

K E N S I N G T O N O U T L O O K

SEPTEMBER 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 65 NUMBER 7

National Night Out



Contributed by Matt Wyss

Night Out drew a crowd on Highland Avenue, above, while Chief Greg Harman made stops throughout Kensington, including a get-together on Ardmore Road, right, where Donatello Bonato was manning the food table.

'Night Out' Brings Out Crowds – and the Guacamole

There were 11 – count 'em, 11 – block parties throughout Kensington on the night of August 5 for National Night Out, a campaign held across the country to educate neighborhoods about the importance of coming together to fight crime and watch the backs (and back yards) of other neighbors to ensure neighborhoods are kept safe.

"It was a huge success thanks to all the hard work of Donald Miller and the block captains," said Kensington Police Chief Greg Harman, referring to the department's administrative man and neighborhood volunteers. Harman's officers and personnel attended 10 of the 11 parties, which accounts for the ubiquitous nature of their photographs appearing above and in most of the pictures on the following pages.

Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia stopped in to several gatherings, as well, and some residents



bounced along from block to block to sample the various creative concoctions of guacamole and other fares available by the bowlful.

"There were great crowds, great food, and I think everyone that participated enjoyed meeting their neighbors and members of the police department," Harman said. "That is what National Night Out is all about and why it is so important to every community."

More Night Out photos appear on page 9.

It's Back to School Without a Budget

Time flew. The bell rang August 26 and the kindergartners at Hilltop School began their long climb toward high school (tears were shed – mainly by parents), while the other grades kissed their summers good-bye and got out their notebooks for another year.

School is back in session, with a full house.

"I love it," said Judy Sanders, who has now completed her first year as school principal, after 11 years of teaching. The school is full, with 550 students and 25 teachers, and no one from Kensington has been turned away for lack of space.

Yet while the high-pitched screams and laughter heralded hope and frivolity, the cloud of a budget not yet passed by legislators in Sacramento does cast a shadow, and the school may have to make more cuts.

"We have to wait and see," Sanders said about the budget.

While no pink slips got handed out to employees at Hilltop, the budget remains somewhat liquid until it's [See SCHOOL OPENS on Page 11]

KPD Collars the Mechanics Bank Robber

It was July 15 when Kensington police officers heard the radio call from Albany: A bank on Solano Avenue had just been robbed, and the suspect had gotten into a car and headed west. That was a good thing, the Kensington officers thought. That's away from here.

But less than an hour later, they got the call they didn't want. Mechanics Bank on Arlington Avenue had just been hit with an armed robbery.

"We didn't really expect that a bank robber is going to rob two banks in one hour," said Sgt. Angela Escobar, who with her team was on the scene about one minute from the 1:40 p.m. call. Officers Doug Medina, Doug Wilson and Cesar Solada – all seasoned veterans – arrived at the same time. "We were right there," Escobar said.

El Cerrito and Albany police came in to assist, but it was working with the Vallejo Police Department that made all the difference, Escobar said. Detective Joseph McCarty had been investigating three recent robberies of Vallejo banks, and when he got KPD's description and a clear photo of the robber taken at Mechanics Bank, he suspected they [See BANK ROBBERY on Page 11]

Planning Under Way for \$1.4 Million in Library Renovations

Kensington Library has long been in need of basic renovations – the furnace is on its last legs, for instance – and officials this month will seek input from the community on how to structure priorities for improvements and repairs.

The community forum will be held at the library from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17. Supervisor John Gioia and Contra Costa County Library Director Anne Cain will moderate the discussion.

"One way someone put it was to say, 'This building is well-loved,'" said Liz Ruhland, Kensington's library director. "That says it well, but this is the time we have to make some changes."

The 43-year-old library needs bathrooms that are wheelchair accessible, a new roof, an air-conditioning system, and new windows to increase energy efficiency. The furnace was scheduled to be replaced 13 years ago. Updated paint, carpet and furniture would refresh the interior look of the library. Improved services such as an automatic kiosk at which library patrons could check out their own books, DVDs and other materials is planned, as well as an area where patrons could pick up books they have put on hold either by phone or using the Internet.

According to Deputy County Librarian Gail McPartland, the first phase of renovations will be covered by an [See LIBRARY on Page 11]



Getting a wheelchair through this hallway to the bathroom is impossible at Kensington Library.



Select Recent Sales

14 Quail Avenue. Charming 2br/1ba Tudor on large lot overlooking La Loma park. Offered at \$635,000. Listing agent: **Sheri Madden**

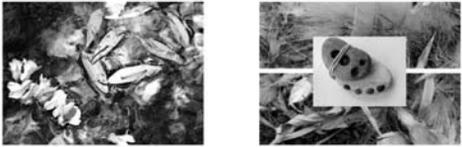
25 Kerr Avenue. Inviting 3br, 2-bath mid-century home with level lot and lovely gardens. Offered at \$779,000. Listing agent: **Celia Concus**

2 Quail Avenue. Very special custom-built 4br, 2.5-bath home overlooking La Loma park. Offered at \$910,000. Listing agent: **Arlene Acuña**

235 Amherst Avenue. Storybook cottage w/clinker brick fireplace & redwood details. Offered at \$839,000. Represented the buyers: **Merrilyn Rhodes**

50 Avon Road. 3-bedroom, 1+bath home with outstanding kitchen. Beautiful yard. Offered at \$749,000. Represented the buyers: **Tom Modic**

New Art Exhibit in Our Office



Please come see our new art exhibit featuring works by Hagit Cohen. Through her artwork she expresses a strong connection between spirituality and creativity. Ms. Cohen has exhibited her artwork in Tel Aviv, Rochester, Toronto, New York City, Los Angeles and Berkeley.

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New Editor For Outlook

The Kensington Community Council has announced the selection of Chris Lavin as the permanent editor of the *Outlook*.

Members of the council expressed appreciation for the interest and participation of all 41 applicants for the position.

Lavin comes to this new assignment with significant journalistic experience and we are confident that she will be an asset to the community, insuring that the residents of Kensington will remain well-informed.

Please join us in welcoming her.

