Renewed Push for Veterans Cemetery to Be Built at the Original Great Park Site

At the State Capitol in Sacramento, Orange County lawmakers have introduced a bill — Assembly Bill 368 — in a renewed effort to begin construction of the 125-acre State Veterans Cemetery at the original Great Park site, approved in 2014.

On a recent afternoon visit to the Great Park in north Irvine, Ed Pope, co-chair of the citizens’ committee to Build the Great Park Veterans Cemetery, pointed toward the site of the long-planned — but not yet built — State Veterans Cemetery in the Great Park. With an edge to his voice, Pope said, “Look at this — our 125-acre site was set aside five years ago and still nothing has been built on it.”

Pope continued, “If the City Council hadn’t reversed course two years ago, right now we would be nearing completion of the 30-month construction project, and the beautiful Veterans Memorial Park and Cemetery in our Great Park would be open and operational by Veterans Day this year, on November 11th.”

Lamentable History
Ed Pope, 81, is a U.S. Army veteran, an award-winning retired high school teacher, and a 47-year resident of Irvine. As he reviewed the history of the Veterans Cemetery project, Pope referred back to 2017, lamenting that “instead of beginning construction in the summer of 2017, on schedule, three members of the City Council actually rejected a $30 million construction grant from the State.”

Apparently, at the behest of developer FivePoint Communities, Mayor (now Supervisor) Don Wagner, and Councilmembers Christina Shea and Melissa Fox abruptly voted for a complicated land-swap scheme to replace the planned Veterans Cemetery with massive office, industrial and apartment development.

The Council’s unpopular decision, in turn, eventually triggered an historic Irvine ballot referendum and voter revolt.

Publisher’s Perspective
“Fraudit” Accountability

The State of California is seeking to revoke accountants’ licenses at HSNO, the firm handpicked by Councilwoman (now Mayor) Christina Shea to “audit” Irvine’s Great Park project. According to the 44-page accusation filed by the State Attorney General, the “audit,” directed by Shea and costing Irvine taxpayers $1.7 million (plus City staff time), failed to follow professional accounting standards and contains major misrepresentations and lies.

The Shea-HSNO “audit” reflected an abuse of power and a misuse of public funds by Shea, in a political smear of former Mayor and Councilman Larry Agran before the 2014 City election. ICNV first exposed this “Fraudit” years ago. Now, the City should appoint independent legal counsel to recover Irvine taxpayers’ funds from HSNO and Shea, too.

Franklin J. Landiag, Publisher and Editor
In the face of developer FivePoint’s $5 million campaign, Irvine voters overwhelmingly rejected the developer’s “Measure B,” 63% to 37%, in a special June 5, 2018 election.

Pope, who chaired the successful “NO on B” referendum campaign, observed, “Last year, the voters made plain that they wanted the City Council to stick with the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery site, and start building the Veterans Cemetery right away.”

But, so far, the City Council has refused to implement the will of the people, choosing instead to talk about “alternatives” to the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery plan. Meanwhile, the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery project has languished. Until now.

Renewed leadership, renewed opportunity

Now, in a dramatic show of State legislative leadership, Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton), joined by others in the Orange County State legislative delegation, sent a mid-March letter to the Irvine City Council urging support for her bill, AB 368. The bill, upon passage, would once again designate the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery site — approved by the City, State (CalVet) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in 2016 — as the chosen location for the Veterans Cemetery, which would then be built with State funds. AB 368 also provides that the State would equip, operate and maintain the Veterans Cemetery in perpetuity, at no cost to the City of Irvine.

According to State officials, following legislative approval in Sacramento — and City approval to move forward — actual construction of the Veterans Cemetery could begin right away, with a 30-month timeline to complete the project.

Will City officials say YES this time?

