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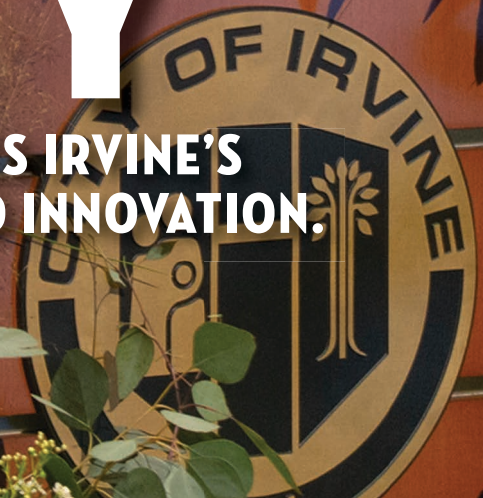
IRVINE WEEKLY

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STATE OF THE CITY

MAYOR CHRISTINA SHEA ADDRESSES IRVINE'S FISCAL STRENGTH, SAFETY, PARKS AND INNOVATION.



IRVINE WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT



Samsung Research America has a Principal Engineer, Engineering

(Req #20B2018) opening in Irvine, CA: Design, develop and maintain distributed, large-scale, real-time event and log data processes in AWS environment. E-mail resume & reference Req # & job title to claire.zhang@samsung.com.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST:

F/T w/ Bachelor's deg & 2 yrs exp in job or as Mktg Mgr to evaluate industry standards & market conditions for bottled alkaline water, etc. Mail Resume to Qure Beverages, 333 City Blvd W #1700, Orange, CA 92868.

Attorney.

Provide legal services on immigration laws. JD or LL.M, ACI Law Group, 6 Centerpointe Dr. #630, La Palma, CA 90623

SALES

Oracle America Inc. has openings for Staff Sales Consultant positions in Santa Monica, CA. Job duties include: Provide presales technical/functional support to prospective customers. Design, validate and present software solutions to include product concepts and future direction. Apply by e-mailing resume to applicant_us@oracle.com referencing 385.23226. Oracle supports workforce diversity.

Engineering

Oath Holdings Inc. has multiple openings in Los Angeles, CA (various levels/types). SW Dev Engr, Sys - Design, build, implement, modify, test, debug & deploy sw sys, large-scale infrastructure platforms & nw services. Ref #MBAC7144.

Performance Engr - Design, develop & modify sw sys, using scientific analysis & mathematical models to predict & measure outcome & consequences of design. Ref# MADA6985.

SW Dev Engrs, Sys - Design, develop, modify, implement, and/or test software for various products. Analyze requirements, investigate and document software solutions. Some positions may require travel and/or telecommuting. Ref# SDE151133

SW Dev Engrs, Apps - Design, develop, modify, implement, and/or test software for various products. Analyze requirements, investigate and document software solutions. Some positions may require travel and/or telecommuting. Ref# SDE151132

Mail resume: Oath Attn: Jillian Johnson, 701 First Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94089. Refer job title & number.

Operation Research Analyst.

F/T is needed by co. at Covina, CA. Analyze & dvlp oper'n procedure, improve operational efficiency; maintain & optimize client d/base. Must have a MS Deg in Ops Research or Bus. Admin; proficient in mgmt s/ware & microsoft office & ERP; team player & good communication skills. Apply to California Sunpower Solar, Inc. at 11211 Center Court Dr, Ste 101, Covina, CA 91724.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

sought by PFK Technologies USA, Inc. in Irvine, CA to manage the design, manufacturing and production of electronics. Requires 25% travel. Resume to: HR, PFK Technologies USA, Inc., 200 Spectrum Center Dr., Ste. 300, Irvine, CA 92618.

GRADUATE STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

sought by Walter P. Moore and Associates, Inc. in Los Angeles, CA. Performs engineering calculations and cost estimates. (Ref #979046). Send Resumes to: Cindy Moss, Walter P. Moore and Associates, Inc., 1301 McKinney, Suite 1100, Houston, TX 77010

Audio System Sales Engineer

(Northridge, CA and may work from home) Design audio systems using EASE software. Configure and tune systems for both demonstration and installation using FIR live room tuning techniques. Manually create EASE speaker representations based upon the dynamic speaker configuration of the plane array system. Calculate manually a specific custom wavefront of plane array loudspeaker of virtually any shape to match a target audience shape. Bachelor Degree or equivalent in Telecommunications Engineering and 2 years of experience required. Must be proficient in EASE software and FIR live room tuning techniques. Occasional domestic travel to venue. Mail resume to ASK Sales & Representation, Inc., Attn: HR, 18314 Kinzie Street, Northridge, CA, 91325

ENGINEERING

Help build the next generation of systems behind Facebook's products. Facebook, Inc. currently has multiple openings in Northridge, CA (various levels/types): RF Design Prototyper (137038N) Participate in multiple aspects of the prototyping, integration, testing, and production process for new Radio Frequency (RF) systems (including components, boards, and configurations). Mail resume to: Facebook, Inc. Attn: AA-USIM, 1 Hacker Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Must reference job title & job code shown above, when applying.

