

GREAT PARK GALLERY REMEMBERS EL TORO LEGACY • IRVINE'S ORGAIN LEADS WITH PRODUCT INNOVATION

**IRVINE**

**WEEKLY**

MARCH 18, 2020 • VOL. 02, No. 11

# URBAN SEOUL 2.0

IRVINE'S NEW KOREAN-AMERICAN FUSION GASTROPUB



# IRVINE WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

## EMPLOYMENT



### Tax Accountant:

prepare tax returns & other tax filings; 40hrs/wk; Send resume to Hall & Company CPAs and Consultants, Inc. Attn: HR, 111 Pacifica, Ste. 300, Irvine, CA 92618

### Fashion Designer:

F/T, BA degree in Design or related; Send resume to Damo Textiles, Inc. 5080 S. Alameda St. Vernon, CA 91058.

### BUSINESS DEVT MGR

sought by Sunpin Solar Development, LLC in Irvine, CA. Plan, direct, & coord bus devt activities re: sales of solar PV cells. REQ: MA/MS in Business, Mgmt, Mktg or rel + 1 yr bus devt, sales/proj mgmt or rel exp. Send CV to: Rachel Cummings, 2020 Main St., Ste. 300, Irvine, CA 92614.

### Business Development Specialist:

Analyze competing firms' marketing methods. App must have Bachelor's deg. in Trade, International Development Studies, or related field. Mail resume to Joyrich USA Inc. at 233 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036; Attn: Ms. Lee

### IT

City National Bank has an oppy in Los Angeles, CA for a Info Security Engr IV. Mail resume to Attn: I. Markaryan, 555 S Flower St, 18th Fl, Los Angeles, CA 90071; Ref #LAVGU. Must be legally auth to work in the US w/o spnshp. EOE

### E-Commerce Marketing Manager:

develop & manage a comprehensive online strategy to improve sales, ux, marketing roi & customer satisfaction. Master's in Comm. Mgmt. Mail Resume to: Instaco LLC, Attn HR: 2030 E. Vista Bella, Rancho Dominguez, CA 90220

### Developer Advisor

sought by Anthem, Inc. in Cerritos, CA to provide maintenance and production support for a self-service business intelligence environment and to establish methods for tracking data quality and improvement. Apply at www.jobpostingtoday.com, Ref# 66358.

### Senior Logistics Manager

sought by BBC Freight Line, Inc. in La Puente, CA: Mng & motvte 3 dirct rep. Dvlp, st-dize, & dploy Logistics struc that is integ w/in globl supp chain & min tot cst while provdng supr cust serv. Use conts impvmt & KPI's to drive & quant cst opt & eff. Id & impl initiatives 4 tact opt of daily ops that impv eff & result in opt trans mode & wrehouse cap. Partner w/ mngt in resrc plan & proc exec, regarding sales Forecast, inv lev & supp chain mngmt. Dvlp/mng stratgic alliances w/ 3rd prty logistics serv 4 trans & wrehousing. Est metrics, track KPIs & ensure timely & acc reprting to supp biz needs. Mont transactional & cntrct expen & all csting data, perf trend anly track & rep cst savngs & eff impvmt. Posit will supv. 3 subords. Req: Master's in Mngt/Logistics/Supp Chain. Prof. in SAP syst, SQL, Lean, & Six Sigma. 10% Domestic Travel Req, Mainly to NY & Chicago. Each Trip w/in 1 Week. Apply: Mail CV to J.Chen, 13936 Valley Blvd #A, La Puente, CA 91746.

