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Serving the Villages and Neighborhoods of Irvine

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Publisher's Perspective

A Time to Speak Up

Worse by the Day. It seems that the Portola High School toxics scandal just gets worse by the day. With the State-ordered testing completed — and all 17 test wells showing toxic petrochemical contamination — it's apparent that there is a serious, *site-wide* problem. Now, IUSD's environmental consultant is blaming the contamination on the long-ago use of IRWD's recycled water to irrigate row crops on the site. This, of course, was denied by IRWD officials who have trumpeted the Water District's exemplary recycled water program for years. The likely source of the toxic contamination? Not IRWD, but the use of the property for military aircraft — including massive dumping of fuels and solvents when the site was part of the El Toro Marine Corps Airbase.

Read the full front-page story. Also read Dr. Harvey Liss's TestForToxics.org article on page 13. It is a detailed but clear, step-by-step description of what's been going on.

15,000! I'm pleased to report we now have more than 15,000 followers online — with more than 10,000 on Facebook alone. All this is in addition to the nearly 28,000 printed papers that are distributed monthly.



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Franklin J. Lunding

Franklin J. Lunding, Publisher and Editor



Soil-Gas Tests Show Site-wide Toxic Contamination at Portola High School



Testimony given at the May 24th IUSD Board meeting. Elaine King, M.D., an Irvine resident and family physician, testified about the damaging effects toxic contamination can have on certain students. Ira Lewis chastised the Board for its failure to exercise "due diligence" by testing for toxics at the Portola High site before purchasing the property.

The Irvine Unified School District claims the source of the toxic petrochemical contamination at Portola High School is IRWD recycled water. IRWD officials reject IUSD's claim.

In its May 24th, late-night meeting, the Irvine School Board stood firm in its determination to open Portola High School to its first 9th grade class in August, despite soil-gas test findings that showed site-wide contamination from toxic petrochemicals — including benzene, known to cause leukemia and other diseases, and toluene, a neurotoxicant damaging to brain development and the central nervous system.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), such as benzene, benzene derivatives, toluene and xylene — petrochemicals often associated with fuels and solvents. There should have been *none* of these VOCs found on the site. And there should have been testing *under* the school buildings, which there was *not*.

The School Board, relying on a presentation by State officials, seemed satisfied that the contamination was at "low levels," and therefore "safe." The Board seemed to ignore — and even resent — public testimony from physicians, scientists and experts in carcinogenesis who noted the special susceptibility of children and long-term teachers and other school employees, especially pregnant women,

→ continued on page 2 →

Test Results

Of the 17 test wells that were ordered by State officials, all 17 showed significant levels of various combinations of so-called

CityWatch: Q&A with Mary Ann Gaido
See page 3.

Update on Toxic Contamination at PHS.
See page 13.

Business & Coupon Connection
P. 4-6

Irvine Living & Community Calendar
P. 7-10

CityViews & Added Columnists
P. 11-12

TestForToxics By Dr. Harvey Liss
P. 13

Open Forum & Community Voices
P. 14-15



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→ continued from page 1 → **Site-wide Toxics at Portola High School**

exposed to airborne carcinogens and neurotoxins. At one point in the meeting, School Board member Sharon Wallin scolded residents, saying she felt personally “hurt” by the public testimony.

Blaming IRWD’s Recycled Water

The Board accepted, without question, its own environmental consultant’s controversial claim that the source of the toxic contamination is Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) recycled water that had been used in agriculture on the 40-acre Portola High School site that was once part of the former El Toro Marine Corps Airbase.

A number of citizens openly scoffed at the notion — unsupported by any evidence — that recycled water used to irrigate crops was the source of the Portola High School toxic contamination. In fact, high State officials had ordered the new soil-gas tests at the Portola High School site, recognizing that IUSD’s earlier characterization of the site as only used for agriculture was *wrong*, and that the property — at the end of major runways — was likely used for military purposes. These purposes included the possible dumping of vast quantities of fuels and solvents associated with military aircraft maintenance and operations.

One after another, citizens challenged and ridiculed the theory that the source of the contamination was recycled water laced with toxics. Larry Agran, former Irvine Mayor and City Councilman, who has relentlessly questioned the safety

of the Portola High School site for years, said, “This toxic recycled water theory has been concocted by IUSD’s environmental consultant — PlaceWorks.” Agran then went on to testify that if this were true, it would be a “bombshell” story of *citywide* toxic contamination because of Irvine’s heavy reliance on IRWD’s recycled water.

Others followed Agran to the podium, quickly pointing out that if recycled water was implicated in the site-wide toxic contamination found at Portola High School, then the entire City would be contaminated with toxic VOCs, because recycled water is used on public and private land throughout Irvine — in the City’s parks and recreation areas, throughout common areas in residential villages and neighborhoods, along streets and parkways, and on school grounds.

Apparently, IRWD officials had not been contacted by IUSD officials regarding the School District’s claim of contaminated recycled water as the source of the toxic petrochemicals found at Portola High School. When reached, IRWD officials rejected the claim. According to a written statement by IRWD Water Quality Manager Lars Oldewage, “We have rarely detected the various VOCs [benzene, benzene derivatives, toluene, and xylene] in IRWD’s recycled water and never at any significant level.”