Market Research Analyst:

Conduct research & data analysis on fashion market; 40hrs/wk; Send resume to Beautiful Giant, Inc., Attn: HR, 17531 Railroad St., Ste. A, City of Industry, CA 91748

Software Engineers,

Woodland Hills, CA: Design software or customize software for client use with the aim of optimizing operational efficiency. Provide tech inspiration to team members. Perform code reviews, code optimization, stress testing, system performance & security. Send res to LifeCare Assurance Company, 21600 Oxnard St, Suite 1500, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Sales Representative

in Los Angeles, CA: Please send resume to Silver Vision Textiles, Inc., 227 W. 140th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

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IRVINE'S STATE OF THE CITY IS STRONG

MAYOR SHEA ADDRESSES THE CITY'S SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES IN 2020 AND BEYOND.

BY: TARA FINLEY

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CITY OF IRVINE

On Tuesday, February 25, 2020, Mayor Christina Shea received a standing ovation from Irvine residents following a robust State of the City address that lauded Irvine's success and tackled its challenges.

Given her previous two terms as Irvine's elected mayor in the 1990s, it was not Mayor Shea's first time addressing the community. However, this was the first State of the City the third-term mayor led since she was elevated to the position following Mayor Don Wagner's election to an Orange County Supervisor seat in early April of last year.

2020's State of the City was a family affair, with Mayor Shea's grandchild leading the Pledge of Allegiance along with her excited Girl Scout troop. Seats were packed with community leaders, residents and supporters from neighboring communities. Many had to stand in the back aisle in order to be a part of the historic annual event.

Before the official address, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Carroll gave opening remarks, praising Mayor Shea's longtime commitment to the city and the achievements she's made since first elected to the Irvine City Council in 1992. Presenting the initiatives she has brought forth, Mayor Pro Tem Carroll stated: "In ways both great and small, Mayor Shea is a driving force in building our city into the regional and national powerhouse it is today." From jumpstarting the development of the Orange County Great Park to championing housing services for veterans and disabled residents, Mayor Shea's efforts were recognized and appreciated.

Mayor Shea began her State of the City address on a positive note, praising the current Irvine City Council as one of the best she's worked with. "The state of the city is undeniably on the right track as we head into this new year," said Mayor Shea.

Hitting on Irvine's topics of interest, we've broken down the key elements of her speech:



Green Initiatives

The city of Irvine is without a doubt far ahead of most cities in terms of environmentally-friendly policy. Dubbed the “Queen of Green” by constituents, Mayor Shea promised that her commitment to sustainability and Irvine’s green initiatives will continue in 2020. Plans include replanting native foliage into the city’s landscape, as well as expanding the successful goat program to assist with weed and fire abatement. The mayor’s organic pesticides policy will remain in effect, keeping Irvine’s parks, greenbelts and open spaces free of toxins. This nontoxic landscaping plan recently won city staff a CalEPA sustainability award.

“We care about the health of our children, our pets and our wildlife,” promised Mayor Shea.

Sustainability

To continue Irvine’s sustainability efforts, the City Council has approved a review of Community Choice Energy (CCE). An alternative-energy program, CCE offers a solution to the rising cost of electricity, giving residents a choice to opt-in to clean energy that saves them on monthly energy bills.

Waste and Recycling

Irvine has seen a great payoff after implementing its green waste diversion recycling program and zero-waste initiative. Mayor Shea shared that, collectively, these efforts have diverted more than 12,000 tons of green waste and food from landfills.

Municipal Energy Efficiency

The mayor was proud to announce that the city has incorporated energy-efficient designs throughout its municipal facilities. Improvements include the installation of solar panels, the use of solar carports, efficient heating at the William Woollett Jr. Aquatics Center, LED safety lights, and recycled insulation at University Community Park. Presently, the council is developing a strategic energy plan that will examine cost-effective measures to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption community-wide.

Addressing fears voiced by the public at previous City Council meetings, Mayor Shea assured residents that each sustainability and efficiency program is thoughtfully reviewed for financial impact before adoption.



MAYOR CHRISTINA SHEA

Crime

Irvine was recently recognized for having the lowest violent crime rate in the U.S. for a city of its size. Mayor Shea remarked on this impressive achievement for both the city and the community, pledging to continue investing in public safety and emergency preparedness. From expanding the use of the public safety drone program to hiring additional police officers and public safety personnel, the mayor outlined her plan to keep crime low as Irvine grows in size.

Safe Community Task Force

Mayor Shea discussed the recent revitalization of the Irvine’s Safe Community Task Force 2020, an ad hoc committee that will work for nine months toward a goal of ensuring Irvine’s status as one of the safest in America. She

divulged items from the task force’s first meeting, where major concerns like human trafficking were discussed.

Irvine’s Business Community

As the largest employment center in Orange County, Mayor Shea announced her plans for Irvine’s business community in the coming year, stating: “Throughout 2020 I plan to continue to build upon the outstanding relationship the city has with the Greater Irvine Chamber. We will ensure that we attract a highly educated and skilled workforce to keep Irvine as the economic center of innovation, technology and creativity.”

Fiscal Strength

The mayor was pleased to announce that for the third year in a row Irvine was named the top city in America for

fiscal strength. Further detailing the city’s financial success, she shared that Irvine is seeing a per taxpayer surplus of \$4,100. Continuing on the topic, she shared that Irvine’s operating revenues are strong – \$207 million for fiscal year 2019-20 – and that the city’s general fund reserves are now at 25 percent of the annual budget. “Irvine is debt-free and fiscally strong,” says Mayor Shea. “I don’t know how many cities can say that.”

Pension Liability

Pension liability is being paid down annually, which is an important debt reduction plan brought forward by Mayor Shea in 2013. This topic remains a key item in the mayor’s agenda.

