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How to Get Tested

By John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor

Kensington residents can get free COVID-19 testing even if they do not have symptoms. Contra Costa is the first Bay Area county to offer free testing to people with or without symptoms of the virus.

Expanded testing helps us more effectively slow the spread of the virus, which will allow us to re-open businesses sooner.

Our goal is to increase testing from the current 400 daily tests to 2,400 tests per day.

As of May 20, 1,209 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Contra Costa out of 25,704 tests given, with 33 deaths. There have been no confirmed cases in Kensington.

Anyone living in Contra Costa can get tested at a drive-through site operated by county Health Services in San Pablo, Martinez,

[See Covid Testing, Page 7](#)

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KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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JUNE 2020

PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 78 NUMBER 4



Kensington PD Adopts Body-Worn Cameras

By Linnea Due

Steve Simpkins, Kensington's interim police chief last on loan from the county Sheriff's Office, likes to quote Sir Robert Peel. Peel founded London's Metropolitan Police based on principles he formulated in 1829. The second principle is just as relevant today: "The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behavior, and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect." Peel would likely approve of body-worn cameras, with their goals of protecting the public and officers while monitoring the legitimacy of police actions.

At its January 23 meeting, the KPCCSD board approved purchasing body-worn cameras (BWCs). By March 12, the department received the cameras and spent the weekend training. At that January meeting, the board also approved a ten-page policy Simpkins wrote detailing use, restrictions, and access. Kensington joins the majority of departments nationwide: according to *Police Chief* magazine, as of 2016, over 60 percent of local departments and half of sheriffs' offices use BWCs for all officers.

"We worked through the weekend," Simpkins said during a phone interview April 1. "We installed them officer by officer. Each officer has his or her own camera." Simpkins explained that he had gotten enough cameras for everyone, though he shares one with Captain Rickey Hull. "We're not out on patrol as much," Simpkins explained.

[See COVID-19, Page 7](#)

[See Cameras, Page 2](#)

County Responds to COVID-19

By John Gioia, County Supervisor

Much has happened since March 16 when Contra Costa and the Bay Area were first in the nation to order a shelter-at-home, followed by Governor Gavin Newsom's statewide order on March 19. County health officers issued these orders under their State Health and Safety Code authority to "preserve and protect public health."

Our collective efforts to stay home and social-distance have slowed the spread of the virus, kept our hospitals from being overwhelmed, and saved lives. Health officers believe that prematurely lifting restrictions will increase rates of transmission and illness, further delaying the re-opening of businesses and getting people back to work. However, decreasing COVID-19-related hospitalizations and a stable number of new cases resulted in new shelter-at-home orders easing restric-

tions and opening up retail to storefront pickup. Future re-opening will depend upon continued progress.

How long will this go on? The April 29 Health Order sets forth "indicators" to assess our progress in determining how fast to ease restrictions. These indicators include: (1) the total number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are flat or decreasing for 14 consecutive days, (2) sufficient capacity in our hospitals to provide care during a surge in COVID-19 cases, (3) ample supply of personal protective equipment for healthcare providers, (4) increasing countywide testing to 2,400 tests daily (currently at 800/day), and (5) sufficient capacity to contact trace, and isolate and quarantine those in contact with confirmed cases.

We are seeing a positive trend in these indicators that signals we will soon be

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JUST SOLD!

Real Estate is business as usual in an unusual market. Properties are selling when presented thoughtfully, carefully and creatively - while keeping buyers, sellers and the community safe.



46 ARDMORE ROAD
KENSINGTON

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Sold with very favorable terms for the Seller



6146 MCBRYDE AVE
RICHMOND VIEW

Just Sold! The most private and inspiring setting with pastoral views of nature! Custom cottage style home opposite Alvarado Regional park.
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Sold with multiple offers for significantly over asking

Considering selling? The market is still strong in Kensington and the surrounding area. Inventory is limited and there are many qualified buyers. If you are interested in knowing the value of your home or what it takes to sell a home in this market, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary.



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Cameras ...from Page 1

Although little research has been done on the impact of BWCs, it appears that the cameras improve behavior of both citizens and the police. One of the biggest concerns is privacy of the public.

Simpkins wrote the policy specifically for Kensington, using elements from other departments—the Sheriff, El Cerrito, Albany, and Berkeley—and he addressed the privacy concern repeatedly. “If you look at the way the policy is written, officers only use them at specific times,” Simpkins said. (See the KPD Body-Worn Camera Draft Policy in the January 23 agenda packet.) “Even another officer can’t access another officer’s body camera footage.” Simpkins explained that officers (for example, on a medical call) have a legal reason to be on the scene. “I think what’s important is to think about if, when, and how footage would be released. The way I worded it is that it’s really strict about releases. That’s the key. We aren’t going to release body camera footage, and no one else is going to see it.”