Several residents testified in support of the School District, complaining that the added testing at the Portola High School site was costing too much and “taking the money away from students and

Irvine families.”

But Ira Lewis, a retired accountant and resident-activist, countered by saying that IUSD and the School Board had “failed to exercise due diligence” by testing for toxic petrochemicals *before* purchasing the land from residential developer FivePoint Communities. Lewis pointed out that if IUSD had done so, the testing would have been at the expense of the seller — FivePoint Communities — not at the expense of the School District and Irvine taxpayers. More important, he added, the issues of toxic contamination would have been discovered long ago, and the District would likely have looked elsewhere for a more suitable school site.

After the meeting, Dr. Harvey H. Liss, Executive Director of TestForToxics.org, said, “IUSD got it *wrong* the first time, and now they got it *wrong* again. This is no way to safeguard Irvine teachers, staff and students.” [ICNV](http://www.IrvineCommunityNews.org)

What Do YOU Think?

Do you favor or oppose postponing the August opening of Portola High School until the source(s) of site-wide toxic contamination can be determined and we can be certain that the High School is safe?

Take the Irvine Community Poll!

Simply go to:
IrvineCommunityNews.org/Poll

The Irvine Community Poll is owned by Irvine Community News & Views. Unlike other proprietary polls, we publish our survey results. This is a way that your voice can be heard — and we can help serve the Irvine community.

If you wish to contact Irvine School Board members and State officials responsible for making decisions about toxic contamination at Portola High School, here are their names and email addresses:

IUSD paulbokota@iusd.org
laurenbrooks@iusd.org
iraglasky@iusd.org
michaelparham@iusd.org
sharonwallin@iusd.org
terrywalker@iusd.org
(Superintendent Terry Walker)

State SectyRodriguez@calepa.ca.gov
(CalEPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez)
barbara.lee@dtsc.ca.gov
(DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee)
Superintendent@cde.ca.gov
(Supt. of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson)



CITYWATCH

Traffic Study Headed to City Council

Recognizing that traffic in Irvine is bad — and getting worse by the day — the City Council, in March 2015, ordered a Traffic Management study, asking for an analysis of the causes of traffic congestion in Irvine and for recommendations of how to cope with its effects. That report has now made its way through the City staff and Planning Commission, and will soon be reviewed by the City Council.

Prepared by outside traffic consultants, the publicly released “Draft Report of the Citywide Traffic Operation and Traffic Management Study” documents the causes of Irvine’s traffic congestion, while appearing to downplay the accelerated rate of residential growth and development. Recommendations range from costly improvements in signalization and roadway infrastructure to a stepped-up commitment to citywide transit.

Great Park Veterans Cemetery on Schedule

At the April 12, 2016 City Council meeting, after Councilmember Christina Shea failed in her effort to derail the Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park, the City Council reaffirmed its support for the project and directed City Manager Sean Joyce to take all necessary steps to move the project forward in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

In recent progress reports to the City Council, City Manager Joyce has assured the Council that the project is on time — that the California Veterans Affairs Department is going to be making a timely, July 1st application to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for federal approval and a grant of funds.

In 2014, the City Council made an offer of 125 acres at the Great Park for a State Veterans Cemetery, pursuant to State enabling legislation and an initial appropriation of \$500,000. If the project application is submitted on time, and then receives timely federal approval, construction of the first phase of the Veterans Cemetery could begin as early as 2018, with the Cemetery operational by 2020.

QA WITH MARY ANN GAIDO

In our Election 2016 coverage, *Irvine Community News & Views* will be conducting occasional interviews with leading candidates for office in Irvine. Our reporters recently caught up with Irvine Planning Commissioner and mayoral candidate **Mary Ann Gaido** at a backyard meet-and-greet. This was one of many gatherings Gaido is attending as part of what she calls her “neighbor-to-neighbor” grassroots campaign. Gaido spoke for a while and then answered many questions — including a few we’ve reprinted here. - FJL

Q. What do you see as the top issue in this campaign?

A. Well, clearly the top issue is growth and development, and the horrendous traffic congestion it’s bringing to our entire City. But, in a larger sense, the real question is whether Irvine voters are ready to elect a Mayor and City Councilmembers with the backbone to stand up to the big developers and stand up for the residents of Irvine.



Q. And just how would you do that?

A. As Mayor, I would be prepared to exercise the broad authority that all mayors and city councils in California have — the power to control residential growth and development... and the traffic it brings. This can be done by adopting policies and ordinances to limit the issuance of building permits and institute a genuine “pause for planning.” Good planning means controlling the pace of growth and development to make sure our infrastructure and our ability to deliver outstanding municipal services aren’t overwhelmed by a pace of growth that’s just too fast. We have done this before in Irvine — in the 1970s when we were just getting started as a City, and then again in the 1980s when we were putting our emphasis on open space preservation rather than fast-paced residential development.