Shop Irvine

Mayor Shea touched on the #ShopIrvine initiative, a program that helps to increase sales tax revenue. She reviewed the past holiday season, which allowed Irvine to experience a strong revenue stream that has carried into 2020. The new year will see a robust wave of efforts to bolster the program, aided in large part by the Irvine Company’s re-investment into Irvine Spectrum. The mayor plans to expand the promotion throughout the entire year – as opposed to only during the holiday season, as it has been in years past.

Public-Private Partnerships

Mayor Shea praised Irvine’s development partners, including FivePoint and the Irvine Company, whose commitment to the city has allowed Irvine to embark upon and complete many ambitious projects, with more to look forward to in the future.

Planned Improvements

Significant rehabilitation improvements have been approved by the Irvine City Council, which will start in 2020 and continue over the next five years. Having recently signed off on an additional \$10 million to the budget, the council is planning on upgrading the aquatics center, improving safety and equipment at several community playgrounds, updating local senior centers, refreshing Ryan Lemmon Stadium, and remodeling the Irvine Animal Care Center. States the mayor: “We are committed to keeping city of Irvine facilities well-maintained with top-notch amenities.”



Traffic Congestion

While most of the speech sang Irvine's praises, Mayor Shea also touched on challenges, including traffic congestion. "Presently, our staff is creating new project improvements throughout the city, to elongate left-turn lanes and to assist with better traffic flow," explained Mayor Shea. Under the leadership of Irvine's Transportation Commission, plans to ensure that traffic impacts are properly mitigated are moving forward. From improving signal timing to upgrading equipment, 12 of Irvine's busiest corridors will be the primary focus of the commission's efforts. The budget for these traffic improvements will come from Measure M2 grant funds – of which \$9 million will be utilized to solve current transportation issues.

Pedestrian Safety

The mayor shared city plans for keeping pedestrians safe, including implementing new technology like pedestrian hybrid beacons and flashing yellow left-turn arrows. "In accordance with our master plan, the city is committed to partnering with employers and the community stakeholders to improve our transportation networks for those who live, work and visit Irvine."

Parks

"Our park system is nationally recognized for outstanding amenities," praised Mayor Shea. With flourishing programming for sports, arts, culture and entertainment, our mayor provided insight into the largest parkland development project currently underway at the Orange County Great Park. Additions residents can look forward to include the expected opening of Wild Rivers water park in 2021. In addition to rebuilding the beloved water park, the mayor shared the city's top priority projects for the Great Park in 2020: the development of an upgraded trail system, a joint training facility for Irvine's police and fire departments, a botanical gardens, a fire museum and a permanent amphitheater.

Veterans Cemetery

As one of the most contentious topics discussed by the Irvine community, the mayor put an end to rumors and fears, stating that she looks forward to dedicating the Veterans Cemetery at the Golf Course site, and revealing the city's full funding for the long-awaited proj-

ect. To support this effort in the coming months, she plans on creating a mayor's veterans advisory council inclusive of all military branches.

Education

Irvine City Council plans to continue to provide financial support to Irvine's schools, ensuring that skilled teachers and a dynamic learning environment is available for all students in our community. Eleven million dollars is invested annually to support students throughout Irvine and portions of Tustin, explains Mayor Shea. "Education will remain a top priority for City Council," guaranteed the mayor.

She then took a moment to touch on notable achievements made by area schools, congratulating Northwood and University High Schools for being recognized as two of the Top 500 S.T.E.M. high schools in the U.S.

Also celebrated was UCI breaking ground on a landmark medical complex adjacent to the UCI Research Park. There, the new center will redefine medical research, doctor-training and patient care by shifting the focus from treating disease to preventing it.

Celebrations

Rounding out her speech, Mayor Shea made a note of important celebrations ahead for the city, including Women's History Month and the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in America.

Locally, Irvine City Council and staff are preparing for next year's festivities, as the community celebrates Irvine's 50th anniversary.

As Irvine's State of the City address came to a close this year, Mayor Christina Shea made the following promise:

"We will continue to remain one of the safest cities in America, one of the top cities for fiscal strength, one of the best cities for education and innovation, one of the best park systems in America, one of the best places to live and to raise a family, one of the best cities for women and children, and one of the greenest cities in America – keeping our families, our children and our pets healthy. We are a city that honors growing cultural diversity, with an emphasis on our families, our seniors, our veterans and our faith-based organizations. I will continue to promote peace and harmony, so that our city will continue to be one of the most inclusive cities in the United States. These are and will be my top goals for 2020."



MAYOR CHRISTINA SHEA

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE RECALL ATTEMPT IN IRVINE

WITH THE CITY ON THE CUSP OF FINALLY REALIZING THE GREAT PARK, NOW MORE THAN EVER CITIZENS MUST LOOK PAST THE LIES.

BY: STEVE GREENBERG

PHOTO: ROCHELLE ULLOA

Ever since 2014, after Larry Agran was voted out of office, he has spent his spare time going after Mayor Christina Shea in a very vindictive and nasty way, primarily through his fake newspaper. Some of his lies claim that she is against the Veterans Cemetery at the Great Park and that she is in favor of grounding the balloon ride, among other falsehoods and personal attacks.

When Agran controlled the Irvine City Council, he ran the Great Park with an iron fist, hiring his Kool-Aid-drinking friends and passing out public funds at a feverish pace. He literally ran the

project into the ground with wasteful spending. A forensic audit revealed wasteful spending in excess of \$250 million; it showed that what was accomplished at the time did not merit the \$260 million spent on no-bid contracts, with consultants who helped bankroll Agran's campaigns.