The City Council is expected to consider the Veterans Cemetery matter this Spring. But, according to highly placed City Hall officials, it’s an open question as to what a majority of City Councilmembers will do. Will they say YES to this new opportunity to finally get the Great Park Veterans Cemetery built and operational? Or will they continue to search for “alternatives” to the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery site? None of those alternatives have the historic significance of the original site, which includes aircraft hangers and the iconic control tower.

In an interview, Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva, the lead author of AB 368, said she wouldn’t ask the State and state taxpayers to fund the study of yet another site. “As far as I am concerned, if we are going to build the Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park, we will do so at the original Great Park site.”

Quirk-Silva added, “Since 2014, the original Great Park site has been thoroughly studied and approved — by CalVet and by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It is clearly the best site for the Veterans Cemetery. I’m not interested in finding any other site.”

Ed Pope, noting that he speaks on behalf of thousands of veterans in Irvine alone, said he applauds Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva and other legislative leaders.

“The fact of the matter is that this project enjoys overwhelming public approval. It is construction ready,” he said.

“What are we waiting for? Irvine and Orange County veterans are dying, on average, at a rate of two or three per day. They deserve to be laid to rest and honored right here at the original Great Park Veterans Cemetery site, close to home and family.”

For updated reporting on the renewed efforts to begin construction of the Veterans Cemetery at the original Great Park site, be sure to subscribe to Irvine Community News & Views.

www.IrvineCommunityNews.org

For information on how YOU can help make the Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park a reality, go to: BuildTheVeteransCemetery.org
Senior Life

F or more than 50 years, Medicare has been America’s remarkable, government-run “single payer” public health insurance program for tens of millions of Americans age 65 and over.

With a half-century of proven success and popularity, there is now a growing momentum among health-care candidates for President — to expand the Medicare health-insurance program to those under 65. How? By letting younger Americans purchase Medicare coverage through a “public option” or to even become part of a more comprehensive, national “Medicare for All” single-payer program that displaces private health-insurance companies.

While Medicare is popular as it is, it is shocking that the Trump administration went to Congress proposing a cut of roughly $60 billion per year in Medicare funding — that’s a funding cut, on average, of $1,000 per year for America’s 60 million Medicare beneficiaries! This is all more shocking since President Trump campaigned in 2016 on a promise to never cut Medicare.


Medicare Fraud? Trump’s budget proposal calls that elimination of Medicare fraud will cover a substantial portion of the proposed funding cuts. I say, nonsense! No doubt there are fraudulent payments being made by Medicare, exposed from time to time in big news articles. However, if it is known that massive fraud is taking place, how can it be addressed already? Clearly, finding tens of billions of dollars of coverage for the proposed enormous cuts is just plain absurd.

In addition to cutting actual services, the Trump budget proposes cutting extensive research programs that are intended to reduce costs while improving patient outcomes. Those programs provide financial incentives and alternative payment plans such as Accountable Care Organizations, programs that are successful in improving treatment outcomes rather than for individual procedures. These incentives reduce re-hospitalizations, reduce unnecessary procedures such as excessive imaging studies, and optimize physician time.

The proposed Trump cuts would simply “throw out the baby with the bath water!” In my case, services — especially preventive care — should be expanded rather than cut. Keeping people healthy saves money.

If Medicare is socialism, I then guess I’m a socialist. I love my Medicare!”

—Anonymous

Mercy Street

Each issue we feature one adoptable pet from the Irving Animal Care Center. “Sprout” is a neutered male, brown tabby Domestic Shorthair cat. He is about 1 year old.

The Irving Animal Care Center (IACC) is a progressive and innovative municipal animal shelter that continually strives to strengthen the human-animal bond and improve the wellbeing of animals by promoting responsible ownership and treatment. The IACC is committed to providing high-quality care for thousands of homeless, neglected, abused animals every year. All animals in their care receive veterinary care, high-quality nutrition, soft bedding, and daily socialization.

In addition, we have found that our choice for Pet of the Month is adopted shortly after placement. For the most current list of adoptable pets at the IACC, visit their website at www.cityofirving.org/IACC/animal-care-center/adoption-get or visit the shelter in person.

