBER 2025

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

Page 7

Kensington Community Education

KASEP-Kensington After School Program

KASEP Adds Lacrosse to After-School Lineup for the First Time!

For the first time, Kensington students will have the chance to play lacrosse after school through the Kensington Afterschool and Enrichment Program (KASEP). This program, run in partnership with the Berkeley Lacrosse Club (BLC), welcomes beginners and experienced players of all genders in grades 3–6. The new class is part of KASEP's ongoing effort to bring fresh, exciting activities to local kids and broaden opportunities to try new sports.

Students will learn the fundamentals of the game—stick skills, passing, and shooting—through lively drills and friendly scrimmages. With no helmets or pads required, the focus is on building confidence, teamwork, and a love of the game in a fun, low-pressure environment.

Founded as one of the first lacrosse clubs in the Bay Area, the Berkeley Lacrosse Club has been a leader in growing the sport across the East Bay. Through school outreach and community programs, BLC provides opportunities for kids of all ages to discover lacrosse and even offers need-based scholarships to ensure more children can participate.

Enrollment for KASEP's lacrosse program is now open, and spaces are limited. For details or to sign up, visit kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org/kasep or check out www.berkeleylacrosse.org to learn more about their program.

Fall Schedule for Adult and Family Classes

April's Jam Making Workshop

Tuesday, October 21st
Community Center
6:00-8:00pm Cost \$45

Learn the art of making delicious homemade jams and preserves while reducing food waste. In this hands-on class, you'll discover how to prepare fruit, add creative flavor combinations, and safely heat-seal jars for storage. Together we'll create a variety of seasonal flavors, and each participant will take home samples to enjoy.

Look for more of April's classes coming soon!

November 18th - Holiday Meal Ideas

December 9th - Holiday Party Ideas

Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi

Wednesdays & Fridays from 9:30-11:00am
Community Center - Drop-in fee is \$15

Yoga with Anja Borgstrom

Strength & Balance Yoga -Tuesdays at 8:30am
Community Center - Cost is \$20 drop in or register online

Chair Yoga w/ Angi Love

Thursdays 10-11am
Community Center - Cost is \$15 drop in or register online

Family Yoga in the Park with Lori Hess

Family Yoga will take place on rotating weekend days at 10:00-10:45 (kids aged 2 to 5) on the grassy lawn outside the KCC Office/Recreation Building.

Fall dates Sunday 9/28, Sunday 10/12, Saturday 10/18 Suggested cost: \$25 per class. Please contact Lori Hess waytoglowkidsyoga@gmail.com with questions about the class.

Follow us on Instagram
@KensingtonCommunityCouncil



KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Kensington Eats Out at Mugunghwa

By Ittai Shiu

Soft-launched just last year, Mugunghwa is already celebrating its first anniversary at its El Cerrito location. The name translates to “hibiscus” in English, but in Korea, the flower carries deeper meaning—it symbolizes resilience, the ability to thrive even in the toughest conditions, much like Korea’s own history.

The restaurant itself mirrors that balance of strength and elegance. Clean, modern, and efficient, Mugunghwa blends technology with hospitality in a way that elevates the dining experience. A digital waitlist and tablets at each table allow you to set the pace—place your order instantly if you already know what you want, or take your time browsing and discussing options with your group. Either way, the operation hums smoothly without diners ever feeling rushed.

While tech-driven dining can sometimes feel impersonal, Mugunghwa avoids that trap. The waitstaff move with purpose but remain approachable, ready to answer questions or provide guidance. On busy Friday and Saturday nights, the “call server” button on your table ensures you’re never overlooked.



The menu spans familiar Korean favorites like sizzling barbecue and colorful bibimbap. No matter what you order, your table will quickly fill with banchan—the beloved array of side dishes ranging from spicy radish to glazed sweet potato, each adding its own layer of flavor and texture.

For something refreshing and daring to the palate, try Naengmyeon, chilled buckwheat noodles in a tangy beef broth, served plain or with sliced meat. Pair it with bulgogi or galbi for a satisfying contrast of hot and cold.

Seollongtang, a creamy and comforting beef bone soup, is another must-try. Mugunghwa’s version is rich and deeply savory, simmered for hours to extract every bit of flavor from the marrow and bones. Served with tender slices of beef and delicate noodles, the broth is gentle yet flavorful, seasoned simply with salt and scallions so you can adjust it to taste. Traditionally enjoyed with rice or kimchi, Seollongtang is the perfect dish for the cooler days of fall.

