

STEPPING UP TO END HOMELESSNESS • THE NUTCRACKER AT IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE • WHERE TO GO FOR THANKSGIVING IN IRVINE

IRVINE

WEEKLY

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**NATIVE SEED FARM:
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF HARVEST**



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“If not for Keith’s compassion and superior defense strategy, we might have lost all of our hard-earned retirement savings to a very opportunistic claimant. The stress prior to retaining Keith was nearly unbearable.”

- Jim and Carol Hoffman

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PHOTO COURTESY IRVINE RANCH CONSERVANCY

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COVER: • Photo courtesy of Irvine Ranch Conservancy

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THE MURAL UNVEILING OF "HOME SWEET HOME," THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF MURALS UNITED TO END HOMELESSNESS WILL BE ROLLING OUT ACROSS THE COUNTY.

IRVINE PHILANTHROPISTS STEP UP TO END HOMELESSNESS

ORANGE COUNTY ALONE HAS NEARLY 7,000 HOMELESS IN EMERGENCY AND TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS AND ON THE STREETS AT LAST COUNT.

BY: DIANNE ANDERSON

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF UNITED TO END HOMELESSNESS

Coming up on the rainy holiday season, a dry roof overhead – even if that means different things for different people – is a priority for families. For roofers like Charles Antis, a dry home is more than a luxury. Without one, a house is a potential safety hazard; at other times, it's a big bill that

didn't always get paid.

After decades at the daily grind of his business, a simple act of kindness became a wake-up call of sorts: A young man extending a bottle of water to a homeless woman on a roadside caught his eye one day.

For the first time, Antis was noticing

more homelessness around Irvine and Mission Viejo. Before then, like a lot of people, he saw them, but then again he didn't really see them.

"Rather than think how I could help them – inadvertently or subconsciously – my mind became puzzled. I wonder[ed], where [did] they sleep?" he said.

In actuality, however, his "aha moment" may have occurred much earlier in life. He started his business three decades ago with little money and no employees. One day, he responded to a service call, happy to get any job. As a woman opened the door, he was hit by a strong smell of mold.



CHARLES ANTIS AND BECKS HEYHOE.

A bad leak was seeping into her young daughter's bedroom – a leak the mother simply couldn't afford to fix.

"I saw mattresses and moldy bedding where the siblings slept. That set me on this journey," explains Antis, a local philanthropist at Irvine-based Antis Roofing. "I wanted to leave, but the mom had this tired look on her face. Something came out of my voice box; I said, 'I'm going to take care of your roof.'"

So he pulled together a group of volunteers and made it happen.

These days, he's all in and realizes that putting the perfect roof on a house also means developing compassion in people. Under his moniker of "Every Nail Matters," Antis says business has soared, enabling him to give back to folks that need help.

It's all a circle.

"We gave them a crude but dry roof, and that family got to stay in their home. They didn't have any more leaks," he said.

Today, he continues to donate time and dollars, generously supporting the successful United to End Homelessness "House 30" campaign to help house 30 homeless families and individuals.

The initiative, led by OC United Way, includes dedicated collaboration of top businesses, philanthropists and governmental, faith-based and non-profit leaders.

Unfortunately, a lot of bias still exists, says Antis, often out of hubris. The homeless are labeled "lazy" or other derogatory terms to justify turning a blind eye. Having participated in the county's last point-in-time count of the homeless, he believes the average person would be shocked at what they see.

"It's our children, it's our parents," he said. "We saw veterans that we all believe deserve dignity and acknowledgment, but our brains have a bias. We're forgetting that they're there."

Doing the right thing isn't always popular. However, in his case, the unexpected outcome is also great for business. The more he gives, it seems, the more he receives.

That's a far cry from the early days when he didn't have money to fix a roof, but had a lot of heart and got it done anyway.