— KCC Board

Corrections

In our obituary concerning Katherine Ligon, we wrote that she was the only female to be the past president of Mira Vista Country Club. That was incorrect. Catherine Susman (then Catherine Berger) also served as president. Also, we reported that Ms. Ligon had played nine "rounds" of golf that morning. We meant to say nine holes.

In the police log, Dennis the Mennis isn't, his name is really Dennis the Menace.

The *Outlook* regrets the errors.

Donations to KCC

The Kensington Community Center appreciates the following donations:

Geeta Bhatt: \$10
Janet Morgan: \$35
Thank you!

Letters to the Editor

Thanks for Help on New Sign

Dear Editor,

As of this writing, the "Gateway Project" at Kensington's south Arlington [See LETTERS on Page 3]

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Bound copies of the newspaper going back to the 1940s are available at the Kensington Library.

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Advertising

Classified ad rates are \$6 a line with a minimum of 2 lines at \$12. A line consists of 45 spaces or characters. An online ad form is available at: www.kensingtonoutlook.com at the bottom of the back issues listings. Send all display and classified advertising mail to:

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Deadlines

Advertising deadline September 8
Editorial deadline September 10

Submission Guidelines

Kensington, this is your newspaper. Feel free to submit story ideas, obituaries, calendar items, letters to the editor, and announcements of weddings and births. E-mail your submissions to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com, or if you're not computer savvy, drop off or mail a hard copy to the Kensington Community Center at the address above. The only restriction is that your submission must be directly relevant to the Kensington community. Include the particulars: the who, what, why and when. Call the editor, Chris Lavin, at 925-376-5592 if you have questions. Remember to include your contact information in case we need to get back to you.

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MAIN POINTS OF ENTRY
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Visual/Performing Arts Building



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◆ LETTERS from page 2

Avenue entrance is nearing completion. It has come to our attention that there may be questions about the funding for the new planter and sign.

The Kensington Improvement Club (KIC) is a private organization whose projects are funded by member dues and contributions. While the county maintains and improves the medians of Kensington, the KIC plays an advisory role in the process.

The Gateway project has been six years in the making. Creation of the overall design, revisions, the decision against a fountain and in favor of a planter, getting signboard approval, gaining access to water, obtaining electrical permitting – all this took time. In fact, KIC is still working to complete this project to our satisfaction.

Part of this planning process was both finding and waiting for available funds. The project has been funded by three main groups: members of the Lighting and Landscape District (thank you), our KIC membership via dues (thank you!), and private contributors giving above and beyond the basic KIC membership (thank you again!)

Importantly, the Lighting and Landscape District funds (about \$13 per year per household) are to be used for our medians. By county governance, this money cannot be used for other Kensington needs and activities (like the police or the park). Notably, the signboard itself is 100 percent privately funded by KIC.

I would like to thank those who have volunteered their time on this project. The community's numerous ideas and suggestions have been helpful to the KIC. We welcome your input and thank you for your kind support.

John McKenna
President KIC

Personally, I liked the lovely Western redbud that bloomed happily in that spot for years. I move that we discard the fountain idea altogether; remove the sign and rework its more suburb-esque elements, then reposition it by the entrance to the community center where we actually need a sign, and demand that the KCC/KMAC/KPPCSD rein in our community's rogue elements.

Gina Moreland

More Sign Troubles

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to find letters to the editor in the July/August issue complaining about our new sign. It is in extremely bad taste and it does not "represent" Kensington.

Apparently quite a bit of money was spent to make it. Do we know how much? And who was on the committee to approve the final design?

If there is enough dissent, could it at least be sand-blasted to get rid of the colors?

I was thrilled when the planter was put in front of it to partially hide the eyesore. I was hoping that the planter was actually going to be fountain. A fountain would have been a nice companion piece to the charming fountain on the Marin Circle. Apparently our planter has been plumbed for the eventuality of its own day being a fountain, but due to lack of funds, it could only be a planter.

Why wasn't there a vote to put together a committee which could have planned all this better? Apparently the sign and planter/fountain were two totally separate projects. That makes no sense at all.

Pamela Drake

Drapery a Nice Touch

Dear Editor,

I thoroughly enjoyed the brief moment in June when someone draped a sheet over Kensington's new entry sign with the words, "This sign is too ugly for Kensington." This project is an amateurish effort, ill-conceived – we need a water fountain in a drought zone? – and poorly designed (the planter/fountain blocks the sign). I am unmoved by the notion that residents can install whatever they want if private funds are used. There absolutely should be a community input process for anything of this magnitude as it impacts all of us, coming and going.

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OCTOBER 18&19, 10AM-4PM
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5:30pm-7:30pm

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25
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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8
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401 Colusa Avenue - View Across Colusa Circle

This artist's rendering of Andrew Woolman's design for a mixed-use development at 401 Colusa Circle includes commercial space at the bottom, with living units above.

Colusa Circle Development Winds Through County Process

The development of the vacant lot on Colusa Circle will inevitably move forward, but exactly what shape it will take is still in flux.

At issue is the property owned by Carol Chisolm on Colusa Circle, across from the Colusa Market. Right now several cars are parked there during the day and night, but plans call for a three-story mixed-use structure that some residents say will block their views of the bay and cause parking problems at the circle.

"Personally, this would block a view from my house of San Francisco," said Rodney Paul, a software engineer and a chief advocate with the Colusa Circle Improvement Association, which is helping to create a plan that works for neighbors and builders.

"This design is just totally out of character with the neighborhood," Paul said.

Chisolm bought the property about eight years ago with plans to build condominiums on the upper levels where she herself plans to live.

Parking, however, has been an issue consistently raised by opponents of the development as it stands. County regu-

lations call for 15 parking spaces to be provided because of the scale of the development, but the architect's plan calls for only eight, and those spaces are "stacked," meaning that a mechanical lift will allow for two cars to be parking in a single space.

"Personally I think the stacked parking will work well," said architect Andrew Woolman.

At the August meeting of the Contra Costa County Conservation and Development Department (previously known simply as the county build inspector's department), staff recommended changes to protect views, and recommended a three-story building for part of the development, but with some of the building toping out at two stories.