### Sr Quality Engr & Product Manager

Zeco Systems, Inc. dba Greenlots has openings in Los Angeles, CA. Product Mngr, Smart Grid: Develop analysis, create frameworks & solutions (May be assigned to various, unanticipated site throughout the US). Sr Quality Engr: deploy pipeline, review code + mentorship. Submit resume (principals only) to: drivera@greenlots.com & include recruitment source + full job title/s of interest in subject line. EOE

### Accounting Clerk.

Req'd: Bachelors in Accounting, Business Administration, or related. Mail Resume: MAX IGL, INC. 1250 W. Artesia Blvd. Compton, CA 90220

### Architectural Designer

Will use AutoCAD to design and draft for Scott Beck Architect in LA, CA. Must have BA in ARCH. Please send resume to ops@Scottbeckaia.com

### MARKETING

BYD Coach & Bus LLC has an opening in Los Angeles, CA for Marketing Associate to maintain and manage BYD Coach and Bus's business database. Ref job code C#4489749 & mail resume to: BYD Coach & Bus LLC, Attn: HR, 1800 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

### Fujitsu Glovia Inc.

has a System Engineer (Job Code #FGI00077) job opening in El Segundo, CA: Support the current HTML5/CSS3/JQuery/Java Scripts/MVC based products. Mail resume to attn: HR Shared Services Staffing, 2821 Telecom Pkwy, MC-C1A, Richardson, TX 75082. Must include job title and job code to be considered.

### Civil Engineer. Req'd:

Bachelor's in Civil Engineering or related. Mail Resume: ANGELES CONTRACTOR, INC. 783 Phillips Dr. City of Industry, CA 91748

### Assistant Manager

is sought by Relo Redac, Inc. in Torrance, CA to assist in managing real estate business in Los Angeles & assess Japanese clients real estate needs. Req. BA deg in any field + 2 yrs exp. assessing Japanese clients' real estate needs, providing real estate consultation re: real estate sales, purchases, rentals & investments, & advising Japanese clients on various aspects of their housing renovation plans, housing structures, cost estimates, tax considerations & compliance w/ real estate regs. CA State Real Estate Salesperson License. Must be fluent in Japanese. Email CV: rshimizu@redacinc.com

### Responsive Technologies Inc

seeks IT Project Managers (2) in Los Angeles, CA and client sites to manage budget, schedule and milestones of IT projects for client companies. Requires: Master Degree or equivalent in Computer Science or closely related field and 1 year of work experience. Must be proficient in Waterfall and Agile/SCRUM framework, AWS, CICD, REST APIs and SOAP web services. Send resume to: Responsive Technologies, Inc., 11755 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1250, Los Angeles, CA, 90025

### Multimedia Specialist.

Req'd: Bachelor's in Multimedia Design, Art, Film, or related. Mail Resume: LIME 'N' CHILI, INC. 800 E. 12th St. #112, Los Angeles, CA 90021

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COURTESY URBAN SEOUL

## URBAN SEOUL 2.0 BRINGS KOREAN FLAVOR TO THE SPECTRUM

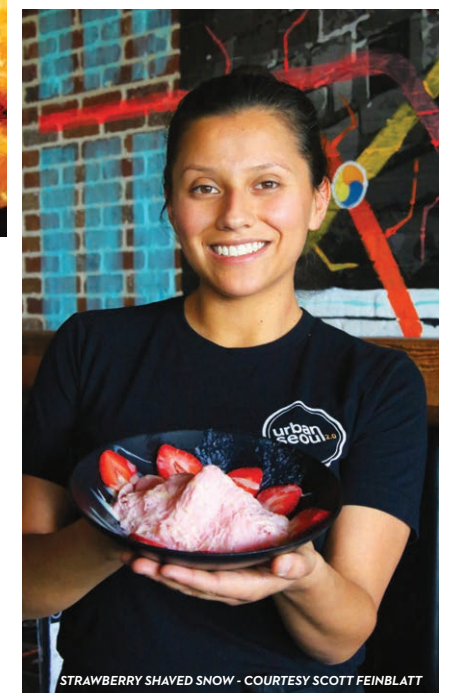
**A BEVY OF UPSCALE ASIAN-FUSION DISHES IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY.**