"Now that we're developing people, the roofs are so much better," he said, adding that most roofing companies experience high turnover. His retention rate is around 90 percent, and he



CHARLES ANTIS SIGNING PROCLAMATION

attracts top talent. "The reason I have them is because our story aligns with their story. We believe everyone deserves a decent place to live."

Becks Heyhoe, director of United to End Homelessness, said people like Charles Antis are moving their agency forward to accomplish the Housing 30 Campaign goals.

Through the initiative, public awareness and engagement, the community is being educated on homelessness solutions. Online advertising and social media sparked larger conversations to draw people and organizations to their initiative to end homelessness county-wide.

It may also come as a surprise that thousands are turning out to champion the cause. Their regular two-hour homeless advocacy 101 training is see-

ing lots of action, with classes running in 18 of Orange County's 34 cities.

"We've had 3,624 [people] attend that class," she said. "We know that people are very interested and want to learn more about how to be involved in addressing homelessness."

Classes provide an easy way to engage those who want to create change, to learn together in a gathering point, and join the movement.

"That's also very encouraging that Orange County residents care about this issue and want to see their leaders engaging in long-term solutions for homelessness," she said.

There is also the high cost of doing nothing. The agency estimates the county spent \$299 million in tax dollars assisting with homeless services for the year 2015 alone. Heyhoe said research

shows that providing long-term solutions is more cost effective.

Recently, local philanthropists around the county gave big to help move the campaign forward, coupled with funding from a variety of grants, foundations and an outpouring of support from the community.

They reached their \$500,000 goal in 30 days. Even so, Heyhoe said there is much more work to do.

In the last 2019 point-in-time count, there were 6,860 people experiencing homelessness in Orange County emergency shelters, transitional shelters and on the streets, with the latter being the majority.

"It might be a shocking number to some people that we have almost 7,000 people homeless here," she said. "To us, it feels like a feasible number

to be able to wrap our arms around. If Orange County continues to work together across sectors, we truly can end homelessness here."

Susan B. Parks, president and CEO of Orange County United Way, said the agency is appreciative of the many caring and influential business leaders, community partners and their volunteers.

They are paying it forward to make a big impact in the lives of others in the local community with their time and donations.

"With their continued commitment to help transform the lives of children and families in Orange County, we are closer to ensuring that everyone in Orange County has access to a quality education, a sustainable income, good health and stable housing," she said.

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NUTCRACKER

HERE COME THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES

FESTIVAL BALLET THEATRE WILL PRESENT THE NUTCRACKER AT IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE FROM DECEMBER 7 THROUGH CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY: SAM MACHADO

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FESTIVAL BALLET THEATRE

Irvine will have no shortage of Christmas cheer when one of the most iconic holiday stories comes on stage this December. Festival Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nut-*

cracker at Irvine Barclay Theatre will have all traditional musical numbers and enchanting holiday magic. Originally written by composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker* tells the

story of Clara, a young girl celebrating Christmas Eve when she receives a strange gift – a nutcracker. As the night continues, the nutcracker comes to life and takes Clara into a world of magic

and adventure.

Audience members will experience memorable moments from the ballet, including the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" and the "Waltz of the Snowflakes."



FBT's production is set to Tchaikovsky's renowned score and features colorful sets and dazzling costumes by award-winning designers Simon Pasutkh and Galina Solovyeva. The story has been delighting audiences and critics in Orange County for more than 30 years. Marketing director and former FBT ballerina Erin Nash said this show will be everything that Irvine residents are looking for. "Nothing captures the magic and warmth of the holidays like The Nutcracker. I personally love to see the wonder in the eyes of our audience. It's no wonder The Nutcracker has become a staple for so many in their holiday traditions."

Nash added, "FBT's breathtaking production of The Nutcracker makes this age-old holiday tradition sparkle like new. Audiences will be swept away as Clara, the Sugar Plum Fairy, dancing toys, mischievous mice, sparkling snowflakes, waltzing flowers and a cast of hundreds take them on a magical journey to mystical lands. If you're looking for the timeless, traditional tale of The Nutcracker, look no further. FBT's



version will not disappoint."

