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OUTLOOK

Bringing the Community Together

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SEPTEMBER 2026

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 84 NUMBER 7



Come See *The Princess Bride*

By Lin Due

Each fall, the Kensington Community Council provides a free family-friendly movie on a big screen in the park. A crowd appears with deck chairs and blankets, picnic baskets and coolers, and sets up shop on the lawn. It's become a cherished local tradition where neighbors gather under the stars to enjoy popcorn, theater snacks, and a beloved film. This year, KCC will show the timeless classic *The Princess Bride* on Saturday, September 26.

"We're especially excited to have finally secured the screening rights for *The Princess Bride*, after several attempts over the years," says KCC board member Carolyn Day Flowers. "A

See Princess Bride, Page 8

Blessing of the Animals at ACC

By Reverend Jen Chapman

Kensington pets, it's time to get blessed! Every fall, the pets of Kensington and their people get together for a time of community and blessing, celebrating the special role our pets have in our lives. While once connected to the KCC picnic, this annual community event is now being held separately on the campus of Arlington Community Church (ACC), which has been leading the event for many years. This will be Rev. Jen Chapman's fourth year to bless the pets of Kensington and neighboring communities.

The Blessing of the Animals will take place in ACC's garden patio (52 Arlington Ave) on Sunday, September 27 at 11am. Come a

See Blessing, page 8



Kensington & Beyond Update

Local Market Snapshot: 5/10/2026 - 8/1/2026

What is the hottest market in the East Bay? All areas: Ave. Days on the Market: 14. Here's the comparison:

City	Median % List Price	Median % Sale Price	Median Square Feet	Median % Above The List Price
Kensington	\$1,290,000	\$1,682,500	2,229 sq ft.	30%
El Cerrito	\$978,000	\$1,300,000	1,629 sq ft.	31%
N. Berkeley (94707 - 94708)	\$1,472,500	\$1,800,000	2,172 sq ft.	22%
Albany	\$1,150,000	\$1,765,000	1,567 sq ft.	53%

Kensington Market: 6/1/2026 - 7/28/2026:

Address	List Price	Sale Price	BR/BA	Sqft.	DOM
73 Kingston Rd	\$1,195,000	\$1,715,000	4/2	2,463	16
● 1643 Oak View Ave	\$1,525,000	\$1,525,000	3/2	1,131	2
● 64 Highgate Rd	\$1,595,000	\$1,900,000	3/2	2,224	18
● 178 Ardmore Rd	\$895,000	\$1,200,000	2/1	2,514	14
● 85 Ardmore Rd	\$1,285,000	\$2,220,000	6/4	2,418	12
● 44 Highgate Rd	\$2,695,000	\$2,575,000	6/3	1,412	57
155 Purdue Ave.	\$1,998,000	\$2,450,000	4/2	1,995	13
24 Arlington Ave	\$1,095,000	\$1,400,000	4/3	2,261	16
● 287 Purdue Ave	\$1,395,000	\$1,100,000	2/2	1,459	15

Properties shown with a black dot were transactions in which Compass represented either the Buyer or the Seller. Compass participated in over 67% of all sales in Kensington during this period.

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COMPASS



KIC and KPOA Town Hall in October

By Linda Lipscomb, KIC

All Kensington residents are invited to a Town Hall meeting to be held at the Kensington Community Center on October 17, from 10am-noon. The Town Hall will be presented by the Kensington Improvement Club (KIC), and the Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA), each holding their own annual membership meetings. The membership meetings and Town Hall meeting will be held both in person and via Zoom (link will follow closer to Oct. 17).

The KIC and KPOA are time-honored community organizations that have represented Kensington residents for decades, frequently providing input on community matters. We are honored to present this unique opportunity to learn about important issues facing Kensington. Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, Police Chief Mike Gancasz, and Fire Chief Eric Saylor will speak at the event.