For example, Forde & Mollrich billed the city \$100,000 per month for allegedly performing public relations work for the public project. Councilmembers Christina Shea and Steven Choi were not given access to invoices and other relevant information and had to go to court to obtain them. To ensure

that Agran and his Democratic majority remained in office in Republican-heavy Irvine, decoy Republican candidates ran in several Irvine elections that siphoned off just enough votes from authentic Republican candidates. After the election, these decoy candidates were never heard from again.

What is more remarkable is that Agran and his new political ally, Kevork Nazar Abazajian, are attempting to take control of the city with a misguided recall attempt of Mayor Shea and Councilmember Carroll, two very passionate public servants.

Please do not allow this to happen in

Irvine. Great things are now happening at the Great Park and throughout the city. The community can enjoy a world-class sports park, including Olympic water polo and volleyball. We can also enjoy a fire museum, Pretend City, the amphitheatre, and an expanded Wild Rivers, among other popular venues. For all that, we can thank Mayor Shea and the current council majority.

Steve Greenberg is chair of the Transportation Commission, director of the Colony Homeowners Association and a former member of the Investment Advisory Committee and the Green Ribbon Committee.



DANIELA DELGADILLO GARCIA
EL BOLO, 2019

FAMILY ROOTS THAT SPAN GENERATIONS AND BORDERS

TWO SHOWS AT IRVINE FINE ARTS CENTER ALLUDE TO IDENTITY AND A SENSE OF HOME AND BELONGING.

BY: LIZ GOLDNER

PHOTOS: COURTESY IRVINE FINE ARTS CENTER

Irvine Fine Arts Center's two exhibitions investigate family dynamics, culture and collective memory, as perceived by 20-somethings and millennials living in Orange County; albeit by those who are often regarded as minorities but are rapidly becoming mainstream residents. **"From Here to There: A Time Machine"** is a collaborative multimedia exhibition, created by two Chinese-Americans in their 20s, who grew up in the O.C.

"A Trace is Not a Map" looks at the lives and legacies of Latinos through the eyes and talents of four visual artists.

The two shows, running side by side at the center, inform viewers of how cultural groups look at their identities through various art forms. Yet the role of the curator of these exhibitions is important. Curator Virginia Arce, born in Mexico City and raised in Glendale, "has unexpectedly stumbled onto an

arts leadership position in Orange County," explains Sarah Rafael Garcia in the Voice of OC blog. She adds, "As a woman of color and first-generation MFA graduate in critical and curatorial studies from UC Irvine, national statistics prove she was at a disadvantage the moment she declared art as her major. Yet in contrast to most first-generation experiences, she was emotionally supported by her immigrant family to pursue an art career."

While walking through the exhibitions, Arce demonstrated compassion for the artists, as well as for their work. Discussing "From Here to There: A Time Machine" in pieces by Susan Lin and Michael Chang, she expressed understanding and empathy for their explorations of their childhoods and ethnic legacies.

Gallery 1, housing this installation, contains a dozen TVs of early-1990s

vintage, along with laser disc players from that period, trophies, plants and cut-up athletic shoes. The TVs play loops of visual scenes that Lin experienced and filmed while visiting her relatives in China recently to attend her grandfather's funeral. Here are videos of Chinese landscapes as seen from the windows of a train, another of a small fire, a third of women in a park engaging in communal dances and exercises, and another of a family dining together. Lin rounds out her contribution to the exhibition with the accolades she received while growing up, for academics, sports and the arts.

Chang's contribution to this exhibition include native Chinese plants, known as money and good luck plants, along with many pairs of athletic shoes, stacked on top of each other, or scattered around the gallery, alluding to his childhood interest in sports. Arce explains that the artists in this show create an immersive environment pairing technologies from the past with



DANIELA DELGADILLO GARCIA
LA MADRINA, 2019

images about longing for a sense of home.

The larger exhibition at the Center is "A Trace is Not a Map." The title alludes to the Latino's search for identity and recognition in a world that still oversimplifies people of color, often seeing them as marginal. This show also explores the broad spectrum of Latino experiences in the world today, as well as their existential issues of personal freedom and self-determination in an increasingly complex world.

The several figurative oil paintings



"FROM HERE TO THERE: A
TIME MACHINE" BY SUSAN LIN AND
MICHAEL CHANG



ALBERT LOPEZ JR.
CHOCOLATE Y PATRONS,
2006



ALBERT LOPEZ JR.
JALE: CLASS C, MOBLE
GALLERY, 2007

by 20-something Daniela Delgadillo Garcia are mature in technique, as well as expressive in their depiction of longing for family and reverence for memories. "La Madrina," a portrait of a compassionate mother with several children, a dog and a doll, evokes the desire for a supportive, extended family that people of all ethnic backgrounds crave. Her "El Bolo," illustrating several teenagers reaching for a book in the air above them, has an ambiguous message; meanwhile, her "Infancia" is more direct, as it demonstrates two young boys caring for each other.

Albert Lopez Jr.'s video, "Jale: Class C, Moble Gallery," of a young man pulling a large van down a street while attached to it by a rope, presumably expresses the difficulty of living and functioning in the world today.

More prosaic are William Camargo's several photographs of his mother and father, titled "Mexican, American Paisa Nation #1" and "Mexican, American Paisa Nation #2." These compassionate portraits of his parents in their working clothes – aprons for his mother, and an undershirt and hat for father – demonstrate to the world what daily life is like for many Latinos. Nearby, this artist's

contrasting archival inkjet prints, "Hey You Like My Tats Foo? Part 1" and "...Part 2" are portraits of dark-skinned artist friends, posing with stick-on prison tattoos, yet adopting stances of pride and even nobility.