Directed and choreographed by Salwa Rizkalla, The Nutcracker will have talents from all across the Southland. In addition to FBT, the production includes talent from the San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet and Ballet West.

The performers include Tara Ghassemieh, Maria Kochetkova, Jeraldine Mendoza and Beckanne Sisk as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Dylan Gutierrez, Victor Luiz and Chase O'Connell will play the Cavalier.

For a truly fulfilling experience, pa-

trons also have the opportunity to attend a pre-show Nutcracker Tea one hour before the musical. Nash described this as "a very special experience, especially for families of young children. Parents are served champagne while children enjoy tea sandwiches, sweet treats, lemonade and tea – and they get to meet and take pictures with Clara and other cast members!"

As a nonprofit organization, FBT relies on philanthropic donations to spread appreciation for art and dance. Nash said the company has been fortunate enough to have a donor this year who will match all donations that FBT receives for up to \$10,000. Not only does FBT present unique performances and provide a nurturing experience for the dancers, they also offer educational outreach programs. This includes the Ballet to School program and Children's Invitation to Ballet.

The Nutcracker opens at Irvine Barclay Theatre on December 7 and continues through December 24. For more details, visit thebarclay.org and festivalballet.org.



LAS VEGAS PERIPHERY: ABANDONED SITE" - PHOTO BY LAURIE BROWN

AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND SCIENCE

LAGUNA MUSEUM'S ART & NATURE FESTIVAL PRESENTS ENGAGING EXHIBITIONS DEPICTING CELESTIAL HARMONIES, DUSKY BEACHES AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.

BY: LIZ GOLDNER

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Laguna Art Museum's seventh annual Art & Nature festival, held November 7 through November 10, presented four aesthetically stunning landscape exhibitions, along with family-friendly activities, films and lectures.

Comprising painting, photography, etchings and a film installation, the exhibitions – all on view into January 2020 – explore art's engagement with the natural world. In comments about the shows, museum executive director Malcolm Warner said that they address the connections of art and science. He added that the Getty Foundation's third Pacific Standard Time art initiative, "Art x Science x LA," to open in 2024, will also address the art/science connection.

The exhibition's mission is in part to explore the conjunctions of art and science, while also raising awareness of environmental issues. To that end, a lecture titled "From Nature to Ecology: The Emergence of Ecocritical Art History," was presented by Alan C. Braddock, Ph.D. and associate professor of art history and American studies at The College of William & Mary. Among his prescient remarks was the following: "Is art becoming more urgent and activist in response to the current state of planetary environmental emergency? If so, does this emergency foster diverse forms of aesthetic creativity and experimentation, or does it constrain artists by encouraging only the most blunt and obvious expressions? What, if any, artistic style or

styles are emerging?"

The two-channel 4k projection video exhibition, "Yorgo Alexopoulos: 360° Azimuth," shown in the museum's largest central gallery, provides a compelling answer to Braddock's question; the artist combines paintings and drawings (his and those of others) with photography and video filmed in diverse parts of the world, along with large computer-generated graphics in the form of moving reproductions of Euclidean geometric shapes, and haunting new-age type sound.

Azimuth's continually moving widescreen video brings an artist's enlightened vision of the outdoors into the indoors. This is the museum's first art exhibition commissioned by Art & Nature to be shown within the



"INDIAN SUMMER" - BY THOMAS HUNT



"LAS VEGAS PERIPHERY: CLUBHOUSE ON THE EDGE" - PHOTO BY LAURIE BROWN

museum walls – not outside on Main Beach, as with previous commissioned installations.

