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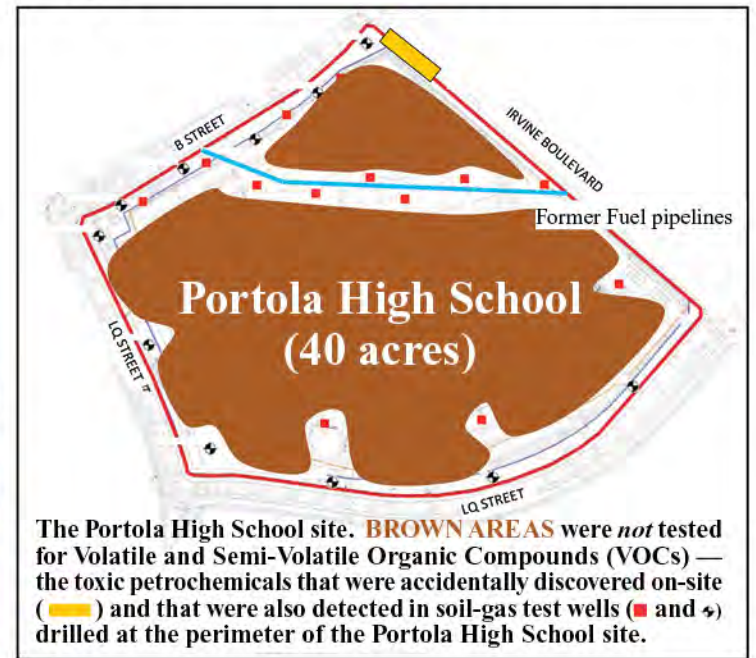
Serving the Villages and Neighborhoods of Irvine

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IUSD to Open Portola High School Despite Contamination



Photo by: Angelo Vassos



Portola High School (above) is being built on a contaminated site (right) along Irvine Boulevard.



Publisher's Perspective

Test for Toxics

The failure of the School Board, the City, and State officials to deal with the toxic petrochemicals at the Portola High School site is astonishing. Sad to say, this reflects the kind of indifference, incompetence and arrogance that led to the tragic lead-poisoning of an entire city — Flint, Michigan. Read our Front-Page story. And then read Page 12, and join your neighbors in the Call to Test for Toxics.

I also urge you to read our Page 3 story. It is the personal testimony of Mary Ann Gaido, the sole Irvine Planning Commissioner with the backbone to say NO to the overdevelopment that is damaging our entire City. See what this means to Irvine's largest center-city village, Woodbridge.

As always, thank you for reading *Irvine Community News & Views*.

Franklin J. Lunding

Franklin J. Lunding, Publisher and Editor



Portola High School, now under construction, is located on a 40-acre site known to be contaminated with benzene and other toxic and cancer-causing petrochemicals that have been discovered along its lengthy perimeter. According to public records, the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) and the City of Irvine learned of the toxic contamination in 2014, but have so far refused to heed calls to conduct soil-gas tests for these same toxic petrochemicals throughout the interior of the 40-acre school site before teachers, staff and students occupy the new high school this September.

At a recent meeting of concerned residents, a number of parents and grandparents voiced their concern that the Portola High School toxic contamination scandal in Irvine appears to be eerily similar to the early stages of the Flint, Michigan, lead-poisoning of thousands of kids — a scandal characterized by official incompetence, indifference, and intentional cover-ups.

For years, former Irvine Mayor and City Councilmember Larry Agran, as well as former Planning Commissioner Harvey H. Liss, Ph.D., pointed to federal and state guidelines and warned of the health and safety risks of building Irvine's sixth high school on a

contaminated Superfund site at the former El Toro Marine Corps Airbase, just 750 feet from a large military toxic waste dump, now capped. Moreover, Agran and Liss noted, the Portola High School site is located on land at the end of two runways, where toxic chemicals used in aircraft operations were apparently dumped directly into the soil. These practices began during World War II and continued throughout the Korean War, and at least into the early years of the Vietnam War.

For nearly five years — under pressure from major developers — top officials at the School District, the City of Irvine, the California Department of Toxic Substances

→ continued on page 2 →

What's Inside...

Business & Coupon Connection
P. 4-6

Irvine Living & Community Calendar
P. 7-10

CITYWATCH Columnists
P. 11

Open Forum & Community Voices
P. 14-15



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Irvine Community News & Views provides a forum for Irvine residents and others to post events and voice their opinions. *Irvine Community News & Views* does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed in this publication.

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→ continued from page 1 → **Portola High School Toxic Contamination**

Control (DTSC), and the California Department of Education have been rubber-stamping approvals to build Portola High School. In the process, they have ignored or dismissed resident concerns about toxic contamination as “fear tactics.”

Despite warnings, red flags, and the actual discovery of large quantities of toxic and carcinogenic petrochemicals — most alarmingly, benzene and benzene derivatives along the *perimeter* of the 40-acre Portola High School site — IUSD commenced construction of the high school in 2014 and has continued

40-acre site, where thousands of future students, teachers and staff will be located in school facilities, would be free of toxic contamination? Most people would logically say “zero” or close to it.”

“But,” Agran added, “the best way to definitively determine the nature and extent of toxic contamination at the Portola High School site is by appropriately testing for benzene and other dangerous petrochemicals, at a relatively small cost of \$100,000.”

In November, 2014, following the accidental discovery of massive

“We can still conduct comprehensive soil-gas testing and evaluate the situation — before anyone gets hurt...before students and teachers and staff are needlessly exposed to toxic petrochemicals.”

— LARRY AGRAN

to build the \$300 million facility, slated to open in September, 2016. The School District has ignored all calls for comprehensive soil-gas testing of the entire *interior* of the site — where teachers, staff and students will gather every day in school facilities to work and study. *This interior area — nearly 90 percent of the school site — remains untested for benzene and other toxic and carcinogenic petrochemicals that have been found along the site’s perimeter.*

On August 31, 2015, former councilmember and mayor Larry Agran, wrote a detailed letter to Governor Jerry Brown, documenting the Portola High School toxics scandal — and the complete failure of oversight by the Irvine Unified School District, the City of Irvine, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the California Department of Education. Agran pointedly asked: “What are the chances — after having found large quantities of [toxic petrochemicals] present along the four-sided perimeter of the school site — that the entire *untested* interior of the

toxic contamination *on* the school site — along Irvine Boulevard — the City’s geotechnical consultant, David Richter, wrote a memo calling for renewed toxics testing. Richter’s memo was buried at City Hall.