Ray Barraza of the Kensington Municipal Advisory Commission thought well of the staff recommendations, and he appeared before the board to express KMAC's concerns about parking and views.

The next hearing for the project will be held at 7 p.m. September 23, at 4776 Pacheco Road, Martinez.

Two Athletes Come Back from Beijing

Two Kensington athletes held their own at the Beijing Olympics last month with successful performances by each.



Sayaka Matsumoto

Sayaka Matsumoto, 25, went up against her equally top international colleagues in the judo competitions. She competed in the 48-kg division, and ended up drawing Ryoko Tani from Japan, who went on to win the bronze.

Meanwhile Jessie Lorenz, 29, competed on the goalball team in the paralympic games. She lives in Kensington with her fiancé, Tom Foley.

Matsumoto represented the United States in judo, where her first match went for the entire five minutes. "Certainly winning is the object but Matsumoto fought a great match and should be proud of her performance," said one of her former coaches. After she competed with her Japanese opponent, Matsumoto went on to challenge Shugen Wu of China.



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Kensington Market Update

| Address | Beds | Baths | List Price | Sold Price | Days on Mkt |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Rincon Road | 4 | 2 | \$789,000 | \$789,000 | 14 |
| Kenyon Avenue | 3 | 2 | \$848,000 | \$834,989 | 34 |
| Oberlin Avenue | 4 | 2 | \$895,000 | \$885,000 | 7 |
| Coventry Road | 3 | 2 | \$899,000 | \$914,000 | 39 |
| Avon Road | 2 | 2 | \$975,000 | \$1,040,000 | 11 |
| Columbia Avenue | 5 | 3 | \$1,250,000 | \$1,300,000 | 18 |
| Sunset Drive | 3 | 3 | \$1,495,000 | \$1,400,000 | 36 |

This information is taken from public records and deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

• For additional information about the Kensington market, please give me a call.

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Change in Camp Directors



Kevan Warren, left, is on his way out as director of the Kensington Community Center camp, and Josh Meurer, this year's head counselor, will take on a new role as camp director for 2009. Warren is off to graduate school to study international relations. The men are surrounded by happy campers, Emily Jeffries, Lucie Frauenfelder, Evan Collins, Oona Frauenfelder and Jane Collins.

KMAC Seeks Candidates to Fill Opening

The Kensington Municipal Advisory Council is seeking applicants to fill a currently vacant alternate position.

KMAC is an advisory body charged with making recommendations to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on land use, planning and zoning variance applications.

The position provides an excellent opportunity for candidates to become familiar with county planning ordinances and processes as they apply to Kensington — especially in regard to the "Kensington Ordinance." This ordinance gives significant protection to existing homeowners — it was initiated by KMAC and passed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors with strong support from Supervisor John Gioia — and helps to protect views, parking, and other community issues relating to the standard of life in Kensington.

The council's five members and two alternates serve staggered four-year terms.

Members and alternates review cases

in advance, interact with the community and the County Conservation and Development Department on issues that concern the council, and perform other council functions outside of regular meetings. Alternates are expected to attend all regular council meetings and vote in place of regular members when required.

Applicants should be property owners and residents of Kensington, and demonstrate knowledge of the community and its land use issues. There is also a three-year residency requirement. Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.

Applications are available at the library, by calling the KMAC message line at 273-9926, or from Kate Rauch of Supervisor Gioia's office, 374-3231. Completed applications should be received by Supervisor Gioia's office no later than Friday, October 17. Interviews will take place in November or early December, and the Board of Supervisors will make an appointment by the end of the year.

Kensington 60 Years Ago

These items were pulled from 1948 editions of the Kensington Outlook, available at the library.

- Nancy Dougery is the undisputed champion of the annual cookie sale, having sold 110 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.
- For sale: Beginner's violin, case, stand and pitch pipe, \$15.
- Famous pianist Robert Brereton of Kensington performs at Arlington Com-

munity Center. Tickets, \$1.80.

- Marilyn Jean Bunyan becomes a hero when she hears brother Norton, 10, scream, and finds him engulfed in flames. She rolls him in a carpet and saves his life.
- At its first meeting, the Arlington Women's Club discusses "Hungary and Its Colorful Gypsy Lore."
- Arlington Beauty Salon offers specials for the Willat Circleette, a "heatless permanent wave." keeping dogs at home.

KENSINGTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

KCC Fall Parade and Picnic—

Please save the date!

We'd love to have you join us for the KCC Fall Parade and Picnic on Sunday, October 19, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Parade participants will gather at 12 noon at the corner of Amherst and Arlington Avenues and then march down to the Kensington Community Center for a barbecue picnic. A coloring contest, pumpkin decorating contest, and other activities are planned for children. Please mark the date on your calendar and consider organizing a group to march in the parade! We'll also need volunteers to help with the BBQ — let us know if you have time to help. KCC's office number is 525-0292.

KASEP

Interested in learning more about our after school enrichment classes? We'll hold a KASEP open house on Monday, September 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m., for parents and students to meet our teachers and discuss classes. Registration for the fall session will be held on Wednesday, September 10, and classes will begin on Monday, September 22. Brochures for KASEP will be available at the beginning of September.

ADULT CLASSES

YOGA FOR HEALTH



Harmonize your body, mind and spirit. This class involves basic Yoga poses, correct body alignment, breathing techniques, and relaxation. Develop strength, flexibility, endurance and grace. Therapeutic concerns such as wrist, knee, neck and back pain, and stress reduction will be addressed. No prior experience required — all ages welcome. Please bring a mat to the class.

Instructor Nicole Becker, a registered Yoga teacher, was trained in Anusara Yoga and has studied acupressure and Qi Gong. She describes her teaching style as light-hearted and welcoming and strives to make each student feel cared for in his or her practice of yoga. For more information about the class, please

contact Nicole at 510-527-6443.

When: Classes are Tuesdays, 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Fees: For residents: \$15 for drop-in; \$75 for a series of 6 classes. Nonresidents please add 10 percent (\$16.50 per class/\$82.50 for six classes). To register, call the KCC office at 510-525-0292.