The most conceptual piece in this exhibition is the abstract plaster and clay sculpture, "Make Time" by Adriana Baltazar. This harmonious, deftly crafted artwork, with its more universal artful aspect, transcends the artist's Latino roots. While providing a counterpoint to the other pieces displayed, it helps to enhance the important of their message. Or as curator Arce explains, many of the art pieces in this second exhibition express the symbiotic relationship between hope and loss, joy and struggle, and illusion and disillusionment. She adds that there is complexity in every piece in this show, and most are open to interpretation.

"From Here to There: A Time Machine" and "A Trace is Not a Map" are on view through March 7 at Irvine Fine Arts Center; Mon.-Thu., 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; cityofirvine.org/irvine-fine-arts-center/current-exhibitions.



BEST BOBA SPOTS IN IRVINE

WHETHER IT'S THEIR TAPIOCA OR THEIR TEA, THESE EATERIES EXCEL AT THEIR CRAFT.

BY: SAM HINGCO

PHOTOS: SAM HINGCO

The boba scenery in Irvine is abundant, with a shop on almost every corner. The city has everything from famous boba chains to small mom-and-pop shops; and with a selection so immense, it can be difficult to find the perfect boba shop. This article features some of the best boba shops in Irvine, as well as their best drinks.

Sunright Tea Studio

Sunright Tea Studio is Irvine's latest addition to the boba scenario. Located on Jeffrey, across from Irvine Valley College, this boba joint has the freshest quality ingredients taken from ven-

dors and tea farms in Taiwan. The Oreo Brulée Milk Tea is one of the best Oreo drinks you will find, with a milky consistency that blends the Oreo flavor together well with the brulée flavor. The Hokkaido Milk Tea has a distinct flavor that is almost impossible to find anywhere else and, despite its lack of recognition, is one of their best drinks. Sunright also values their perfect ratios of tea to boba in order to provide the tastiest drinks possible. 15475 Jeffrey Rd #450, Irvine; (949) 316-4000.

Omomo Tea Shoppe

Omomo in Alton Square offers quality teas with the goal of "creating mem-

orable experiences in every sip." The menu provides a caramel brulée cup for some of their drinks: the Camo Thai, Omomo Matcha and Oreo Brulée Green Milk Tea. The caramel brulée cups are a cream coat plastered on the interior of the cup, which makes the drink much tastier and creamier. The fruit teas and fruit tornadoes on Omomo's menu attract quite the crowd, both for their heavenly taste and aesthetic presentation. 5365 Alton Pkwy, Irvine; (949) 861-8828, omomoteashoppe.com.

One Zo

One Zo, located in Woodbury Town Center, has been recently gaining quite the attention. Their menu includes a wide selection of teas and an assorted arrangement of boba, such as taro, black sesame and honey boba. One Zo presents each customer a cup that is custom to the taste buds for particular individuals. They focus their attention primarily on their boba quality, displaying their craft as they make the boba directly in front of the customer from scratch. Their Brown Sugar Milk Tea is one of their most famous, and the warm boba compliments the taste of the strong tea flavor well. Although they concentrate on perfecting their boba, One Zo's teas are definitely better than

the average boba shop. 6376 Irvine Blvd, Irvine; (949) 418-9672, onezo.us.

Boiling Point

Though known for having exceptional hot pot, Boiling Point in Heritage Plaza offers a modest, yet appetizing, tea menu. The milk teas at Boiling Point distinguish themselves from other boba chains. The milky rich flavor which each cup offers is far better than many other milk teas you will find. Their most popular drinks are the Milk Green Tea and Hokkaido Milk Tea. The Hokkaido Milk Tea is almost identical to Sunright's and both have a flavor that is hard to forget. 14140 Culver Drive, Irvine; (949) 733-2211, bpgroupusa.com.

Cha for Tea

Cha for Tea has two Irvine locations, one in Woodbridge and the other in University Town Center. This chain is known for having refreshing teas for the most reasonable prices. One of their most popular drinks is the Honey Green Milk Tea. Cha for Tea's Honey Green Milk Tea is incomparable to other green milk teas as the refreshing taste of the green tea combined with the creamy flavor of the honey milk along with the chewy boba make the perfect concoction. Cha for Tea also usually has "Buy one, get one free" deals with the app Retail Therapy (cash-only). If you are looking for the perfect hangout boba spot for reasonable prices, then Cha for Tea is the place for you. Various locations; chafortea.com.

FOOD

THE MOST UNIQUE BOBA SHOPS IN IRVINE

WITH THE THIRD-LARGEST ASIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IN THE COUNTRY, IRVINE'S BOBA SCENE IS ONE OF A KIND.

BY: AUDREY FONG

PHOTO: AUDREY FONG

Growing up in Irvine, I would look forward to eating at A&J Restaurant because it meant that my parents would let me get a drink from Lollicup or Champion Food – my first introduction to boba. I would eagerly run over to one of the stores, a \$5 bill in my hand, and then stare at the dozens of choices before settling on one. Flash-forward over a decade and the boba scene has

exploded in Irvine. It feels like everywhere you look there's a new boba shop opening.