Separately, thousand of anxious residents have called for toxics testing in a petition to the School Board and City Council. The petition has so far been ignored.

Asked about parallels to the Flint, Michigan, lead-poisoning of an entire city, Agran said, “While the failure of governmental oversight is similar, both locally and at the State level, there is one important difference: Here in Irvine we still have time to do the right thing. We can still conduct comprehensive soil-gas testing and evaluate the situation — *before* anyone gets hurt...*before* students and teachers and staff are needlessly exposed to toxic petrochemicals.”

Meanwhile, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control has indicated that they are still “reviewing” the Irvine situation. Portola High School is scheduled to open in less than 200 days. ICNV

Benzene
Known Carcinogen

Benzene is a natural constituent of crude oil and an important component of gasoline. Exposure to benzene and benzene derivatives increases the risk of cancer and other diseases. Benzene is a notorious cause of bone marrow failure.

Clinical and laboratory data, as well as epidemiologic studies, link benzene to aplastic anemia, acute leukemia, and bone marrow abnormalities. The specific hematologic (blood-related) malignancies that benzene is associated with include: acute myeloid leukemia (AML), aplastic anemia, myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). Organs targeted by benzene include: liver, kidney, lung, heart and the brain. Benzene can also cause DNA strand breaks and chromosomal damage.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) classifies benzene as a human carcinogen (cancer-causing agent). So does the State of California. The American Petroleum Institute (API) stated in 1948 that “it is generally considered that the only absolutely safe concentration for benzene is zero.” The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has set a permissible prolonged exposure limit of just 1 part of benzene per 1 million parts of air — 1 ppm. The short-term exposure limit for airborne benzene is just 5 ppm for 15 minutes. The risk from exposure to 1 ppm for a working lifetime has been estimated as 5 excess leukemia deaths per 1,000 employees exposed.

Source: Wikipedia

Pointing to effects on Woodbridge, Gaido urges Council to say NO to thousands of new housing units at Great Park

What follows is the January 26th testimony of Mary Ann Gaido, asking the City Council to reject accelerated development.

Forty years ago, as a young Irvine Transportation Commissioner and later a City Councilmember, I proudly voted to approve the development of Irvine’s third major residential community — the Village of Woodbridge. Then, and now, Woodbridge stood as an example of what good planning could achieve. Together, the Irvine Company, the Mayor and City Council, and hundreds of Irvine citizens who were involved in the planning process, agreed to go forward with a beautiful residential village that would eventually include 9,000 homes and nearly 30,000 people.

For decades, our outstanding planning in Woodbridge and elsewhere stood the test of time. Our residential villages were approved and built in accordance with our City’s



This Woodbridge Village edge — along Jeffrey, between Alton and the I-405 — would be replaced with two added traffic lanes.

General Plan — with ample infrastructure, especially roadway capacity to ensure that traffic moved smoothly and the quality of life in Irvine remained second to none.

I thought about that history when, on Dec. 17 — the week before Christmas, late at night and without public participation — the Planning Commission quickly rubber-stamped tentative tract maps permitting developer FivePoint Communities to go ahead with the accelerated development of 4,184 new houses at the Great Park. I was the

only Planning Commissioner to vote NO. I voted NO because approval of those tentative tract maps was in complete disregard of our General Plan standards — and was certain to put thousands of additional cars and trucks on our streets, bringing near-gridlock conditions to Irvine’s older center-city villages.

In the case of Woodbridge, the added traffic will make traffic along Jeffrey — especially at Alton — much worse than it already is. One proposed “mitigation” is to widen Jeffrey and Alton — adding lanes of traffic along the village edge of Woodbridge, bringing traffic and noise and localized air pollution that much closer to our residents. These new lanes of traffic will displace the beautiful 40-year-old streetscape, sidewalk, and landscaped berm and trees that have been a hallmark of good planning for Woodbridge — and for the rest of us in Irvine.

It’s unclear who will pay for this costly, multi-million-dollar “mitigation.” What *is* clear is that we’ll all pay the price of a diminished quality of life that comes with the abandonment of our planning standards.

I’m proud that, over the years, I’ve said YES to many outstanding development projects in Irvine — when the time was right, and when those development plans conformed to the high standards in our City’s General Plan. But I’ve also been proud of those occasions when I’ve said NO to accelerated development — development that was too much, too fast, would bring too much traffic, and would diminish our quality of life. This is a time to say NO. Unfortunately, the Planning Commission failed to say NO. But the people of Irvine, through their elected Mayor and City Council, can still say NO.

Mayor and Members of the City Council: I urge you to uphold our planning standards by voting NO on the accelerated development proposal before you tonight.

The City Council voted 4 to 1 to approve 4,184 new houses at the Great Park. Only Councilmember Beth Krom voted NO.

Krom and Gaido Bring Irvine Support to State Fair Wage Initiative – To Raise the California Minimum Wage to \$15 by 2020



Krom and Gaido (front row, right), leading an Irvine Living Wage delegation to Los Angeles to celebrate the gathering of 600,000 voter signatures in support of the State Fair Wage Initiative.

Volunteers led by Irvine City Councilmember Beth Krom and Planning Commissioner Mary Ann Gaido — proponents of Irvine’s 2015 initiative to restore the City’s \$11 per hour “Living Wage” — have merged their efforts with the broader State Fair Wage Initiative, which would raise California’s minimum wage to \$15 per hour over the next 5 years.

With 600,000 signatures gathered statewide, the Fair Wage Initiative appears certain to qualify for the November 2016 ballot.

Gaido and Krom took the lead to restore a “Living Wage” in Irvine when the current City Council majority — Mayor Steven Choi and Councilmembers Christina Shea, Jeff Lalloway, and Lynn Schott — voted in June to *cut* Irvine’s Living Wage from \$11 per hour to just \$9 per hour. ICNV

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Red highlighted businesses have an ad in this issue. Check it out!