Where: Classes are held in the Community Center.

Thursday Hatha Yoga: 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Classic yoga postures and breathing practices for revitalization. Learn to listen to your body and your breath; explore and enjoy. On the second and the final Thursdays of the month, relax in a blissful restorative practice. First and third Thursdays are a more active practice. All levels of experience welcome.

Fees for residents: \$12 for drop-in

One-month pass: (4 classes) for \$40

Non-residents: please add 10% (\$13.20 for drop-in and \$44 for month pass).

For questions about the Hatha Yoga class content, please contact instructor Claire Lavery at 681-3077.

For questions about registration or location, please call KCC at 525-0292.

Classes are held in Room A in the Recreation Building (Building E).

TENNIS

Kim Roots offers classes for youth and adults. To register, call Kim at 526-6730.

Adult classes: 5 classes/\$40 per resident; \$45 per non-resident

TENNIS COURTS: West Court



Looking for Tennis Racquet Donations!

Do you have dusty tennis racquets filling your closet or garage? KCC is looking for racquets for both children and adults to use in our tennis program. Please call 510-525-0292.

New Listing



94 Purdue Avenue, Kensington

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KENSINGTON CALENDAR

Sept. 1 – Art Exhibit, Allisen Asercion, mixed media artist, Kensington Library. Pieces are two-dimensional collages primarily from natural papers, found objects and other mixed media. Call 524-3043 for library hours, or contact alliekazam@comcast.net or 594-1986. Through October 31.

Sept. 3 – CERT Training Starts, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Community Center. This 20-hour course is designed to train laymen to be members of a Community Emergency Response Team. 215-4450, or visit www.kensingtonfire.org.

Sept. 6 – El Cerrito Democratic Club, endorsement meeting for candidates of West Contra Costa Unified School District, 2 p.m. at St. Peter CME Church, 5324 Cypress Ave., El Cerrito. Candidates will speak and answer questions. Contact homehilary@comcast.net or 375-5647 for more information.

Sept. 7 – Personal Theology Seminar, 10 a.m., Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Road. Walter Truett Anderson, author, lecturer, political scientist, philosopher, former syndicated columnist, on "Religion Without God." Contact Alisa for more information, 525-0302, ext. 306.

Sept. 8 – KASEP Open House, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Recreation Building. Many KASEP (Kensington After School Education Program) teachers will be available to talk about their classes. Call 525-0292 for information.

Artist Talk, with Dmitry Grudsky as guest artist, 7:30 p.m. Garden Room, El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane at Ashbury Avenue. Sponsored by El Cerrito Art Association. Guests and those interested in joining the group are welcome. Contact Charlotte Britton at 510-234-5028.

Castoffs Knitting Club, 7 p.m., Kensington Library. An evening of knitting, show-and-tell and yarn exchange. New members welcome. 523-3043.

Author Talk, 7 p.m., Kensington Library. Dr. Rose Fox will read from her memoir, *Love and Laughter: My Life with Ken*. Free. 524-3043.

Sept. 10 – Kensington Unit of the League of Women Voters, discussion of local issues, 1:15 p.m., 39 Stratford Road. Guests are welcome. Confirm at 525-5187.

KASEP Fall Registration, Recreation Building, 6:45 p.m. for kindergarten students, 7:15 p.m. for students grades 1-6. Call 525-0292 for more

information, or visit. Classes begin September 22.

Sept. 11 – Disaster Preparedness Class, 7 p.m., El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito. Philip Machel, Red Cross volunteer, will give a talk on how you and your loved ones can prepare for all types of disasters. He will discuss how to keep safe during disasters, including how to make a family disaster plan and build disaster supply kits. Phone 526-7512.

Sept. 13 – Guinea-Pig-A-Thon, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa. Everything you want to know about adopting a guinea pig, bonding your lonely pet with a new friend, and caring for your guinea pig. Phone 525-6155, or www.rabbitears.org.

Sept. 14 – Personal Theology Seminar, 10 a.m., Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Road. Huston Smith, author of *World Religions*, and former professor of religion and philosophy, at M.I.T., Syracuse University and the University of California, in interview with Walter Truett Anderson, on "Picking Huckleberries from the World Religions Vine." Contact Alisa for more information, 525-0302, ext. 306.

Sept. 16 – Berkeley Garden Club, 1:45 p.m., Epworth United Methodist church, 1953 Hopkins Street. Susan Handjian, water conservation representative for EBMUD, will speak on becoming a Mediterranean gardener. Call 433-2911 or visit www.berkeleygardenclub.org.

Sept. 17 – Community Forum, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Kensington Library. Discussion of library renovations with Supervisor Gioia and Anne Cain, Contra Costa County Library Director. 61 Arlington Ave. 524-3043.

Sept. 20 – Tri-City Safety Day, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., El Cerrito Plaza. Collaboration with Kensington, Albany and El Cerrito fire departments. Guest appearances will include Smokey the Bear, Bubbles the Clown, McGruff the Crime Dog and Pluggie the robotic fire hydrant. 215-4450.

CPR/First Aid Course, 9 a.m., Arlington Community Church. Sponsored by Kensington Fire Department. CPR will end at about noon. Those continuing with First Aid will meet from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Cost is \$23 for CPR, or \$46 for both classes. Call 215-4450 to register.

Fuzzy Bunny Clipping, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., RabbitEARS, 377 Colusa. "Take It All Off Safely and Calmly," a demonstrated method of shearing for [Continued on Page 8]

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It's Almost Parade Time



Pumpkins helped passers-by get into the spirit of the Fall Parade and Picnic last year along Arlington Avenue. Decorating contests will again be part of the festivities October 19.

The Kensington Community Council's Fall Parade and Picnic has been scheduled for Sunday, October 19, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. An ice cream social will follow the parade at the Arlington Community Church at 2 p.m.

Parade participants will gather at noon at the corner of Amherst and Arlington Avenues, then march to the community center for a barbecue picnic. A coloring

contest, pumpkin decorating event and other activities are planned for children.