The total effect of this meditative art installation, with its subliminal references to SoCal's 1960s and '70s Light and Space Movement artworks, is subject to personal interpretation. Yet this reviewer found it to be mesmerizing and almost otherworldly, engaging visitors with seeming celestial harmonies. "360° Azimuth"

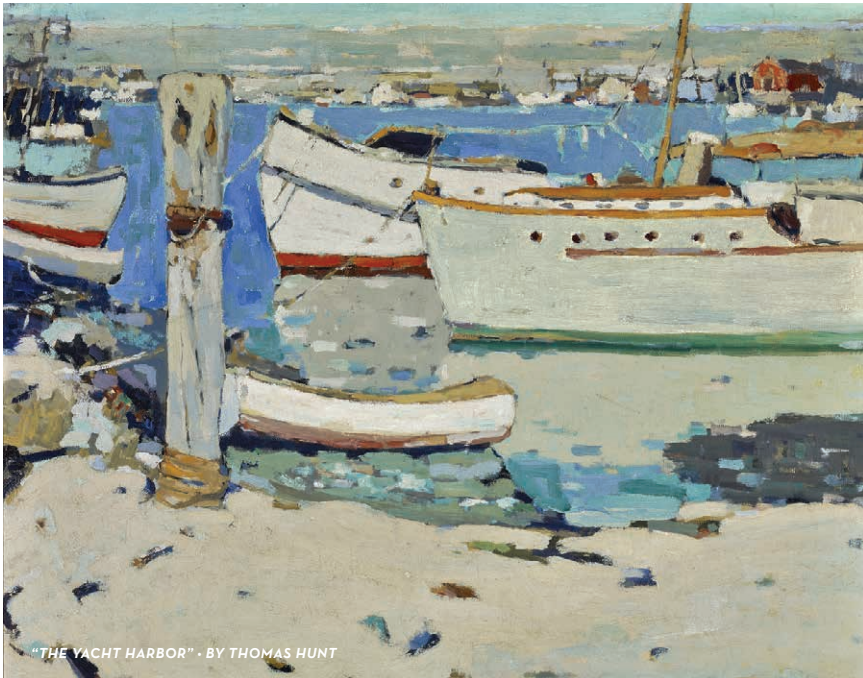
might then provide an answer to lecturer Braddock's aforementioned question: "What, if any, artistic style or styles are emerging?"

Three other landscape-inspired exhibitions in the museum, while more traditional in nature, are a "breath of fresh air" in part because they display not often seen artworks. "Thomas Hunt: California Modernist" features 50 of the relatively unknown

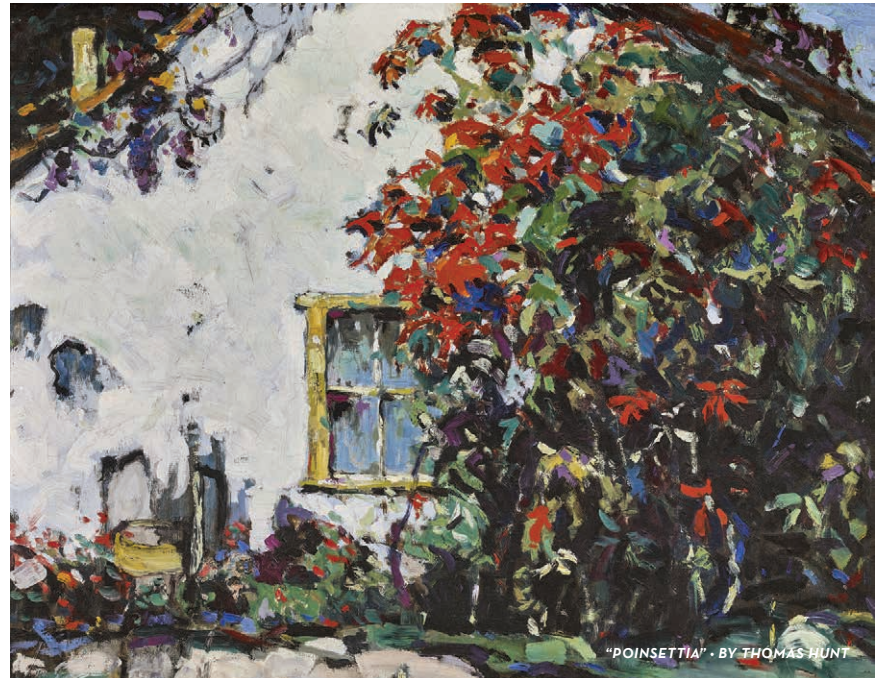
artist's modern art-inspired landscapes, most of them painted in the 1920s and '30s. These seascapes and landscapes, depicting scenes in New England and along the Southern California coast, employ broad brushstrokes and are inspired by forms and styles from the modern art era (as opposed to the earlier plein air or impressionist style paintings, which the museum so often exhibits). Further, his bright coloration, according



