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Serving the Villages and Neighborhoods of Irvine

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Publisher's Perspective

Big News! Lots of Views!

Big News! State Orders Toxics Testing at PHS. With fewer than 150 days until Irvine's \$300 million Portola High School (PHS) is scheduled to open, the State of California has issued orders to test for site-wide toxic petrochemical contamination, presumably from long-ago military operations and dumping of aircraft fuels and solvents. Our front-page story chronicles the dramatic developments of recent weeks. This is a growing scandal that we first broke a year ago — you can count on *Irvine Community News & Views* to stay on top of this story. Meanwhile, for up-to-the-minute news on the PHS toxics issue, be sure to subscribe — free — to Dr. Harvey Liss's TestForToxics.org website and blog.

www.TestForToxics.org

Lots of Views! Readers Reject Lalloway Tollway. Hundreds of *ICNV* readers responded to our March online Irvine Community Poll, asking whether they favored or opposed Irvine Councilman Jeff Lalloway's plans to put costly toll lanes (\$10 each way) on the I-405 Freeway. Opposition to the Lalloway proposal was overwhelming — accompanied by plenty of strongly-worded views. Check out Pages 14-15 — our Open Forum/Community Voices section — to learn what your Irvine neighbors are thinking.

More than 37,000! I'm pleased to report that *ICNV's* reach and popularity continue to grow. We now have a combined print and online circulation/distribution of 37,200: Print is 22,500 and Online is 14,700. *Thanks for your continuing support!*

Franklin J. Lunding

Franklin J. Lunding, Publisher and Editor



State Officials Order New Tests for Toxic Petrochemicals at Portola High School Site



A capacity crowd of Irvine residents filled the expanded IUSD boardroom at a turbulent March 22nd public hearing on toxic contamination at Portola High School.

For more than a year, Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) officials have refused requests and ignored petitions to conduct comprehensive testing for toxic petrochemicals, claiming that previous, limited testing at the school site was adequate.

In a stunning development, amid growing anxiety and recognition that there may be extensive, *site-wide* toxic contamination at Portola High School, the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has ordered IUSD to conduct testing for toxics at the 40-acre site — where the \$300 million high school is in the final stages of construction. Located along Irvine Blvd. near Lake Forest, Portola High School is scheduled to open in August.

In a March 2, 2016 letter addressed to IUSD officials — with a separate copy to former Irvine Mayor and Councilmember Larry Agran — Director Barbara A. Lee of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), writing on behalf of California EPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez, reported that DTSC had concluded that “further subsurface

sampling should be conducted at the site” in order to determine “the potential presence of contaminants that could pose a threat to the health of individuals who attend classes or work at the school, or people who might otherwise use the school’s property.”

Director Lee’s update and official orders — in response to Agran’s August 31, 2015 letter to Governor Jerry Brown and subsequent communications with DTSC — made it clear that Irvine’s Portola High School was being built on a former national Superfund site that had *not* been properly tested for decades-old petrochemical contamination. This toxic contamination likely resulted from military aircraft operations and widespread dumping of fuels and solvents that occurred at the former El Toro Marine Corps Airbase, beginning in 1943.

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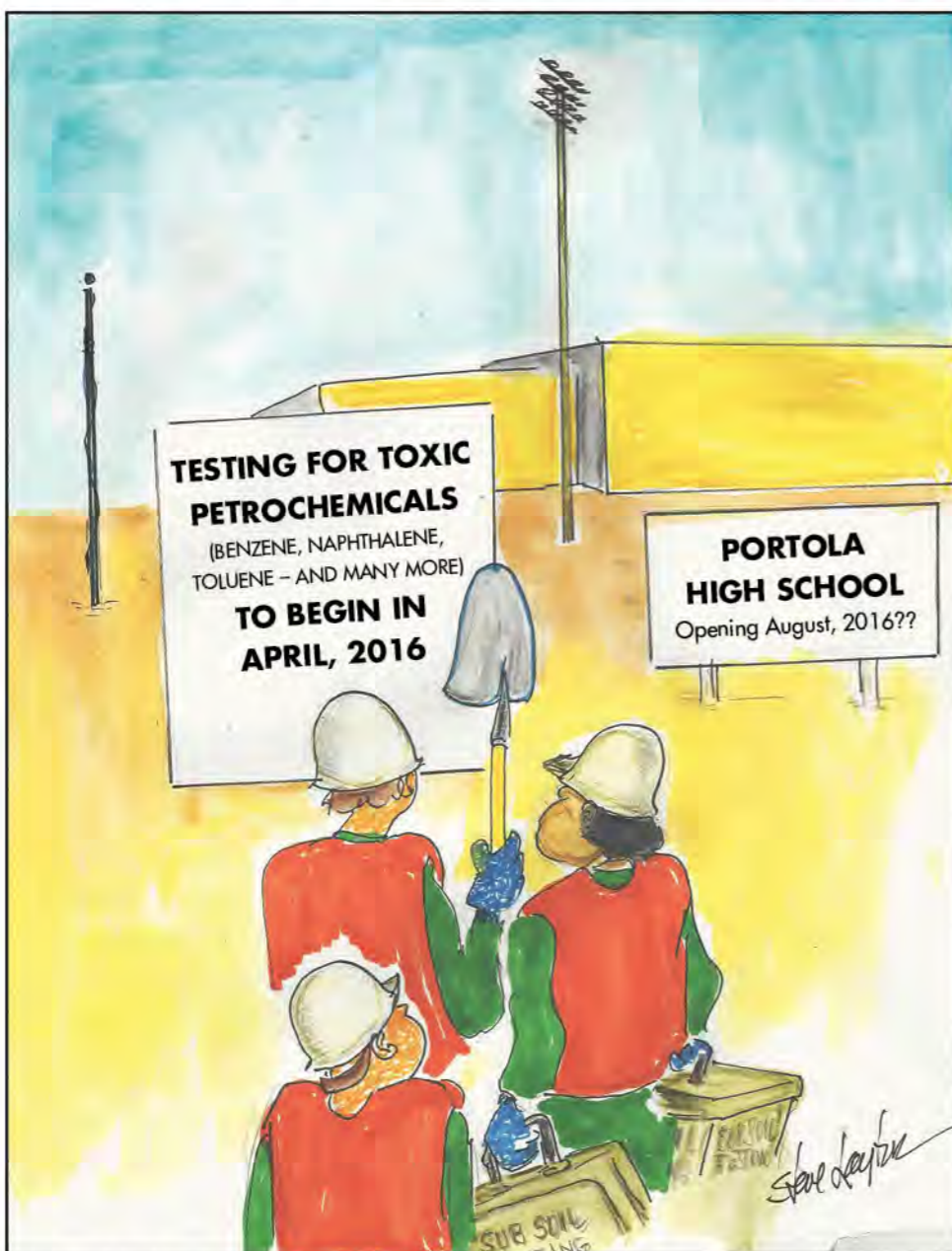
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"Shouldn't we have been doing this testing for toxic petrochemicals two years ago — before the school was built?"