That footage can be used as evidence in a trial. Simpkins says that the DA’s office in Contra Costa County has a secure transfer system. “We use software that comes with the camera to securely transfer to the DA’s office.” He pointed out that a defense attorney could conceivably release footage. “But for us, we’re not going to release footage.”

Simpkins wanted his policy, which gives specifics on when to use the camera, to have leeway but also teeth. “There is a clause that the officer can use it as he sees fit. If a situation goes sideways, it’s OK for them to turn it on.” Again, how the footage is accessed is key. “Without these tight protections, hypothetically an officer could take something that they felt was amusing and put it on their Facebook page. That cannot happen or anything like it.”

“The officers were excited about getting them,” Simpkins said. “They’ve been wanting them for a long time. I’m not very fond of the term ‘industry standards,’ but this is one industry standard I wholeheartedly support.”

Simpkins noted that a resident told him that sending officers into the field without BWCs was tantamount to malpractice. “They are perfectly happy to be filmed all day,” he said. “I challenge you to find another industry where that would be true.”

The cameras, of course, cannot settle all arguments. “The videos don’t always grab everything,” Simpkins said. “It doesn’t have a 360-degree view. I remember seeing sample footage of two officers responding to the same thing. From Officer A’s camera, it looks like an unjustified shooting, but Officer B’s camera clearly shows the threat.”

The system that Simpkins got for the KPD has several features that might prove important. It has a signal device mounted in the patrol cars. If the officer turns on the overheads, the lights on top of the vehicle, that officer’s body camera automatically turns on. “Another perk,” Simpkins said, “is that the videos are stored securely in the cloud. And we can add other evidence to that. Let’s say that you have a home security system that includes a camera. The visual evidence storage system we pay for lets citizens upload evidence from their home. We give you a link, and you can upload the video from your home camera. We’re moving into the future.”

Simpkins was to have a couple of months longer to memorialize the changes he made during his tenure since October. In a Zoom KPPCSD meeting on March 26, his contract was extended until June 30; at that point he would go on to his new promotion within the sheriff’s office, that of assistant sheriff. However, the timing changed, and Simpkins turned over the reins to Walt Schuld in mid-May. See story on page 7.

Letters to the Editor

Emergency Evacuation in Car and on Foot

Dear Editor:

On top of COVID-19 we are now entering another serious fire season with very little rainfall. Being prepared early and thoroughly is our best defense.

In support of the April Outlook articles “Mapping Wildfire Evacuation” and “Traffic Study Raises Questions,” I want to encourage as many residents as possible to read the detailed Traffic Consultants Report (on the Kensington Fire Protection District’s website) including the specific recommendations to improve evacuation. Commissioned by the KFPD, the study looks at existing traffic patterns on streets and pathways (not sidewalks) to determine pinch-points and barriers to evacuation. The report makes recommendations that, if implemented, could save lives during a fast-moving wildland fire or other emergency evacuation.

I want to point out that the report recognized the value of the walking pathways in Kensington and states, “Given the limitations of the road network to handle a sudden influx of vehicle traffic, greater consideration needs to be given to the potential for people to evacuate on foot. The use of the pathway network...is likely to be the best option based on current conditions.”

In addition to acknowledging the importance of the nineteen walking path segments reviewed, the report also recommends needed improvements in order for them to be more viable as evacuation options. Those of us who walk on the paths know how true this is.

This is a relatively easy fix if only our local districts, which are both charged with key aspects of emergency evacuation response, would commit to take ownership (as the KPPCSD did in 2012 but never implemented). We need our elected officials to pick up that ball and move it forward for greater community preparedness and evacuation options. Once paths are owned by a public agency, we can work together and apply for grants, get the needed permits, and fund those improvements. We need these paths improved for overall community health and safety.

Lisa Caronna

And While You’re on Those Paths...

To the Editor:

The Kensington paths have been getting a lot of use while we are sheltering in place. This underscores the value of the paths for recreation. While we recognize their importance as essential safety corridors in an evacuation, it is also true that they make navigating Kensington on foot more pleasant and easier.

The Kensington Pathkeepers has been recommending path etiquette to ensure safety as we contend with Covid-19. All path users should maintain social distance and keep an eye out for others on the path. Be particularly mindful of this on weekends and times of higher use. And since the paths often are close to homes, we recommend that walkers wear masks at all times. Residents getting to know the paths better should check out the Kensington Pathkeepers website at kensingtonpathkeepers.org, which includes a useful map and works well on mobile devices. It also provides information on how to join our effort to achieve public ownership of the paths.