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Lower Level - Food Court Seating

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Ralphs
Rubio's
Togo's, Great Sandwiches
Z-Pizza

HERITAGE PARK / WALNUT & YALE

Heritage Park Regional Library

HERITAGE PLAZA / CULVER & WALNUT

Caffè Bene
Caspian Restaurant
Ralphs

IRVINE BUSINESS COMPLEX

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Gymboree - Irvine
Toscana Luxury Apartments

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IRVINE BLVD. & JAMBOREE**

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/ PRISM & SPECTRUM**

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WESTPARK PLAZA / ALTON & CULVER

Albertsons
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Starbucks Coffee

**WOODBRIIDGE MEDICAL CENTER /
BARRANCA & WOODBRIDGE SQUARE**

Woodbridge Walk-In Urgent Care

**WOODBRIIDGE VILLAGE CENTER /
BARRANCA & CREEK**

Champagne French Bakery Café
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**WOODBURY TOWN CENTER /
SAND CANYON & IRVINE BLVD.**

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THE COUPON CONNECTION *by Cheryl Honig*

Hi, I'm Cheryl Honig, Advertising Coordinator for the *Irvine Community News & Views*. I enjoy getting to know business owners and managers in Irvine, and helping them create compelling ads that increase awareness for their products and services. Thank you to all the businesses **highlighted in red** on page 4 – it is a pleasure to work with you! I invite business owners to call me to discuss how we can work together to spread the word about your business throughout Irvine!

I look forward to hearing from you!

Cheryl Honig • 949-284-6079 • cheryl@irvinecommunitynews.org

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Impressive in Irvine

by Cheryl Honig

As I work my way around Irvine, I have the pleasure of discovering unique and innovative businesses, and meeting the most generous, dedicated, and hard-working people. I am excited to understand what makes businesses successful, and thrilled to learn what motivates people to excel at their chosen craft. As I listen intently, I am drawn into their world — emerging at the end of our visit as one of their biggest fans. These businesses and people are... **Impressive in Irvine.**

Urban Produce Bracken's Kitchen

Can you picture a cafeteria-like tray that holds small live plants of herbs, wheatgrass, and leafy greens? Now picture a column of 25 trays stacked on top of each other extending 25 feet in the air. Now picture 354 of these 25-foot tall shelving systems traveling around a 5,800 square foot warehouse much like clothes travel around in a dry cleaners. Crazy, huh? I have seen this in person, and it's happening right here in Irvine!

Urban Produce grows 1 million pounds annually of USDA Certified Organic fresh produce on their patented Controlled Environmental Agriculture High Density Vertical Growing System, providing locally grown nutrient-dense produce for the local community, and creating local jobs. "Our mission is to build patented vertical growing systems all over the world, bringing fresh, locally grown produce back to urban areas," remarks Danielle Horton, Director of Marketing for Urban Produce. This system reduces water consumption by 90%, and will provide more people in non-agriculturally friendly areas the opportunity to enjoy ultra-healthy produce. "One of our goals is to create smaller versions of the growing system that can be utilized by churches and non-profit organizations to feed people who experience food insecurity," explains Danielle.



Chef Bill Bracken

Currently, Urban Produce provides healthy greens — enough to feed 250 people at a time — to **Bracken's Kitchen**, a non-profit organization that utilizes a food truck named "Betsy" to serve high-quality and healthy meals to people in need in Orange County. "Feeding people is not the same as nourishing them," says Chef Bill Bracken who has enjoyed a culinary career spanning 35 years. I volunteered on "Betsy" (at the vegetable station), and watched first-hand as Chef Bracken displayed his compassion for people ... and his passion for serving great food.



Please visit these websites to learn more!
www.UrbanProduce.com
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Irvine Living

INDOORS • OUTDOORS FINDING AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE

Interest Rates and Refinancing

I am often asked, "With interest rates low, should I refinance?" I am not a lender — so it's a challenge to fully answer that, but I can give you a real estate agent's perspective. The reality is that refinancing is a personal question, and it depends on your individual circumstances. Generally, with interest rates at historic lows, you should consider three things when contemplating a "Refinance."



REAL ESTATE
 by Michael Mei*

(1) You have options as a consumer, so shop around! Even a 1/8th point on your interest rate can save you \$20,000 over the course of a 30-year loan on a \$600,000 mortgage. Do not give up your choices, because there are 20,000 reasons to get the best rate! Rates are really low now and lenders are extremely competitive about offering you the best rate.

(2) Refinancing is a service that costs money. So factor in that cost to see if the assumed savings outweighs the expense. Look at how long you need to stay in the new loan to recoup the savings. If you are refinancing today and selling next month...do not refinance. The rule of thumb is that you want to reduce your interest rate by at least 1% and keep the loan for a minimum of 2 years.

(3) You also may consider a 15-year loan. This short-term mortgage can save you lots of interest over the life of the loan, compared to a 30-year mortgage. So instead of paying \$125,000 in interest over 30 years, you may only pay \$70,000 in interest over 15 years. You will have to absorb a higher mortgage payment though. Some opponents suggest a 30-year loan, but that you then pay extra each month to pay down the principal balance — which can achieve the same outcome.

**Michael Mei is a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Platinum Properties, specializing in Irvine's luxury home segment. He received the prestigious International President's Elite award from Coldwell Banker for being in the Top 2% in the world for his sales volume. Michael Mei has been a resident of Irvine for over 21 years, and currently lives in Irvine with his wife and three children.*

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Community Calendar

February 2016/March 2016

The Irvine Museum



Granville Redmond (1871-1935)
Untitled, Moonlight Marsh

The Nature of Water: Our Most Precious Resource

Now through June 16th

The Nature of Water is an exhibition that serves a dual purpose: it presents a selection of superb California landscape paintings and it makes the museum visitor aware of one of California's historically scarce and precious resources, water.

The featured art documents the perpetual natural cycle of water in our atmosphere. Water exists in nature in three physical states: liquid (water), solid (ice) and gas (water vapor). The Water Cycle describes how a fixed quantity of water has remained the same for hundreds of millions of years.

Museum Open: Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info: 949-476-2565



Lindsay Buchman, Possession, 2014-2015
Intaglio, washi and beeswax, 18x24"

Irvine Fine Arts Center

Lindsay Buchman: Y(OURS)

Opening Reception:

Saturday, February 13, 4-6 p.m.

Exhibition: February 13 - April 16, 2016

Lindsay Buchman's solo exhibition, Y(OURS) examines possession through works on paper, sculpture, a site-specific installation, and a risograph publication. By advancing the idea that there is no mine without yours and no yours without mine, Buchman explores the relationship between personal and collective property and what it means to own.