Q. How are you going to finance your campaign?

A. As I’ve said before: I certainly won’t be relying on developer money in my campaign for Mayor. If I can raise \$100,000 from small donors — 2,000 Irvine residents donating an average of \$50 each — and if we can enlist hundreds of hard-working volunteers, we can win.

Q. What are your views about the presidential campaign?

A. In our local races, I try to stay away from partisanship. But since you asked, I’ll give you a direct answer. I’ll be voting for the Democratic nominee. The alternative, Donald Trump, is simply unacceptable. To be honest, I find Trump’s candidacy appalling. I’m committed to civility in public life. To watch Donald Trump disrespect women and bash immigrants and make fun of disabled people is contrary to everything I believe about leadership in public life. Leaders don’t divide people and drive us apart. Even as we may disagree about public policies, true leaders should speak and work in ways that bring us together.

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 Albertsons • Al Amir
 Da Luau Hawaiian Grill • Honey Pig</p> <p>DIAMOND JAMBOREE / ALTON & JAMBOREE
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THE COUPON CONNECTION *by Cheryl Honig*



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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.**



I took piano lessons for 8 years when I was a young girl. I loved practicing, and playing with my teacher's two Afghan Hound dogs. The whole experience was positive and fun — exactly what students will find when they take lessons at **FreshStart Piano Studio** with owners/teachers Clare and Kevin Kao. **"At the core of our teaching philosophy is to instill a love of piano, and music in general, that will last a lifetime. We teach the fundamentals of music with an emphasis on life values — perseverance, commitment, and respect — that can be applied to learning other skills, all in a positive and fun atmosphere."**

Kevin and Clare, a husband and wife team, met in 2010 at San Diego State University while Kevin was finishing his Master's in Music, and Clare was finishing her Bachelor's in Piano Performance. She had a key to the practice studio, and he needed to practice! Kevin took a position at a piano studio, but the experience was unfulfilling, and not how he envisioned sharing his love of the piano. After much discussion, Kevin and Clare accepted the challenge of opening their own studio, and giving back to the community.

Clare grew up in Walnut, California, and Kevin grew

up in Irvine, graduating from Irvine High School. They currently live in Irvine and plan to raise their family here.

FreshStart Piano Studio offers private and group lessons for children and adults, with two recitals every year. **"The recitals are an opportunity for students to show off their practicing throughout the semester, and exercise their courage muscles! The studio helps us pass on our passion for music and piano,"** say Clare and Kevin.



Clare and Kevin

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Irvine Living

COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS

INDOORS • OUTDOORS FINDING AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE

The Irvine Ranch Conservancy (IRC) offers a wide range of fun and interactive activities — yoga, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian programs, habitat restoration projects and much more!

You can explore Irvine wilderness and open space areas throughout the year!

Most of the activities are free and led by IRC-Certified volunteers, *but you must register prior to each event.* For more information on events, or to register, go to: LetsGoOutside.org

The new East Sinks Viewing Deck in Limestone Canyon Nature Preserve provides stunning views of the iconic geological landmark often referred to as the "mini Grand Canyon of Orange County."



Visitors to the newly opened East Sinks Viewing Deck enjoy the view of the "mini Grand Canyon." Many free guided activities — taking visitors to the new deck — originate in the City of Irvine with trails into Limestone Canyon. For more info: <http://letsgooutside.org/eastsinksdeck>.



letsgooutside.org

Community Calendar

June 2016

Coming Soon...

Concert on the Green & Fireworks Festival
 Irvine High School Stadium.
 July 4th. 3pm gates open.
 9pm fireworks begin.
 Info: 949-724-0488

Sizzlin' Summer Concerts

July 10:
 Gold Rush Country (country)

July 17:
 Identity Theft ('80's variety)

July 24:
 Blue Breeze
 (Motown, R&B, soul & funk)

Aug. 7:
 LAvation (U2 tribute)

Aug. 14:
 Dog N' Butterfly (Heart tribute)