For more information about the IACC, call 972-752-7740.

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Thank You to These Outstanding Businesses... Where You Can Pick Up Ivanhoe Community News & Views

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Spring 2019
Community Calendar

April - May - June 2019

**HELLO April**

1. Page Turner Book Group, Katia Wheeler Library. Info: 714-999-4753
3. Book Club
4. Food Club
5. Irvine Garden Club
6. Ride the Rails: Irvine Orange Line Museum Sites
7. Storytime in the Garden
8. April Baby Shapes
9. Ice Cream Social at the First United Methodist Church
10. City Council Meeting, Irvine Civic Center, 4 pm. Info: 949-724-3290
13. High School Art Exhibit
14. Edible Gardening Workshop
15. Family Craft Night
16. Make Your Own: Trivia Night
17. Mother’s Day Events
18. Memorial Day Luncheon at the Lakeview Senior Center
19. Senior Picnic: Irvine Regional Park
20. Senior Picnic: Tustin Senior Center

**MAY highlights**

**EVENTS AT THE GREAT PARK**

Edible Gardening Workshop at the Farm + Food Lab
Saturday, May 4th: 10-11am. Info: 949-724-7528

Storytime in the Garden at the Farm + Food Lab
Sunday, May 5th: 9-10am. Info: 949-724-7528

The Art of Competition
Exhibit at the Palm Court Arts Complex now through May 12th. Check for specific days/times. Info: 888-829-3929

**MOTHER’S DAY EVENTS**

Mother’s Day, Sunday May 12th.

Memorial Day Luncheon at the Lakeview Senior Center
Friday, May 24th: 11:30am-1:30pm. Info: 949-724-6900

Mother’s Day Dessert & Paint Night at the OC Great Park
Saturday, May 18th: 3-4:30pm. Info: 949-724-6599

**IN OBSERVANCE OF MEMORIAL DAY (MAY 27TH)**

Memorial Day Luncheon at the Lakeview Senior Center
Friday, May 24th: 11:30am-1:30pm. Info: 949-724-6900

Memorial Candle Lighting Ceremony

Irvine Memorial Day Ceremony
Bill Barber Memorial Park. Monday, May 27th: 10am. Info: 949-724-6606

**JUNE events**

**STUDIO ARTS FESTIVAL**

Irvine Fine Arts Center at Heritage Park. 9am-5pm. The 15th annual Studio Arts Festival is on Saturday, June 1st from 10am-5pm in Heritage Community Park. The festival features works of art for purchase in ceramics, textiles, jewelry, painting, photography, printmaking, fiber and glass. For further information, call 949-724-6600.

Super Pet Adoption
The City of Irvine Animal Care Center will host its 17th Annual Super Pet Adoption from 10am-5pm, Sunday, June 2. More than 50 pet rescue groups and animal shelters will bring about 1000 homeless dogs, cats, rabbits, and small animals for adoption. Each animal available for adoption is spayed or neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated by a veterinarian. Cats and dogs are vaccinated appropriate age. The annual event features dozens of pet-related vendors, gourmet food trucks, live music, snow cream stands served in handmade ceramic bowls. Info: 949-724-8880

**STUDENT EXHIBITION AT UCI**

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Exhibition at the UCI Marine Science School of the Arts. Opening Reception: June 6, 6-8pm. Exhibits run from June 6th to June 15th. All exhibits are free and open to the public. Info: 949-834-4232

**FATHER’S DAY EVENTS**

Father’s Day, Sunday, June 16th.

Father’s Day Luncheon at the Lakeview Senior Center. June 15th, 11:30am-2:30pm. Info: 949-724-6900

Father’s Day Celebration at Pretend City, Saturday, June 15th, 10am-5pm. Info: 949-428-3900

Irvine Farmers Markets

- Saturdays, 8am-12pm: Co Maris Church (Corner of Bevill Cyn and Turf Ridge Rd)
- Saturdays, 8am-12pm: Main Park

For further information on City of Irvine events go to: cityofirvine.org or call 949-724-6600.