"The explosion of boba shops reflects the larger demographic and cultural transformation of Southern California," Judy Wu, professor of Asian-American studies at UCI, says. "Orange County is home to the third biggest Asian-American and Pacific Islander population in the country, and the popularity of boba



speaks to the growth of these communities as well as how much people of diverse backgrounds enjoy this drink."

This rise in the popularity of boba led me to chronicle and review the boba scene in Southern California on my Instagram, @bobabitchess, and with all these boba shops opening, I wanted to share with you the most unique boba shops in Irvine!

Redstraw Tea Bar

Redstraw is my favorite shop in Irvine! From its beautiful décor to its super friendly staff, I love everything about Redstraw. What it does differently is that it offers drinks made with real milk (they also offer alternative milk options for vegans and lactose-intolerant individuals) and real fruits. They also have a section on the menu where you can choose your tea leaves, and they'll freshly brew them for you. My favorites are their Grasshopper, a green tea made with cucumber juice, and their Blue Lady, a black tea with orange peels and blue mallow flowers. 14031 Jeffrey Road, Irvine; (949) 336-7527, redstrawteabar.com.

Meet Fresh

Meet Fresh is huge in Taiwan, and Irvine is lucky to have one! Unlike other boba shops, it has a full dessert menu featuring traditional offerings like sweet tofu and red bean soup, plus fun desserts perfect for a group like shaved ice! What makes their drinks stand out, though, is that you can get fun toppings in your drinks like pureed taro, mochi and taro balls. My favorite is their grass jelly because it's the silkiest grass jelly out there. 2710 Alton Parkway #105, Irvine; (949) 955-9236, meetfresh.us.

One Zo

One Zo is unique because it's the only boba shop in Irvine that makes its boba in-house, meaning they actually make the dough that becomes the little balls in your drinks. Other shops buy the boba from a supplier and boil them until they're soft – similar to the way we cook pasta at home. While most boba shops only offer crystal boba or the traditional black boba, OneZo offers fun flavors like strawberry, black sesame, chrysanthemum, caramel and more. The flavors even rotate! 6376 Irvine Blvd, Irvine; (949) 418-9672, onezo.us.

Spiritea

While Spiritea is overpriced, I admit that it is a unique tea shop. It is hands down the most gorgeous shop in Irvine, and the luxurious interior is definitely worth an Instagram photo. Drinkwise, their teas are freshly brewed in an espresso machine specially made for Spiritea and all their drinks are made with glacier water, ensuring a pure taste. I recommend sticking with their fruit teas and pure teas to get the yummiest result. 13238 Jamboree Road, Irvine; (714) 417-9797, spiriteadrinks.com.

The Alley

If you're a boba fanatic, then you've probably seen brown sugar boba milk popping up on menus. For those of you that haven't, it's basically full milk served with warm boba and a brown sugar drizzle – simple but so delicious. When it comes to this drink, The Alley is the best! What makes this place unique is that they offer the brown sugar boba drink in several options such as matcha and crème brûlée (my favorite!). 507 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine; the-alley.us.

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A PASSION FOR GROWTH

SOCAL POWERLIFTING OWNER ZACK BARTELL TALKS BALANCING BUSINESS AND FITNESS.

BY: RYAN LEUTERITZ

PHOTOS: COURTESY ZACK BARTELL

Meet Zack Bartell. At 23 years old, Zack is a college graduate, a competitive powerlifter, and owner and founder of his own gym, SoCal Powerlifting, which houses hundreds of members. He's nothing less than an inspiration – any of his clients will tell you that – and his story is one of dedication, hard work, serious guts and ultimately great success. Zack sat down with *Irvine Weekly* to tell us how his weight-loss journey led to him founding and owning Irvine and Orange County's premier powerlifting gym.

What was your childhood like in Irvine?

Growing up in Irvine, I did what most youth do. I went to school, participated in sports and lived a pretty normal childhood. There was definitely a high standard for education, and while I excelled in some ways, I definitely struggled to some extent. I was an ADHD kid that could not sit still for the life of me. I even got held back in kindergarten because my teachers and parents didn't feel I was ready to go to 1st grade.

Not only did I struggle with ADHD, but I also had a weight problem. Food for me was comfort, so I would often find myself excessively snacking and eating.

My parents were very helpful, and did absolutely everything they could to help. The weight struggles led to bullying, and more woes in school. When thinking about my childhood, this definitely clouds my mind quite a bit. From being picked last for sports teams, to always being "it" when playing tag, I definitely struggled.

I never felt I had a "place." I was not good at sports, I was not extremely studious, I was just in this limbo, middle-of-the-pack area. It wasn't until playing football at Woodbridge High School, did that change. Football was the first activity that I had ever done where being "big" was sometimes positive. It gave me an outlet to get better, and get in better shape. It gave me a group of friends that would support me – many I still talk to weekly. It led me to finding my love for strength and fitness.

How and when did you find your passion for fitness?

It all started in the Woodbridge weightroom. I was going into my junior year and at my heaviest weight. It came to the point where even some of my football coaches were concerned. This was really eye-opening, and I did not want to let them down. I spent the spring and summer of 2013 losing 60

pounds, and falling in love with lifting weights. With my newfound confidence and strength, I found myself starting on the offensive line that year and never looked back.

While I had fallen in love with lifting, I still did not know if it was what I wanted to do for my career. The idea of being a collegiate strength coach definitely enticed me, but I knew it would involve quite a bit of school to get there, and I was not sure if it was my passion yet.

How did your passion for fitness lead you to owning your own gym?