Until the Covid-19 threat subsides, I will be unable to lead in-person path tours. But I have created a Zoom-based video tour people can join from home. Send an email to rodneyjpaul510@gmail.com for information on how to participate.

Rodney Paul

JULY 2020 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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KENSINGTON Community Education

KCC Summer Camp 2020

\$350 per week

Registration Started Tuesday February 25th

Enroll on Website:

KensingtonCommunityCouncil.Org

Weeks 1, 2 and 3 are cancelled from June 8th to June 26th. We hope to be back with Weeks 4 through 10 from June 29th to August 14th.

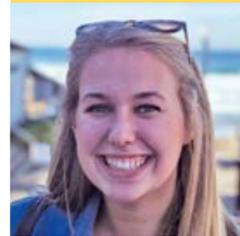
COVID-19 Update

The Kensington Community Council is continuing to monitor the recommended Contra Costa County Health guidelines, and is actively exploring options to provide engaging, but safe, camp experiences for Summer Camp 2020. Based on the continued shelter-in-place order for the Bay Area counties till June 1st, the KCC has decided to cancel the first 3 weeks of summer camp. If you have registered for any of these 3 weeks you can email the KCC office for a full refund or transfer into one of the currently remaining weeks of camp.

We remain hopeful that we will have the opportunity to welcome our campers onto the big lawn for at least part of the summer. We are working hard to modify our camp experience to provide both fun and safety for our campers and staff. Many of the fieldtrips have already been cancelled, to ensure that kids are not in crowded busses. If we move forward with camp sessions in July, we will be restructuring camp into small self-contained cohorts of campers with two counselors assigned to them for the entire time. Every effort will be made to keep hands and equipment cleaned regularly and to provide activities that will ensure social distancing within each cohort. Campers will be asked to bring their own basic art supplies, sports equipment, and hand sanitizer.

In the event that the entire summer of camp is cancelled, enrolled participants will be contacted and full refunds will be provided if applicable. Currently, enrollments are still being accepted with the standard cancellation/change policies.

We will provide an update as soon as more information is available. Please email questions or concerns to: kccec@yahoo.com. Thank you for your patience and understanding and stay well.



We are excited to announce that Kate Thomsen has been hired as the 2020 Summer Camp Director. Kate grew up in Kensington and has been a KCC camp counselor in previous years. She has returned home for the summer after graduating from Oregon State University with a degree in Early Education. We are so pleased she has agreed to join us for the planning and coordination of this coming camp season.



Photo by Sherry Garcia

On behalf of the entire Kensington Hilltop School community we want to congratulate the Class of 2020! Our wishes are no less heartfelt because we can't deliver them in person. We look forward to celebrating when we are able to gather as a group!

Judy Sanders

KASEP Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program



Teacher Vicky would like to share this easy, fun and delicious recipe with all of her students she misses very much.

Easy Oreo Truffles

Ingredients:

- 36 Oreo cookies (feel free to use flavored Oreos, but you will need two packs as there are less cookies in the flavored packs)
- 1 8oz package cream cheese
- 16 oz. Dipping chocolate (Candy Melts, Ghirardelli Dark Chocolate Melting Wafers...)

Directions:

Crush the cookies to fine crumbs in food processor. (Cookies can also be finely crushed in a resealable plastic bag using a rolling pin.) Add cream cheese; mix until well blended. Roll cookie mixture into 42 balls (or use small cookie scoop), about 1-inch in diameter. Freeze until solid. Melt dipping chocolate over simmering water. Using a tooth pick, dip balls in chocolate; place on wax paper-covered baking sheet (twisting toothpick as you pull it from the truffle). (Any leftover chocolate can be stored at room temperature for another use.) Cover tooth pick hole with a dab of dipping chocolate. Add sprinkles immediately, while chocolate is still soft/wet. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour. Store leftover truffles, covered, in refrigerator.

Lost and Found

KASEP Office has lots of jackets and other items in our lost and found. If you are missing something give our office a call and schedule a time to stop by and check it out.



KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg. E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccec@yahoo.com, or call 525-0292. M-F: 11:30am-5pm.