Directives Issued in State Letter

The State orders included direction to identify the sources of the toxic contamination, and to prepare a site-wide risk assessment report — to determine “risk estimates for exposure to subsurface contaminants to both students and faculty.” This risk analysis would review the levels of toxic exposure at the high school site and the projected diseases, disabilities, and even “excess deaths” among teachers, staff, and students.

DTSC officials had been reviewing the Portola High School matter for months to analyze the evidence — previously reported in the *Irvine Community News & Views (ICNV)* — that prior testing

of the site was *inadequate*. Testing performed in 2014 had *not* included soil and soil-gas testing of the interior 35 acres of the site to search for toxic and cancer-causing volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene,

“We would like to have 100% confidence that this site is safe.”

– TERRY WALKER
IUSD SUPERINTENDENT

as well as xylenes (BTEX), tetrachloroethene (PCE), and trichloroethene (TCE).

Beginning in March of 2015, Franklin J. Lunding, publisher and editor-in-chief of *ICNV*,

commissioned a multi-part series and subsequent special articles on the Portola High School site contamination story. The articles were researched and written by Harvey H. Liss, Ph.D., a Registered Civil Engineer and former Irvine Planning Commissioner. They are available on Dr. Liss’s own recently established website and blog, www.TestForToxics.org, and in *ICNV*’s website archives: www.IrvineCommunityNews.org.

Special School Board Meeting

Amid a growing sense of crisis, IUSD called a Special Meeting of the School Board for March 22nd — intending to submit a “work plan” for perfunctory toxic testing to the State the very next day. This was in apparent violation of the DTSC directive that “the proposed sampling activities should be discussed with...the public and other interested stakeholders, prior to the formal submittal of the work plan” to the State. The short notice and hurried schedule, as well as the School Board’s meeting format, made it clear that there would be no real public discussion, and that the Board did not intend for public comments to have any effect on the work plan.

An overflow crowd of more than 100 residents attended what turned out to be a 4-hour School Board meeting that didn’t end until after 11 p.m. About two dozen people

testified, most of them making impassioned and personal public comments asking for testing of virtually the entire interior of the school site. One after another, residents expressed shock that there

→ continued on page 3 →



Dr. Harvey Liss, addressing the IUSD Board and audience, pointing to the 35-acre area of the Portola High School site that remains untested for toxic VOCs.



Edward S. Pope, 1984 Orange County Teacher of the Year, chastises the IUSD Board and Superintendent for refusing to acknowledge evidence of school site contamination.

orders to undertake toxic testing. The toxic testing draft work plan that was presented by IUSD mentioned only 8 soil-gas test well locations for the interior of the Portola High School site. (This was increased to 10 shortly before the meeting.)

Citizens balked at the small number of test wells. At more than 3 hours into the meeting, Superintendent Terry Walker re-stated and answered a resident’s earlier question: “Is there the possibility that we would delay the project?” Walker replied: “Of course.” A few minutes later, he added, “We would like to have 100 percent confidence that this site is safe.” This earned audience applause and later comments from anxious residents and parents of school kids that it appeared that the Superintendent finally “got it.”

10 Test Wells Grow to 20

As the meeting ended, Board president Paul Bokota and DTSC staff appeared to agree that the proposed 10 test wells should probably be doubled to a total of 20 test wells drilled mostly at depths of 16 to 20 feet, with testing to commence in April. The testing will be followed by publication of the results, including preparation of a comprehensive analysis of health and safety risks to teachers, staff and students who will occupy Portola High School. The School Board has two regularly scheduled meetings this month — April 12th and April 26th. Presumably, each meeting agenda will include a public report on the status of the toxic testing and site-wide risk analysis required by the State in its March 2nd letter and directives. [ICNV](http://www.ICNV.org)

Irvine Community News & Views will continue to cover this story. For the most current information, go to Dr. Harvey Liss’s website and blog, TestForToxics.org. See Dr. Liss’s continuing analysis on page 13.

Chronology of IUSD’s Recognition of Portola High School Site Contamination

October, 2013 – Hydrocarbon-contaminated soil is discovered during infrastructure construction in the Agua Chinon Wash, 250 feet from the Portola High School site (PHS). Initially reported as two “stained” spots, the quantity of soil ultimately removed was 661 cubic yards.

November, 2014 – Naphthalene-contaminated soil initially discovered during excavation for a storm-drain along Irvine Boulevard extends 29 feet onto the PHS site. 78 truckloads of contaminated soil, almost 1,000 cubic yards, are removed.

May, 2014 – Soil-gas test wells are drilled along a narrow strip of property added to the PHS site in a land swap, because of storm drain construction and street realignment. 10 of the 11 wells show some combination of detectable benzene, bromodichloromethane, chloroform, ethylbenzene, toluene, trimethylbenzenes, and xylenes.

August, 2015 – Former Mayor and Councilmember Larry Agran writes to Governor Brown explaining that mounting evidence points to a contaminated school site that requires testing for VOCs.

October, 2015 – Reply to Agran and IUSD from DTSC Division Chief Dot Lofstrom opens communication with Dr. Harvey Liss, Executive Director of TestForToxics.org.