"LAS VEGAS PERIPHERY: MARKING THE EDGE" - PHOTO BY LAURIE BROWN



"THE YACHT HARBOR" - BY THOMAS HUNT



"POINSETTIA" - BY THOMAS HUNT

to museum director Warner, is similar to that of the early 20th century fauve (meaning wild beast) artists. This show is only the second solo exhibition of this artist's work.

"Laurie Brown: Photographs," on the museum's lower level, are landscape photos, created in Southern California and in Las Vegas. While described as documenting mankind's relationship to the landscape, they have no human figures within them. Instead, these often-panorama style pictures depict humankind's besmirching of the land through aggressive suburban development, alongside contrasting bucolic images of our still virgin landscapes. It is a dramatic exhibition, addressing ecological change, with many photos created before our environmental movement became so prevalent.

"Etchings by Mildred Bryant Brooks," on this venue's upper level, rounds out the museum's Art & Nature exhibitions. The artist's finely etched landscapes, many depicting pastoral scenes in 20th century Southern California (where the artist lived most of her life until her death in 1995) demand time and attention to fully comprehend, as she was a master printmaker, with a

technique reminiscent of Rembrandt and Goya's.

Brooks studied classic artistic technique in several SoCal art schools in the 1920s, was a member of the California Society of Etchers, California Society of Printmakers, Chicago Society of Etchers, Society of American Etchers and the Pasadena Society of Artists, and won 22 awards. Her work is included in the Library of Congress.

During the Art & Nature press preview, executive director Warner referenced previous outdoor installations, as part of this annual museum celebration. He discussed and showed pictures of the first installation there by renowned SoCal artist Lita Albuquerque. For her performance, *An Elongated Now*, on Main Beach in 2014, she assembled 200 volunteers in Heisler Park. She led the volunteers down a winding pathway to the beach; they then walked silently to the water's edge, following the arc of the shoreline, as the low tide was gently lapping and the sun was falling toward the ocean. At twilight, the artist's daughter Jasmine ceremoniously moved down the line, tapping each participant on the shoulder, signaling each to switch

on a small blue light and to turn slowly. As they rotated, they symbolized harmony within the movement of the earth and the planets.

Local artist Elizabeth Turk's "Shoreline Project," held in 2018, also on Main Beach, featured 1,000 performers, each carrying an LED-illuminated umbrella, imprinted with the symmetrical inner structures of shells. The performers walked, skipped and danced on the beach in spontaneous and choreographed movements. They also engaged the visitors on the beach and in the town of Laguna Beach. Choreographer Lara Wilson explained the performers' dance movements, saying, "I included virtuosic moments to highlight the unique abilities of the dancers, in contrast to the elements – to the high tides, to the sand, and to the darkening sky following the sunset."

Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach; Mon.-Tue. & Fri.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu., 11 a.m.-9 p.m. "Yorgo Alexopoulos: 360° Azimuth" on view through January 5, 2020. "Thomas Hunt," "Laurie Brown" and "Mildred Bryant Brooks" on view through January 12, 2020. lagunaart-museum.org.