About 20 years ago, I was introduced to my first Korean food. Two Korean school friends of mine invited me to dine with them at a glorious Korean barbecue palace in L.A. which no longer exists. They introduced me to the components and procedures for cooking and assembling beef lettuce wraps, with which I immediately fell in love. A few years

later, I was introduced to another type of Korean dining experience, when I was taken to a Korean tofu soup house. From the moment the raw egg was dumped into the hot and spicy soup, where it cooked in front of my eyes, I was hooked on that as well. While I am certainly no expert on Korean food, I have enjoyed routinely discovering new dishes over the years. When

Irvine Weekly recently received an invitation to check out the Korean-American fusion gastropub Urban Seoul 2.0 at Irvine Spectrum, I was eager to fasten my napkin to my collar and dive in. My instincts served me well.

When I stopped in, on one fine Sunday afternoon, the chicly decorated gastropub only had about a half-dozen other dining parties. I guessed that busi-



STRAWBERRY SHAVED SNOW - COURTESY SCOTT FEINBLATT

ness might be slower in the afternoon, as most people don't begin drinking until well after noon. Regardless, I was impressed and felt welcomed by the establishment's urban design, which featured hanging old-style light bulbs encased in cages and walls bearing a

BY: SCOTT FEINBLATT





COURTESY URBAN SEUL

sparsely-painted brick veneer. I chose the option of sitting indoors, although most of the other diners were outside, with one person sipping beer at the bar. Glancing at their menu, I was a bit overwhelmed. The menu categories include: bowls, specialty items, tacos, sandwiches/sliders, salads, shareable sides, kids' options, desserts and drinks.

My eyes bounced around at the multitudinous colorful dish titles and descriptions. Where would I start? With the chicken stir-fried udon? Gogi gravy fries? Angus kalbi sliders? Each item sounded more exotic and decadent than the last. Fortunately, the friendly staff assisted me with my deliberations. For openers, I sampled their Urban Pork Bun, which their menu describes as "braised and seared pork belly, mixed greens, cucumber kimchi, gochujang aioli in steamed rice bun." When the dish was placed in front of me, I was already in love with the artistry of the presentation. Next, when my teeth sank into that soft, little, white bun and the mini-slab of pork, allowing me to access the cornucopia of flavors contained therein, my eyes rolled back in my head as I half-sighed, half-grunted a yummy sound.

By the time I finished the last bite, the next item was placed before me. For the

second round, I had the spicy rice cakes (crispy rice cakes topped with sweet & spicy sauce). The rice cakes themselves were about the size of corn puffs and each looked like a binary star system (or conjoined corn puffs, if you will). While the dish was fairly simplistic, the delicious sauce, combined with the texture of the rice cakes was highly satisfying. I probably could have called it a day with those two dishes, but I also had a main dish and a dessert to negotiate; additionally, while Urban Seoul 2.0 also had an impressive drink menu, I did have a drive home to consider.

When my waitress set my Urban 3B bowl down onto the table, a flying saucer may as well have landed; the thing was enormous. Decoratively presented, of course, the bowl contained: shredded romaine lettuce, purple cabbage, cucumber, carrot, daikon sprout, fried onion, poached egg and sesame oil, all over purple rice (which I chose rather than the white rice) with chili paste dressing. The Urban 3B can be ordered with optional proteins added in the form of: pork belly, gogi, spicy pork, chicken, tofu, spicy tuna and/or kalbi. I went with the three protein option and selected pork belly, gogi and spicy pork. As my waitress instructed me on the preferred consumption procedure, my



URBAN PORK BUN - COURTESY SCOTT FEINBLATT

eyes glazed over; I was definitely in over my head, but then I remembered that my dear readers were depending on me, so I shook off my encroaching food coma, grabbed that bottle of sweet and spicy sauce, poured it on, and tossed that baby before diving in.