November, 2016 – Dr. Liss provides necessary documents to Chief Lofstrom to begin re-investigation of the PHS site because of the contamination reported soon after approval of the original site in April, 2014.

March 2, 2016 – Joint letter from California EPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez, and signed by DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee, orders IUSD to perform site-wide soil-gas testing for VOCs, because evidence shows the site, historically, *not* only a farm. The order requires design of a work plan involving the public and stakeholders that specifies sampling locations, sampling depth, soil-gas and soil sampling methods, and also requires a report of risk estimates for students and faculty from exposure to subsurface contaminants.

March 22, 2016 – IUSD holds a Special Board Meeting and Public Hearing on their proposed work plan specifying 10 soil-gas test wells, deemed inadequate by an audience of over 100 often agitated residents. After a 4-hour meeting, sometimes turbulent, the IUSD Board indicates they will increase the number of test wells; but their precise number and location are left unspecified.

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I look forward to hearing from you!
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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.**



Sarita (right) with her students.

Do you know someone who needs help learning English?

Some time ago, I lived in Europe for 10 years — and spent 4 years in Brussels, Belgium. I took traditional French lessons so I could “converse with the locals” when I went shopping. What I learned then helped me immensely.

I think that life is enhanced greatly when you speak the local language. **Sarita Sidhu**, founder of a business, **Englation**, offers an alternative to traditional English classes. And I think she’s onto something! **Sarita says, “The goal is to be understood, and complete accuracy is not necessary in achieving this goal. So cast aside your fear**

that you don’t know enough to get started, and jump right in.”

With her background in Psychology and Bachelor’s in Education, Sarita teaches English language skills by creating customized programs that focus on what her students want to achieve. Whether it’s conversation, pronunciation, writing, grammar, listening skills, or reading, Sarita will make it fun and interesting. She brings her effervescent personality and sense of humor to help her students learn English where they need it most. For example, visit the local Farmers’ Market with Sarita, and she will help you learn the names of the

fruits and vegetables. Other examples: Pick up the phone with Sarita to learn how to make an appointment with your doctor, dentist, or hairdresser; or learn how to make a dinner reservation and order from the menu at that special restaurant. Work with Sarita and soon you’ll be savoring your favorite dish with renewed confidence!

“The most important thing is to keep speaking and practicing,” says Sarita.

Sarita grew up in England and moved to Irvine with her husband and two daughters (both University High School graduates) 14 years ago. She created her **English-as-a-Second-Language** program to help people communicate more effectively.

Sarita maintains that **Englation** is for people who want to improve their English language skills while having fun...because that’s how you learn best. Adding a personal note, she says, “I love working with people who are enthusiastic about learning and energized by their accomplishments.”

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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/Explore/Bommer-Canyon or register for free activities at LetsGoOutside.org/Activities.

Help native plants and local wildlife thrive by planting seeds, transplanting seedlings or planting native plants in the ground at the Native Plant Nursery located on-site at the Quail Hill Trailhead. This is a unique, family-friendly opportunity to enhance native habitat by helping start plants at the same location they will be planted. Children 5 and older are welcome and no experience is required; tools and training will be provided. Native Plant Nursery community stewardship days occur every first Sunday and fourth Thursday of the month, so you can be part of an ongoing project and see firsthand how your hard work benefits the land, over time.

Register for free at www.LetsGoOutside.org.

Take part in a relaxing combination of hiking and yoga in picturesque Bommer Canyon, in Irvine, every Wednesday morning from 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m., beginning Jan. 6, 2016. Classes focus on breathing, stretching, endurance and strength. Your body will be energized and your mind will be refreshed all while taking in the views of local meadows, oak, sycamore groves and rock outcrops.

You can register for free at www.LetsGoOutside.org.

Restore local habitat, native plants and wildlife so they can thrive in Agua Chinon by taking part in the recurring “Adopt a Canyon” stewardship program. You will learn how to identify plants, help remove invasive weeds and plant native plants. No experience is necessary other than a desire to explore and care for our open space. The activity originates in the City of Irvine and travels into OC Parks' Limestone Canyon Nature Preserve, so you will enjoy vast views of the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks while helping improve the natural habitat for native wildlife.


You can register for free at www.LetsGoOutside.org.

Let's Go Outside

Community Calendar


2nd Annual
IPSF STEAM CARNIVAL
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IPSF STEAM Carnival
 EXPERIMENT, EXPLORE AND PLAY WITH THE FAMILY AT THE STEAM CARNIVAL



- Irvine Public Schools Foundation (IPSF) is excited to present the second annual STEAM Carnival. A creative twist on the traditional carnival, this family-friendly event for all ages is designed to provide children with fun, hands-on activities in an interactive carnival atmosphere to spark their interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM). Discover, experiment, learn and play as a family with a variety of STEAM activities, games, animal exhibits, live performances, prizes and so much more!
- Tickets are \$4 online presale and \$5 at the door. The first 350 attendees will also receive a limited-edition tote bag. All proceeds earned from the event goes directly to benefit the schools in the Irvine Unified School District.

DATE/TIME: Saturday, April 30, 2016. 2-7pm.
LOCATION: The Irvine Market Place, Edwards Theater Courtyard
INFO: 949-263-8340
www.ipsf.net/steam-carnival