A standout under the “Korean Favorites” section, and our personal favorite, is the Tteokbokki, one of Korea’s most iconic street foods. Served bubbling hot in a fiery red gochujang sauce, the chewy, cylindrical rice cakes soak up just the right amount of heat while keeping their signature bounce. At Mugunghwa, you can elevate the dish with instant ramen noodles or melted cheese—or better yet, both.



That combination is no accident. When ramen was introduced to Korea in the 1960s, diners began mixing it into tteokbokki, giving rise to rabokki. Cheese, meanwhile, became widely popular in the ’70s and ’80s thanks to government dairy campaigns, and by the ’90s, it had found its way into Korean street food. Today, gooey cheese-topped tteokbokki is a modern classic.

At Mugunghwa, the dish arrives with flair. A server wheels it out on a cart and melts the cheese tableside with a blowtorch, sending up wisps of smoke and delivering that perfect char before it stretches into gooey, spicy-sweet bites. It’s as theatrical as it is delicious—a fitting metaphor for Mugunghwa itself: rooted in tradition, yet unafraid to embrace the modern.

10140 San Pablo Ave El Cerrito (510) 989-5019

100th Birthday

...from Page 5

In the past 100 years the school has been home to hundreds of teachers and staff and thousands of students, many of whom still reside in Kensington. The school currently has 479 students enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through sixth grade.

In addition to the core curriculum, the Kensington Education Foundation (KEF) funds art, PE, library, STEAM, reading lab, and much more, while KASEP, through the nonprofit Kensington Community Council, offers after school enrichment classes.

The school is currently focused on four basic expectations for all students: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Kind, Be Responsible (The 4 Be’s). Students are also expected to model the core values of Kensington Elementary: Kindness, Integrity, and Everyone Belongs. While some things have changed, like the policy of no cell phones or smart watches at school, the ideals of our community’s elementary school remain timeless.



Red Flag Ready Fest

By Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Red Flag Ready Fest is coming to Kensington, and you won’t want to miss this fun, free, family-friendly event dedicated to building a safer, more wildfire-ready community. Join us on Saturday, October 11, from 11am-2pm at Kensington Park and Community Center.



Photo by Nancy Rubin

This event honors the progress we’ve made together—Firewise communities are taking root across Kensington, neighbors are stepping up to reduce wildfire risks, and regional partnerships are strengthening our collective resilience. Now it’s time to celebrate and keep the momentum going.

Meet your local heroes from the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department, Kensington Police, Contra Costa County Fire, Cal Fire, the American Red Cross, East Bay Regional Park District, Diablo Fire Safe Council, and many more. These partners are excited to participate in this event because of the incredible progress being made in and around Kensington. Their support reflects how far we’ve come as a community. Take a moment to stop by their booths, ask questions, and welcome them to Kensington. East Bay Regional Park District staff will also be on hand to share insights about the wildland area behind Kensington and their ongoing fire mitigation efforts.

Bring the whole family—there will be kid-friendly activities, emergency go-bag giveaways (while supplies last), and helpful resources to boost your household preparedness. Chat with your neighbors and learn how to take the next step toward making your home and block more fire-safe. Learn more at www.kensingtonfire.org/fest.

The Professional Tree Care Company

Caring for trees since 1978.

Our services range from consultation through all aspects of tree health care and removal. We have a 100% recycle policy for all materials generated by our activities. Certified arborists, licensed/insured. www.professionaltreecare.com

510•549•3954 or 888•335•TREE

ANYA’S TECH HELP



Experienced longtime technology professional tackles whatever computer/phone/tech issue you may have. References available.

Contact 415.523.6553 or anya@anyas.tech

CRESTMONT SCHOOL

Curiosity • Compassion • Confidence

TOUR OUR CAMPUS! INQUIRE TODAY!

510.237.4164 www.crestmontschool.org admissions@crestmontschool.org 6226 Arlington Blvd

EST. 1969 IN RICHMOND, CA



▼ TK-8 Modern Cooperative School

▼ 9 minute drive from the Kensington Library

▼ Social-Emotional Learning

▼ Affordable tuition + aftercare

▼ Small classes

ZC

EB

FALL UPDATES

with ZIP CODE EAST BAY

Stop by the Zip Code East Bay office and say hello at one of the upcoming Colusa Circle Events!



Halloween Harvest Celebration

Sunday, October 26th

Tree Lighting & Holiday Fair

Sunday, November 30th

EACH OFFICE IS INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED. DRE 02029039.

388 COLUSA AVENUE | 510.323.3669

a certified B Corporation & Green Business

ZIPCODEEASTBAY.COM

BAY AREA PORTFOLIO

ZIP CODE EAST BAY