So, there is still time to plan your float, or just get the kids into those Halloween costumes and decorate their bikes.

For information about the ice cream social, contact the church office at 526-9146, or e-mail Michael jeangaron@aol.com. For information about the parade and picnic, call the KCC at 525-0292.

Starlight Players Casting New Shows

Starlight Players are now casting *The Ring*, *A Mummer's Play for Yule*, to be performed during the holidays.

To find out more about the show, anyone interested in auditioning or participating is invited to attend meetings at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 15 and 22 at the Kensington Library.

Confirmed performance dates are Dec. 2, 7 and 14. Kensington and Berkeley

dates will be confirmed later. Auditions are informal. A read-through will be scheduled in October.

The Starlight Circle Players, Creations for Stage and Circle, is an ongoing independent collaboration of visual artists, writers, actors and musicians.

For more information or to schedule an audition, e-mail Lezlie and Evelie at starlightcircleplayers@yahoo.com.

Neighborhood Notes

Volunteers Needed To Help Those in Need

The Turnabout Shop, a center for gently used household items and clothing, is in need of volunteers to help sort items, and more. Sponsored by the Berkeley Clinic Auxiliary, the shop sells new or gently worn, clean clothing, household items, art work, books, linens, jewelry, and miscellaneous small items; space does not allow large items such as furniture. All merchandise is donated. The shop opened in 1954 and is operated by a group of dedicated volunteers, but new volunteers are always welcome. Since 1917, BCA has worked to raise funds for local health care needs, the primary ongoing effort being an orthodontia program for needy West Contra Costa County and Berkeley children with severe dental problems. Hours of the shop are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and is located at 10052 San Pablo Ave. (near Fairmount), El Cerrito; telephone 525-7844. To request a volunteer application form, call Vi Gallardo at 526-3073; application forms are also available at the Shop during open hours (when donations are also accepted).

Eclectix Gallery and Store to Move

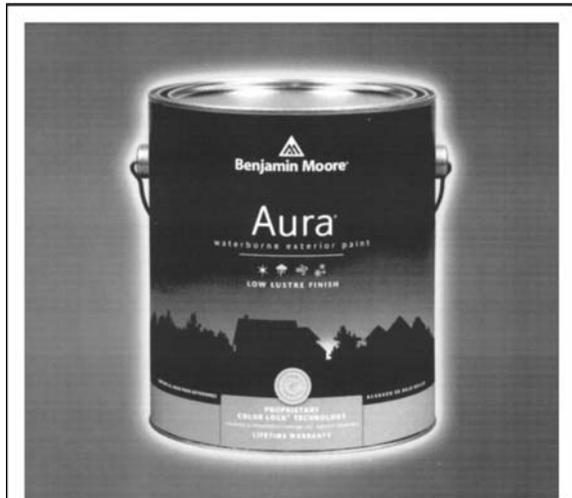
Eclectix Gallery will be moving its operations this month to accommodate the growing shopping and art opening crowds they have been getting. They will move to a bigger, more spacious location at 10082 San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito, between the Cerrito Theater and 33 Revolutions Cafe. The new space will feature more of the eclectic items the gallery is known for, as well as an expanded gallery space to host the upcoming and packed with great art "Strange Brew" show, that will take advantage of the larger area while allowing full enjoyment and appreciation of the art. The "Strange Brew" show will feature fantastic and strange art by strange artists, celebrating Halloween and El Dia de los Muertos. The exhibit will open on October 3rd, California Arts Day, with the artists' reception from 7 to 10 p.m. For more information about Eclectix wares and/or exhibits; or for opening day information, please visit the website at www.eclectixgallery.com.

Embracing World Traditions

For the second year, Arlington Community Church will hold weekly interfaith education and worship meetings for young people ages 7 to 14 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Monday evenings, beginning October 6. Activities will include music, song, dance, art, drama and stories of community and friendship from many traditions. Learn ritual and spiritual practices and prayers and sacred texts from the great world religions and cultures. Through the arts, we will celebrate and remember our shared spirit and wisdom, as we learn together. Families join with together twice a semester for a potluck celebration of what has been learned. For more information call the church at 526-9146.

Disaster Preparedness Class Set

"How to be Red Cross Ready," a disaster preparedness class sponsored by the Red Cross, will be held at 7 p.m. at the El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito. Philip Machel, Red Cross volunteer, will give a talk on how individuals and families can prepare for all types of disasters. He will discuss how to keep safe, including how to make a family disaster plan, and how to build disaster supply kits. Machel has been a volunteer with the Disaster Services branch of the American Red Cross for almost four years. He teaches Disaster Preparedness and Shelter Management classes and is a member of the Red Cross Contra Costa County Team that responds to local disasters. Phone 526-7512 for more information.



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KENSINGTON CALENDAR continued

wool or de-matting that is as easy on the rabbit owner as it is on the Angora rabbit. Bring your own bunny. Space is limited and pre-registration is encouraged. Phone 525-6155.

Sept. 21 – Personal Theology Seminar, 10 a.m., Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Road. Ruth Gendler, author and teacher. She has worked with California poets in the schools, and led classes in writing and creativity. Contact Alisa for more information, 525-0302, ext. 306.

Sept. 22 – Kensington Library Book Club, 7 p.m., Kensington Library. Discussion of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston. New members welcome. 524-3043.

Sept. 27 – Don't Toss the Good Stuff, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., a Goodwill collection to precede the Annual Kensington Curb-Side Clean-Up (September 29 – October 3.) Drop off items for Goodwill in the Kensington Library/Arlington Church parking lot. See story, Page 9.

Hands-On Class: Make Box Sculpture, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., led by Emily Kuentler. This is the first of four Saturday classes; attend some or all. Suggested fee for each class: \$45, including craft material. To register, call Emily, 415-505-7827. No art experience needed.

Sept. 28 – Personal Theology Seminar, 10 a.m., Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson

Road. Rebecca Parker, president of Starr King School for the Ministry, on "Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire." Her book by the same title was released in July. She will sign books after the talk. Contact Alisa for more information, 525-0302, ext. 306.