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>4 Lindsay Buchman: Y(OURS) Granville Redmond (1871-1935) Untitled, Moonlight Marsh</p> 	<p>5 Homework Help. Katie Wheeler Library. 3:30pm. Info: 714-669-8753</p> 	<p>6 Bunco at the Rancho Senior Center. First Wednesdays. 12:30-3pm. \$5. Info: 949-724-6800</p> 	<p>7 The Drowsy Chaperone Irvine Civic Center. 5:30pm.</p> 	<p>1 Live Music Fridays. Ugly Pie Co. 3939 Portola Pkwy. 6pm. Info: UglyPieCo@gmail.com</p> 	<p>2 Seasoned Chefs Culinary Workshop. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 10-11am. Free. Info: OCGP.org</p> 
<p>10 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-1pm. Info: ClinicInThePark.org</p>	<p>11 After Work Fitness Hike. Hicks Haul Road, Limestone Canyon. 6-7:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>12 IUSD Board Meeting. 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine. 7pm. Info: 949-936-5000</p> <p>City Council Meeting. Irvine Civic Center. 5pm.</p>	<p>13 Mid-Week Hike in Bommer Canyon. 8am-1pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>14 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>15 Movie Matinee. Lakeview Senior Center. Fridays at 12:15pm. Info: 949-724-6900</p> 	<p>16 Cardio Hike in Limestone Canyon. 8-11am. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 
<p>17 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>18 Homework Help. Heritage Park Library. 4:30pm. Info: 949-936-4040</p> 	<p>19 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>20 Storytime in the Garden. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 9-9:45am. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>21 AWE Lecture. Agriculture Wellness + The Environment. OC Great Park Farm + Food Lab. 7-8:30pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>22 Sophomore Instrumental Recital. Irvine Valley College Performing Arts Center. 7:30pm. Free. Info: IVCArts.org</p> 	<p>23 Blooming Buds Nature Hike. Limestone Canyon. 9am-12:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 
<p>24 Certified Farmers Market. OC Great Park. Rain or shine. 10am-2pm. Info: OCGP.org</p> 	<p>25 Orchard Hills Evening Hike. The three-mile loop has several very steep climbs, but the hike is done at a moderate pace. 6:30-8:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>26 City Council Meeting. Irvine Civic Center. 5pm.</p> 	<p>27 Collect Wildflower Seeds at the Native Seed Farm. Sign up to help behind the scenes at the Irvine Ranch Conservancy's one-of-a-kind Native Seed Farm in Irvine! 8:30am-12pm. Info & Registration: LetsGoOutside.org</p>	<p>28 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>29 Flow Yoga in the Hills. Orchard Hills. 6-7:30pm. Info: LetsGoOutside.org</p> 	<p>30 STEAM Carnival. Sponsored by IPSF. The Market Place, Edwards Theater Courtyard. 2-7pm. Info: 949-263-8340</p> 

April 2016

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.



"Trey" is a male, neutered, blue domestic medium-hair. He is about 2 1/2 years old.

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

Clinic in the Park • Sunday, April 10
 Free • No Appointment Needed • Family Fun

When: Sunday, April 10; 10AM - 1PM
 Where: Great Park Farmers' Market
 Exit Sand Canyon (Irvine), Right on Marine Way

April is Blue Ribbon Month!

Join RAISE in celebrating the 2016 Blue Ribbon Youth Art Contest Winners!

This year's theme: "Keep Me Safe: Raising Strong Happy Children"

Meet with our pediatric cardiologist, dietitians, nurses, and health educators

Plus Egg Hunt for Kids!

Prevention

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

High School Art Exhibition & Imagination Celebration

Irvine Fine Arts Center
Opening Reception: 4-6pm, May 6.
Exhibition: May 6-28.

The High School Art Exhibition is a multimedia show featuring art produced by students from Irvine high schools, including drawing, painting, photography and ceramics.

Imagination Celebration, an annual partnership between the Irvine Fine Arts Center, Arts Orange County and Orange County Department of Education, features a collection of sculptural art created by artists ages 5-18. Representing schools throughout Orange County, the Irvine Fine Arts Center is proud to be the region's exclusive host of this collection. Admission, parking and opening reception are free.



PRESENTING... *7 Rivage* NEWPORT COAST



- 4 Bedrooms
- 4 Fireplaces
- Expansive Views
- 3.5 Baths
- Living Room
- Family Room
- Game Room
- Former Model
- Extensive Upgrades
- 3 Car Garage



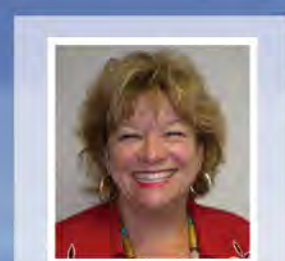
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Katy Kennedy
 Travel Agent
 When I was very young I was swimming in the Sea of Cortez off Mexico, and everything about the warm water and clear sky felt right. Then, a big Devil Ray leaped out of the water and seemed to sail forever. It was at this moment that I knew I needed to find more places like this. And, that's what I do now ... for myself and for others. I specialize in arranging honeymoons and destination weddings, or trips to Belize and Costa Rica, for which I'm a certified specialist.

Have you dreamed of staying in a bungalow perched on stilts above beautiful turquoise waters in a tropical paradise? Can you see yourself lounging on a private deck, soaking in the rays of the Tahitian sun? Your island fantasy can easily become your reality. I am happy to say the Tahitian Islands are more accessible than ever before! With my help, you'll be splashing in fifty shades of blue water in no time!
 Tahiti is only an 8-hour flight from Los Angeles — just one more movie and a cocktail beyond Hawaii! Through my close relationship with Tahiti's many resorts, I can often add a complimentary full daily breakfast, special welcome gifts, upgrades, dinners in world-class restaurants with sand floors, and much more. I'll make sure you have the best location at a resort that's suited to your personal taste and budget.

Katy Kennedy • Tahiti and South Pacific Specialist
949-930-9275

As a travel professional, I have been crafting dream vacations for my clients for many years. My career has allowed me to personally experience over twenty islands throughout the South Pacific. So, if you'd like to experience the sunrise and sunset from your overwater bungalow, stay at the Hilton Moorea. After the sun sets, enjoy a night-cap at their overwater bar. Love turtles? There is a turtle sanctuary at Le Meridien. Prefer sting rays? Stay at the Four Seasons and enjoy a private ray feeding with their onsite oceanographer.
 Each island and resort has its own personality. Whether this is a honeymoon, a special anniversary or just a great opportunity to share with family or friends, let me assist you in planning an outstanding travel adventure to paradise.
 The sun sets more beautifully over Tahitian waters — don't miss it!