Info: 949-724-6606

Come and enjoy free concerts on the lawn at Mike Ward Community Park in Woodbridge. Sundays 5:30-7:30pm in July and August! Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, and picnic baskets! Gourmet Food trucks will also be onsite!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>IRVINE MUSEUM Bryan Mark Taylor (contemporary artist) <i>City Night, San Francisco</i></p>			<p>1 Bunco at the Rancho Senior Center. First Wednesdays. 12:30-3pm. \$5. Info: 949-724-6800</p> <p>BUNCO</p>	<p>2 Food for Thought Film Series: Of the Land. OC Great Park Terraced Lawn. 8-9:30pm. Info: 866-829-3829</p>	<p>3 The Nature of Water: Our Most Precious Resource. Now Through June 16th at the Irvine Museum. 18881 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100. Info: 949-476-0294</p>	<p>4 Studio Arts Festival. Irvine Fine Arts Center. 14321 Yale Avenue. 9am-5pm. Info: 949-724-6880</p> <p>STUDIO ARTS FESTIVAL</p>
<p>5 10th Annual Super Pet Adoption. Irvine Animal Care Center. 10am-4pm. Info: 949-724-7740</p> <p>Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: 714-733-3167</p>	<p>6 Orchard Hills Evening Hike. Come out and enjoy the evening on the Orchard Hills Loop Trail. 6:30-8:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>7 Bingo at the Lakeview Senior Center. Tuesdays. \$8. Buy-in 12:30pm. 1-3pm. Info: 949-724-6900</p> <p>BINGO</p>	<p>8 Storytime in the Garden. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 9-9:45am. Info: 866-829-3829</p>	<p>9 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>10 Movie on the Lawn. Roman Holiday. OC Great Park. 7pm. Info: 866-829-3829</p>	<p>11 Woodbridge Village 40th Anniversary Celebration. Mike Ward Community Park. Food Trucks, Parade and Free Concert featuring the Springsteen Experience. 4-7pm. Concert at 4:45pm. Info: WVA.org</p>
<p>12 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: 714-733-3167</p> <p>Clinic in the Park. OC Great Park Farmers Market. 10am-1pm. Info: 949-385-3067</p>	<p>13 Teen Advisory Group (TAG). Katie Wheeler Library. Ages 13-18. TAG meets on the 2nd Monday of each month to plan library activities. Snacks provided. 5pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p> <p>TAG</p>	<p>14 IUSD Board Meeting. 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine. 7pm. Info: 949-936-5000</p> <p>City Council Meeting. Irvine Civic Center. 5pm.</p>	<p>15 Meditative Yoga and Meadow Walk. Bommer Canyon. 6-7:30pm. Info & Registration: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>16 Agriculture, Wellness + the Environment Lecture. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 7-8:30pm. Info: 866-829-3829</p>	<p>17 Live Music Fridays. Ugly Pie Co. 3939 Portola Pkwy. 6pm. Info: UglyPieCo@gmail.com</p>	<p>18 Cardio Hike. Limestone Canyon and the Sinks. 7-10am. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p>
<p>19 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: 714-733-3167</p>	<p>20 Full Moon Hike. Bommer Canyon. 7:30-10pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>21 International Discussion Group. Rancho Senior Center. Participate in thought-provoking conversations about current national and international topics. 9:30am. Third Tuesdays. Info: Bob Meyers 949-786-2097</p>	<p>22 After Work Fitness Hike. Hicks Haul Road. 6-7:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>23 Smile: Expressions of Orange County. Great Park Gallery. 12-4pm. Info: 866-829-3829</p>	<p>24 Movie Matinee. Lakeview Senior Center. Fridays at 12:15pm. Info: 949-724-6900</p> <p>Lakeview Senior Center</p>	<p>25 "Found" Opening Reception. Irvine Fine Arts Center. Found is an exhibition by artist Debbie Carlson. 4-6pm. Info: 949-724-6880</p>
<p>26 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: 714-733-3167</p>	<p>27 Habitat Restoration. Quail Hill. 9am-12pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>28 IUSD Board Meeting. 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine. 7pm. Info: 949-936-5000</p> <p>City Council Meeting. Irvine Civic Center. 5pm.</p>	<p>29 A Summer Idyll: Picturesque Views of California. Irvine Museum. Runs 6/25 to 10/6. 11am-5pm. Info: 949-476-2565</p> <p>Joseph Meltsch (1882-1941) <i>Red and Green</i></p>	<p>30 Stuffed Animal Sleepover. University Park Library. Bring a stuffed animal friend to a special storytime and then leave it for a sleepover. Pick it up the next day to find out what happened at night. 6pm. Info: 949-786-4001</p>	<p>10th Annual Super Pet Adoption SUNDAY, JUNE 5</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.



"Kilauea" is a female, spayed, black, domestic shorthair mix. She is about two years old.

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


Clinic in the Park

Free • No Appointment Needed • Family Fun

Sunday, June 12
 Great Park in Irvine
 10am - 1pm

WE'RE TURNING 4, COME CELEBRATE!

- Obstacle Course for Kids
- Free Books
- Kids in Hot Cars Information
- Sun Safety



@clinicinthepark

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

Featuring Special Guest, Veteran Angels' Southpaw Clyde Wright!

Put your ad **HERE**
 Contact Cheryl
cheryl@irvinecommunitynews.org

THE JEFFREY OPEN SPACE TRAIL

by Marilyn Vassos

The Jeffrey Open Space Trail is an Irvine asset just waiting for your visit! It has won awards for its landscaping and innovative design. Along the trail you will find panels telling the history of Irvine.

Be sure to pause at each one as you step back in time. These panels take you through a 500-year history of the Irvine Ranch. In fact, on one of the panels that told about the beginning of the University of California, Irvine, and the first housing developments in the area we found our own neighborhood in University Park.

The paved trail parallels Jeffrey Road and begins at Roosevelt, just north of the I-5 freeway. You can enjoy a walk along the trail or ride your bike. If you walk, wear comfortable shoes, use sun screen, wear a hat and bring water. Riding your bike, don't forget your helmet!

The Jeffrey Open Space Trail is more than a walking and biking trail...It is a history trail as well.