Admission, parking and Opening Reception are free. **Info:** 949-724-6880

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Dan Brown, Firefighter of the Year 2015, OCFA The Best and Bravest Awards Dinner February 4th</p> <p>Homework Help. Heritage Park Library. 4:30pm. Info: 949-936-4040</p> 	<p>2 Groundhog Day.</p> 	<p>3 Storytime in the Garden. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 10-11am. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>4 Planning Commission Meeting. 5:30pm. OCFA The Best and Bravest Awards Dinner. Irvine Marriott. 5:30-8:30pm. Info: Kay@kandkpublicaffairs.com Sponsored by the Exchange Club of Irvine.</p>	<p>5 OC Writers Read & Critique. OC Great Park Gallery. 11am-1pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> <p>OC Writers: Read & Critique</p>	<p>6 Garden Workshops: Build and plant a raised bed garden. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. Free. 10-11am. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	
<p>7 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>8 Teen Advisory Group Meeting. TAG meets on the second Monday of each month to discuss and plan library activities and to help the library keep up with teen trends. Snacks provided. Drop-ins always welcome! Meets in the downstairs Community Room. 5-6pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p>	<p>9 The State of the City Address. Irvine Civic Center. 5pm Reception. 6pm Address Begins.</p> 	<p>10 Mid-Week Hike. Orchard Hills. 8am-1pm. Info & Registration: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>11 Live Music at Eureka! 4143 Campus Dr. Each Thursday night Eureka! features Live Music at their University Town Center location! 8pm. Info: 949-596-8881</p> 	<p>12 Lincoln's Birthday.</p> 	<p>13 Rooten's Free Travel Seminar. 17775 Main Street. 10am. Info: 949-250-0774</p>
<p>14 Valentine's Day.</p>  <p>Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p>	<p>15 Presidents' Day.</p> 	<p>16 International Discussion Group. Rancho Senior Center. Participate in thought-provoking conversations about current national and international topics. 9:30am. Third Tuesdays. Info: 949-786-2097</p>	<p>17 Adult Book Club Meeting. Katie Wheeler Library. 7pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p> 	<p>18 Agriculture, Wellness and the Environment Lecture: History of Landscape Design. OC Great Park Gallery. 7-8:30pm. Info: OCGP.org</p>	<p>19 Live Music Fridays. Ugly Pie Co. 3939 Portola Pkwy. 6pm. Info: UglyPieCo@gmail.com</p> 	<p>20 Trabuco Center Grand Opening. The opening of the City's third Senior Center on 5701 Trabuco Rd. 10am. Info: 949-724-7300</p>
<p>21 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> <p>Clinic in the Park. OC Great Park Farmers Market. 10am-2pm. Info: ClinicInThePark.org</p>	<p>22 Homework Help. Heritage Park Library. 4:30pm. Info: 949-936-4040</p> 	<p>23 City Council Meeting. Irvine Civic Center 5pm.</p> 	<p>24 Morning Yoga. Bommer Canyon. 9:30-11am. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>25 Homework Help. Katie Wheeler Library. Teen tutors assist elementary and middle school students with completing their homework assignments. Held downstairs in the Community Room. 3:30pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p>	<p>26 Movie Matinee. Lakeview Senior Center. Fridays at 12:15pm. Info: 949-724-6900</p> 	<p>27 Learn Origami. Katie Wheeler Library. 1:30-2:30pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p> 
<p>28 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>29 After Work Fitness Hike. Hicks Haul Road. 6-7:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>1 MARCH Short Story Book Club. Heritage Library. 2:30-4:30pm. Info: 949-936-4040</p>	<p>2 Bunco at the Rancho Senior Center. First Wednesdays. 12:30-3pm. \$5. Info: 949-724-6800</p> 	<p>LIVE MUSIC FRIDAYS 6:00PM If you would like to perform in store please email us sample at uglypieco@gmail.com UGLY PIE CO. BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED PIZZA 3939 Portola Parkway, Irvine 92602 • 714.389.1119</p>	<p>IRVINE MUSEUM Karl Yens (1868-1945) Half Dome, Yosemite</p> 	

Adoptable Pet of the Month

Each issue we feature one "adoptable" pet from the Irvine Animal Care Center. The Irvine Animal Care Center (IACC) is a progressive and innovative municipal animal shelter that continually strives to strengthen the human-animal bond and improve the welfare of animals by promoting their humane care and treatment. The Center's 3.73 acre, park-like facility cares for thousands of homeless, neglected and abused animals every year. All animals in their care receive veterinary care, high-quality food, soft bedding and daily socialization.



"Garth" is a male, neutered, domestic shorthair mix. He is about one year old.

For more information about Garth and other adoptable pets, or the IACC, call 949-724-7740 or email info@irvineshelter.org

Clinic in the Park • Sunday, February 21
Free • No Appointment Needed • Family Fun

When: Sunday, February 21, 10AM - 1PM
Where: Great Park Farmers Market
Enter on Marine Way from Sand Canyon at the I-5

Celebrate Healthy Heart Month with Clinic in the Park

- Learn how to maintain your heart's health
- Therapy dogs from OCSPCA
- Meet with our dietitians, nurses, and health educators
- Free books

Healthy Heart.

- "When a Band-Aid Isn't Enough": Basic First-Aid Skills from Woodbridge Walk-In
- Obstacle course for kids
- Learn Community CPR

Healthy YOU

Visit: www.ClinicInThePark.org | Email: clinicinthepark@gmail.com | Call: (949) 385-3067

Let's Go Outside

The City of Irvine's Bommer Canyon, rich in Irvine Ranch lore and nature's wonders, offers expansive views of the most resilient native plant communities. It is a testament to the timeline of land usage in Orange County, from ranching and agriculture to preservation through community effort. Bommer Canyon is open for self-guided access and scheduled programs.

Learn more at LetsGoOutside.org



FOR SALE: 74 Clifford, Irvine (Lambert Ranch)

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No Mello Roos!
 5 Bedroom 5 Bath at 4,600 sqft
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This gorgeous home is located in The Grove enclave of Lambert Ranch, offering a spacious great room accented by impeccable craftsmanship and featuring an ideal Feng Shui layout with energy flowing from room to room. This home expresses how families want to live.

www.74Clifford.com



Jessica Stephens
 Master Travel Consultant

I was bitten by the travel bug at a very early age and loved the feeling I got when experiencing a destination for the first time! I am amazed at the feeling of excitement and wonder I still have as an adult. As a travel consultant, it is through my great attention to detail and vast product knowledge that my goal — helping create lifelong memories for you and your family — can be realized.