Travel



Four Seasons Bora Bora



Hilton Moorea



Turtle Center Le Meridien


TRAVELSTORE
 WE'VE BEEN WHERE YOU WANT TO GO
 www.travelstore.com

School Bond: Pro & Con



SCHOOLWATCH
 by Carolyn Inmon*

The Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) has placed a school bond measure on the June 7, 2016 ballot. They have created a **School Facilities Improvement District (SFID)**, which is made up of *only* the schools that will receive much-needed improvements. The bond will provide \$319 million in local funding for upgrades to Irvine's aging schools.

Pro: It is critically important to modernize our aging schools and bring them up to the level of our newer schools. Over half of Irvine schools are more than 30 years old. Bond proceeds will be used for bricks and mortar needs. Funds will also be used for career technology, science labs, safety improvements, and art and music classrooms. All 32,000 students deserve access to 21st-century instructional technology and learning tools. Homeowners not receiving benefits will neither vote for this school bond nor have to pay for it. This is because non-applicable bond assessment residents are already paying for school building and maintenance through Mello-Roos.

Con: This measure is complicated, expensive and unfair because its heavy costs — in higher property taxes — fall on some people in town and not others. Trying to understand which parts of town are included is confusing. Who is in the SFID and who is not? In addition, there are many instances where property owners live in the older part of town but their children attend a newer school. Since much of Irvine is not part of the SFID, the financial burden on the owners in the SFID is significant. On average, they will pay between \$121 and \$203 per year in added taxes. Conceptually, *unified* has always been the important word in IUSD's title. We have taken pride in the concept that *"We're all in this together."* This idea is missing in the current bond measure.

*Carolyn Inmon is a retired Irvine teacher. She has taught at virtually

Great Park Sports Park



SPORTSWATCH
 by Joel Smith*

A priority project, written into the Great Park Master Plan in 2008, was to set aside 100 acres to build a vast Sports Park — to benefit Irvine and all of Orange County. **Past City Councils — from 2006 to 2012 — got off to a good start building the Sports Park.** Even during the Great Recession, the City managed to plan and build 6 state-of-the-art soccer fields. The fields are a mix of natural turf and artificial turf, including lighted fields so that games and practices can take place at night.

The promised Sports Park at build-out is supposed to include an amazing array of fields and facilities: 7 baseball fields, 11 volleyball courts, 10 basketball courts, 24 tennis courts, 24 soccer fields, and a 2,500-seat soccer stadium. For the past three years, there has been a lot of talk about getting the Sports Park built out, but no features have actually come on line. The City Council has said that is about to change, starting this October, with the opening of some new sports facilities at the Great Park.



A Great Park balloon aerial view of the soccer fields and Sports Park in 2013.

I have been out to the Great Park to look around. While I really hope that the new sports features are completed this fall as promised, it looks to me like there is a lot of work still to be done. A lot of us continue to watch... and wait.

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

Committed Citizens



WORDSWATCH
 by Harris E. Kershner*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

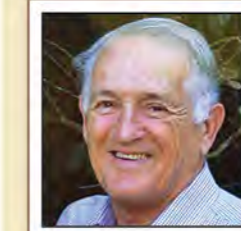
This newspaper exists because a group of thoughtful, committed citizens care about the quality of life in the City of Irvine. *Irvine Community News & Views* has diligently addressed the genuine concerns that exist regarding the inadequate testing that has been done so far at the site of the new Portola High School, scheduled to open this fall.

Irvine residents owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Harvey Liss, who did the heavy lifting — in this case slogging through dense documents to prove that most of the Portola High School site was never tested for dangerous petrochemicals, like benzene and naphthalene and other toxic and cancer-causing chemicals that were found in large quantities along the perimeter of the site.

After multiple articles and a petition signed by thousands of Irvine residents failed to prod the School District and the City to do the right thing, an alternative approach became necessary. In August, 2015, former Mayor and longtime City Councilmember Larry Agran wrote a detailed letter to Governor Jerry Brown explaining why testing was needed. As a result, the State has now **ordered** IUSD to do the necessary testing. This change, reversing the status quo, is a victory for common sense and public safety.

*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.

Distinctive Voices



CULTURECORNER
 by Steve Layton*

Residing in Irvine has its advantages. One of those advantages is exposure to the latest advances in science and modern discovery. **Do you know that a UCI-affiliated institution is offering exciting lectures by world-class speakers covering the latest breakthroughs in science and social studies?**

Interested? Then consider an evening presentation of *Distinctive Voices* at the Beckman Center.

Distinctive Voices presents the latest in discoveries, innovation, and emerging issues in exciting and engaging public forums. Topics may include advances in medicine, energy, biotechnology, the environment, space exploration and more. *Distinctive Voices* programs are sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. But fear not! Although the topics may be technical, the presentations are geared for broad public understanding and enjoyment.

The *Distinctive Voices* programs are free to the public at the Beckman Center theater auditorium, which seats 240. Lectures are generally one hour, with time for audience questions and comments. Events are normally scheduled on weekday evenings starting at 7 p.m. While admission is free, reservations are required for these popular presentations. Guests can see a list of specific events and make reservations by subscribing to the *Distinctive Voices* email list at <http://www.nasonline.org/programs/distinctive-voices>.



The Beckman Center (and auditorium) is located at 100 Academy Drive in Irvine.

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

Let's Go To France!

by Peter Dills*

As you may know, chardonnay is the most popular grape grown in California — it graces more than 100,000 acres of dedicated farmland. Yet, we import many bottles of champagne and a variety of red wines from France, which also produces its fair share of wonderful chardonnays, even though the French terrain is not as smooth as our famous Napa and Sonoma here in California.

Pouilly-Fuissé is one of the top wines coming out of French wine country, located in the southern part of Burgundy, at the north edge of Beaujolais.

This is my first non-bubbles review of French wines — a **2013 Jadot Pouilly-Fuissé** made with 100 percent chardonnay grapes. While we tend to give California wines labels like “buttery,” I’ll go with “crisp.” This wine is a medium-bodied chardonnay with notes of honey and melon, and if you close your eyes long enough, a touch of



Peter Dills*

oak. I will admit, however, I have cheated a bit on my review: My bottle was way above their recommended 12 degrees Celsius, and my wine’s food companion was red seedless grapes.