It was one of the first things I found that I was really good at, teaching people how to lift weights. It was the first thing I was really passionate about. I really enjoyed bringing people that same happiness that I found when I lost weight. Seeing that I could help others get stronger and be confident in the way they look; I think that played a big role in me finding my passion for strength training.

So what happened was, I was coaching a group of lifters at a different gym and I was getting really into it. I cared about my people and they meant a lot to me. The gym was ultimately closing and I just felt this pull within me; I didn't want to lose my people. I took some money that I had saved up from working like four jobs, I found a space, and bought some gym equipment. I wanted to give them a home and a place to train.

I didn't see further than that, which is kind of funny. I didn't think it would be what it's become, I thought it would just be a passion or a side thing.

How did you balance finishing school and building a gym?

I used to work at another gym, so I was going to school in the morning and by noon, I was driving down to Laguna Niguel to coach at this other gym. It was like, school, gym, workout, do fulfillment and take care of customer service, and then I'd get back to campus at like 9 p.m. after the dining halls had already closed (laughs). It sucked but I loved it at the same time. Once I opened the gym, it was really, really difficult because my grades started to slip. It was hard to balance both things. I was doing [workout] programming for clients in class, I was responding to emails in class, I was working on marketing materials in class. It was hard for me to actually focus in school, so that started to tank

my grades. I opened in August 2017 and by spring 2018 I was failing multiple classes. I had to decide; do I take advantage of this momentum because my business is growing or do I pull back on the business and finish my degree. I did a little bit of both. I decided I would still finish my degree and I would just have to transfer schools. I transferred to Cal Baptist and my classes were all online, which allowed me to have more freedom in my schedule to focus on the gym.

What do you attribute to the success of SoCal Powerlifting?

I think, at first, a lot of it was charisma. I just loved this so much, that I attracted good people and good clientele who wanted to share about me and spread the word. Then the other thing is, I think that I found a niche in powerlifting and strength where people who have been following a workout program at LA Fitness or another gym, wanted to take it to the next step. They don't want to pay for a personal trainer, but they do want some guidance, so we kind of bridged that gap. I think we really captured the market in the sense that there's not other gyms that do what we do.

In fact, there's starting to be gyms, I could name one, that are starting to look at us and try to copy our model a little bit, but they're not us.

What made you want the gym to be in Irvine?

Irvine, I could go all day on Irvine. Irvine is freaking awesome because it's centrally located in Orange County so we are able to get a lot of clientele from both northern O.C. and southern O.C. Our location in Skypark Circle is super close to the freeways: the 405, the 73, the 55 and close enough to the 5. We get a lot of people who work in Irvine and want to wait out traffic and go train with their coaches after work; then they don't have to sit in hours of traffic as they head home. That's been huge, just having a place where people can come after work and train. Actually, since moving to Irvine from Newport, we have more than doubled in size in less than a year, and I equate that to the location being in Irvine.

SoCal Powerlifting is always accepting new members, find their contact info below!

SoCal Powerlifting, 17795 Sky Park Circle #5G, Irvine; (949) 697-1641, socialpowerlifting.net.

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With the new year comes exciting new products, including hibiscus-infused water debuting this spring. For every premium 350ml glass bottle sold, eDot will contribute a percentage to Olive Crest. And for every liter sold, eDot will double its donation.

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THE CALL OF THE WILD REMAKE IS A DOGGONE DIGITAL DELIGHT

**ADAPTION CAPTURES JACK LONDON'S
WAGGISH WIT WITH CGI AND
IMMERSIVE CINEMATOGRAPHY.**

BY: ASHER LUBERTO

The Call of the Wild proves that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Thanks to a cute puppy and charming characters, Jack London's classic novel, which has translated poorly to the big screen thus far, finally comes to life here. And it's mostly thanks to CGI.

Yes we've seen this plot countless times, ever since the book, *The Call of the Wild*, was published in 1903. Since then, there have been dozens of both

film and literary adaptations, dating as far back as a silent version in 1923. *Wild* has been tackled by actors such as Clark Gable and Charlton Heston, and its influence can be seen everywhere. Kids still read it in school. Hemingway and Dos Passos were inspired by it at an early age. And we wouldn't have movies like *Old Yeller*, *Marley & Me* and *A Dog's Purpose* without it. So why did it take 117 years for a film to finally capture London's waggish wit?



COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS

In this film's case, technology makes it possible. Buck, the book's beloved canine hero, is a product of motion-capture-work. He's the size of two dogs combined, and his stomach makes him a prisoner of his own instincts. When dog-nappers tempt him with food, Buck licks his digital chops, then follows the scent. These baddies take him to Alaska, where he's sold to a local mailman, Perrault (Omar Sy), who leads a pack of sled dogs. Through dense forests and empty tundras, past avalanches and herds of deer, Buck guides his crew and the audience in thrilling chase sequences that make the most of the \$125 million budget.

The whole film is a joyride. Produced by 20th Century Studios – Disney's new label for 20th Century Fox – *The Call of the Wild* is more concerned with entertaining the whole family than exploring London's themes of nature vs. civilization. But that's OK. Because Buck is so adorable, and civilization here is so amiable, you'll be happy to go along for the ride.

Things really start picking up when Buck meets John (Harrison Ford). An old mountain man with a beard the size of Mount McKinley, John spends his days drinking in the wilderness, helping others whenever he can. One day that means saving Buck. When a Gold Rush prospector named Hal (Dan Stevens) buys Buck, sending him and a pack of dogs across thin ice, John comes to the rescue, saving our bleeding hero from drowning. It's a cute ice breaker that leads to a captivating bromance.