Although the election for board directors for the Kensington Community Services District was uncontested, board directors incoming and current will also be invited to speak about topics important to Kensington citizens.

Coffee and refreshments will be served, so plan to come early, meet your representatives, and greet your neighbors! For further information, contact KIC at KICpost@gmail.com and KPOA at kpoassoc@gmail.com.

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July Police Log

By Chief Mike Gancasz

July 1, Rincon Rd. Grand theft of property. Investigation ongoing.

July 1, Los Altos Rd. Burglary from vehicle. No suspects located.

July 6, Kingston Rd., Grand theft of vehicle parts. No suspects located.

July 6, Coventry Rd., Grand theft of vehicle parts. No suspects located.

July 9, Coventry Rd., Elder care concern investigated, no financial loss, case closed.

July 10, Ocean View Ave., Burglary from vehicle. No suspects located.

July 10, Stratford Rd., Burglary from vehicle. No suspects located.

July 10, Coventry Rd., Petty theft from vehicle. No suspects located.

July 13, Edgecroft Rd., Report of property damage, efforts to locate and notify owner, investigation ongoing.

July 16, Wellesley Ave., Grand theft of vehicle parts. No suspects located.

July 17, Arlington Ave/Ardmore Ave. Failure to obey Peace Officer. Officers attempted to stop a vehicle for a non-moving vehicle code violation. The vehicle failed to yield and sped away from officers at a high rate of speed. Officers did not pursue and advised neighboring jurisdictions. Investigation is ongoing.

July 17, Plateau Dr., Vandalism. Vehicle vandalism. No suspects located.

July 29, Ardmore Dr., Grand theft of vehicle parts. No suspects located.

July 30, Lawson Rd., Residential burglary. Three juvenile suspects contacted and released by their parents.

Kensington Book Group September Meeting

By Debbie Hamati

Kensington fiction lovers are invited to join the upcoming Kensington Book Group virtual meeting on September 22 at 6:15pm to discuss *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque. Published in 1929, this seminal anti-war novel has had a profound impact on literature and war narratives and is considered a classic. Chronicling the harrowing experiences of WWI soldiers, Remarque explores the themes of war's futility, failure of idealism, loss of innocence, blind nationalism, institutional hypocrisy, the dehumanizing nature of combat and the postwar struggle for soldiers returning from combat. To join monthly Zoom meetings, contact kensingtonbookgroup2026@gmail.com.

Future discussion books include: *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte (October 27), *How to Read a Book* by Monica Woods (November 17), and *Breathing Lessons* by Anne Tyler (December 29).

As a popular ongoing activity of the Kensington Library (now temporarily closed for remodeling), the Kensington Book Group is celebrating its 20th year. The group intends to continue independently during the reconstruction and reconnect with the library when it reopens in 2027. For those accessing the Contra Costa Library system, the closest branch is the El Cerrito Library on Stockton Ave.



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The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues. KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.

OCTOBER - 2026 DEADLINES

Advertising Deadline ♦ SEPT. 8
Editorial Deadline ♦ SEPT. 10

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

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Has AI Made Us Superfluous? An Opinion

By Anya Sophe Behn

I have recently been helping neighbors who are trying out Generative AI tools for big, non-technical projects. Generative Artificial Intelligence (genAI) is a particular type of language program that “reads” immense amounts of information based on rules (in this article, I refer to genAI and bots interchangeably).

For text, this started with predicting the next word, based on the previous words in a sentence or paragraph, after training on 8 million web pages and given 1.5 billion rules. It’s essentially statistical prediction. For graphics, genAI predicts the next pixel, based on a similar method.

News media and others refer to genAI as AI, even though that is inaccurate in the technical sense. “Self-aware Artificial Intelligence” has been predicted since the ‘40s.

These projects I am helping neighbors with are going well. They take a bit of “bot-sitting” and very specific instructions with revisions as needed. Sometimes the bot does wildly unpredictable things. GenAIs require particular language and attention, and understanding how they work is helpful.