My taste buds continued their swim down the river of decadence. You're not going to want to skimp on that sweet and spicy sauce; given the size of the

bowl and how many ingredients were contained therein, a liberal application will be necessary to provide the perfect balance of taste and textures. Concession: I don't think I made it five bites into the dish before that food coma was back on my case, so I determined to finish the bowl at home, shoved it aside, and meditated on emptiness while awaiting my dessert.

As par for the courses, the strawberry shaved snow was decadent in appearance. Fortunately for me, besides being delicious, sweet and refreshing, it also had a light and fluffy consistency, so it tricked me into thinking I could pack it in, which I did. Suffice it to say, I didn't need to eat again for the rest of the day.

Later, after I recovered, I reached out to Nick Choi, Urban Seoul 2.0's manager, who gave me the scoop about the five-and-a-half-year-old restaurant's origin. "Urban Seoul 2.0 was established following the success of Urban Seoul in Diamond Jamboree plaza in Irvine. We wanted a bigger space and a more upscale menu to improve our diners'

experience," Choi said. He added that while there is nothing definitive yet to announce, the Urban Seoul team is "currently in the works of adding a new location." I'll be keeping my eyes peeled for that new location, but in the meantime, I'll be returning to Urban Seoul 2.0.

Urban Seoul 2.0, 714 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine; (949) 727-1900, [urbanseoul2.com](http://urbanseoul2.com).





## THE GHOSTS OF EL TORO

**“MCAS EL TORO, 2003” PROVIDES A GLIMPSE OF FORMER BASE’S HISTORY AND PREVIOUS RESIDENTS’ LIVES.**

The Great Park Gallery, on the campus of the Orange County Great Park, has a special relationship with six photographers who call themselves the Legacy Project. In 2003, these inveterate picture-takers resolved to capture photographs of the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, along with photo tributes to its

long legacy, as it transitioned into the Great Park.

They continued shooting photos of the burgeoning park for more than a decade, ultimately capturing more than 400,000 images. Since 2011, the Great Park Gallery has mounted several exhibitions featuring Legacy Project images. Many of these photos demonstrate

the project members’ expertise as photographic artists, with each working in his own inimitable style.

Yet this **“MCAS El Toro”** exhibition is comprised of some of the earliest Legacy Project photos, all taken in 2003. These images documented the then still-standing Marine Corps buildings and structures, many constructed during and

after World War II – decades before the base was decommissioned in 1999, and construction of the Great Park began.

Many of these buildings were simple in design and nondescript, catering to basic needs, while others were more complex, serving the requirements of strategic military missions. Further, as the photos show, most of the structures had clearly deteriorated since the marine station was decommissioned.

Some of these photos, including those of aircraft hangars, airstrip control towers and bunkers storing weapons and bombs, reveal their functions. There are also mundane offices and barracks, with their doors and windows shut. Others structures contain ambiguities,

JACQUES GARNIER



with their curiously positioned and sized windows and doors. The viewer might like to enter and explore these buildings to find out what functions they served.

In introductory material to the El Toro exhibition, Tyler Stallings, director, Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, Orange Coast College, writes: "The original buildings were built with typical military functionality and current need in mind, that is, aesthetics and longevity were not at the top of the list of requirements, most likely. The benefit of the Legacy Project's efforts, as demonstrated with this exhibition, is that their artistic impulse created an archive that has generated a dialogue between the present-day park and the absent military base of the past."

In fact, there is a film noir quality to these photos, as the simple, functional buildings, offset by dark shadows, ominous skies and/or decaying vegetation, possess a feeling of mystery, along with a longing for the past.

In 2006, the six project members, along with 400 volunteers, created "The Great Picture," the world's



largest photograph. They shot the 3,375-square-foot photo from a camera obscura, which was retrofitted from a jet fighter hangar at the closed

marine base. They made their 35-minute exposure through a six-millimeter aperture onto a single seamless muslin canvas, and processed the photograph in an Olympic-size pool turned into a giant developing tray. The giant photograph, three stories high by 11 stories wide, portrays the base's control tower, structures and runways, with a backdrop of the San Joaquin Hills. Guinness World Records certifies the camera obscura as "The largest pin-hole camera."