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF HARVEST

IRVINE RANCH CONSERVANCY'S NATIVE SEED FARM PROVIDES NATURAL RESOURCES FOR HABITAT RESTORATION THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

BY: TARA FINLEY

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF IRVINE RANCH CONSERVANCY

Nestled in the hills of Irvine, the Irvine Ranch Conservancy's Native Seed Farm is celebrating 10 years of growth and harvest.

Born out of the destruction of the Santiago Fire, the farm was cultivated on a parcel of a burned-out avocado orchard. From its beginning in 2009, what was once a small farm has developed into something much larger. Since the move to its current home in the heart of Irvine, the farm now grows over 50 species which produce approximately 1,000 pounds of seed per year.

The purpose of the farm? To sustainably provide natural resources for habitat restoration throughout the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, which

includes Limestone Canyon.

"The Native Seed Farm began as an innovative idea from IRC [Irvine Ranch Conservancy] staff as a way to sustainably support restoration efforts on the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks," said Irvine Ranch Conservancy president and CEO, Michael O'Connell. "Since 2009, our team has learned so much, allowing us to expand the farm operation to support our growing restoration program."

In an effort to preserve the vitality of the land in a cost-effective and eco-friendly manner, IRC staffers committed to learn how to farm. The organization was facing a critical point due to the lack of the plant materials needed to restore the landmarks. By

collecting seeds from the wild and growing them on their own farm, the committed team was able to not only build up the resources needed, but do so in a way that maintained the natural flora of Irvine.

The goal of the Native Seed Farm is to not only provide a reliable source of plant material for restoration projects, but to educate the public about Irvine's local wild lands and encourage community involvement.

"The farm was started as a direct response to an issue, but it has evolved into a community outreach asset," said O'Connell. "Thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers, we've not only been able to produce the plant materials and seed needed for our resto-

ration projects, but get the community involved and educate them along the way."

In order to produce enough seed to support ongoing restoration efforts, the IRC relies on the help of volunteers. As the organization celebrates its 10th operating year, they hope to welcome more community volunteers, as well as expand their farm programs and activities for the public.

"We hope the Native Seed Farm can serve as a model for other organizations looking to create a native seed farm to support their own restoration efforts," said O'Connell. "We are so pleased with how far the Native Seed Farm has come and can't wait to see what the next 10 years will bring!"



ORDERING IN OR EATING OUT? HERE'S WHERE TO GO FOR THANKSGIVING IN IRVINE

FROM CLASSIC HOLIDAY OFFERINGS TO NEW TWISTS ON TRADITIONAL DISHES.

BY: TARA FINLEY

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAVIO'S

Thanksgiving is here. If you feel like enjoying the holiday without the extra serving of stress that comes with planning and preparing an elaborate meal, join us at one of the many restaurants in Irvine that offer decadent buffets or memorable plates. Using our stomachs as a trusted guide,

here are our suggestions for a great Thanksgiving meal that you don't have to cook! Given the popularity of those listed, advanced purchase or reservations are strongly encouraged.

Habana

If you're looking to spice up your

Thanksgiving experience, check out Habana's Cuban-inspired Thanksgiving buffet. From 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on November 28, Habana will be serving Caribbean spice roasted turkey breast, smoked pork loin, yucca mashed potatoes, coconut cream pie and much, much more. Known for their delicious food, lively atmosphere and house mojitos, this is a great spot to enjoy turkey day. 708 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine; \$65 adults, \$38 kids under 10; restauranthabana.com/irvine.

Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse

If one thing is sure, it's that you won't ever have a bad meal at Davio's. If you're craving classic dishes this Thanksgiving, Davio's is offering a plated feast from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Nov. 28. The meal includes oven-roasted organic turkey, Yukon Gold creamy potatoes, green beans, challah bread stuffing, homemade apple pie and more. Children under 12 get their own plate of turkey, stuffing, creamy potatoes and gravy. Sad about missing out on Thanksgiving leftovers? Davio's offers "Tomorrow's Turkey Sandwich" to go; a decadent sandwich stuffed with turkey, cranberry apple chutney, gravy, and of course, stuffing. 8420 Von Karman Ave #100, Irvine; \$65 per person, \$23 kids under 12; davios.com/irv.