April and May in Woodbridge...when the Jacarandas are in bloom. Photo by Angelo Vassos

Countdown to Summer Vacation



SCHOOLWATCH by Carolyn Inmon*

From all my years of experience in teaching, I can tell you this: When the calendar gets to June, just about all members of our school community — teachers, staff and students — are counting the days until the summer break is here.

As the school year ends, let me take this opportunity to thank those who taught our children — the children who struggled as well as those who excelled. Thanks, too, to the dedicated parents who led the PTA, organized the fundraisers, and volunteered in the classrooms. And let's take time to congratulate school staff and the children themselves on a job well done.

The excitement of last September, when the 2015-2016 school year was beginning, has given way to the exhaustion of June (especially for teachers). As a teacher, I remember how much I welcomed the lazy summer days in the sun — no homework, no grading papers, no report cards. Have a great summer, everyone!

Finally, as we end the school year, I want to report to you on how I voted on Measure E, the Irvine school bond measure. As you know, I struggled with this matter for a long time. I have never voted against a school bond or any measure to support public education. But this measure was badly flawed and unfair — it would impose new taxes only on those living in older areas of town with older schools. So, when I voted by mail, I voted NO.

Here's why. In effect, Measure E said this: If you want to fix up and modernize your older neighborhood schools, you have to tax yourself an extra \$200 or more each year to do it. Meanwhile, people in the newer parts of town with newer schools, would pay nothing extra. That's just contrary to the idea of a unified school district. It divides IUSD into the "haves" and the "have-nots."

I will be working for passage of the big State school bond on the November ballot — which will help all our schools, including here in Irvine. And if the IUSD School Board wants to put a fair local school bond measure on the November ballot — a measure that says we are all in it together on an equal basis — I'll work for that too.

I'll have more to say about these issues in future columns.

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



WORDSWATCH by Harris E. Kershner*

Don't Defer Kind Acts

"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

— ATTRIBUTED TO STEPHEN GRELLET

Anyone who has ever attended the Irvine Global Village Festival knows that Irvine residents follow many faith traditions and come from many corners of the globe. An important ideal that we can all subscribe to is to be kind to one another. This is especially true because none of us can know for certain when we, or those dear to us, will shed this mortal coil.

*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.

"Links-Style" Golf Course at Great Park?



SPORTSWATCH by Joel Smith*

Let's take a closer look at the proposed golf course at the Great Park. Here's a little history: In 2013, Councilmember Christina Shea teamed up with residential developer FivePoint Communities to give control of the Great Park design and facilities to FivePoint. Shea's "vision" for the Great Park — then and now — is to wipe out the 200-acre Great Park Canyon, the most popular feature of the Great Park Design offered by Master Designer Ken Smith, and replace it with an 18-hole golf course. This would be Irvine's fifth golf course.

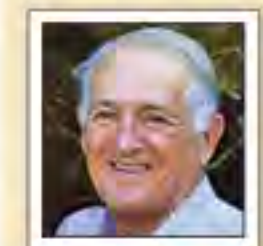


An example of a Links-Style Golf Course

But on further investigation, I've discovered this isn't a traditional golf course. Shea is proposing what developer FivePoint Communities wants — a "links-style" golf course that is cheap to build with very few trees, lots of sand dunes, and very little vegetation. All in all, pretty unattractive.

So, do we really want to spend millions on a money-losing Great Park Links-Style Golf Course? Or should we use available Great Park funds to reinstate Ken Smith's magnificent Great Park Canyon — with its many hiking and biking trails, picnic areas and campgrounds, trees and foliage, and birds, butterflies and other wildlife? Maybe it's time to ask the people of Irvine what they think.

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



CULTURECORNER by Steve Layton*

Summer Shakespeare

The "Bard" left us 400 years ago this past April. But, happily, William Shakespeare joins us again this summer...at what is certain to be the fifth sold-out season at the intimate New Swan Shakespeare Festival theater in UCI's Gateway Plaza.

As in previous seasons, actors and musicians will be surrounded by sold-out audiences that are so up-close that they are virtual participants in the UCI-staged outdoor summertime plays. And the plays this season? The ever-popular comedy, *As You Like It*, and the tragedy, *Hamlet*.

The July and August evening performances all start at 8 p.m. For performance dates, reserved seating and ticket purchases, go to: www.NewSwanShakespeare.com — or call the UCI Box Office at 949-824-2787. Get your seats soon. Performances sell out quickly.

Before being disassembled, boxed-up and put away for the winter, The New Swan will host three Music Mondays in late July and August. Shakespeare in song, *Shakespeare's Fool*, will be performed at 8 p.m. on Monday, July 25th; *Mariachi Las Colibri* returns by popular demand on August 1st; and an evening of Mozart classics by the New Swan String Quartet will be performed on Monday evening, August 15th.

See you at the Swan!



The New Swan Shakespeare Festival is an up-close theater experience. Photo: Paul Kennedy, UCI photography

*Steve Layton is a semi-retired businessman. He remains very active in the Irvine community as a supporter of the UCI Drama Department.

SoCal Wine Blends

by Peter Dills*

Ninety-nine years ago — in 1917 — the first Los Angeles winery was established... and it is still open today. But years before the San Antonio Winery opened its doors, nearby communities — Pasadena, Eagle Rock, and Sierra Madre — had gained a reputation for growing quality grapes.