The Great Picture's enormous custom-made shipping crate, with the picture in it, is also displayed at the El Toro exhibition, along with a negative reproduction of its image.

#### A Bit of History

When the six Legacy Project members – Jerry Burchfield, Mark Chamberlain, Jacques Garnier, Rob Johnson, Doug McCulloh and Clayton Spada – first prowled the 4,700-acre base in 2003, they photographed the remnants of life there, of a place that had been occupied by hundreds of thousands of marines and their families for decades. These remnants included officers' homes, backyards, playgrounds, theaters and a shopping mall.

As Chamberlain once explained, "As with most photographers, we are insatiable alley walkers and there were innumerable nooks and crannies to explore in a territory normally off limits to civilians. It was a shooter's delight, and this haunting landscape gave us

all itchy trigger fingers."

In addition to photos of building exteriors at the base, Burchfield's early images concentrated on the presence of the military people who served there, revealing footprints painted onto floors, murals and drawings on walls, rooms with furniture strewn about, clothing and toys. Chamberlain's photos favored outdoor scenes of runways, hangars and Quonset huts. He shot pictures from various angles, at different times of the day, creating aesthetic images. Garnier's pictures, bordering on the surreal, featured torn drapes and broken blinds as daylight filtered in.

McCulloh's work explored angled compositions as he involved himself in the images in nearly imperceptible ways. Spada shot runways with striping, cracks and vegetation creeping through. He regarded fading elements as modern petroglyphs, relics of a vanishing society. The most Impressionist images were Johnson's landscapes. He employed raindrops and fog to create pictures inspired by an earlier time.

Many of the above images, exhibited in museums and galleries over the years, are laboriously archived by Legacy Project members. Perhaps they will display these magnificent pictures as subsequent iterations to their photos in this MCAS exhibition.

Over the years, as Legacy Project members continued to document the transition of the base into the Great Park, they became aware of plans to create elaborate architectural, landscaping and environmental features within the park. Those amenities, as described by New York-based landscape architect Ken Smith in 2009, would include, "sustainability at a large scale, making social spaces that promote community and health, connections to regional identity and a sense of history."

While many of those plans have been scaled down or scrapped, the Great Park today proudly displays its Carousel, Balloon Ride, Kids Rock and Farm + Food Lab, all of which have been documented by the Legacy Project.

"MCAS El Toro" is on view through May 17. Great Park Gallery, Palm Court Art Complex, Orange County Great Park, Irvine; Thu. & Fri., noon-4 p.m.; Sat. & Sun., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; free. [cityofirvine.org/orange-county-great-park/arts-exhibitions](http://cityofirvine.org/orange-county-great-park/arts-exhibitions).

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DR. ANDREW ABRAHAM - COURTESY OF ORGAIN

## ORGAIN LEADS WITH PRODUCT INNOVATION

### IRVINE-BASED NUTRITIONAL COMPANY SETS ITS SIGHTS ON EXPANSION FROM NUTRITION NICHE INTO MAINSTREAM MARKET.

When 17-year-old Andrew was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of muscle cancer, his recovery post chemotherapy and radiation treatment included homemade organic shakes to help gain his appetite and strength. The only shakes available in the market at the time were made with synthetic and unhealthy ingredients.

This unexpected brush with illness and the path to recovery as a cancer survivor set in motion the launch of a \$300 million brand and business, with founder Dr. Andrew Abraham establishing his nutritional food company, Orgain, in Irvine.

"I started Orgain in 2009 with the sole purpose of looking to improve the health and wellbeing of people's lives.