For City of Irvine Information: Call 949-282-4600. For further information on City of Irvine events go to: cityofirvine.org or call 949-724-6600.

Green Park Drive, 10am-12:30pm, weather permitting. Call 949-282-4600.
SchoolWatch: Citizen Activism Works!

by Carolyn Iamon

This story is true. I learned that the thrust of my SchoolWatch was a 20 percent cut in City support for our schools, teachers, and students. To be clear, this was a proposed $2 million cut — cutting the current $10 million per year down to $5 million per year — that the City proceeds annually to augment the hundreds of millions of dollars in annual school district budgets. This cut would have been damaging to all of our Irvine schools. Let me explain my entire story. In 2012, Ioram in join this with City leaders — former Mayor and then-Councilmember Larry Agran, and then City Engineer P.K. Wong — to co-launch a grassroots campaign to win voter approval of our SOS (Support Our Schools) initiative to double City funding for Irvine schools to nearly $10 million per year. The initiative, which received 70 percent voter approval, enabled us to improve Irvine schools by hiring more classroom instructional assistants, more school nurses, and additional School Resource Officers to police our schools and counsel students. Our SOS initiative was budgeted and implemented through 2016. Then in 2017 and 2018, the City, out of the blue, officials put forward a proposal to cut City support for our schools by $2 million for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, I used this SchoolWatch platform to announce and sound the alarm. I asked, “Do we need real reform? Filling school nurses, and fewer police officers providing security and counseling services? In what world do these kinds of cuts make any sense at all?”

Carolyn Iamon is a retired Irvine teacher. She taught at virtually every grade level, from K-12, as well as at the community college level.

Child Health & Safety Prevent Childhood Drowning!

by Phyllis Agron, M.D.

It had been two years since the last child had drowned in the North Basin. The proximity of the North Basin to our house had caused us much concern. Our children were too young and too inquisitive. So, what steps should you take to prevent both fatal and non-fatal drowning?

The AAP recommends adopting a “layered” prevention strategy. First, begin with water safety education. Second, teach your children to swim on all four sides with a self-closing latch that meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Standards. Second, consider supervision is critical when a child is near any body of water. Avoid all distractions such as cell phones, chatting with friends, and drinking alcohol. Designate a “water-sitter” on the boat or near the water and the kid in the water at all times. Third, small children and non-swimmers should wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket when on the boat or near the water. “Flotation” is not reliable. Fourth, learn CPR.

Remember, water and weather hazards are just about everywhere in our lives from pools, to oceans, to lakes, and streams. If you know, you are safe. If you do not know, you are at risk. For more information on our AAP website: www.aap.org and search on drowning. “Let’s have a good and SAFE summer.”

Next time: What About Swimming Lessons?

Phyllis Agron is a practicing Orange County pediatrician, a Professor at the UCI School of Medicine and President of the Orange County Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Agron is a recognized national expert in pediatric injury control and prevention.

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Finally, a Bill in Congress to Address Climate Crisis

by Sarah “Steve” Mosko

It was hope-inspiring that a bipartisan bill was introduced in the House of Representatives in January that could save our children and grandchildren from what scientists tell us is an ongoing and growing climate disaster.

The evidence is incontrovertible that the climate is in crisis and that burning fossil fuels is the primary cause of this crisis. The United States has a moral obligation to protect our most vulnerable populations from the harmful effects of climate change.

H.R. 763 promises to reduce 2016 carbon dioxide emissions by 49 percent in 2030 and by 90 percent in 2050, according to a widely respected economic modeling firm. In 20 years, national employment should grow by 200 percent. Hundreds of billions of dollars in additional federal and state revenue will be generated, along with the creation of millions of new jobs. For every dollar spent on renewable energy, four dollars are returned to our economy.