The Backyard at Hotel Irvine

Looking for something casual and kid-friendly this Thanksgiving? The Backyard at Hotel Irvine puts a twist on the holiday, offering not only food, but fun as well. Complete with food stations, a dessert station, live music, face painting, a photo booth, lawn games, a petting zoo and more, this is a celebration that's sure to put smiles on the faces of all members of the family. Seatings are at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Menu items include breakfast favorites, smoked salmon, shaved Brussels sprouts, pumpkin bisque, roasted turkey, apple cranberry cobbler and more. The kids' buffet serves up cheesy noodles, tater tots, meatballs and steamed broccoli. 17900 Jamboree Road, Irvine; \$79 adults, \$37 children ages 5-12; hotelirvine.com/holidays.

Eats Kitchen & Bar

Also located inside Hotel Irvine, Eats will be hosting a traditional sit-down dinner from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thanksgiving.

Their main course includes your choice of oven-roasted turkey or honey-glazed ham, mashed potatoes, sage stuffing, cranberry sauce and more. A starter butter lettuce salad and dessert of bruleed pumpkin tart can be added for an additional fee. 17900 Jamboree Road, Irvine; prices vary; hotelirvine.com/eats-kitchen-bar.

Del Frisco's Grille

This Thanksgiving, Del Frisco's is offering a special menu that combines their classics with traditional Thanksgiving dishes. Serving up starters such as butternut squash bisque and cheesesteak eggrolls, holiday entrees like herb & citrus butter roasted turkey along with steaks, seafood and sides, this is the place you want to go if you your party has a range of tastes. If there's a sweet tooth in the group, they'll be happy to choose from desserts like peanut butter chocolate pie and molten chocolate cake. Open during regular restaurant hours. 772 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine; prices vary; delfriscosgrille.com.

Ruth's Chris Steak House

If you're looking to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal this holiday, Ruth's Chris will be hosting a sit-down dinner where guests will savor oven-roasted turkey breast with sausage and herb stuffing along with homemade gravy and cranberry relish. Each meal comes with a pumpkin cheesecake and vanilla ice cream dessert, along with your choice of starter and side. We recommend their sweet potato casserole, one of the best we've ever had. 2961 Michelson Drive, Suite A, Building 10, Irvine; \$41.95 adults, \$14.95 kids; ruthschris.com.

Urban Plates

If you want to host Thanksgiving dinner at home, but don't feel like cooking, Urban Plates is taking reservations for their Turkey Family Feast, which feeds a family of six to eight people. The menu includes free-range turkey breast, mushroom stuffing, gravy and all your favorites. Already fully cooked, all you have to do is heat it up! They also offer family sides to go, along with whole desserts like fresh apple pie and their seasonal pumpkin walnut cake. If you want to dine in, they're open Thanksgiving day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. 3972 Barranca Parkway, Irvine; prices vary; urbanplates.com/thanksgiving.

CANNABIS COMPLIANCE FIRM

The Cannabis Compliance Firm is composed of the best cannabis-focused attorneys in Southern California. We combine years of experience in cannabis law and industry-specific insight to help you stay compliant and thriving. Christopher Glew and Jina Kim are expert cannabis attorneys assisting numerous clients in legal licensed cannabis regulation, cannabis manufacturing, cannabis cultivation, cannabis retail operations and cannabis distribution. Christopher Glew is lead counsel for the Santa Ana Cannabis Association and founder of the California Cannabis Bar Association. Feel confident that the Cannabis Compliance Firm will educate and advise you every step of the way. We know the laws and with the ever-changing cannabis space, you should too. Call or visit our office located in Santa Ana for a consult today!