My experience for smaller tasks is this: ask the bot to do something, it does it, you ask for more versions, it does it, you find one you like, then you modify it. Sometimes the time it takes to get the bot to modify the work as you want it is similar to the time it would have taken you to do it from scratch. This has also been the experience of many technical friends I’ve talked with.

Are There Benefits?

The most useful function I have seen from genAI is simplifying internet search results (Google, DuckDuckGo, Brave, Bing, et. al.) by giving an “AI Overview” at the top of the search results. It is important to check the sources, because sometimes genAI makes things up; these are called hallucinations; predictions gone awry. These overviews make finding the answer you’re looking for easier because rather than you visually combing through a morass of duplicate websites and spammy ad-filled information, genAI does it, and the answer may be right there from genAI. Or it may be bad information.

Before the internet’s main function became a driver for putting ads in our faces rather than sharing quality information, a good summarized answer was unnecessary.

GenAI can also help a person start a project or give feedback on something, much like you would do in asking a friend or co-worker to take a look.

Something that prevents me from using it more (beyond the massive amounts of water and energy it takes) is that anything you ask or upload into the genAI model will be used for the model to ingest, so nothing you do with it is private. This is, in part, because these programs degrade dramatically without “fresh data” from people to eat.

FOMO or Fear of Missing Out

When ChatGPT was released, I was surprised by the speed at which nearly every company and computer program started pushing AI everywhere. It was like a pile-on of lemmings without any of them (for the most part) really considering the best-use cases for their service, and not understanding genAI’s actual capabilities rather than believing the frenzied hype.

GenAI is frequently hyped up as the cheapest, fastest way to do anything: “Better than a person!” Our media and the billionaire tech bros (I must ask, where are the women?) push genAI to executives of corporations as a way to reduce costs by replacing employee labor with genAI.

It is presented as the best invention since sliced bread with no downsides. One wonders...can that be true? And do we want to replace people? What will we be doing if we don't have jobs or income?

In part because of the way generative AI is marketed to company leaders, over the past few years millions of individuals, including in our community, have lost their jobs with the excuse that genAI can do their jobs. What actually happens in companies claiming to replace people is that they drastically cut staff, leaving one or two very stressed-out people trying to cover the jobs of several.

After all, who doesn't love a phone tree or chatbot rather than speaking to an actual person? Hiring in tech is extremely constrained for the same reason. College commencement speakers who extoll genAI are loudly booed because many of those graduating cannot find jobs to pay their student loans.

Can AI Replace Humans?

No. An effort to replace humans with genAI is nonsensical, and that’s because of us, not because of AI. We need each other, and we need human interactions to be happy. We get sad without interactions with other people, no matter how brief those interactions are.

The fever dream of having unpaid workers in the form of generative AI programs for higher profits is not a future any of us should want.

Next month: How AI hypes itself and why.

Anya Sophe Behn has more than 30 years’ experience in the tech industry at every level, from startups to large corporations.

Kensington’s September Meetings

- Kensington Community Services District Sept. 10, 7pm, Kensington Community Center
- Kensington Community Council Sept. 14, 6:30pm, Recreation Building, Kensington Park
- Kensington Improvement Club Sept. 28, 7pm, Room 3, Kensington Community Center
- Kensington Municipal Advisory Council, Sept. 30, 7 pm, Kensington Community Center

Get involved in our community. All meetings are open to the public and citizen participation is deeply valued and encouraged.



Little Marvin and the Gardeners Stage a Rock Benefit

By Marion Henon

Rock in the Redwoods returns to Coventry Grove for a benefit concert on September 19 from 6-10pm. The local rock and roll cover band is excited to host another community-fueled event at this magical spot. We hope to get everyone dancing as well as enjoying a delicious paella dinner, both seafood and vegetarian, salad and dessert, provided by Oak-land’s Venga Paella, included in the ticket price.