Annika Brydon
Saint Mary's HS-UC Santa Barbara



Marley Janoff
ECHS-Sarah Lawrence College



Madeline Shean
Bentley HS-Middlebury College



Luca Vieira
BHS-UC Berkeley



Annakari Hoyer-Nielsen
Oakland School for the Arts-Dance
UC Santa Barbara



Nathan Tam
Albany HS-UC Berkeley



Ford Whitefield-Brewer
Irene M Hunt School of Marin
Contra Costa College



Barrett Koontz
ECHS-UCLA



Emily Zhang Yuxin Miller
College Preparatory School
Duke University



Ella Erdtmann
ECHS- Undecided



Celeste Elsbury
AHS-George Washington University



Hannah Nielsen
ECHS-UC Santa Cruz



Zachary Muerer
ECHS-Undecided



Emily Jeffries
ECHS-Santa Barbara City College



Lucy Ihnken
Saint Mary's HS-UC Santa Cruz



Mia Syren
ECHS-Lewis & Clark College



Toby Graf
Saint Mary's HS-Middlebury College



Sophie Shean
Saint Mary's HS-Tulane



Sierra Parks
ECHS-Long Beach State



Ryan Duquet
College Preparatory HS
Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Liam Hattevik
Saint Mary's HS-USF



Sorelle Holsen
ECHS-Univ. of Colorado, Boulder



Aidan McDermott Lajoie
ECHS-UC Davis



Aaron Shay-Cowell
ECHS-College of Marin



Kaya Yilmaz
ECHS-Undecided



Elisabeth Easton
ECHS-USC



Arlo Valiela
ECHS-Northeastern University



Thomas Chuaqui
ECHS-Emerson College



James Woo
Saint Mary's HS-Pomona College

2020

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

This year's graduating seniors won't have fetes and celebratory dinners to remember; their final months as high school students were overtaken by the pandemic. Unlike past tragedies, such as in Paradise, when students scattered across Northern California to finish up their year, this emergency was worldwide and continues still, with unknown and devastating consequences. For the seniors, it impacts not only graduation but possibly college plans as well.



More immediately, shelter-in-place meant not spending these gorgeous weeks of spring with friends, participating in plays and athletics, telling favorite mentors how much they're appreciated. Parents, the schools, and the community have stepped up to try to make up some of these deficits.

Everyone in Kensington congratulates our seniors for jobs well done. This year threw our seniors that hardest-to-hit pitch: a curve ball. For this year, like no other, let's all of us aim for the fences.



Larkin Barnard-Bahn
Sacramento Country Day HS
Scripps College



Megan Molkenbuhr
Newbury Park HS-Moorpark College



Luca Safran-Wellington
ECHS-Gap year



Caleb Sokolowski
ECHS-UCLA



Daisy Paige
ECHS-UC Berkeley



Gwyn McNally
AHS-Columbia College Chicago



Melody Osterholm
ECHS
Gap Year Program Washington DC



Eliza Aikenis
Jewish Community HS of the Bay
UCLA



Edgar DeAnda
ECHS-SF State



Schuyler Wijzen
Professional Performing Arts School,
NYC
School of American Ballet, NYC



Dinah Gongora
BHS-Boston University



Madeline Hill
ECHS-University of Utah



Kenzie Jolie
AHS-San Diego City College



Evan Curl
BHS-San Diego State



Audrey Dowling
ECHS-UCLA



Aliya Earley
ECHS-Scripps College



Piper Carlstrom
ECHS-University of Hawaii Manoa



Ouyanatu Maina
College Preparatory School
Amherst College



Roscoe Bell
ECHS-University of Minnesota



Macey Keung
Berkeley HS-UC San Diego



Sunny Wyrzykowski
Berkeley HS-Gap Year



Jonas Willett
ECHS-UC Berkeley



Liliana Trevino
ECHS-Berkeley City College



Isaac Sterling
ECHS-UCLA



Jasper Dalton-Recht
ECHS-Oberlin



Iliana Trevino
ECHS-Berkeley City College



Isaac Sterling
ECHS-UCLA



Natalia Kavaler
Tilden Prep-Berkeley City College



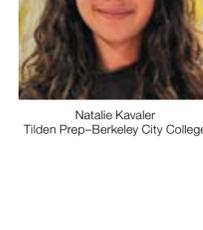
Anjali Pinney
ECHS-Chico State



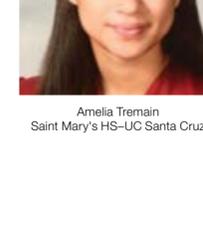
Jack Soto
College Prep
University of Colorado Boulder



Amelia Tremain
Saint Mary's HS-UC Santa Cruz



Elias Lehman
ECHS-UC Berkeley



Marco Sherman
ECHS-UCSD



Aidan Devito
ECHS, LA Film School



To our quiet-except-when-provoked, meme-hating(?), Warriors-loving, thrift-store-combing-and-flipping, foil-wielding, joke-making, Cocoa Puff, CONGRATULATIONS!!
You really made it, pal. Like for real. You're really graduating!
CHEERS TO YOU & GO TRITONS!

Senior Shout Out!!!