Fast-forward to today. The San Antonio Winery is the largest and oldest winery in Southern California. The grapes/juice are now brought in from Monterey and the wine regions of Paso Robles. That is where our wine comes from for this review.

The 2013 Opaque Darkness from San Antonio Winery is a blend of zinfandel syrah, cabernet, Grenache, petite sirah, and petit verdot. I have been a fan of blends for years, and this opaque is in a class by itself. The mix of grapes stands out for me; other reds use more cabernet in their mix.

You'll appreciate the texture and smooth tannins that the syrah grape brings to this



Peter Dills*

dark-red blend. Zinfandels have always been a great companion at BBQs, and with this 50 percent grape, I can highly recommend it for any backyard cooking event. It's a little pricey compared to other blends I've recommended, but with the popularity and customer acceptance, this one is well worth it.

Opaque Darkness is a dark, inky-red wine, exhibiting ripe berry notes. The taste is exceptional. If you are looking for a bit of spice with a great first taste, then this blend is for you. Many

reviewers call wines like this "jammy" — I say "blueberry pie." You'll find it at Whole Foods, Vons and Albertsons. It makes a great Father's Day present!

THE DILLS SCORE

With each review, I give you my Dills Score. Starting with a base of 50 points, I add 8 points for value; 1 add 9 points for color; 9 points for aroma or "nose;" 8 points for taste; 8 points for finish; and 8 points for my overall impression. The maximum possible score is 100.

Total Score for the 2013 Opaque Darkness is 91! \$30 at Vons and other fine retailers. For more, go to: www.opaque.com

* Peter Dills is the proud son of noted restaurant critic Elmer Dills. You can email Peter at thechefknows@yahoo.com and follow him on Twitter @kingofcuisine. And check out Peter's radio show, *Dining With Dills, Sundays at 5pm on radio station KLAA, 830 AM.*

Irvine Voter Registration Surges

by Isabella Villano and Josh Jia



Isabella Villano

Irvine's Voter Registration Campaign — led by a number of Irvine young people — is picking up steam. For weeks now, teams of volunteers have set up voter registration stations at locations throughout Irvine — such as Irvine Valley College and the University Center (across from UCI).

We're encouraging local residents to fill out traditional voter registration forms. But we're also promoting the new California electronic registration system, which is perfect for conveniently registering friends and family. The response to our campaign has been amazing, with many citizens taking action to register. We've also been answering good questions about voting by mail and other changes in the law that make registration and voting easier than ever.

As high school students — both of us 17 this year — we won't have the opportunity to vote in 2016. However, our commitment to civic engagement is a way to have our voices heard. Indeed, by helping others register to vote, we believe we are playing a constructive role in strengthening our local Irvine democracy.

2016 is a remarkable election year. In addition to the presidential election, the November ballot here in Irvine will include state and local races and ballot measures important to us all. But you can't vote if you aren't registered to vote!



Jishuai (Joshua) Jia

Online Voter Registration...

Go To: www.registertovote.ca.gov

TestForToxics.org

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

Is the Portola High School Site Safe?

On the evening of Tuesday, May 24th, the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) held what they surely consider the last Board meeting to consider the contamination at the Portola High School (PHS) site. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) made their presentation supporting PlaceWorks's recommendation that "no further action is required." So, although no further investigation or cleanup is required by law, the debate over what level of each Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) is safe is not settled. For example, we now know there are no safe levels for benzene and toluene. And, the source(s) of the contamination is still not known, only hypothesized. Below is a synopsis of relevant events:

1. The map on this page shows how few locations were actually tested for the toxic VOCs that are dangerous to human health. When IUSD, their environmental consultant PlaceWorks and the DTSC make presentations, they always show a map loaded with dots, squares and circles that are *irrelevant*, having nothing to do with the useful locations where soil-gas testing was performed. They only obfuscate the truth. And there are 17 test locations rather than 10 only because of a resident uprising at the March 22nd Board meeting that demanded more testing.

2. The only reason the recent set of soil-gas tests was performed, was because of a letter former Mayor Larry Agran sent to Governor Brown on August 31, 2015, with supporting evidence provided by Dr. Liss demonstrating that the school site (at the end of runways) was likely used by the military, probably to dispose of used solvents and other toxic fluids. Thus, the site likely did not always *only* serve agricultural purposes, as it was previously portrayed by PlaceWorks and approved by DTSC in 2014.

3. How did Agran's August 31, 2015 letter lead to testing of the site interior? Months after Agran's letter arrived at the Governor's desk, after many communications between Dr. Liss and DTSC Division Chief Dot Lofstrom, a remarkable set of orders in a March 2, 2016 letter from DTSC Director Barbara Lee, on behalf of CalEPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez, was sent to the IUSD. That letter *overturned* the previous assessment made by PlaceWorks, that the school site was always used only for agricultural purposes, and agreed with Dr. Liss that the site likely had military use.