Little Marvin and the Gardeners, or LMG as they are affectionately known, include eight regular band members, and this year will feature an additional vocalist and a horn section! They have played over the years at the Kensington Circus Pub, the Ivy Room, venues in Napa for private parties, and at the Kensington Community Center for multiple events. Their music spans from highly danceable ‘50s classics to covers of Santana, B52s, Talking Heads, and Smash Mouth.

The dinner and show is in support of Camping Unlimited, which sends Bay Area children with developmental disabilities to Northern California camps that provide a warm and supportive atmosphere of planned permissiveness. The goal is to encourage community, recreation, education, adventure and fun in beautiful natural surroundings.

At the same time, this program provides out-of-home respite to parents and caregivers of the daily demands of care and supervision. Check out www.CampingUnlimited.org for more information.

Tickets are on sale now at www.rockintheredwoods.com. The event will be held on September 19 from 6-10pm. Visit the website for more details. See you there!

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Colusa Circle’s First Art Crawl Showcases Local Talent

By Rae Quigley

On Saturday, July 25, Colusa Circle welcomed neighbors, local artists, and visitors for its inaugural Colusa Circle Art Crawl—a lively afternoon celebrating creativity, community, and the neighborhood businesses that make the Circle such a special gathering place.

On this beautiful summer afternoon, participating businesses transformed themselves into pop-up galleries and creative spaces, giving attendees the opportunity to browse and connect with artists working across a wide range of mediums. Ceramics, paintings,



Pam Jue exhibits her artwork during the first Colusa Circle Art Crawl on July 25. 13 artists were featured in eight Circle businesses. Photo by Liana Dickson.

photography, digital illustration, and books were displayed throughout the Circle, encouraging visitors to explore local shops while discovering new work by talented Kensington artists.

The inaugural Art Crawl featured Laurie Caird Bramlage, Cara Goldstein, Suzanne Hobesh, Pam Jue, Suzy Kelly, Carolyn Lord, the works of the late Catharine Hiersoux, Pam Johnson, Laura McNall, Nan Phelps, Joelle Provost, Luke Swanson, and Rob Wulffraat. Artwork and creative projects were showcased throughout the Circle at Benchmark Pizzeria, Circle Salon, Freshly Cut, Hiersoux Gallery, Nan Phelps Photography, Natura, Portavia, and Zip Code East Bay. Benchmark Pizzeria added to the festive atmosphere by serving summer cocktails and complimentary pizza, creating a welcoming place for neighbors and visitors to gather between stops.

With a strong turnout and enthusiastic support from the community, the first Art Crawl was a celebration not only of local art, but also of the connections that bring Kensington neighbors and businesses together. Visitors had the opportunity to meet artists, discover new work, support local businesses, and experience Colusa Circle in a fresh and creative way.

The Colusa Circle Merchants Association hopes the successful first event will become an annual tradition. Mark your new calendars now for the next Colusa Circle Art Crawl, planned for Saturday, July 24, 2027.



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Kensington youngster Sam Rakestraw leaves no crumb behind. Photo by Rachel Wood.

A Standout First Season for Kensington Park'd

By Meghan Murphy and Rachel Wood

What started in May as a bit of an experiment—*Could a monthly food truck night bring Kensington neighbors together?*—has turned into one of the community’s favorite new traditions.

Kensington Park'd will close out its first season with two Friday events on September 11 and October 9, from 5–8 p.m. at Kensington Park. After five months of food trucks, live music, picnic blankets, kids running across the field, and neighbors staying well past dinner, the final two nights will be a chance to celebrate what has been a phenomenal first year.

Each event has boasted a full park, filling the upper field with families and neighbors enjoying a rotating lineup of food trucks and local musicians. The basic formula has stayed remarkably simple: good food, a blanket on the grass, and a few unhurried hours together.