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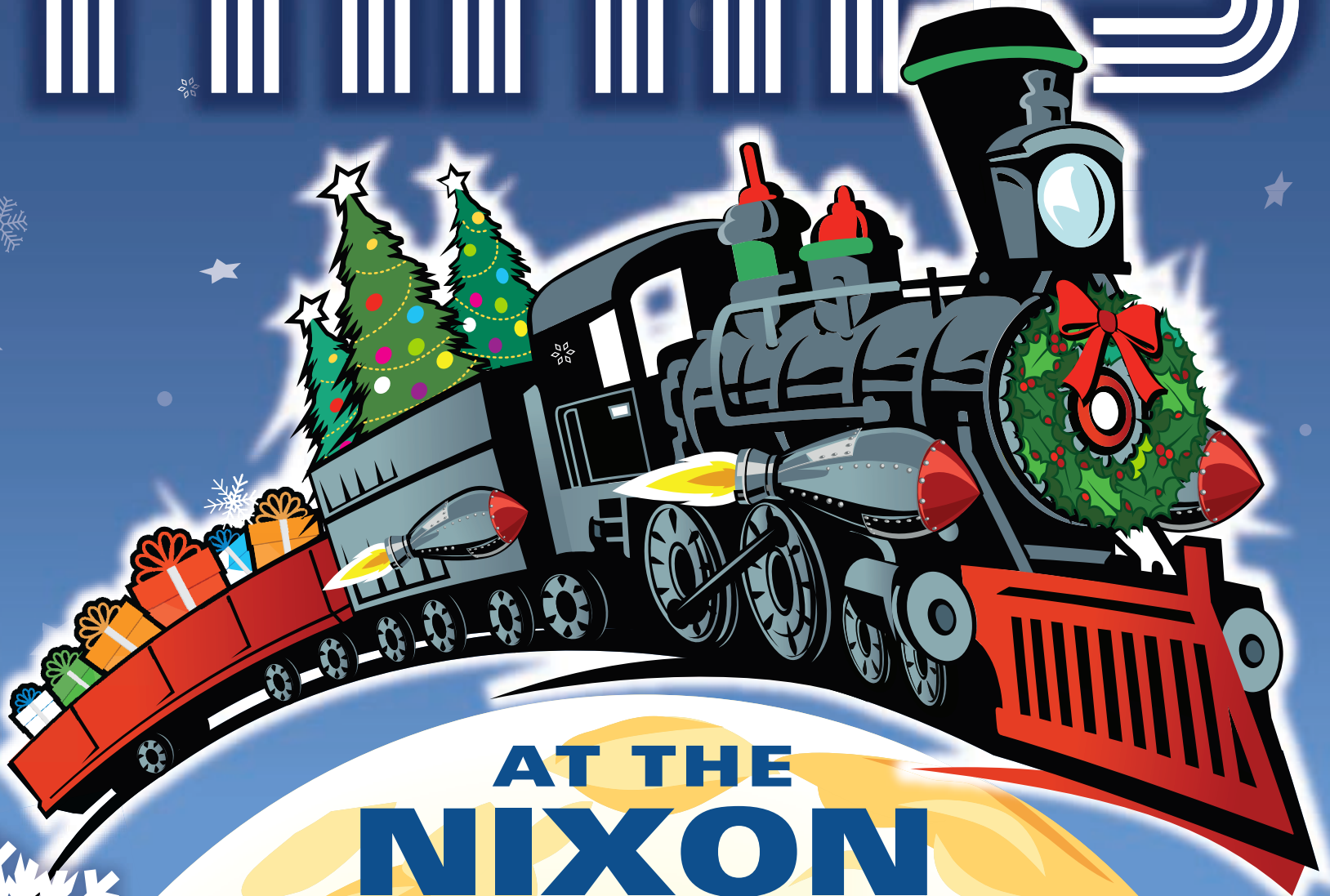
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