GRADS OF 2020 our love follows you wherever you go
 Congratulations GS Troop 31655 Graduating Seniors-Lucy, Evan, Luca, Maddie H., Sierra, Natu, Sophie, Maddie S. and Daisy. Best of luck, Meg and Jenny

Congratulations to our graduating senior Annika Brydon! We couldn't be more proud of you. We've watched you grow into the beautiful young woman you are today, and we can't wait to see what wonderful things UC Santa Barbara will bring you tomorrow. We wish you all the best in your next adventure. Go Gauchos!

Congrats Liliana! We're so proud of you and excited for what's next. Know there's something inside you greater than any obstacle. Love Dad, Mom & Carina

Congratulations to Macey Keung, graduating from Berkeley High AHA 2020. She will be continuing her studies at UC San Diego in interactive media arts. Good luck Macey!

Congratulations Gwen McNally! Best Wishes for your continued success in life and your photographic endeavors. Love, Mom & Dad

Congratulations 2020 grads on your many achievements. We are all so proud of you!



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KENSINGTON MARKET UPDATE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



INVENTORY
 Inventory plummeted 58% from 2019 after Shelter-in-Place, with only 7 new listings*



DAYS ON MARKET
 Despite the lack of open houses, listings actually sold faster: 17.4 days on market vs. 21 days on market in 2019*



PRICES
 Prices were down slightly, but price per square foot actually rose 15%: \$765/sq.ft vs. \$666/sq.ft. in 2019*

*Data from bridgeMLS as of May 6, 2020 deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

CONSIDERING MAKING A MOVE? As we write this, our stagers, painters and inspectors are back to work, and we are bracing for the surge in spring inventory that was delayed due to the pandemic. If you'd like to know more about whether or not it is a good time to buy or sell, get in touch, we can help!

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COVID-19

...from Page 1

able to further ease restrictions and expand re-opening. You can follow our progress by going to www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/dashboard.

In order to minimize the risk of another surge in cases, easing restrictions will be coupled with the need for face coverings in public, and continued social distancing requirements including prohibitions on mass gatherings.

Contra Costa County has taken proactive steps to prepare and protect the public from the health and financial impacts of this pandemic. These steps include establishing a 250-bed overflow medical facility at the Ford Building in Richmond (which, fortunately, hasn't yet been needed), transferring hundreds of homeless shelter residents to hotel rooms, freezing commercial and residential rents along with enacting eviction protections countywide (including Kensington), launching a help line for small businesses (1-833-320-1919), providing millions to community agencies serving our most vulnerable, and offering free COVID-19 testing to all residents. (See article on back page.)

In addition, the deadline for paying property taxes was extended for residents facing financial hardship. The county Treasurer extended the date to make payment without penalty until June 30, 2020, and the governor has signed an Executive Order extending that deadline to May 2021. Check our county Treasurer's website for more information.

The Kensington Library will re-open for the same 35 hours per week service as soon as permitted by the county Health Officer. However, to address budget issues, the county will be standardizing all 35 hours per week libraries to be open Tuesday through Saturday. That means the Kensington Library will be open Wednesdays instead of Mondays.

County Animal Services, Public Works, Planning and Building, and other services continue to be provided to Kensington residents, with some modifications for social distancing.

Our office is here to serve you during this emergency. If you need help, call us at (510) 231-8686 or email me at john_gioia@bos.cccounty.us. Also check the county's COVID-19 webpage (www.cchealth.org/coronavirus). We will get through this together!

Covid Testing

from Back Page

Concord, Pittsburg, Antioch or San Ramon. Residents can also get tested at state-run walk-in sites in Pinole, Walnut Creek or Brentwood. Call 1-844-421-0804 from 8am-3:30pm daily to make an appointment for testing. Results are available in one to three days.

Testing is free and confidential. However, if you do have health insurance, it will be billed. While this testing is available to all residents, it is recommended that you check with your primary physician first about getting tested.

Of course, anyone with symptoms of the virus should immediately call their doctor and get tested. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, fatigue, muscle ache, sore throat, headache, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, recent loss of taste or smell, or confusion. For more information about COVID-19 and testing, go to www.coronavirus.cchealth.org.

Simpkins' Tour of Duty Comes to an End

By Linnea Due

After a term that most agree was a stunning success, interim police chief Steve Simpkins has left the building. The board had extended his contract to June 30, but Simpkins left mid-May for his new job as second-in-command at the sheriff's office.

"The first thing Tony [past GM Tony Constantourous] said to me was 'Please do me a favor and find your replacement,'" said Simpkins in a phone interview on May 7. From the very beginning, knowing that his term was likely six months, Simpkins spent time and energy doing exactly that.

On May 14, the board voted to hire Simpkins' recommendation, retiree Walt Schuld, as interim COP. Simpkins could not have been more pleased. "He's coming for the right reasons," Simpkins said. "We're both career law enforcers. We know what good law enforcement looks like. He's a very talented, wise man."