We all need a break from our hurried lives, the endless tasks, the stress, the 5 and 405 freeways. Fortunately for us, we don't have to travel that far to escape completely.

Consider a drive up the California coast — to the kinds of places that make you think you are in Italy, France, or a lodge in the Alps. Between San Simeon and Carmel, along California's famed Pacific Coast Highway, is spectacular Big Sur, with its towering cliffs, winding turns and breathtaking views. Just north of San Francisco is beautiful Napa Valley, considered California's Tuscany, and one of the world's premier wine regions. Then, perhaps it's east to South Lake Tahoe — with scenery that rivals the beauty of the Swiss Alps.

California offers something for everyone! It's best to share your interests with a travel professional to craft a vacation that specifically matches your needs. I am waiting for your call!

Jessica Stephens • Travel Store
949-517-9813



Big Sur



Napa Valley



Lake Tahoe



Post Ranch Inn at Big Sur
 (Background photo)

Travel

A School Bond

The Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) is preparing to place an unusual school improvement bond on the June 7th election ballot. It's "unusual" because the bond is intended to help *some* Irvine schools in *some* parts of our City. And, only some Irvine residents will be voting on the measure — and paying for it if it passes.

It's a little complicated, but here is the story. Irvine has lots of new, modern schools. But there are many old schools in town, too — some of them 30 or even 40 years old, especially in older villages like University Park, Turtle Rock, Woodbridge and Northwood. These schools need expensive rehabilitation and remodeling, as well as modernization with new laboratories and investments in new technologies.

To quickly produce the tens of millions of dollars needed, IUSD is proposing creation of a School Facility Improvement District (SFID) comprised of older schools that are located in designated Elementary/K-8 School Service Areas. Only voters living in these designated School Service Areas will be voting on the bond issue, which, according to the School District, will cost the average homeowner between \$121 and \$203 per year — depending on the value of your property.

Under State law, a 55 percent "supermajority" is required for this kind of school bond to pass.

Finally, I offer my thanks to Lorrie Ruiz and Annie Brown, IUSD facilities and public information officers, for helping inform me — so I can inform *you* — about this *important* school bond issue.

**Carolyn Inmon is a retired Irvine teacher. She has taught at virtually every grade level, from K - 12.*



SCHOOLWATCH
 by Carolyn Inmon*

Concussion!

Go see an outstanding movie, *Concussion*, starring Will Smith. Smith plays the true-life role of Dr. Bennet Omalu, the brilliant Nigerian immigrant and research physician who discovered and then proved the connection between repeated head trauma and life-long brain damage — called CTE or "chronic traumatic encephalopathy" — among professional football players.

I have, myself, experienced four concussions. I was knocked unconscious once and needed stitches in my head on two occasions. Thankfully, I haven't had any significant long-term negative effects...so far. I think that may be because my injuries were sustained playing soccer which, unlike professional football, didn't require me to *repeatedly* ram my head into other players.

Concussion tells an important American story, which is still unfolding. The main takeaway for me is this: We desperately need to focus our attention on player safety, especially head injuries. Head trauma is simply too prevalent in the sport of football.

Yes, I believe that professional players, who put their bodies on the line in exchange for money, should have that choice. But when it comes down to playing football in youth sports — especially from early ages right up through high school — football needs to be made much safer, even if it means major changes in the game.

**Joel Smith is a homegrown Irvine athlete and Concordia University graduate who excelled in soccer, and now coaches in Irvine.*



SPORTSWATCH
 by Joel Smith*



Concussion No. 2

Ignoring What You Know To Be True

"There are none so blind as those who will not see." —Traced back in English to John Heywood in 1546.

During the 2014 election season, the precursor to this newspaper was lawfully organized as a "slate mailer" and as a newspaper. In 2015, the *Irvine Community News & Views* terminated its status as a slate mailer. Its status, since then, is that it is an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation), registered with the California Secretary of State, and entitled to engage in any lawful business activity. *ICNV* is also licensed to do business in the City of Irvine.

Despite numerous requests by the Editor of the *ICNV*, the City of Irvine has steadfastly refused to allow free copies of *ICNV* to be distributed in City Hall, just like other publications such as *OC Weekly* and the *Irvine World News*. The ostensible reason for this refusal is that the content of the paper is too "political."

Any UCI law student who has taken Constitutional Law could explain to the City Council that content-based restrictions are subject to "strict scrutiny" under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. It appears that the City Council is daring the newspaper to sue the City in Federal Court to have the restriction on distribution declared unconstitutional. This will result in a waste of your tax dollars and mine — the City is virtually certain to lose that lawsuit. *Indeed, there are none so blind as those who will not see.*

**Harris E. Kershner is a local attorney, specializing in Employment Law. He has lived in Irvine for over 30 years, and currently resides in Woodbridge.*



WORDSWATCH
 by Harris E. Kershner*

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Last month, I wrote about Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre — this summer will be its last season of concerts and performing artists. And now we learn that the Irvine Planning Commission is bringing down the curtain on Zio Ziegler's audacious and somewhat controversial mural — located right there on the wall of Tilly's, a major casual clothing business, along the northbound I-405 near Spectrum.



CULTURECORNER
 by Steve Layton*

For the past year, this work of art has been breaking the monotony of a slow, tough freeway commute for tens of thousands of daily motorists. The massive mural — 55 feet by 340 feet, with its bright blue background — graphically depicts stumbling runners. The mural doesn't seem to say anything specific — it just provides a big splash of attractive light and color, greeting (some say assaulting) drivers and passengers alike as they pass through Irvine.

For what it's worth, I like the Tilly's mural. It's a brassy, visual cymbal clash, which seems to say, "Wake up. You're in Irvine!"

In June, the Tilly's mural will be no more. Irvine's rules don't permit it. Granted this "ephemeral art" was never meant to be permanent. But maybe it's time for our City Council and Planning Commission to consider permitting — even encouraging — juried mural designs for the unique space on Tilly's wall and on the walls of other privately owned buildings, too. Why not? It's free. It's fun. And it sure beats beige!

