



ROMAN SEND-OFF

Westwood Basics Plus' new play, "When in Rome," will likely be Dennis Taylor's last production.

PAGE 11



LOOKING UP

Venado held a career conference where the role models are younger.

PAGE 7

PAGE 5

The City Council voted to name a stretch of Yale after John Iamon.

Persian New Year a banner event

The city has been promoting the event around town. Celebrants will gather Sunday at Mason Park.

BY SONYA SMITH
IRVINE WORLD NEWS

Irvine, some officials say, is the first city in the nation to promote the Persian New Year by placing banners around town.

The city for the first time hung 50 banners celebrating the new year on Culver Drive between the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway and the San Diego (SR-405) Freeway.

"The beginning of spring is the celebration of a new beginning, and since this celebration has been occurring for thou-

sands of years we want to celebrate this with America and more specifically Irvine," said Nora Valenzuela, director of public relations for the Network of Iranian-American Professionals of Orange County.

Valenzuela's organization worked with the city to make the banners a reality. The Community Services Commission OK'd the banners that were designed pro bono by Saeed Danostan. The newly formed Persian community foundation PARSAA helped raise funds for the banners' production and installation.

Some Irvine Police tips for the celebrations:

Celebration locations: The common choice for celebrations is Mason Regional Park where usually 15,000 to 20,000 people come to celebrate. Police encourage people to also gather at parks that offer the same features as Mason Park-

MORE ONLINE

For more information on park locations and information, see the story at www.ocregister.com/irvine.

including bodies of water and areas of open grass.

Traffic: Because of congestion, drivers are cautioned to use avoid the area around Mason Park between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Sunday.

Roadways most affected: University Drive between the San Diego (405) Freeway and MacArthur Boulevard; Culver Drive between Campus Drive and the San Diego (405) Freeway; Harvard Avenue between Culver Drive and Michelson Drive.

Parking: Parking at Mason Park costs \$10 per car; is limited to 600 vehicles and usually fills up by midday. No annual

passes are accepted. On-street no-parking areas will be posted and rigorously enforced, with vehicles towed at the owners' expense.

A temporary loading zone will be set up on University Drive between Harvard and San Joaquin. This is a temporary zone; vehicles may not be left unattended. Vehicles are also restricted from entering the park to unload items. Parking is prohibited at the Bethel Korean Church.

Parking is also provided at: University High School at \$10 per vehicle.

UC Irvine campus lot 1-B at \$7 per vehicle (Parking access machines only accept \$1 and \$5 bills. No change provided.)

University Methodist Church at \$15 per vehicle.

Event questions can be referred to NPOC board member Hamid Falah at 949-851-8668.

FAST FACTS

Persian New Year: Called Noruz, the new year begins at the spring equinox. This year in Los Angeles the new year began at 5:07 p.m. Tuesday, March 20. The equinox is when the days and nights are equal in length and is the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

Celebrations: The new year festivities begin with the ritual of "Chahar Shanbeh Soori" or Wednesday Fire. On the last Tuesday night of the year bonfires are prepared after sunset to give thanks for good fortunes of the past year and to release any remaining evils.

Source: Network of Iranian-American Professionals of Orange County

Board wants more cost analysis

Plan estimates that \$446.8 million will be spent on the Great Park over the next five years.

BY SONYA SMITH
IRVINE WORLD NEWS

A proposed business plan that estimates the Great Park will cost \$446.8 million over the next five years drew a mixed reaction from the Great Park board of directors last Thursday.

MORE ONLINE

This story and others are posted online as news happens at www.ocregister.com/greatpark.

Once approved, the plan will be used to make decisions on funding, plans and priorities. Approval could come within two months, officials said.

Some of the board's thoughts:

Miguel Pulido: Wants to see other possible funding and more details on expenditures. Would like an idea from the designers of what should be developed first to "kick off" the park.

Beth Krom: Would like possible partnerships for features such as the sports park in a separate plan. Wants to know what park costs may be paid for by the city - such as security.

Walkie Ray: Is concerned that the park's operation costs are not being sufficiently examined. Underlined that the city's general fund money should not be used for the park.

Steven Choi: Wants to focus on how the park will be built with available funds. Shared Ray's concern that the estimates do not include operations and maintenance costs.

Christina Shea: Would like the Lennar Corp. to better explain their plans. Wants a breakout of public relations costs and other items. Was pleased to have a draft plan, but said that estimates must be updated regularly.

Bill Kogerman: Is worried about sufficient funding for a veterans memorial in the first phase.

Sukhee Kang: Wants to see possible funding. Wants the business plan updated regularly. Wants to see breakouts of general and administrative costs for the park.

Michael Pinto: Wants to set priorities soon for the park's components to better guide funding decisions.

Larry Agron: Says proposed plan is conservative and is assured more funding will be available.

Performing for Darfur

Students for Social Responsibility raise \$7,000 for refugees.



PHOTO BY JEFFREY ANTENORE / FOR IRVINE WORLD NEWS

IRVINE HIGH SCHOOL BAND THE JAKES performed the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" at the Students for Social Responsibility benefit concert Friday.



NISHA SHARASCHANDRA and Ketki Warudkar perform a traditional Indian dance at the Students for Social Responsibility benefit concert Friday at Irvine High.



MEMBERS OF IRVINE HIGH'S Students for Social Responsibility, along with club adviser Jim Antenore, right, thank the audience for attending their benefit and raising \$7,000 that will go to aid refugees in Darfur. "We hope that students and staff at the school are more aware of the situation," Antenore said.



DOMINIC BERNATH jumps back as flames shoot from his wallet during his magic show at the benefit concert Friday.

Performing for Darfur

Students for Social Responsibility raise \$7,000 for refugees.



PHOTOS BY JEFFREY ANTENORE / FOR IRVINE WORLD NEWS

IRVINE HIGH SCHOOL BAND THE JAKES performed the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" at the Students For Social Responsibility benefit concert Friday.



NISHA SHARASCHANDRA and Ketki Warudkar perform a traditional Indian dance at the Students for Social Responsibility benefit concert Friday at Irvine High.



MEMBERS OF IRVINE HIGH'S Students for Social Responsibility, along with club adviser Jim Antenore, right, thank the audience for attending their benefit and raising \$7,000 that will go to aid refugees in Darfur. "We hope that students and staff at the school are more aware of the situation," Antenore said.



DOMINIC BERNATH jumps back as flames shoot from his wallet during his magic show at the benefit concert Friday.