"How do you feel about an adventure?" John asks Buck. The two are star-gazing, and as Buck watches his new friend play harmonica, we know what his answer would be if he could talk. Of course Buck wants to go; he would go anywhere with John. So, they venture through spellbinding, photorealistic landscapes.

It feels like a leash has been taken off the audience when they explore Alaska's mountaintops. Cinematographer Janusz Kaminski captures Buck and John's liberation for the viewer quite deftly. By shooting from Buck's point of view – low angle shots on a gyroscopic camera – we feel as if we are right there with him. One memorable scene sees the two canoeing down a river. With a school of fish swimming below and a flock of eagles soaring above, the camera cuts to Buck's POV, staring up at sunny skies.

Not everyone will admire the CGI, though. Some have complained about the filmmaker's lack of pet actors, which is shortsighted. Considering the backlash Disney would have received if they used a real dog – making it swim down waterfalls and under icebergs – the use of digital effects seems like the right call here. Sometimes director Chris Sanders (*How to Train Your Dragon*) plays it safe where he shouldn't have, though. His dogmatic way of thinking confines him to some eye-rolling Disney tropes. But the pros outweigh the cons. And thanks to dazzling effects and soulful characters, this version of the classic runs at the head of the pack.

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COURTESY OF HULU

THE NEW *HIGH FIDELITY* AND WHY YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE AN ALBUM BY ITS COVER

WITH UPDATED SENSIBILITIES AND CHARACTERS, THE ADAPTION IS A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE ORIGINAL.

BY: LINA LECARO

Zoë Kravitz's character in Hulu's *High Fidelity* reboot is a self-admitted "asshole" who smokes and drinks too much, lies a lot, is self-absorbed and cheats on the love of her life. But critics – both professional and of the couch variety on social media – have a problem with her role that has nothing to do with how the character is written, how well the actress plays it or even how this modern take fares next to the beloved 2000 John Cusack/*Jack Black* film, or the original book by British writer Nick Hornby.

Apparently, people are taking issue with the actresses' beauty, which many have complained makes the story-line unbelievable. A woman this gorgeous wouldn't struggle romantically the way

Rob – the protagonist here – does, and she sure wouldn't be so neurotic as to over-think, self-doubt and pine for past loves by painstakingly crafting music playlists as seen here. Really?

This is not a compliment, people. It's judging an album by its cover without trying to listen to what's inside. Frankly it's sexist, and it's even sort of addressed in the show itself, when a pony-tailed music big-wig about to lose his incredible record collection to Rob (unbeknownst to him) makes the assumption that her date knows more about who played on what recording than she does. Assuming good looking people can't struggle romantically or be pathetic fanatics, belies what this new version is trying to do, which is transcend the stereotypes of the original.

High Fidelity is the ultimate music nerd narrative. Both the book and the movie spoke to those of us who live our lives with a ceaseless soundtrack running at all times, one which reflects the past, the present and the future, and shapes our outlook on relationships, the world and who we are. So while Robyn Brooks, as played by the offspring of Lenny Kravitz and Lisa Bonet (the latter of whom fans might remember was in the original movie) is really nice to look at, it is her words – spoken directly to the viewer – and her music choices that should get our full attention here. The first thing I did after binging the full 10 episodes was search for playlists from the show on Spotify – which are filled with everyone from Prince and Al Green to Zappa and Bowie. A perfect

playlist? Now that's a beautiful thing.

Kravitz's Rob owns an all-vinyl record store in Brooklyn (Cusack's was in Chicago). It's been about a year since she broke up with her fiancé Mac (Kingsley Ben Adir) and she's still not over it. In an effort toward self-reflection, she shares with us, the viewers, her top 5 heart breaks and how they went bad. It's 2020, so this includes a woman, as well as her now best friend Simon (David H. Holmes), who admitted he was gay while they were dating. He now works for her at the shop along with a sharp, rock-loving sista named Cherise (Da' Vine Joy Randolph, who truly lights up the screen just as she did in *Dolemite is My Name* and gives Jack Black a run for his money as the comic relief).

The trio's debates about pop culture and music, specifically as they pertain to categorizable themes, are the best thing about this version of *Fidelity*. "Top 5 Songs about Self-Love (aka Masturbation)... Go!" The Divinyls, Cyndi Lauper, Violent Femmes and more get shout-outs, and as the trio argue these kinds of lists throughout the series, we can't help but play along. The exchanges are as heated as they were in the movie, and have been updated here to reflect the dilemmas of modern fandom. Can any of us go into a music store and buy a Michael Jackson album without feeling shame these days? Well, maybe if we just think about Quincy's production work? Hmm...

Of course, nobody has to worry about this stuff if they don't want to anymore thanks to Amazon and Ebay, which makes the motivational subtext in this reboot markedly unique. The vinyl collecting and playlist-making (now done via streaming service on Rob's phone versus old school mixtapes of yore) and even one-upmanship (upwomanship!) in terms of arguing about music, are easily avoided and resolved thanks to smartphones, Google, Shazam and Discogs.com. Cusack and Black didn't have these kinds of resources, dude!

And of course, vinyl record shops are not really the destinations for musical discovery they used to be. They are places where nostalgia junkies and passionate weirdos converge to surround themselves with what they care about most. *High Fidelity* is about relationships and how we learn and grow from each, and don't get me wrong, its star is truly beguiling, but when it comes to the Top 5 reasons you should watch it, celebrating the love of music is definitely #1 on the list.



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