An interesting wine maker’s note: One part of the wine is fermented in stainless steel vats and in oak barrels, a combination that delivers a silky, smooth finish. The wine maker recommends a fish or cream sauce pairing.

Pouilly-Fuissé is a great representation of old world wine making. Bravo!

THE DILLS SCORE

Each month I will give you my Dills Score. I have added points for value. I’m starting with a base of 50 points; I added 7 points for color, 8 points for aroma or “nose,” 8 points for taste, 9 points for finish, and 9 points for my overall impression, which includes my value rating. The maximum possible score is 100.

Total Score for the 2013 Jadot Pouilly-Fuissé is 91! Retails for \$25, and on sale for about \$21 at most area markets including Bristol Farms & Whole Foods.

**Peter Dills, proud son of noted restaurant critic Elmer Dills, readily admits to being born into a world of food! Tune into Dining with Dills, Sundays at 5 p.m. on KLA 830 AM. And visit Peter’s website: www.peterdills.com for local events and wine tastings.*

Teen News & Views

by Josh Jia



Jishuai (Joshua) Jia

Hi, my name is Jishuai Jia, but I’m better known as Josh. I’m the second featured student writer for *Irvine Community News & Views*, joining my co-columnist, Isabella Villano.

I’m currently a junior at University High School, and I’ve been a resident of Irvine for the past 11 years. Irvine’s public high schools have a great reputation for being academically rigorous. In addition to taking intense courses in subjects such as Advanced Placement (AP)

Physics, Biology and Computer Science, students are encouraged to pursue other interests through clubs or extracurricular activities offered to them on campus.

Students may also choose to conduct independent research, volunteer for organizations, or even start projects on the side as part of their extracurricular activities. I recently finished up an internship in marketing for Team Orange County, participants in the Solar Decathlon at the Great Park. I’ve also volunteered to help in local election campaigns. I guess I’m well on my way to being a “citizen-activist” in Irvine.

In addition to teaming up with Isabella to write this column, the two of us are working together on an Irvine voter registration drive for the 2016 elections. We believe everyone should vote! The State of California recently passed a law that allows people to register as voters online. As a result, high school students — even those who are under 18 years of age and not yet eligible to vote — can assist in registering others online via iPhones, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices. In this way, Isabella and I — joined by other students — will be able to play more active roles in Irvine civic life.

Next time: More about our voter registration efforts.

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 urging citizens to REGISTER TO VOTE.

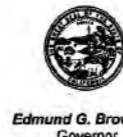
You can now register online in a matter of minutes!

**<http://registertovote.ca.gov>
Register to Vote Today!**



Department of Toxic Substances Control

Barbara A. Lee, Director
1001 "I" Street
P.O. Box 806
Sacramento, California 95812-0806



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

March 2, 2016

Mr. Larry Agran
Irvine, California 92612

Dear Mr. Agran:

I write this letter on behalf of Secretary Rodriguez, who asked me to respond to your inquiry concerning the adequacy of clean up activities at the Portola High School in Irvine, California. I would like to inform you that the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has conducted a review of site documents and has determined that further subsurface sampling should be conducted at the site. This additional sampling will assess the site for the potential presence of contaminants that could pose a threat to the health of individuals who attend classes or work at the school, or people who might otherwise use the school's property.

The basis for this review is predicated on three factors: the prior use of this site by the military; the occurrence of contamination at a storm drain located at the northern corner of the property; and past sampling that found low levels of volatile organic compounds in certain areas of the property. Please allow me to briefly describe each of these factors, and then to describe the path forward to conduct further subsurface sampling.

Past investigations indicate that the property was undeveloped prior to school construction and that the site was historically leased by the military to farmers. The subsurface investigation was conducted with this conceptual understanding of the site in mind. However, a review of aerial photographs suggests a non-farming use of the site, with a network or roads and what may be buildings or tanks in 1946, 1968 and 1977. The use of these roads is unknown, and thus there is the possibility of past releases of contamination. Further investigation is warranted to determine whether this road network is associated with military operations rather than agricultural use.

Contamination was encountered during the installation of a storm drain at the northern corner of the school property that was not anticipated based on the conceptual understanding of the site. The origin of this contamination is unknown and cannot be attributable to known past operations at the property. Further investigation of this contamination is warranted to determine whether this contamination is an isolated occurrence or whether it is indicative of a more extensive site-wide issue.

Soil gas sampling during the Supplemental Site Investigation found low levels of volatile organic compounds, specifically tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes (BTEX). The origin of the PCE and TCE is unknown and cannot be attributable to known past operations at the property, as indicated in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment. The origin of the BTEX may be attributable to the former pipeline at the property. Therefore, further investigation is warranted to determine the source of these contaminants.

I am directing the Irvine School District to submit a work plan for additional subsurface sampling. The proposed sampling activities should be discussed with DTSC, the public and other interested stakeholders, prior to the formal submittal of the work plan to the Department.

At a minimum, the work plan, and subsequent final report, will include the following elements:

1. Sampling Depths. Contamination at the storm drain was encountered at 16 to 20 feet at depth. Soil and soil gas sampling of the school property should be focused at this depth.
2. Soil Gas Sampling. All soil gas samples should be collected pursuant to DTSC's 2015 Active Soil Gas Investigations Advisory. Leak check compounds and shut-in testing should be used to demonstrate that no sampling system leaks have occurred during sample collection. Temporary soil gas probes should be installed and sampled at least twice to evaluate potential temporal variability of soil gas contaminants.
3. Soil Sampling. All soil samples for VOC analysis should be collected using USEPA Method 5035 pursuant to DTSC's 2004 Method 5035 Guidance Document.
4. Final Characterization Report. The final report should provide a comprehensive summary of all subsurface data collected at Portola High School. The data should be interpreted pursuant to the revised conceptual understanding of the site. Sources of contamination, if encountered, should be identified and described. Data should be presented in both table and map formats for easy access by the general public. The final report should provide risk estimates for exposure to subsurface contaminants to both students and faculty. The report should be signed and stamped by a professional civil engineer or professional geologist.