The previous, agricultural-usage only assessment did not impose the requirement to test the site interior for soil-gas VOCs. Thus, the State's March 2nd letter declared that PlaceWorks was *wrong* and the DTSC's approval in 2014 was also *wrong* in certifying that "further assessment of the site is not required." The State's orders now required testing of the interior of the site for VOCs — testing that had NEVER before been performed — regardless of the incessantly repeated, misleading statements that such testing had been performed.



4. The recent test results from the 17 soil-gas test wells show measurable VOCs in all 17 test wells! Yet, the "Final Characterization Report" produced by PlaceWorks assumes, *without evidence*, that the unknown contamination levels under the buildings are not higher than those elsewhere on the site. So, PlaceWorks apparently crafted a theory — again without providing any evidence — that the site contamination was caused by IRWD's recycled water used for irrigation when the site had been used for agriculture. Thus, the contamination under this theory would be uniformly low over the large, untested portions of the site, as well.

5. Recycled Water? But the use of contaminated recycled water [that IRWD denies] doesn't explain how the massive soil contamination discovered in a storm-drain trench along Irvine Boulevard occurred; or, how massive contamination occurred in the Agua Chiron, 250 feet to the west of the school site, and could occur elsewhere on the site. In fact, at the top of the above map is a label that reads "40 feet apart" indicating the distance between the massive soil contamination found in the storm-drain trench and the soil-gas test well 37 (SG-37) in which none of the major contaminants of the

storm-drain trench were found. The obvious conclusion is that much more intensive testing is required to ensure that the levels under school buildings are not higher. Widely-spaced test locations won't tell the whole story.

6. Water-vapor Barrier: PlaceWorks also claims that the 15-mil water-vapor barrier installed under the buildings will protect against VOCs intrusion. Although IUSD could have installed a membrane that is impermeable to VOCs, the installed barrier is not. Moreover, to be protective against VOCs intrusion into the buildings and classrooms, all seams must be welded rather than overlapped and taped as was done at Portola High School. In addition, utility penetrations of the barrier membrane (e.g., sewer lines) must be carefully sealed.

7. More contamination found: PlaceWorks's recently-released "Final Characterization Report" revealed a previously unknown-to-the-public discovery of more contaminated soil on the school site while building a retaining wall sometime in 2015, near the storm-drain trench along Irvine Boulevard. This is where massive amounts of contaminated soil had been previously removed with the claim that it has *all* been removed.

OPEN FORUM

FREE SPEECH FOREVER!



Open Forum & Community Voices

Dear Readers:

As the founding publisher and editor of *Irvine Community News & Views*, I have the opportunity to read each and every email, letter, and written comment we receive — and there are hundreds of them! I also have the privilege to then share some of these comments and insights with the rest of our readers in these Open Forum/Community Voices pages. We begin our Letters section by publishing the two concluding paragraphs of a May 16th letter sent by former Irvine Mayor and City Councilmember Larry Agran to Governor Jerry Brown, asking for help regarding the worsening toxic contamination issue at Portola High School.

Franklin J. Lundberg
Publisher and Editor

Letters to the Editor

A Plea to the Governor

It is extremely regrettable that the highly problematic Portola High School site was selected in the first place — and that proper testing for toxic petrochemicals was not done years ago, before the property was purchased and before the \$300 million Portola High School was built. However, the situation is what it is. As things stand now, Portola High School cannot be considered “safe” for occupancy. The reality is that much more work needs to be done. More tests need to be performed to map the entire school site for contaminants, and to identify the specific sources of the toxic petrochemical contamination; to determine the areas of heaviest concentrations of VOCs, including under school buildings; to describe the on-site risks of human exposure to VOCs, both outdoors and indoors, including from the intrusion of vapors into school buildings; and to determine the cleanup and/or mitigation measures that can be undertaken to ensure health and safety.

Mindful of the daunting issues that must be addressed, I know I speak for thousands of Irvine residents in urgently requesting that you issue an executive order directing that the opening of Portola High School for the 2016-2017 school year be postponed until further testing and analysis is undertaken, and protective measures are implemented to ensure the health and safety of the teachers, staff and students who will eventually occupy the new high school.

—Larry Agran

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.

More Letters to the Editor

Toxics at Portola High School Site

The Portola High School Toxics matter is a case where the School District's environmental consultant — PlaceWorks — apparently made a grave error. They wrongly characterized the 40-acre school site as having been only used for agricultural operations, even though it was land at the end of runways at the former El Toro Marine Corps airbase. Now, instead of acknowledging the error in its latest “Characterization Report,” *PlaceWorks and IUSD are doubling-down by claiming the toxic petrochemicals found throughout the Portola High School site are the result of contaminated reclaimed water that was used to irrigate crops.*

What? This appears to be complete nonsense. It would mean that Irvine's parks and parkways — which depend on IRWD reclaimed water — are also contaminated with toxins. That would be shocking news if it were true — but I'm sure it isn't true. *The site-wide petrochemical contamination at Portola High School is much more likely to have come from the decades-long practice of dumping millions of gallons of fuels and solvents at the end of runways in connection with military operations and the cleaning and maintenance of aircraft.*

This critically important matter of school health and safety can only be conclusively resolved by more study and more tests in search of higher concentrations of toxins — especially under the already-constructed high school buildings. This must be followed up by thorough, independent analysis, and whatever remediation is necessary *before* students, teachers and staff are allowed to occupy Portola High School.