“What a wonderful way to bring together friends and neighbors in Kensington,” said Anne Forrest of the Kensington Community Council. “While enjoying the food and music, you can reconnect with old friends from Kensington School days and also meet the many new families who are just learning about the community.” Forrest added that KCC is looking forward to next year’s second season of Kensington Park'd.



Kensington family Corah and John Chavez enjoyed the fresh food truck fries. Photo by Meghan Murphy.

One of the best parts has been watching the event become more than something people simply attend. Kids now expect to find their friends there. Families make plans to meet up. Neighbors arrive without necessarily knowing who else will be there, confident they'll run into someone they know. That kind of casual community gathering was exactly what we hoped for when we started Kensington Park'd.

The final two events will keep the same format, with a rotating lineup of food trucks and local entertainment. On September 11, the Great Space Coaster will perform live. The Bay Area band brings an energetic mix of rock, funk and dance music that should make for a particularly fun late-summer night in the park.

Then on October 9, Kensington Park'd will wrap its inaugural season with local DJ Gemtone, giving the final night a celebratory sendoff as the sun sets a little earlier and fall arrives in Kensington.

Kensington Park'd is a collaborative effort, made possible with support from the Kensington Community Services District, Kensington Community Council and our parks and foodie crew, along with the musicians, food vendors and community members who have helped make each event happen. And ultimately, the people who made the first season successful are the hundreds of Kensington neighbors who keep showing up. See you at the next one.

Updates and food truck lineups are posted at www.kensingtonfoodtrucks.com



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On a gray day in October, residents chatted as they walked their dogs up the Arlington during KCC's 2025 parade. Photo by Leigh Schneider.

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The KCC Heard You Loud and Clear — Come Join the Parade.



By Anne Forrest, KCC

In March, the Kensington Community Council conducted a general information survey to find out what members of the community wanted the KCC to focus on in the coming years. We were gratified to receive nearly 300 responses. The theme that came through loud and clear in almost everyone’s responses was that Kensington wanted more: more classes, more events, in short, more ways of connecting in the community.

People are looking for ways to get together as a community in informal settings around Kensington. That is what the Kensington Parade and Picnic are all about.

On Sunday, October 18, the Kensington Parade and Picnic is back with your chance to join fellow community members from neighborhood groups and have some fun. Don’t just watch the parade, come and join it — young and old, and two- and four-legged alike.

Kensington dog lovers: Bring your pooch and walk with a group of other fun Kensington dogs and their owners. Dog outfits are encouraged, but every dog, small and large, furry and not-so-furry, is welcome to come prance along the Arlington.

The theme of the parade is Halloween and community spirit. This is a wonderful time to preview your 2026 costume and show off your spooky or funny Halloween finest. Prizes will be awarded for best children’s costume, best adult costume, and best four-legged costume.

The parade will again be led by the renowned Cal Straw Hat Band and end with the El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department truck. It will feature grand marshal cars, local Girl and Boy Scout troops, nursery schools, and community organizations such as the Path-keepers and the Firewise groups.

Once the parade participants have made their way up Arlington Avenue to the Community Center, everyone is invited to enjoy live music provided by the Korematsu Middle School Jazz Band, led by Tiffany Carrico. They’ll be followed by the Great Space Coasters Band, which plays everyone’s favorite music from the ’70s, ’80s, and ’90s.

And what’s a picnic without food? Lunch will be on sale to enjoy while listening to the music. There will be information tables with community resources, children’s arts and crafts, and the ever-popular Sterling the Bubble Guy.

If you are part of a local community group who would like to walk in the parade, please reach out to Leigh Schneider, one of our parade/picnic planners, and volunteer at leigh@redoakrealty.com.

The parade starts on Sunday, October 18, at 11:30am at the ACE Hardware parking lot. This is your chance to connect with your friends and neighbors, whether by walking in the parade, watching from your front yard, or joining friends and neighbors on Arlington Avenue sidewalks.