Support for H.R. 763

There is widespread agreement among economists, Democratic and Republican, that preserving carbon and returning the money to consumers is the most cost-effective solution to the climate crisis. H.R. 763 has already earned the backing of major organizations, including the Physicians and liposocytealums, U.S. Congress of Catholic Bishops, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund and Metabolic Energy Network.

What You Can Do

It is widely believed that a carbon pricing bill will eventually pass — the only question is when. If your public to let Congress know you want to act to combat the climate crisis right now. Please contact your Member of Congress (and others) and ask them to sponsor H.R. 763. And start the conversation with your friends and family on both sides of the aisle to support it.

H.R. 763 is an American-led global response to climate change. The bill imposes a carbon border fee on imported goods from nations that fail to impose some form of a price on GHG emissions. In addition to nudging other nations to follow suit, the border tariff enhances the competitiveness of American firms that are already more efficient than their global competitors. It also discourages American business from relocating to places where they can pollute more.

Predicted results of H.R. 763

H.R. 763 promises to reduce 2016 carbon dioxide emissions by 49 percent in 2030 and by 90 percent in 2050, according to a widely respected economic modeling firm. In 20 years, national employment should grow by 200 percent. Hundreds of billions of dollars in additional federal and state revenue will be generated, along with the creation of millions of new jobs. For every dollar spent on renewable energy, four dollars are returned to our economy.

Kate Porter
45th Congressional District
Contact Rep, Kate Porter (and other Orange County Members of Congress)

by email (preferred)
by phone
by postal mail
by a personal visit
by a personal visit
by a personal visit

Kate Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
1117 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5617
Fax: (202) 225-0966
time@porter.house.gov

Irvine Office
2151 Mission Hills Drive, Suite 195
Irvine, CA 92604
(949) 660-6953 • M-F 8:30am - 5:30pm PT

Other Members of Congress who represent parts of Orange County may be contacted by phone or visit their D.C. offices.

Rep. Linda Sanchez (CD-38)
Rep. Lou Correa (CD-46)
Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CD-47)
Rep.Mike Levin (CD-49)

Sarah Mosko is a licensed psychologist and sleep disorders specialist, with a background in neuropsychology and basic science research that enables her to explain the science behind current environmental problems and solutions. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University, and held an NIH Postdoctoral Fellowship at UC San Diego.
Legalized Bribery

A Failure of City Leadership

Most residents — and business leaders too — will tell you that overdevelopment and traffic are Irvine’s biggest problems, causing a diminished quality of life from one end of the City to the other. So, you’d think that when a developer shows up with plans to build an extra 1,000 housing units — on top of the 9,500 units previously permitted by the City — the City staff, Planning Commission, and the City Council would be skeptical and ask some hard questions. Instead, throughout the months of March, the staff, Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers shewed themselves to be neat, weak, and totally ineffective in even vocicing the public interest, let alone defending it.

Here is the story. In 2013, developer FivePoint went Council approval (3-2) to expand its existing city to build a total of 4,000 residential units in their Great Park Neighborhoods. With about a third of these units built and sold, FivePoint lobbyists claimed that under State and local law they had the “right” to build another 1,056 residential units. Fully 10 percent more than their initial entitlement.

Instead of pushback from Council-appointed Planning Commissioners, and the City Council itself, these City officials — with the power to say NO — showed apparently free developer FivePoint more than they care about existing Irvine residents. Here are the names of the officials who gave the go-ahead to FivePoint:

City Council:
Donald Wagner, Melissa Fox, Anthony Kuo, Faridh Khan
Planning Commission:
Stephen Harout, Dustin Nirschl, Michael Carroll, Greg Smith, Jeff Phillips

It’s pretty clear what developer FivePoint gets out of this — more entitlements that they don’t have to pay for which will translate into hundreds of millions of dollars in windfall profits. And what do existing Irvine residents get? More overdevelopment, more overcrowding, and much more traffic and cost of living increases. FivePoint projects time and again without any critical review.