30 – VOLS String Quartet, 8 p.m., Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave. Shostakovich, Piazzolla, Puccini, and Grieg. \$20. 525-5211 or www.berkeleychamberperform.org.



The VOLS String Quartet will perform at 8 p.m. September 30 at the Berkeley City Club

AT THE LIBRARY

All events at the Kensington Library are free and do not require registration unless specified below. The library is located at 61 Arlington Ave. Phone 524-3043 for more information on any of the programs, or visit www.ccclib.org.

Sept. 2 – Family Story Time, 7 p.m. Best for preschool and up. Continues Sept. 9, 23 and 30. No storytime will be held Sept. 16.

Catalytic Converter Thefts on the Rise

The theft of a catalytic converter from a car on Ardmore Road on July 30 is part of an increasing trend throughout the Bay Area of rising thefts of the converters, which are easy to steal using battery-powered "saw-all" tools, then sold to recycling shops for the valuable metals they contain.

Thefts of the converters from BART parking lots have become almost common, Bay Area law enforcement officials say, and if a car is parked outside during the night, those cars can become prey to theft, as well.

The first sign a motorist has that the converter has been stolen is that he or she will start the car and hear a roar as if the muffler has fallen off. After a drive to a mechanic, they discover their converter has been stolen. Most converters cost \$1,000 or more to replace.

"Yes, we take them," said an East Bay recycler who preferred not to be named in this story. The converters are recycled particularly to obtain the valuable platinum and rhodium they contain. "It's not illegal," he said.

A catalytic converter is a device installed beneath a car that is designed to reduce toxic emissions from internal combustion engines. It does so by running the exhaust from the engine through compounds in the converter first, then out the exhaust pipe.

Joan Gallegos, of the Kensington Public Protection and Community Services District, reported to the board in August that legislators in Sacramento are considering legislation that would require recyclers to record information from people who come into their shops to sell their wares, and would include their names, identification and the type of materials being sold.

"This would help in cases like the theft of our stolen signs, for instance," she said, referring to leash-only signs that have disappeared in the park. However, Kensington has also experienced theft from the cemetery of brass plaques, which are also recyclable.

Several recycling shops throughout the East Bay accept metal plaques, rolls of copper wiring, and the converters. A single converter can be sold for up to \$250 to a recycler.

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Sept. 4 – Babies & Toddlers Story Time, 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. For young children with their parents or caregivers. Free. No registration required. Repeats Sept. 11, 18, and 25.

Sept. 8 – T(w)een Crafts, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Sept. 16 – Groark the Dragon, 6:30 p.m., with puppeteer and ventriloquist Randel McGee. For ages 3 and up.

Sept. 19 – Manga Club, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., for teen-agers.

Sept. 20 – Book Group, 2 p.m. "Let's Talk About It: Jewish Literature," discussion led by Dr. Naomi Seidman of the Graduate Theological Union. The book this month is *The Little Disturbances of Man*, by Grace Paley. Register with Liz Ruhland at 524-3043.

Sept. 22 – T(w)een Crafts, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

All public meetings are held at the Community Center unless otherwise noted below. Agendas and more information can be found at www.about-kensington.com.

Sept. 8 – Kensington Community Council, 7:30 p.m. 525-0292.

Sept. 10 – Kensington Fire Protection District, 7:30 p.m. 527-8395.

Sept. 11 – Kensington Public Protection and Community Services District, 7:30 p.m. 273-9926.

Sept. 22 – Kensington Improvement Club, 7 p.m.

Sept. 30 – Kensington Municipal Advisory Council, 7 p.m. 273-9926.

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.... and More 'Night Out' Photos



The night started to get chilly up on Grizzly Peak Boulevard, where Lyle Ryan hosted a "night out" well-attended by the fire and police departments.



Police and fire officials managed to make it over to Coventry Road, as well, where the front terrace of Kay Reed's house served the neighbors well, including lots of seating and visiting.



At Jane Kaplan's and Donatello Bonato's party on Ardmore, plates were full as neighbors talked and caught up as children whizzed by on their scooters, full of energy and loathe to get their picture taken.

'Good Stuff' Gets Recycled for 2nd Year

A small group of dedicated volunteers has organized Kensington's second big recycling event to get usable household items to Goodwill before the Annual Kensington Clean-Up this month.

Curbside pick-up for big trash is scheduled in Kensington from September 29 to October 3, but Kensington residents can channel their still-useful stuff to the Goodwill by bringing decent clothing and usable items to the Kensington Library parking lot from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, September 27.

After households purge the usable items, they may then leave the "true trash" by the curb for Bay View Refuse to collect the following week, say volunteers Kay Reed and Kathy Stein.

Last year's event was "so preposterously popular," according to the volunteers, that they relocated this year to a larger venue, where there are plenty of parking spaces.

Goodwill trucks and staff will accept the goods in the parking lot at 59 Arlington Ave. Volunteers will be on hand to help carry stuff from the car to the Goodwill truck.

Volunteers will accept anything useful, but not mattresses or large appliances.

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Helen Horowitz is leaving her post at the Kensington police and parks department at the end of this month. She has seen the departments through some trying times.

Horowitz to Leave KPD, Parks

After 13 years of work for the parks and police departments, Helen Horowitz will be moving on to another phase of her life at the end of this month.

"I'm looking at all kinds of things, really, trying to figure out what I want to do," said Horowitz.

Since 1995, Horowitz has been the organizer, troubleshooter and scheduler while manning the front desk at the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District, becoming the visible face to many a local crisis. Before her current position, she helped maintain, organize and keep the programs going at the Kensington Community Council, where she is particularly happy that, under her watch, the summer day camp program grew by 60 percent while gross receipts for classes and camp went from \$100,000 to \$275,000.

"That was a fantastic experience," she said, because she got to know people in the community and their families. It was fun to watch some of her "campers" grow up to be counselors. "We built a program

around community service."

Horowitz also is proud that the department has received consistently clear audits during her tenure.