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KENSINGTON EATS OUT

The Art of Doing Simple Things Exceptionally Well

By Ittai Shiu

Near the bustling intersection of Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way, where Berkeley’s vibrant college culture spills onto the sidewalks, Hinodeya Ramen brings more than a century of Japanese culinary tradition to one of the city’s liveliest corners. With roots dating back to 1885, the heart of Hinodeya is its dedication to dashi—the refined broth that has evolved over generations and remains the foundation of every bowl.

Originating in Hasuda, just north of Tokyo, Hinodeya began as a humble family restaurant serving travelers and railway workers. Four generations later, it has evolved into one of Japan’s most respected dashi ramen traditions, eventually choosing Northern California for its first U.S. outpost.

We arrived passing through the traditional noren curtains and were greeted by the restaurant’s long lacquered counters and understated Japanese aesthetic that provide the ideal setting for a culinary tradition. We kicked things off with Chashu Bun with garlic sauce. The pillowy-soft bun and tender, flavorful pork made for the perfect start to the meal, especially as you watched in anticipation as bowls of ramen made their way to other tables.

The Hinodeya House Ramen is the restaurant’s signature bowl. Its umami-rich broth combines bonito flakes, kombu, scallop bouillon, and pork oil to create a broth that’s surprisingly light yet incredibly layered. Paired with chashu pork, bamboo shoots, a perfectly marinated soft-boiled egg, spinach, and nori, it’s easy to see why this is their bestseller.

For something with a little kick, the Spicy Miso Ramen delivers. The savory miso broth is balanced with chicken stock, chili bean sauce, and chili oil for warmth that builds without overpowering the broth’s complexity.

The Hamaguri Ramen was a pleasant surprise. Featuring fresh littleneck clams in a buttery dashi with subtle garlic notes, it tasted light, briny, and incredibly clean—a refreshing alternative to the richer pork-based bowls.

One of the highlights of our visit was chatting with Mike Muranaka, who spent six years at the original San Francisco Japantown location before helping establish the Berkeley restaurant. He explained just how much care goes into the dashi, joking that longtime regulars can even taste the subtle differences created by the East Bay’s water.

Mike also insisted we try the Creamy Vegan Ramen, and we’re glad he did. Made with shiitake mushroom dashi, soy milk, and the restaurant’s original sesame sauce, it was rich, velvety, and deeply satisfying. The spinach noodles, mushrooms, tofu, and vegetables created a bowl that felt every bit as thoughtfully composed as the rest of the menu. Rich, balanced, and deeply satisfying, it was made with intention rather than accommodation—and ultimately became the most memorable dish of the meal. We were ready to call our vegan friends before we even left the restaurant to tell them what they’d been missing.

In a world where restaurants often chase the next trend, Hinodeya reminds us that some of the best dining experiences come from honoring heritage rather than reinventing it. In a city fortunate to have no shortage of exceptional ramen—from rich tonkotsu to creamy, indulgent broths—Hinodeya sets itself apart by elevating the essentials: carefully crafted broth, quality ingredients, and patient attention to detail, all in a quiet celebration of doing simple things exceptionally well.

Hinodeya Ramen Berkeley
2309 Telegraph Ave.



Blessing

...from Front Page



little early for treats and activities before the blessing. There will also be a pet-friendly chapel service in ACC’s Social Hall at 10am for those who would like a little church with their blessing. The blessing at 11am will follow the usual format of introducing pets, sharing, and a group blessing, followed by individual blessings for those who would like to receive them.

All people and pets are welcome, not just cats and dogs...bring your reptiles, rodents and rabbits too. (Please keep pets leashed or contained throughout the event.)

If it’s best to leave your pet at home, you can bring a picture and/or item of your pet to be blessed. We hope you’ll come and be part of this annual celebration of our beloved pets.