Best regards,

Barbara A. Lee
Director

DRAMATIC BREAKTHROUGH FOR PORTOLA H. S. SITE

This letter from the DTSC to Larry Agran with orders to the IUSD to perform further testing for contaminants at the Portola High School site is a definitive response to his August 31, 2015 letter to Governor Brown, though a lot has happened in between! [See the chronology on page 3.]

Below is some background and the implications of the directives in that letter.

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

This is finally the recognition from the State agency (DTSC) that the mounting evidence of contamination on the school site since its initial approval in 2014 warrants new testing, and that the contaminants could pose a health threat to the school's occupants.

When the project was submitted to the DTSC for their approval by the IUSD's environmental consultant, the historical use of the site was characterized as only a farm—the so-called “conceptual understanding.” Hence, it only had to be tested for agricultural chemicals. The discovery of naphthalene and other Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in a storm-drain excavation along Irvine Blvd., as well as soil-gas sampling around the southern perimeter of the school site that had to be performed on a narrow strip of land later acquired to match a new road alignment turned up a plethora of VOCs, all unexpected to be found on a farm. Those chemicals were more in tune with military use. Further indications of military use were given by a series of aerial photos taken, beginning in 1946.

When contaminants are found on the perimeter of a site, it makes sense to expect that those same contaminants would be found in the interior of the site.

There were a pair of fuel pipelines that ran across the site, serving the airbase when it was in operation. The fuel lines were pressure-tested before they were removed to determine if they leaked, and they did pass that test. However, since they could have had a leak repaired, the soil underneath the pipelines had to be tested at depth for VOCs. They were, and no contaminants were found. However, this does not prove that the surrounding area was not contaminated since no one would have dumped toxic waste over the fuel lines that surely had signage.

The intent here is clear that the work plan for further testing of the interior of the school site to be developed by the IUSD is that “the public and other interested stakeholders” be involved in its preparation.

It is important to note that the DTSC is requiring a risk analysis to determine the risk of exposure from contaminants based on the work plan and the laboratory results of the soil-gas testing.

IN CONCLUSION

These orders to the IUSD to perform further testing are a major victory. However, ensuring that the IUSD fulfills its responsibility for the safety of the students, faculty and staff who will be occupying the school for many years to come, will require the continued active involvement of Irvine residents. The 100 residents who attended the ground-breaking March 22nd Special Board meeting and Public Hearing were instrumental in the unanimous support of the Board to add more soil-gas test wells as the meeting progressed.

In a late March 28th email received from Annie Brown, IUSD's Public Information Officer, she wrote: “The draft workplan is being updated to reflect additional locations and tests beyond the 10 originally submitted.”

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.

Most of our reader interest and comments focused on last month's story about Irvine Councilman Jeff Lalloway's plans to put toll lanes (\$10 each way) on the I-405 Freeway. On this page, we print results and comments received in response to our Irvine Community Poll about the Lalloway-OCTA tollway plan.

On page 15, we have reprinted a letter from Dr. Phyllis Agran, a long-time, distinguished pediatrician in Irvine and Orange County. Dr. Agran, who is also a UCI Professor, offers a sobering view of the emerging toxics crisis at Portola High School, scheduled to open in August. Dr. Agran's letter reminded me that there is a lot of knowledge and wisdom in our Irvine community — we just need to do a better job of listening to the wise voices among us. — FJL

Lalloway's I-405 Tollway

■ I like the idea of having this option. If I am not busy, I will sit in traffic like the rest of the folks but if I am in an emergency, I will use the pay lanes.

—Albert Lee

■ It [the I-4-5] is called a Freeway for a reason!

—Jack Pouchet

■ If the \$20 per day round trip toll is true, that's just insane.

—Gary Blanchette

■ Really? The public does not need lanes that people have to pay for! It's a FREEWAY, not a tollroad!

—Deanna Wright

■ I'm absolutely disgusted and sickened by Jeff Lalloway's lack of solutions to the problems he and the Irvine City Council created — from the toxics at Portola High School to traffic gridlock. Jeff Lalloway has to go.

—Gary Nguyen

■ All this will accomplish is making commuters endure years of more inconvenience due to construction on the freeway. Toll lanes are just as bad as the regular lanes when there is traffic. I can not wait to get out of Irvine!!

—Ken McEwan

■ You must be kidding me. Recall Lalloway.

—Linda Cauble

■ Freeways should be free! I'm disgusted with Lalloway for denying that he supports a tollway on the I-405 when he, in fact, voted for toll lanes.

—Tessa Kershner

■ Are you crazy? My rent is up, my health insurance is up, groceries are super expensive. I cannot afford this extra cost two or three times a day in two cars...please be reasonable with those of us who live here and love Irvine.

—Joanne Santiago

■ Looks like the oligarchy is pushing their agenda here! I'm so upset about how crowded Irvine is compared to just 10 years ago. Developers and the Irvine Company simply don't care about the citizens here.

—Sharon Horn

■ I only favor this proposal if the tollway stays free for HOVs (high occupancy vehicles). The time saved seems really good and the money generated will stay local.

—Conor Cox

■ Lalloway has an East Coast mentality, representing big businesses and not caring about the middle class. In New Jersey, toll roads are everywhere. He wants to do the same thing here in OC.

—Mitra Karami

■ Orange County is apparently for the privileged. I could not afford a toll lane every day. As it is, I often bite the bullet on my to or from Riverside and go the long way, avoiding the toll road just to save money.

—Cindy Voll

■ The new lanes on the I-405 should be open for everyone to use.

—John Battey

■ How is adding toll lanes beneficial? It generates money, but it makes the commute worse, especially since there are no true commuting alternatives.

—Ted Dempsey

■ Toll lanes will only congest the freeway still more for the less affluent motorists.

—Annette Bork

■ No way, Lalloway!

—Jerry Couchman

■ Keep all lanes free. Toll roads favor the rich.