**Steve Layton is a semi-retired businessman. He remains very active in the Irvine community as a supporter of the UCI Drama Department, and currently serves on the Leadership Committee of the New Swan Shakespeare Festival.*





FROM THE PUBLISHER

The Irvine City Council and the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) have been unresponsive to the obvious need to test the *entire* Portola High School site for toxic petrochemicals. And since the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is clearly dragging its feet in requiring IUSD to “test for toxics,” it’s time for Irvine residents to take action.

If you stop next to the site of the Portola High School, along Irvine Boulevard, about a half-mile SE of Pusan Way, you will see that many of the high school structures are already built. The IUSD is obviously hoping that resident demands to test the site will go away; however, if there are more toxic petrochemicals on the school site, similar to what’s already been found, they will be lurking there for many more years.

To conduct independent, comprehensive soil-gas testing of the *entire* Portola High School site would cost less than \$100,000 — a pittance compared to the estimated \$300 million cost of the high school.

With the risk so great and the cost so relatively small, it is inconceivable that the IUSD, protector of students and staff, would abdicate its responsibility, regardless of the cover that a rubber-stamping, ineffective public agency like the DTSC provides.

Whether the Irvine School Board and City Council want it or not, tests for toxic petrochemical contamination at the Portola High School site *will* have to be conducted sooner or later. When health complaints arise among staff or students, regardless of the reason, the first suspected cause will be contaminated soil. Comprehensive tests now would either reassure the public that the site is safe; or, the tests would identify contamination that could be cleaned up before the new school is occupied when it opens in September of 2016.

Take a few minutes to read Dr. Harvey Liss’s “Call to Action,” and then *take action* by going to the website, www.TestForToxics.org.

– FJL

A CALL TO TEST FOR TOXICS AT PORTOLA HIGH SCHOOL

by Harvey H. Liss, Ph.D., P.E.

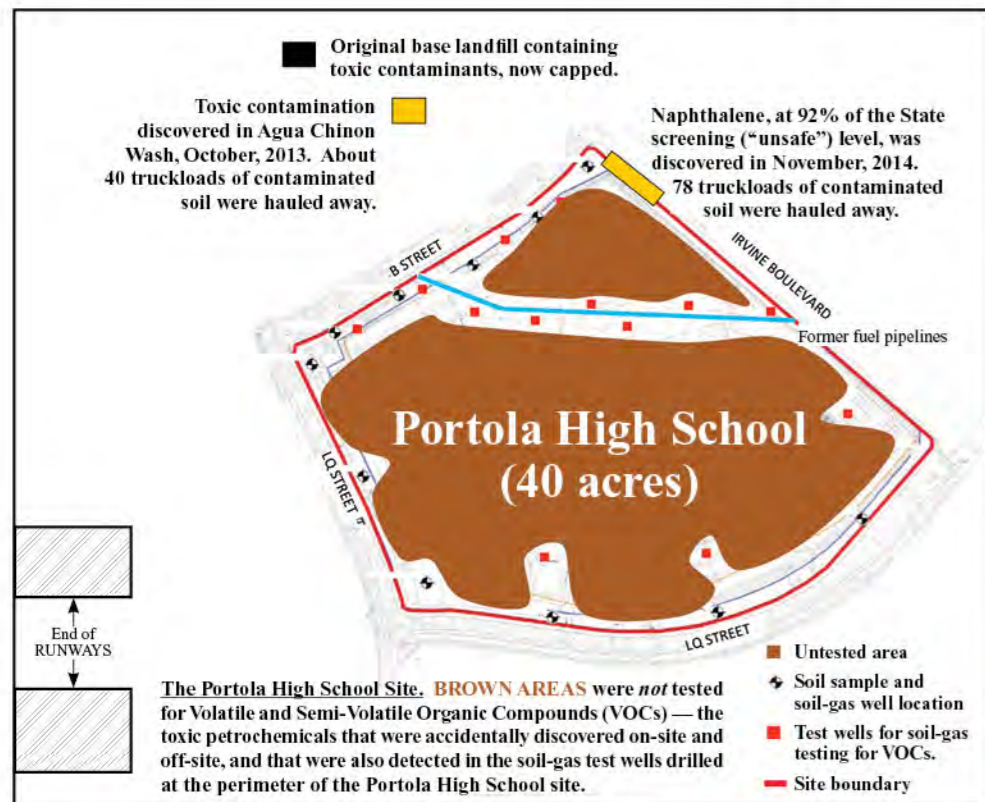
Here are the facts concerning the Portola High School site, where Irvine’s newest high school is now under construction and scheduled to open in September of 2016.

- **Fact No. 1.** The Irvine Unified School District — with funding assistance from the State of California — is building Portola High School (at a cost of nearly \$300 million) on a former Superfund site that is now known to be contaminated with toxic petrochemicals, including but not limited to: benzene, toluene, xylenes, trimethylbenzene, tetrachlorethylene, trichloroethylene, and naphthalene.
- **Fact No. 2.** These toxic (and, in some cases, carcinogenic) petrochemicals have been discovered during major excavations nearby (November, 2013) and *on-site* (November, 2014), and from 10 of 11 *on-site* soil-test wells that were drilled along the perimeter of the 40-acre site, in 2014. (See accompanying map.)
- **Fact No. 3.** While the interior of the school site has been tested for agricultural pesticides, it has *not* been tested for the toxic petrochemicals that were accidentally found nearby, and along the perimeter of the site.
- **Fact No. 4.** To conduct comprehensive soil-gas testing (involving about 100 test wells covering the entire interior of the school site) would cost an estimated \$100,000.

Given the incontrovertible evidence of toxic contamination on the Portola High School site — and the relatively small cost of conducting independent, comprehensive testing for petrochemical contamination throughout the site’s interior — we call upon the Irvine School Board and the Irvine City Council to order such testing, immediately.

The failure to do so raises the likelihood that any contamination will remain undiscovered until avoidable diseases, disabilities, and even deaths among Portola High School teachers, staff and students begin occurring because of prolonged exposure to these toxic and carcinogenic petrochemical contaminants. The legal, financial and moral liability of such a catastrophic scenario is incalculable.

For latest updates, references and documentary materials: www.TestForToxics.org and *subscribe!*



IT'S 2016, AN IMPORTANT ELECTION YEAR.

Irvine Community News & Views is proud to join the State of California, the City of Irvine, UC Irvine, and other major institutions in encouraging citizens to REGISTER TO VOTE.