Goats

...from Page 6

morning, the goats were lying down in a sleepy herd at the top of the ridge where they had done their chomping cleanup. By 10:15am, Monday, they were gone. The goats left behind a much cleaner hillside. They ate all the leaves and side growth of larger shrubs, although there was still a small number of denuded stems sticking up. Maybe a garden crew with weed whackers can come by and get those too. Thank you, East Bay Regional Parks! You can go to ebparks.org to see the 2026 goat grazing schedule.



Princess Bride

...from Front Page

true nostalgic favorite from acclaimed director, the late Rob Reiner, *The Princess Bride* broadly appeals across ages and generations, telling a captivating story of adventure and romance, with witty dialogue and charming characters.”

Showtime kicks off at dusk (approximately 7:30pm), with concessions opening at 6:30pm. Please arrive early to claim your spot on the main lawn. Remember to bring blankets, low-profile folding chairs, and layers to stay comfortable as the evening cools down. KCC will have popcorn, non-alcoholic drinks, and after-dinner treats available for purchase. We hope to see you there.

KCC offers a special shout-out to the generous Movie Night sponsors who make this event possible: Mechanics Bank, Nation’s Giant Hamburgers, and the TTL Team at Red Oak Realty.



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Three Old Faces, One New on the Board

By Lin Due

The big news on the Kensington Community Services District board didn’t happen at the August meeting—it happened in the process of running for director seats on the November ballot. Four seats were up for grabs: three four-year terms and one two-year term, the remainder of Dave Spath’s tenure. Spath is now in San Diego, and the board last month decided not to axe the seat, which would have left eight directors, an even number. Instead it began an application process to appoint someone to fill the less-than-three-month term until the winner of the two-year seat is sworn in during the December meeting.

Confused? It gets easier. As it develops, Jim Watt and Sarah Gough decided not to run. Directors Rodney Paul and Daniel Levine signed up with the county elections board, Levine for a four-year seat and Paul for both a four-year seat and the two-year seat. Newcomer Adam Bastein did the same: signing up for both four-year and two-year. When no one besides those three signed up for the three four-year terms, that became an uncontested result.

Then director Alex Aquino-Fike dropped in at the last minute to opt for the two-year term. Paul and Bastein were ineligible for that seat, having made it to the four-year term, so with no one else running, the two-year seat also became uncontested.

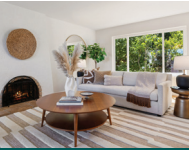
The bottom line is that board directors for the KCSD will not be on the ballot in November. Paul, Levine and Bastein will be four-year directors starting in December, and Aquino-Fike will fill the two-year seat.

Then there was the less-than-three-month term still to fill. Bastein applied for the position, as did Ivan Boekelheide. Both had impeccable credentials and experience, and both sounded very similar during the board interviews at the regular meeting on August 13. Bastein was chosen to fill out those couple months, likely because he’ll be able to hit the ground running in December.

Bastein said in the meeting that he had grown up in Berkeley, near to the border with Kensington, and that his parents still lived in the area. He has two young children, so is very familiar with the park and its offerings. He also noted that because he is close to his parents, he understands issues challenging young families and seniors.

He is focused on emergency preparedness—his elementary school burned down during the Berkeley/Oakland firestorm, and he was also impacted by the ’89 earthquake. The park is another focus. He wrote in his application: “My daughters and I spend time there almost every day, so I see firsthand how important it is as a gathering place for residents of all ages.”

Bastein has a business and financial background and serves as the chief operating officer of a small technology company. He plays a key role in planning and budgeting, which should serve him well on the board.



KENSINGTON MARKET UPDATE

The Kensington market remains highly desirable. We’re seeing well-prepared and well-priced properties in particular attracting strong interest. The average sales price for Q1/Q2 in Kensington jumped 17% from last year to \$1.754M.

Long-term, Kensington real estate has remained resilient, with home values increasing 74.8% over the past decade. For sellers, strong equity may create an opportunity to make a strategic move. For buyers, Kensington continues to offer lasting value.

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