Simpkins said that Schuld's vetting process went more quickly than expected, so it was possible for Schuld, who costs significantly less than the sheriff's office charged for Simpkins, to come on board sooner than planned. As a retired annuitant, normally Schuld could only work 960 hours per year, but PERS has lifted its restrictions during the pandemic. "When COVID ends, whenever that is, I don't see them rescinding that for quite awhile," Simpkins said. "So he can come in and go full speed ahead. Then he can drop down to 960."

The new interim will be doing the same things Simpkins did, carrying on the culture Simpkins created—and looking for his own replacement. "Once we get past the next election cycle, we're in a much better place," Simpkins said.

"He and I have a lot of resources to find a permanent chief. I think for the time being Kensington needs someone who has worn the star already. There are so many complexities on the table. Then it would be a perfect place for someone to come for an extended period."

When I expressed how sorry we are to see Simpkins go, he quipped, "Well, I'm not dead, just in Martinez." We all wish him well in his promotion.

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Fiery Fire Board Meeting Wakes Up the Dogs

By Linnea Due

The May 13 meeting of the Kensington Fire Protection District board featured hiring a new interim general manager, Mary Morris-Mayorga. (The following night, the police board swore in new interim police chief Walt Schuld. Stories on both will appear in the July issue.) Fire board president Julie Stein dressed down hired consultants Regional Government Services for multiple sins, such as allegedly charging for services that had already been paid, taking on unauthorized tasks, and far more. But the big fireworks emerged when director Don Dommer proposed signing a letter of intent to rent the old Marvin Gardens storefront on the Arlington for the district’s interim GM and possibly, Dommer said, for the police district’s staffers.

Dommer said that because the police will take over the offices on the first floor of the renovated Public Safety Building, he’d looked all around town for a spot for the fire district’s general manager (Morris-Mayorga can hire clerical help if she wishes, so there could be two part-time employees). Dommer determined that the old real estate office was the best bet. The space, about 1200 square feet, is now full of packages of toilet paper, stacked floor to ceiling. Young’s Market had two truckloads delivered of this season’s most coveted item, and the store has the space until July. After that, the space could go to the fire board.

Incredulity ensued. Director Larry Nagel asked, “Who decided this? I’m the co-chair of the building committee, and I don’t know anything about it. This is crazy. We haven’t even discussed this as a board. This [assigning the first floor to the police] has never been proposed.”

Dommer countered, “Tossing them out of the building does not go politically. We tested that. It’s a bad idea. We found a way to keep them in there.”

Director Janice Kosel asked, “What financial agreement did you make with the community services district [the police district]?”

“None,” Dommer said. “They don’t talk to us.”

When last we visited this controversy, the police board engaged RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture (RDC), which had drawn plans for the fire district to occupy the entire PSB, to see if it could carve out a space for the police. The districts also agreed to a two-by-two committee of two directors from each district to discuss the matter. It was widely assumed that all district employees would be housed elsewhere, and the police district is weighing options for administrative housing. The two-by-two committee has not met.

The motion to send a letter of intent was postponed until the full board could examine the revised plan to house the police in the PSB. It remained unclear where Morris-Mayorga can work—not on the second floor, said fire chief Michael Pigioli; the building is on lockdown to protect front-line responders and the public.

The following day, Rachelle Sherris-Watt, on the police side of the two-by-two committee, explained the lag. In late March, board president Chris Deppe, Sherris-Watt, interim chief Steve Simpkins, and Captain Rickey Hull met with RDC. “Steve and Rickey gave their input,” Sherris-Watt said. “Then throughout April, RDC was doing drawings. They came up with three different options. Steve tweaked those plans. We don’t have finals, and our board hasn’t seen the plans. But RDC was sending the plans to the fire board. Once we have finals, the two-by-two committee can meet.”

In a welcome twist, the fire board meeting was interrupted several times by barking dogs: Stein, Kosel, and Pigioli tried to mandate quiet in their separate Zoom windows. But the dogs, hearing each other over Zoom, began a cacophonous meeting of their own.

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MARCH-APRIL POLICE LOG

2 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Edgecroft Rd. Resident reported BMA with white hat and dark backpack walking in the creek then into the neighbor’s yard.

3 Suspicious Person/s, Coventry Rd. Subject yelling in street and blasting music. WMA 70-80yo gray overalls. RP will flag officers.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Coventry Rd. RP heard something extremely heavy that fell on the roof of house, can’t see damage. No idea what it was. RP is home alone and wants PD to come out and take a look. Misc Public Service Provided.

5 VEHICLE ACCIDENT - No Injury, Arlington Av. 1995 Gold Lexus.

6 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Beverly Rd. Female subj was taking pictures of houses on Beverly Rd advised she looked suspect, requesting she be checked out. Unknown race, long hair, drk clothing. Ls headed down Avon Rd. Unable to Locate.