—Jennifer Polson

■ Citizens have already paid for the freeways — I don't want to pay again.

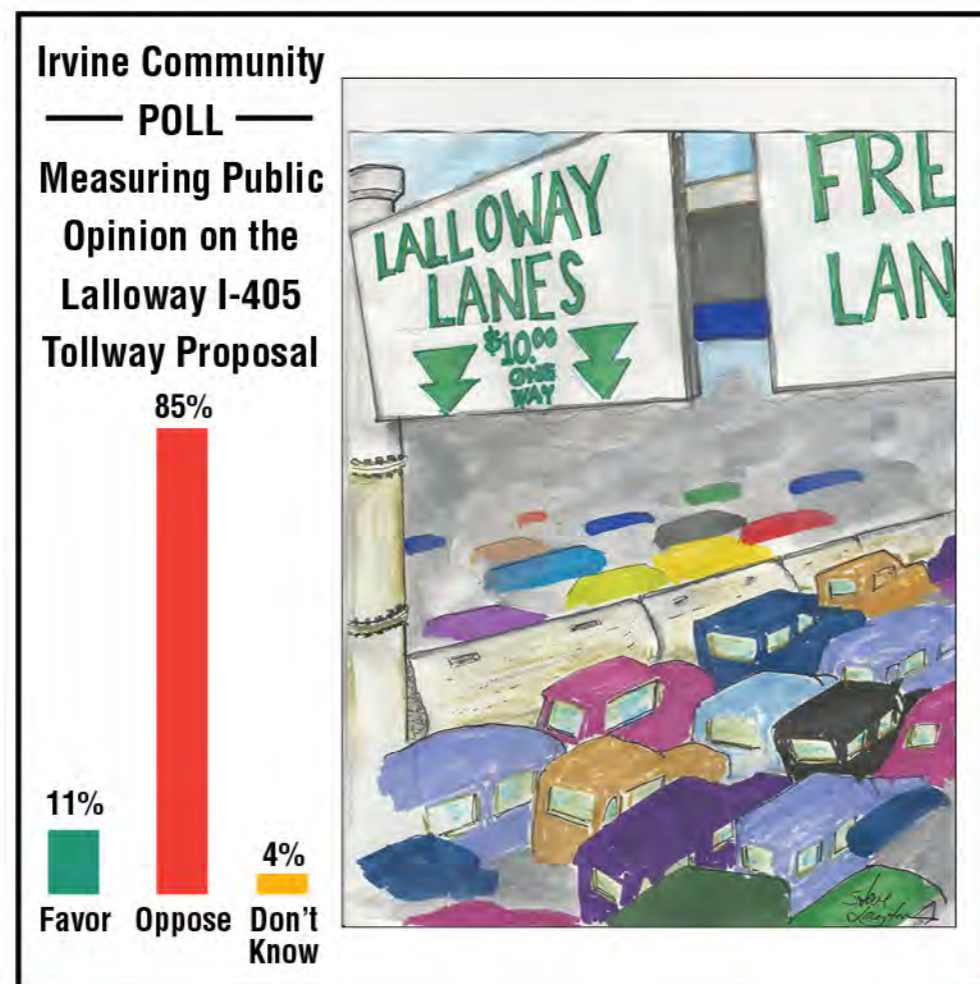
—Steven Nutt

■ Extra lanes on the I-405 would help considerably. However, the idea of toll lanes on the I-405 or I-5 is repugnant. Remember, these are part of our freeway system. What part of freeway is difficult for Lalloway to understand.

—Aris Papayouanou

■ Ridiculous! Try to solve problems, don't create them.

—Hari Pinninti



Phyllis F. Agran, MD, MPH
Irvine, California

March 29, 2016

To The Editor:

The Irvine community owes a great debt of gratitude to the *Irvine Community News & Views* for covering the story of the relentless effort to press State and local officials to test for toxics at the Portola High School site before students, teachers and staff occupy the new high school.

In issuing orders to undertake testing at Portola High School for toxic petrochemicals — known as Volatile Organic Compounds, or VOCs — State EPA officials at the highest levels understand that these petrochemicals are, in their words, “contaminants that could pose a threat to the health of individuals who attend classes or work at the school.” We now know that these toxic and even carcinogenic (cancer-causing) VOCs found on-site — benzene, toluene, naphthalene, and many more — have been discovered, sometimes in large quantities and alarming concentrations, along the entire perimeter of the high school site. And, yet, local and State officials went ahead and allowed the \$300 million Portola High School to be built without testing the entire interior of the site for evidence of petrochemical contamination.

Now, finally, soil-gas testing has been ordered to determine if petrochemical contamination at Portola High School is “site-wide” — and to identify its source or sources; understand the pathways and extent of contamination in soils, soil-gases and in the indoor and outdoor air; and then honestly assess the health risks to the thousands of students, teachers and staff who will occupy the school in the years ahead. All this must be done in a matter of weeks if the school is to open, as planned, in August.

At this late date, there is no margin for error. As a pediatrician and public health advocate, I regard this as a real crisis for the Irvine community. Until now, local and State officials have downplayed the toxics problem — referring to contamination as simply “stained soil” and “non-hazardous” chemicals. In fact, we are dealing here with some extremely potent carcinogens and neurotoxins that — with every-day exposure even at what are described as “low levels” — can cause disease, disabilities including impaired mental development, and even “excess deaths.”

Let's remember this: We have learned that what once might have been considered a “safe” level of exposure for a young person or pregnant teacher was, in fact, not safe at all. Today, for example, we say that there is no “safe” level of exposure to lead — whether in paint, in gasoline, or as we've learned from the Flint tragedy, in water.

I attended and testified at the March 22nd School Board meeting regarding the testing that the State has ordered. Near the end of what was a very difficult meeting, IUSD Superintendent Terry Walker said, “We would like to have 100% confidence that this site is safe.” I think we can all agree on that. But, first we must have a sustained commitment to honesty, transparency, and good science as we evaluate the test data and the associated risks our community faces.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Agran, MD, MPH

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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