And when the district got a \$210,000 grant from the state to improve the parks, it was Horowitz at the helm to ensure that improvements were made to the basketball courts, picnic tables, park benches, sidewalks, and handicap parking areas in Kensington Park. It was also on her watch that the abandoned school site at the park was developed into a major renovation and construction project.

The change in Horowitz's job was precipitated over the summer when General Manager Greg Harman opted to make the administrative position part-time. That didn't work for Horowitz, who has long been accustomed to full-time employment.

"I'm out job hunting," Horowitz said, and laughed. "It's a changing of the guard and it's time to move on. Kensington has been really, really good to me."

Announcements



Pamela Brown and Shauna Rajkowski

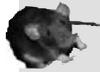
Brown-Rajkowski

Pamela Brown and Shauna Rajkowski were married on July 27 on the University of California-Berkeley campus by the Rev. Rachel Anderson, a Unitarian Universalist minister. Pamela is the assistant director of the planning and analysis office at UC Berkeley and Shauna is the acting leasing coordinator at the University of California Office of the President. Pamela also volunteers on the Kensington Municipal

Advisory Council. The Browns (Shauna will be taking Pamela's last name) live with their two dogs – Tilden and Morgan – in Kensington.

Pamela, 40, and Shauna, 42, met over 12 years ago at San Francisco's YMCA when training for a triathlon and have been together ever since. In 1999, Pamela and Shauna moved to Kensington, where Shauna had previously lived when an undergraduate student attending Cal. The couple had a commitment ceremony in October 2001 and were married in San Francisco in February 2004. After their marriage was annulled by the California Supreme Court, Pamela became actively involved with Marriage Equality USA (MEUSA) where she serves as their national policy director.

Pamela and Shauna had their rehearsal dinner at Inn Kensington where Drew, Monica and the rest of the Inn Kensington staff created a special evening the couple and their families won't soon forget. A honeymoon has been postponed until after the November election as the couple will continue their work to defeat Proposition 8, the proposed constitutional amendment that would eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry.



Meet Moesher!

Pet of the Month

Moe is a three-month old black-hooded boy rat. He is very friendly and energetic and loves people and burritos. He's witty and crafty and loves games involving hidden treasure hunts. His favorite is I Spy. If you would like to play games with Moe, please visit him at RabbitEARS, open 7 days a week in our new Kensington location on Colusa Circle at 377 Colusa, phone 510-525-6155.

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Festivities follow at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue.



Stop by The Mechanics Bank Kensington office the week of September 15 to pick up an entry form. Have your child enter our Kids Coloring Contest for a chance to win a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond! (Details in our Kensington office.)



Purchase barbecue lunch tickets in advance, Monday thru Friday, September 15 to October 17, at The Mechanics Bank and receive 50¢ per ticket off the regular Open House price.

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◆ **BANK ROBBERY** from page 1

had the same guy, and worked with KPD, the FBI and the California Parole Fugitive Violation Team to make an arrest.

"We put it all together by networking," Escobar said.



Kensington police officers Doug Median, Doug Wilson, Angela Escobar and Cesar Solada responded to Kensington's bank robbery, and helped solve the case within days.

The result: The arrest of suspect Joseph Stanley, a 57-year-old Vallejo man who was caught at a West Sacramento hotel July 25 on suspicion of robbing the Kensington and Albany banks as well as the three in Vallejo. The banks Stanley is suspected of robbing in Vallejo were two stand-alone banks like Mechanics Bank here, and a Wells Fargo inside a Raley's grocery store. He also was wanted for a parole violation on less serious charges.

Sources said the robber got away with \$9,000 from the Kensington bank, and "a

significant amount" from the others. A second suspect might be involved, Escobar said, and the investigation is continuing. It was the second bank robbery here in nine years.

"The police did a fantastic job," said Chris O'Brien, the Mechanics Bank man-

ager. The staff handled the robbery "very well," he said, although he did not want to comment further. While he could not talk about bank procedures, bank employees usually are instructed to lock the doors immediately after the robber departs, and to alarm their security company.

Above all, Kensington police and bank personnel are relieved that no one was hurt.

"It was just good police work," Escobar said.



Mechanics Bank's surveillance cameras took this photo of the suspect during the robbery in July.

◆ **SCHOOL OPENS** from page 1

passed. The 25 teacher slots will remain filled – those contracts were signed last spring – with four new teachers. Two teachers retired last year, Jeannette Dey, who taught kindergarten, and third-grade teacher Linda Bekes.

Two other teachers decided not to come back this year, including second grade teacher Carla Hilton, who resigned to move to Nevada, and Emma Goldbeck, who taught fourth grade. She is on maternity leave.

In the front office, one secretary and one clerk man the phones and tackle the daily paperwork, but the clerk position "is still kind of up in the air," Sanders said, in light of the pending budget. Pam Porter and Janet Peterson fill those positions. "I can only hope and assume it will be the same people," Sanders said.

Because California is dealing with a \$15 billion budget deficit – and still trying to reconcile a budget – schools like Hilltop are left in the position to wait and see how their budgets will shape up. Contracts

with teachers are signed in the spring, and cannot be broken, so the only wiggle room is with employees such as those at the front desk. Once the budget is passed, schools have 45 days to reconfigure their budget projections, but programs and activities not under contract are usually the first to get cut.

"We have a wonderfully active parent community, which is part of what makes this school so great," Sanders said. The school's programming and extra-curricular activities are supported by the Kensington Education Foundation, the Dads' Club, the Parent Teacher Association, and the School Site Council.

The next PTA meeting will be Sept 4 at 7 p.m.

A major fund-raising event is coming up in November, with the annual auction, held at Blake Gardens. Items typically include restaurant certificates, getaways and unique items. If you have anything to contribute to the event, call Beth Thomsen at 527-1319, or e-mail her at jthomsen@aol.com.

◆ **LIBRARY** from page 1

estimated budget of \$1.4 million, all of which will come from the county library. She will be on hand at the forum to answer questions, as well.

Automated services are used at many county libraries, which frees up trained

selected), and leave the library without standing at the service desk. Once they use the service, most people really like it."