CITIZEN ASSIST, Arlington Av. Red winery truck blocking traffic. RP requesting that an officer speak to the business regarding where the delivery truck should park when deliveries are made.

11 THEFT, Arlington Av. Reported after a party this evening, 7-8 ppl, purse and cell phone missing check book, credit cards, misc personal items inside.

12 PETTY THEFT, Arlington Av. Vehicle is jacked up and wrench near the vehicle. RP believes that someone may have been in the process of stealing his tires/catalytic converter.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Coventry Rd. BMA 30s white shirt and black pants, came to door asking for money for children, departed toward Arlington. Unable to Locate.

15 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Anson Way. Woman screaming help, somebody help I need help. Contacted subjects at a party and yelling in rear yard, no crime.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Beverly Rd. Brown raincoat knee high blk boots red/brown should length hair taking pic of res. Incident location was Stratford Rd/Berkeley Park Bl, 2004 Silver Honda Accord, CA.

16 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Eagle Hill. “Social Security Administrator” called to say her ssn was compromised. She confirmed her ssn # to them along w/ her name and address.

BURGLARY, Lawson Rd. RP received email informing her that the door of one of the tiny homes that they have on their property was broken into lights/light fixtures taken. Montessori Family School.

17 CASE/INCIDENT FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY RP rec’d email from officer to give him a call. Follow-up to EBRP district area with RP to locate and investigate disturbed dirt area possible human waste hole, 200 yards east from Kensington city limits. Possible homeless encampment.

18 MISC CIVIL MATTER, Norwood. Requesting that an officer admonish residents regarding garbage going into the street and now attracting rodents. RP is not at home.

BURGLARY, Cambridge. Vehicle back left window smashed. Snowboard/snowboard boots and binding taken. 2010 Silver Subaru Forester, CA.

19 HAZARD, Marchant Ct. Neighbor had some tree work done, now branches are hanging in the wires on the pole ifo RP’s residence.

20 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Trinity Av. Reported someone on the street possibly using a drill to break into vehicles, 2 people possibly males wearing dark gray sweats pants and hoods, last seen running n/b on the block...vehicle they were near when they heard the drilling is an orange Honda Element parked ifo RP’s residence, but belongs to the neighbors.

FOUND PROPERTY REPORT, Lake Drive/Beloit. RP standing by with found mail on the ground from nearby streets. RP stated the mail appeared open and possibly checks stolen. Addresses listed on mail were Highland and Trinity.

Burglary, Grizzly Peak. Resident gone for weeks, returned to find residence broken into.

23 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Av. WMA 40s, jeans pullover jacket on light blue scooter riding around slowly looking at porches. Approached RP’s porch that has packages, then ran off when he saw that someone was home. Last seen s/b on Rugby. Unable to locate.

31 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Arlington Av. Resident reported male looking through mailboxes. Unknown race, 60’s, 6’00, medium build, brn shirt, tan hoodie, blu jeans. Walking on Arlington toward Young’s Market. Unable to Locate.

April

1 VANDALISM, Ardmore Rd. Hate speech along the Ardmore path on the RP’s fence and neighbor’s fence.

3 WELFARE CHECK, Highland Blvd. RP requests welfare check on her aunt and uncle. Advised nephew’s female friend is at the residence stealing and refusing to leave. Stated her aunt is afraid and wants a restraining order. She has two friends there who are trying to help resolve the situation. Misc Violation—Warning Given.

5 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Coventry Rd. RP believes 2 persons entered car/driveway.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Ave. RP took a package that was accidentally delivered to his address on Amherst. He saw lots of other packages on the porch some opened/some unopened. Rang the doorbell but no answer. Concerned that the resident inside may be injured. Misc Public Service Provided.

CITIZEN ASSIST, Arlington Av/Amherst Av. Elderly female out walking to market and is now fatigued. Would like assistance back to her res. IFO cheese shop. RP advised she walked from her home in Berkeley to the Kensington Wine Shop. When she went to walk back home, she realized she did not know the directions to her home. I provided her a courtesy ride home. Misc Public Service Provided.

PERSON SEEKING ADVICE from PD, Colusa Ave. Threatening messages sent to RP via Instagram. Message included her name, address, and picture of res.

6 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Franciscan Way. WMA 60s, 5’10, thin build coat & pants. Entered res w/ two juvs. WMJuv and WFJuv 10-11yr old. Starting to leave. Downhill on Eureka. Misc Violation—Warning Given.

9 REQUEST FOR EXTRA PATROL, Coventry Rd. Found items belonging to a possible squatter located on the west side of the residence. RP requesting more police presence in case they come back. Misc Public Service Provided.