—Gail Lewis

Is “Barely Passing” Good Enough for Irvine?

If you went to a restaurant and saw a sign in the window with a health inspection grade of “C,” you probably wouldn't eat there. If a restaurant receives a “C,” the inspector has identified a number of violations of health and sanitation standards — perhaps improper handling of food, inadequate refrigeration, dirty surfaces, maybe even rodent infestation. These are serious concerns, but perhaps not quite enough to “fail” the restaurant and shut it down.

What if schools were graded the same way? Would you send your child to a school that received a “C” grade for health and safety? According to a May 19th district-wide mailer from IUSD Superintendent Terry Walker, Irvine's new Portola High School, which is set to open in August, is an “Outcome Two” school site. This means that while toxic contamination has been discovered all over the site, it has not yet been found in high enough concentrations to bother with cleanup or to actually delay the opening of the high school pending additional testing.

Aren't Irvine schools supposed to be the best? Shouldn't every school — especially those in Irvine, world-famous for its master planning — receive an “Outcome One” rating (which means there are no detectable toxics found on site) before its doors open to teachers and students?

Since when is a barely passing grade good enough for Irvine?

—Martlyn Vassos

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IT'S 2016, AN IMPORTANT ELECTION YEAR.

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Councilmember Christina Shea stormed out of the April 12th City Council meeting, refusing to vote on Councilmember Beth Krom's motion to reaffirm City support for the Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park.

Veterans Cemetery

■ How many times, and in how many ways, will Christina Shea and developer FivePoint Communities try to destroy our planned — and State-approved — Veterans Memorial Park and Cemetery at the Great Park? Shame on Shea! Shame on FivePoint!

—Edward S. Pope
Specialist 5th Class
U.S. Army, ret.

■ My name is Kaizhi Guo Sharman. I greatly value the Council-approved Great Park Veterans Memorial Cemetery in its planned form and location in the Great Park. I oppose moving it and making it smaller.

My father, Xun Qui Guo, was a Chinese Army general who led 50,000 troops in battles against the Japanese during World War II. In the process, he helped pin down a half million Japanese troops who might otherwise have killed American soldiers. I moved to Irvine from China in 1985 and have lived here ever since. I became a U.S. citizen and registered voter in 1996.

Some people have said that the planned Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park must be moved due to prospective residents' belief in feng shui. Most Chinese pay little heed to this superstition, especially the highly-trained professionals in Irvine. Basing a decision to move the Veterans Cemetery on feng shui is like basing it on seeing black cats, broken mirrors, or walking under ladders.

I know that hundreds of Chinese in Irvine and surrounding communities have forebears who served in the Chinese and/or American military. We need a sizeable and peaceful place to honor these heroes and to feel the connection with American soldiers of all eras.

Let's stay with the location in the Great Park, already agreed to by the State.

—Kaizhi Guo Sharma

(Advertisement)

AN OPEN LETTER FROM MARY ANN GAIDO

MARY ANN
GAIDO



Mary Ann Gaido

Why I Am Running for Mayor

Two years ago, in the 2014 Irvine election, I challenged Mayor Steven Choi and his fast-growth, pro-developer policies that have been producing horrendous traffic and overcrowding throughout Irvine, posing a real threat to our master-planned City and our quality of life.

I campaigned from one end of Irvine to the other, calling for a “pause for planning” — to enable us to place strict controls on growth and traffic, preserving and protecting our residential neighborhoods and villages.

Even though Steven Choi was backed by developers who bankrolled his campaign with more than \$500,000, I came within 3 percent of winning. In fact, I fell just 954 votes short of winning.

Now, I am running again to make sure that the people of Irvine, not the big developers, are in charge of our City. I want us — Irvine residents — to shape our own agenda for a brighter future by once again dedicating ourselves to the highest planning principles.

I moved to Irvine before the City was incorporated. I raised my family here. I served as a two-term City Councilmember and a long-time Planning Commissioner. I led our City in the careful planning of every village and neighborhood in Irvine — and in the preservation of our beautiful wilderness and open space areas. From the earliest days of our City, I have been actively engaged in the shaping of Irvine.

In fact, I am proud to have played a major role in planning, designing and approving zoning for Turtle Rock, University Park, Woodbridge, College Park, the Colony, Walnut Village, Northwood, and many other villages that make up our master-planned community. Now, these villages and neighborhoods — in fact, all of us — need protection from the out-of-control growth and development policies that are causing a nightmare of traffic and stress in our City.

I'm ready to serve again...this time as your Mayor!

Please join me. My campaign for Mayor will be a grassroots effort, knocking on doors and talking to Irvine neighbors in every part of our City. But I do need to raise enough money to reach Irvine's 100,000 voters. Please visit my website — www.MaryAnnForMayor.com — and be part of our campaign.

Thank you!

Mary Ann Gaido