You can now register online in a matter of minutes.

<http://registertovote.ca.gov>

Register to Vote Today!



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OPEN FORUM

FREE SPEECH FOREVER!



Listening to Community Voices

Dear Readers:

Last month's Irvine Community Poll asked the question: *Do you approve or disapprove of the job that the Mayor and City Council are doing to control growth and traffic?* The response was overwhelming — from hundreds and hundreds of Irvine residents. More than a response, it was a loud roar of *disapproval* — nearly 100 percent. Steve Layton's cartoon on this page reflects what our Irvine Community News & Views writers and staff are hearing from residents. And the representative sampling of comments printed on these Open Forum/Community Voices pages lets residents be heard...in their own words. Listen to what your Irvine neighbors and friends are saying. —FJL

■ I don't see any effort from the City to resolve day-by-day heavier local traffic. The City Council and the Mayor just ignore the pain that all of the people living in Irvine are experiencing.

—Michael Wang

■ All the traffic from the new housing developments at the Great Park crowds Sand Canyon Avenue. It is bad already and will soon be unbearable.

—Dan Tang

■ There is no excuse for the traffic lights to be timed to impede the flow of traffic. The increased high-density home building will make getting around here a nightmare.

—Linda Lewis

■ Mayor Steven Choi and his City Council majority threw out the General Plan and gave control of things to developer FivePoint Communities — their high-density housing has brought high-density traffic.

—Sharon Toranto

■ The incredibly dense growth in Irvine has caused ridiculous traffic. We need more infrastructure and public transportation before any more developments are approved.

—Allison Eisendrath

■ We live in Aliso Viejo and have our business in Irvine. The short 18-minute trip to and from work now routinely takes up to 40 minutes each way. We thought about purchasing a home in Irvine, but the traffic just seems to get worse each year. A trip to The District [in Tustin] is a nightmare.

—Ravi Kanwai

■ It's a shame that development companies care more about lining their own pockets than they do about following City development plans that were made for a reason.

—Kate Thompson

■ Our family has lived in Irvine 37 years, and even our grown kids who have lived here all their lives are horrified to see what is becoming of Irvine. The traffic is ridiculous...a nightmare. I live in Northwood and work at UCI, and it takes me 25 minutes to get to work on a good day. Intersections are regularly blocked. The slow growth plans of the past have been thrown out the window. This is now a stressful City.

—Kimberly Gyurina

■ The City planners and decision makers really need to realign their thinking with the grand vision for what makes our City great. I question if there is any regard for overall quality of life for long-term residents.

—Bradley Reece

■ There is no control on growth. Traffic is abysmal. The majority of Councilmembers that govern this City are in bed with the developers. It's time to dethrone King Choi and his merry band of bandits. Let's take our power and our City back.

—Gene Davila

■ All I see are new developments going up with no additional road infrastructure to support them. Either Irvine's master plan is flawed or our elected officials are negligent in their duty to follow the plan. Traffic is getting worse by the day.

—Joe Mistretta

■ One of the things that historically made Irvine great is that growth was controlled and planned. That approach has been tossed out the window in favor of shoving in high-density housing wherever it will fit. My surface street commute to work is less than five miles, but is now taking over half an hour due to the clogged streets.

—Sam Pawley

■ Wow! A few years ago, this was a peaceful, convenient place to live. Now the overcrowding and traffic has become a nightmare!

—Michael Lewis

■ What happened to Irvine's planning? I guess it has been thrown out the window by the Mayor and Council we have now.

—Victoria Rossiter



■ I completely disapprove of Mayor Choi's uncontrolled growth plan. The Mayor obviously has zero respect for the community. The out-of-control growth is ruining Irvine's quality of living.

—P. Pawley

■ This is what happens when Republicans take over our City Council. They're in the pockets of the developers — anything goes.

—Mark Brown

■ Houses don't cause traffic. People driving cars increase traffic. Empty i-Shuttle buses and empty UCI buses increase traffic. Parents driving their children to and from school increase traffic.

—Alan Travis

■ I've lived in Irvine since 1976. I used to love my City, but now it's horrendous with all the traffic that is here. It takes me an average of 27 minutes to get to my job, 4.2 miles down Main Street — straight down Main from Woodbridge to Von Karman. I hate it.

—R. Arndt

■ It's awful what's happening to this great City that I love....The building in Irvine is ridiculous, truly! I moved from L.A. to Orange County in 1992, and the changes I've seen are not good!

—Leslie Tekstra

■ Irvine is quickly becoming just another big Orange County city, like Anaheim and Santa Ana. There is no longer anything special about the Irvine experience. Too bad.

—James Harris

■ Irvine's uncontrolled growth and resulting traffic congestion have transformed a once calm, organized and desirable place to live into just another hectic, stressful city. If the City leaders do not follow Irvine's Master Plan, then conditions will continue to worsen and this City will no longer be considered a desirable place to live.

—Debbie Dutra

■ Unfortunately, concern for the well being of Irvine and its residents is being ignored, in deference to the wants and needs of FivePoint Communities — the developer that is here today to profit and then leave the residents of Irvine to live in a permanently dysfunctional environment.

—Ira Lewis

■ Apparently, the Mayor and City Council have been bought by the developers. They are no longer thinking what's best for our communities.

—Leti Stiles

■ This Mayor and City Council continue to sell-out our comfortable living conditions to greedy developers, leading to massive traffic jams, water shortages, and who knows what other problems caused by overly dense population.

—Eugene Wood

■ Irvine is already ruined. Even if you stop building, there's pretty much no way to reduce traffic. Good job, Choi and Company.

—Nick Ngov

■ Irvine was always special. Now it's bursting at the seams, and shows no signs of slowing down. It's so out of control! I've been here since 1978, and it's heartbreaking to see it all unravel.

—Danielle Haloern

■ I moved here from Florida eight years ago to have some type of peace and serenity. I fell in love with Irvine. But, OMG, since the Mayor took power, it's been a disaster all around. My family and I can't believe how we've become such a crowded City.

—Joanne Santiago

■ The surge in construction creates massive traffic congestion, which contributes to an increase in pollution, noise, delays in regular and emergency traffic, and will undoubtedly impact negatively the housing market. Irvine is losing its charm and friendliness, while becoming a congested bedroom town.