10 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Cambridge. RP being harassed by a woman for the past 5 days, her dog chases RP up the stairs, RP requesting police patrol the area.

MISC CIVIL MATTER, Cambridge. RP said that she wants to report that she was walking her dog home when the resident began yelling at her “for no cause” and yells “don’t come near me” and she was scared and would like to speak to an officer. Misc. Public Service Provided.

HIT AND RUN - Property Damage, Parkside/Canon. Reckless driver hit RP’s wife, no injuries, almost hit pedestrian, only got a partial plate.

13 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Coventry Rd/ WMA & WFA 20s. Female had red hair. RP’s husband just saw them leaving area. Suspicious that they were prowling. NB

Coventry then down the Ardmore path. Misc Public Service Provided.

14 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Cambridge Ave. Female subj coughing on purpose at him & has harassed him for past several days. WFA 70s, red bandana over her mouth. RP does not know who she is. Put branches on his car. Had her dog chase him. Dog is blond-colored small. Last seen NB on Cambridge. RP requests contact ifo his res. Misc Public Service Provided.

15 PETTY THEFT, Princeton Ave. RPs purse taken from porch. RP was carrying groceries and purse and set them down on the porch. RP started receiving fraud alerts and has been unable to locate purse.

17 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Colusa. Neighbor stomped down hall and back steps to car, then placed a baseball bat or crowbar in his shirt and went back into apt.

18 ARREST FOR OUTSIDE AGENCY Warrant, Colusa. Neighbor constantly banging on door. Poss that gf locked him out and is not letting him back in.

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE, Anson Way. Male subj came out of veh and up onto RP’s property. When RP confronted him, he departed. Unable to Locate.

21 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Cambridge Ave. Veh taking mail out of mailboxes. Last seen NB on Arlington going towards El Cerrito. Unable to locate.

22 BURGLARY/ARREST, Colusa. WMA 50s, short, stocky. Broke down door w/ three locks. RP’s husband, daughter inside. Arrest and Case Report Taken.

23 MISC CIVIL MATTER, Hilltop Elementary. Male employee using facility to wash his car. Unable to Locate.

PETTY THEFT, Beloit Ave. Mail stolen and tampered with the past couple of days.

26 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Beloit, Grizzly Peak. WMA, 60s, thin, long gray hair, beard spitting into the air and yelling idiot. RP was on the other side of the street. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.

27 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Ave. 2 strange vehs in the area. One large 4d older model pickup truck dark green was parked in emergency zone. HMA 20s, bb cap, blk shirt. Idled there for a few mins, then sped away. #2 veh dark green older model sedan w/cans in trunk. WMA 60s, thin, wht beard, blk tshirt, blk bb cap. #3 newer model blk compact. Both vehs have left the area. RP thinks they were casing or att to steal mail. Unable to Locate.

BURGLARY, Trinity Ave. Driver side window and rear window smash. Speaker cabinet taken.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Ave. Received threatening email from an unknown person. States they will spread embarrassing personal information to her friends/family unless RP sends money. Resp had an old account password RP has used for bank/email etc. Doesn’t believe this is an active password she is currently using.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Highland Blvd. Threatening email reveal private info and shows an

old password RP has used. Resp wants payment of bitcoin to prevent releasing information.

BURGLARY, Kingston Rd. Residential between 1620-1715 hrs , house is clear no known loss possibly interrupted by the dog. Glass broken in breakfast room door to rear deck, door off its hinges.

29 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Colusa Market. WMA, short, in his 60s wearing a grey sweater and walking a brown dog. Very aggressive with RP when she told him not to stand so close to her. Subject yelled at RP and told her “Fuck off.” RP wants the subject admonished for his behavior. Subject last seen SB on Colusa. Unable to Locate.

30 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Coventry Rd. RP stated that she was talking to subject and speech became garbled and slurred. Subject maybe on the Arlington in a gold Honda Civic.

Jog Virtually, Donate Actually

By Camden Richards

Zip Code East Bay’s 3rd Annual Colusa Circle 5k, originally scheduled for March, will now be a virtual run. Between June 14th and June 21st participants can run, walk, or stroll the race course. All proceeds from the race will be donated to Urban Tilth. Urban Tilth is a nonprofit organization that hires and trains residents to cultivate agriculture in west Contra Costa County to help our community build a more sustainable, healthy, and just food system.

If you’d like to register, download a course map or simply donate a little to a good cause, please visit ColusaCircle5k.org. Race finishers who snap a post-race photo in front of the Zip Code East Bay office at 380 Colusa Avenue will also be entered in a raffle. Visit ColusaCircle5k.org or contact lisa@zipcodeeastbay.com for more information.

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