It was a time when nutritional products that were marketed as being nutritious were using ingredients that were far from being good for you," says Abraham. "I felt that there was a big need in the space to build a brand and company that has a completely different approach. We wanted to focus on what we could do to improve the lives of millions of people and the path for me was

clean nutrition."

Today the company is positively influencing millions of lives not only with its wellness products but also through giving to others with initiatives in the same realm. Orgain recently launched its Grants for Greater Good program seeking companies that are an extension of its mission in helping to make people healthier holistically through cleaner nutrition, active lifestyles and mindfulness. Applications for the grants opened February 1 and will be accepted until March 20, with companies across the U.S. eligible to apply for one of three \$50,000 grants.

"We are very fortunate to be in a position to offer these grants, and the response has been extremely positive. We are learning about a lot of companies across the nation that are doing some wonderful things," he shares. "In addition to the grant money, I am happy to guide companies to navigate the path to success and learning from my mistakes. I have learned the hard way how to make something work and succeed and I know starting a company is not easy. I am trying to help companies avoid the same pitfalls that I made so they can accelerate their success."

Abraham can attest to the challenges any entrepreneur steering a startup experiences. As the naïve one-man show behind the business for the first few years, he now realizes guidance from a few seasoned industry leaders would have provided much-needed impetus. "I was flying blind in the beginning and took a sink-or-swim approach," he says. "Also, everyone underestimates the amount of resources they need, I certainly did. I did not realize how much time it would take, how much of my energy would be devoted to the brand."

Orgain first introduced ready-to-drink nutritional shakes and protein shakes as its core product offering. Then came powders, with the company offering the number one selling plant-based protein in the country. Nutrition bars soon followed as well as products for kids. All dairy-based products are organic or grass-fed dairy, and the 100 percent plant-based products can be used by anyone, including vegans. Products are now available in more than 10 countries including China, Mexico and Canada, either in stores or online.

"We really are after the mainstream market – those that are looking to improve their health and wellness every

BY: RUKSANA HUSSAIN





DR. ANDREW ABRAHAM - COURTESY OF ORGAIN

day,” says Abraham. “We have over 100 SKUs overall, and the brand has grown by leaps and bounds. Innovation is top of mind for us, it’s part of the company that I lead, and it’s a hyperfocus of mine because we are constantly trying to push the envelope in nutrition.” That persistence to constantly innovate found the company launching multiple new products this year.

One of the exciting items debuting is a plant protein pancake mix. Other products include collagen zero waters, organic sport plant-based powders and sport energy, recovery and protein powders. Among Orgain’s bestsellers are the plant-based protein powders and a clean protein shake that has 20 grams of protein, extremely low sugar and tastes like chocolate milk. Additionally, the kids’ protein product is one of the fastest growing items – a nutritional shake perfect for picky eaters, positioning the brand as the nutrition company for the whole family.

“I make a smoothie every morning using the plant protein powder. My favorite is peanut butter or chocolate peanut butter flavor,” he shares. “I use our clean protein shakes after a workout or when I need a snack during the day. I have two sons age 9 and 10 and they use the kids’ protein after soccer practice. We are trying to solve the

need for the chocolate milk that may have 8-9 teaspoons of sugar, so we pride ourselves in using far less sugar, using organic ingredients and really serving a need for children.”

The company has also expanded into the sports nutrition category, catering to athletes looking for cleaner products. Orgain has a 30-gram, plant-based protein powder, and a pre- and post-workout powder, where instead of using artificial stimulants and caffeine, food-based ingredients such as organic beets, organic turmeric and organic ginger take center stage to help with recovery and inflammation. All of Orgain’s clean nutrition products are non-GMO and made without soy ingredients, and most are USDA Certified Organic.

Future plans include numerous new products, more brand awareness with a new national marketing campaign, and growth in terms of staff, space and market success. The company’s 80+ staff members work from the Irvine HQ, and a larger facility is being built down the street to move into in the next few months. “I’ve been able to surround myself with a wonderful team that has really helped to grow the brand and accelerate the scale,” says Abraham. “It’s been wonderful to hire people that are driving the business forward in the same way that I am.”