Ruhland and the other officials hope to see a healthy attendance at the September 17 meeting. "We really want to have the community's input on this renovation," she said.



Lyndsey Breksa, 9, receives help from librarian Pamela McKay at the Kensington Library.

librarians to help patrons with less mundane tasks than checking out a book. "Some people are afraid that we will lose our jobs, but that isn't the case," Ruhland said. "We'll be more available to provide services. ... The growing approach is self-service. The way it stands now, we have to touch every item multiple times. This service would allow someone to come in, pick up a book they have reserved (or

The Kensington Library employs the equivalent of 3.8 full-time people, with Ruhland, a part-time children's librarian, three part-time library assistants, and two clerks. The library has the highest per capita use of any branch in the Contra Costa County Library system. The public forum will be held at the library, 61 Arlington Avenue. For more information, call the library at 524-3043.

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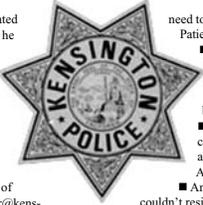
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From the case files of the KPD

This report is based on the many reports in the police logs of the Kensington Police Department. The Outlook is solely responsible for its writing and editing.

Events in June and July

- Poor kid: He had his battery-operated car stolen on Ardmore Road. Maybe he should have parked it in the garage.
- Yet more graffiti at Hilltop School.
- A home was burgled on Lawson Road. Gone are the family jewels, along with checks.
- Windows of a car, smashed, on Berkeley Park Blvd.
- What's with the graffiti? More at the Community Center. If you know of a graffiti maker, let us know at editor@kensingtonoutlook.com, and we will provide complete anonymity to that person or persons in regard to reasons for this. We just want to know what's up. Why spray? It seems to be so lame, so enlighten us.
- And another one: Burglary of a home on Westminster Ave.
- They take years to make but a minute to steal. A Persian rug was stolen from the top of a car on Ocean View Ave. Probably not a good idea to leave it out there overnight.
- On Rincon Road, a diaper bag and other baby items, stolen and gone. At least someone is looking after their new child, by hook or by crook.
- Niche crime: Bonsai plants and pots, stolen from the front porch of a place on Cowper Ave. Just a thought: Where do you go with a stolen bonsai?
- Maybe it's the same guy? Also on Cowper, a Quan Yin statue got sniped, and as she is known as the goddess who hears the cries of the world, perhaps Cowper residents need to reinvent in good intentions to ensure ongoing tranquility.
- Don't forget that sticker! Police towed a car from Colusa at Oak Park for having expired tags.
- When you're a parolee, you gotta dread those lights in the rearview mirror. But that's what happened when Officer Martinez pulled over somebody at a traffic stop, and found out he was wanted for a parole violation. We assume the suspect got a hot meal that night.
- The domino effect: Officer Barrow rushed to Berkeley Park Blvd. to investigate a taxi that had hit (then ran) into a Camry, that was then pushed into a BMW. Case remains unsolved. Taxi cab owner can't be too happy, either.
- Fraudulent mail sent to a resident on Los Altos Drive.
- Someone on Highgate Court came home to find weird scratches on the front door. Spooky.
- Just as weird: An alarm sounded in the mausoleum on Colusa Ave. And it's not even Halloween yet.
- Some idiot smashed in a kitchen window on Berkeley Park and went in and took a bunch of stuff.
- Crunch: A neighbor backed into another neighbor's car on Cowper Ave.
- Loud music caused officers to come out to Ardmore Drive to illustrate the use of the volume control knob.
- A parked car was sidwiped on Beloit Ave. No note. Not even a pretend one.
- A big rig moving truck blocked traffic on Ardmore at Coventry. C'mon, people, do the police



need to be involved in this kind of thing? Patience.

- It was July, so yes, there were fireworks. Lots of kids with fireworks. They are getting pretty good at vacating the premises before the police show up, though.
- Lots of false alarms, even to construction site. Should have had an alarm at construction on Eureka Ave., where tows were taken.

■ Another music lover on Ardmore couldn't resist blasting for a while. Police were called. Complainant must not have been capable of walking over and asking him or herself.

- Oh, those pesky people trying to work for a living. Officers responded to York Ave. to find the suspicious man looking for odd jobs, any odd job.
- Large party didn't go over well on Cannon Ave. Seems word got out, because more than 250 were there. Now that's a party.
- Sometimes putting stuff in a car isn't a crime. A suspect proved that the stuff was his, really his, on Arlington Ave.
- More weirdness: A resident heard a door slam inside her home on Stratford Road.
- Suspects were seen trying to open car doors along Cambridge Ave. Luckily everyone had done the right thing and locked their doors.
- Oops, someone had a handgun stolen on Arlington Court. That's the kind of thing you want to hide real well, folks. If you simply must have it. Which you shouldn't.

■ An extremely drunk man near Arlington and Coventry had to be rushed to the hospital after he fell. Yikes.

■ A water main broke along Highland Blvd., and a bunch of houses got flooded.

- A driver on Jessen Court lost the Fastrak pass. Prepare for future backups.
- Apparently everyone went on vacation one day in July, because the police received no calls for service on July 20.
- One of those people was in Milan, Italy, and called police in Kensington to report missing property. International investigation?
- Stop the presses! A UPS truck double parked, made a delivery, then drove away. Police report made.
- Some kids activated an alarm on Highland Blvd. as they were using the bathroom. Perhaps they needed help.
- A driver smashed into a fire hydrant at Highland and Arlmont. No one got hurt but for the hydrant.
- Some people trying to be funny rearranged the letters on a sign for Arlington Ave.
- I thought you had the keys, no I thought you had the keys. No one did on Edgcroft where a couple needed help getting into their house.
- A strange jacket was found in a back yard on Colusa.

- A visiting student from China got stuck on Ocean View Ave. Everything turned out OK.
- Four signs were stolen from the park, the ones telling dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash. Word is that the signs were expensive enough to make it a felony crime. Now, we ask: Is that worth it?
- Someone drove into their neighbor's yard trying to parallel park. Good thing it wasn't a driving test.

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