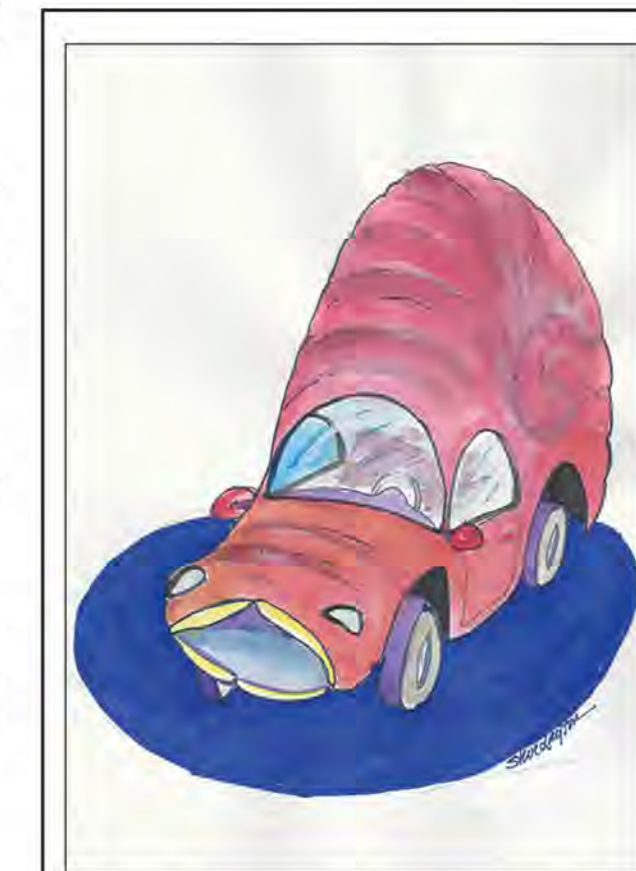
—Pierre Francis

■ Recently meeting with registered Democrats in the University Park community, the No. 1 unsolicited concern about the City of Irvine is the recent rapid increase in residential building and increased traffic.

—Howard Emery

■ I make my living doing a lot of driving all over Irvine, and I see how traffic has increased steadily over the last couple of years. Not only are improvements and expansion of roadways not taking place, the City is falling short in its maintenance of existing streets.

—Sean Patterson



Coming Soon: The New "Snailpace"...
It's Perfectly Suited for Irvine.

■ I hate all this traffic. I don't like having to schedule my errands in the few hours when the traffic isn't crowded and the signals too long. It's too bad that we can't trust our leaders to do the right thing for our City.

—Sandra Cullum

■ Severe traffic congestion has plagued Irvine for years despite its Master Plan. Conditions worsen each year. Excessive building of high-density housing will surely exacerbate the problem even more.

—Annette Bork

■ The traffic has tripled since I moved here 6 years ago, and I'm not looking forward to what it will be like with all the new developments opening on Jeffrey and Portola.

—Michelle Nagy

■ There are now many traffic choke-points in Irvine — the leadership sucks.

—Veneet Sharma

■ Look at Michelson and Jamboree and the Irvine Business Complex. What were our City officials thinking? There are 50,000 people who only have one or two grocery stores within 3 miles.

—Brendan Copley

■ The consequence of the recent housing developments in the northern and eastern areas of Irvine is gridlock. I cannot fathom what is going to happen next year with thousands of additional homes being sold. We lack adequate roads, schools and parks. It seems that private interests — greedy developers — have taken over our City, and they do not care what the local citizens think or what the impacts of their developments are on the people who live here. It's time to take our City back.

—Pat Kennedy

■ Mayor Choi is doing a bad job controlling growth and traffic. All he seems to want is to add more and more development.

—Loretta Khorey

■ It's an easy job [to be Mayor or a City Councilmember] when all you have to do is say "yes" to anything the developer wants to build.

—Alan Meyerson

■ Slower growth is smarter planning.

—Sheila Claybourn

■ The traffic explosion has been brutal, and poorly managed — not what I signed up for when I paid a pretty penny for my Irvine home. I think we need to shut down current expansion plans and re-think our approach, re-aligning it with the Master Plan that had been working so beautifully.

—George Llata Jr.

■ Irvine is ruined due to overdevelopment. I am planning on moving after 15 years of living in Irvine. What once was a perfectly planned community is now one of the worst due to greed and corruption.

—Kim Wilmot

■ The Irvine that once was exemplary in administration, planning, and service is slowly disappearing under the weight of a City Council that seems determined to destroy everything that put the City of Irvine on the national map and made us the envy of so many other cities. Our only hope is the 2016 elections. If we have any hope of stopping the unfettered growth and the now impossible traffic situation that is destroying the quality of our lives, we must change the members of the City Council. It is up to us.

—Shirley Lorenz

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please include your name and ZIP code. Letters for publication must be addressed to Editor, 4199 Campus Drive, Suite 550, Irvine, CA 92612 or email Editor@IrvineCommunityNews.org. Letters may be edited for publication. Unpublished letters will not be acknowledged or returned.

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February 2016 - Volume 3, No. 2

Irvine
COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS

Serving the Villages and Neighborhoods of Irvine

Distribution in Irvine:
Print-21,000 • Online-14,100

IUSD to Open Portola High School Despite Contamination

Portola High School (above) is being built on a contaminated site (right) along Irvine Boulevard.

Publisher's Perspective
Test for Toxics

The failure of the School Board, the City, and State officials to deal with the toxic petrochemicals at the Portola High School site is astonishing. Sad to say, this reflects the kind of indifference, incompetence and arrogance that led to the tragic lead-poisoning of an entire city — Flint, Michigan. Read our Front-Page story. And then read Page 12, and join your neighbors in the Call to Test for Toxics.

I also urge you to read our Page 3 story. It is the personal testimony of Mary Ann Gaido, the sole Irvine Planning Commissioner with the backbone to say NO to the overdevelopment that is damaging our entire City. See what this means to Irvine's largest center-city village, Woodbridge.

As always, thank you for reading *Irvine Community News & Views*.

Franklin J. Landing
Franklin J. Landing, Publisher and Editor

What's Inside...

- Business & Coupon Connection P. 4-6
- Irvine Living & Community Calendar P. 7-10
- CITYWATCH Columnists P. 11
- Open Forum & Community Voices P. 14-15

→ continued on page 2 →

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