I won’t write more here: This is a legalized bribery, pure and simple. It is corruption of our local elections and our local democracy. And, yes, it has consequences. Just read the adjacent article and see what’s happening with growth and overdevelopment and traffic in Irvine. And take a look at the Three Fox and the FivePoint inspired, continuing Shes Fox hunt for an alternative Irvine Veterans Cemetery.

Yes, BIDs, elections have real consequences — often to the detriment of our community — especially when BIG MONEY donors are buying the results they want.

Franklin J. Lunday is publisher of ICFY. He was Chair of the Irvine Transportation Commission and served on the Irvine Planning Commission from the 1990s. As an experienced elections attorney, in the 1970s and 1980s, Lunday served as a member and Chair of the Illinois State Election Board, charged with administering and enforcing campaign finance and election laws.

FOSSILE FREE SPEECH FOREVER!

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Myths and Facts about Building the Veterans Cemetery

For years now, Irvine Community News & View has proudly advocated construction of the planned-and-approved (2014-2016) Veterans Cemetery at the “ARDA” site in the Great Park. ICFY recently assembled a panel of experienced planners, architects and civil engineers familiar with the original Veterans Cemetery project and the various “alternatives” to the ARDA site that have more recently been put forward. This article summarizes the findings and conclusions of these professionals in an effort to focus on facts and dispel misinformation about building the Veterans Cemetery.

This spring the Irvine City Council will apparently “decide” between two Great Park sites for the Veterans Cemetery. One would cost 17.2% more for the entire 125-acre ARDA site and complete Phase 1, which would accommodate the first ten years of burials. Moreover, the Concept Plan for the ARDA site can accommodate the preservation and repurposing of historic structures, such as the iconic aircraft control tower and airplane hangars. This provides a large opportunity that does not exist elsewhere.

According to experienced civil engineers, the CalVet cost estimate for the ARDA site seems reasonable. However, the Shea-Fox Golf Course site necessitates removal of about 700-800 feet of the massive airbase runway that is as much as 40” thick. The runway removal would cost tens of millions of dollars. In addition, the Golf Course site lacks essential infrastructure to lead to the site, something the ARDA site already has on three sides. Since the Golf Course site has not been investigated for a Veterans Cemetery, there will have to be additional, as yet unknown costs.

TOXIC CONTAMINATION
Unfortunately, discussions of toxic contamination of the ARDA site have been tainted by ignorance and misinformation on both sides as if the entire site is beset with toxic contamination. The fact is that this is not true. The only known sources of contamination: (1) About one-third of the original 1-acre Nacas El Toro landfill lies within the boundary of the 125-acre ARDA site. This landfill lies within the final 10-year phase of Cemetery development — not to be built for 90 years. (2) Some of the buildings that are slated for demolition on the ARDA site are contaminated by asbestos, and lead in the immediately surrounding soil. The costs to remove the asbestos and lead-contaminated soil are listed in the Concept Plan: $3.4 million. The chance of finding additional, yet unknown, soil contamination is much greater on the ARDA site than in the soil under the nearby Great Park Neighboring homes or anywhere else on the former airbase.

This year, we hope that the Irvine City Council will “decide” on the ARDA site.
For updates on the Veterans Cemetery and other breaking Irvine news, subscribe for free to:

IrvineCommunityNews.org

Get the latest Irvine news on our Facebook page, at:
Facebook.com/IrvineCommunityNews

What do YOU think? Take the Irvine Community Poll!
The 125-acre Great Park “ARDA” site, owned by the City, was originally designated in 2014 for a Veterans Cemetery.

• Should the Great Park ARDA site be transferred to the State of California to build, operate and maintain a Veterans Memorial Park and Cemetery — at State expense and at no cost to the City? OR

• Should the Great Park ARDA site be transferred to land developers, along with zoning to build nearly 1 million square feet of office, commercial, industrial and residential development?

Go to: IrvineCommunityNews.org/poll. Take the online Irvine Community Poll...and, if you wish, add your comments.