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COURTESY OF DISNEY/PIXAR

## PIXAR'S ONWARD CONJURES THE MAGIC OF BROTHERLY LOVE

**WHILE IT MAY NOT BE ON PAR WITH STUDIO'S FLAGSHIP FRANCHISES, FILM STILL BOASTS ITS OWN PECULIAR CHARMS.**

BY: ASHER LUBERTO

Disney/Pixar's biggest enemy is itself. Because of the studio's track record, which spans from *Toy Story* to *Coco*, worthy films like *Onward* can seem disappointing in comparison to the studio's greatest hits. But there's still plenty to love in the animation studio's latest and, if you open yourself to its peculiar charms, enough magical moments to make the clichés disappear.

The first scene sets the tone. As the opening narration begins, we see wizards casting spells in green pastures. "Once upon a time the world was filled with wonder," says the voice over. Then technology was invented and magic became a thing of the past. Sound familiar? Pixar specializes in grounding storybook worlds in real-world problems, and this

one does so with a sprinkling of pixie dust and dashes of realism.

Now the world is a suburban wasteland. Filled with homes, street lights and parents worried about rent; the place looks like a neorealist version of *Dungeons and Dragons*. So it's fitting that our hero isn't a warrior, but an everyday elf. With everyday problems like learning to drive on his plate, Ian (Tom Holland) doesn't seem ready for a cross-country adventure. He doesn't even seem ready to drive. But on his 16th birthday mom (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) gifts him dad's old wizard staff, which has the power to bring paps back to life for 24 hours, and before you can say "abracadabra," Ian conjures up the bottom half of his father's body, leaving the other half to be found in a far away land.

And so Ian does embark on a cross-country adventure. With his older brother, Barley (Chris Pratt), driving the three around in his van, there's no telling where they might end up. A gas station filled with biker gang fairies? Sure. A mystical tavern turned family restaurant? Why not? This scene is, after all, a clever self-jab by Disney for what some see as selling out magical ideas for commercialized sequels.

The cleverest conceit, however, is the family dynamics. Between Ian and Barley, there's a love-hate relationship that any sibling can relate to. Because director Dan Scanlon pulls from his own experience as a younger brother who lost his father at an early age, the intensity and honesty here transcends animation. The images on screen might not

**"BECAUSE DIRECTOR DAN SCANLON PULLS FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE AS A YOUNGER BROTHER WHO LOST HIS FATHER AT AN EARLY AGE, THE INTENSITY AND HONESTY HERE TRANSCENDS ANIMATION."**

be real, but the emotions feel genuine.

There's plenty of fun to be had, too. When the boys stuff a sweatshirt and glasses on dad's sentient legs, he morphs into the animated version of *Weekend at Bernie's*. This makes for some goofy sight gags, as well as the embodiment of Barley's motto ("You got to work with what you got!"), which becomes the movie's motto. Since *Onward* doesn't have the greatest special effects, it has to work with what it's got to cast a spell.

What it's got is the complex and real brotherly love of Ian and Barley. Giving each other words of encouragement, the two set aside their differences to conquer their quest. By using his father's staff, Ian turns cheese puffs into river rafts and empty canyons into invisible bridges. One memorable scene sees Ian turn Barley into the size of an action figure.

It would have been nice to see Ian use the staff even more often, but the film has its fair share of magic tricks. The biggest is how Pixar can turn modest plots into astounding adventures. How can a group of toys hanging out be entertaining? A rat baking pasta riveting? A couple of bros on the open road captivating? The simplest answer is the humanity of its characters. Ian and Barley's road trip mirrors many of our own relationship journeys. Many of us spend our whole lives looking for closure that never comes. Thankfully, with luck, whatever god we believe in or little magic, a lot of us do find ourselves.





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- Jim and Carol Hoffman





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