

IRVINE WEEKLY ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS: VOTE CHRISTINA SHEA FOR MAYOR AND MIKE CARROLL FOR CITY COUNCIL

IRVINE WEEKLY

OCTOBER 10, 2020 • VOL. 2, NO. 24

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OPINION

CHRISTINA SHEA FOR MAYOR OF IRVINE

SHEA'S LONG HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN IRVINE WILL BRING STABILITY AND CONTINUITY TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

BY: IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

Irvine is fortunate to have a capable and caring City Council at a time when our state and national political climate is unfortunately and unnecessarily chaotic. For our well-run



city to continue on a path of good-governance in such uncertain times, we need stability and continuity on the City Council.

That is why Irvine Weekly is endorsing Christina Shea for mayor of Irvine.

Shea has a long history of leadership in the city with numerous accomplishments under her guidance. Perhaps the most significant of which was delivering on the city's promise to build the Great Park. But there are many other virtues of the city to tout: Irvine is the safest city in the nation; Irvine has incredible public education; Irvine has a robust business community; and Irvine has tremendous open space with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship.

As both mayor and a former City Council member, Shea has long been involved in the city's governance and deserves credit for many of these accomplishments in Irvine.

In the coming months and years, there will be a plethora of challenges that the

mayor will need to address. And having a leader with so many years of experience will serve our community well. From helping to rebuild the city's small business landscape after business shutdowns caused by Covid-19, to keeping Irvine the safest city in America, to building a veterans cemetery, the mayor will need to pull from an arsenal of relationships and resources developed over decades of service.

In dealing with these issues, Shea's plan includes creating a Mayor's Business Council to help businesses in the city bounce back; she is adamant that a veterans cemetery should be built with state funding as to not overwhelm the city's coffers; and she boasts a strong relationship with Irvine police, and in fact was endorsed by the police association.

Shea's current involvement in the city is admirable, and considering the hard road ahead in the aftermath of Covid-19, there is no need to replace Irvine's current mayoral leadership.

While we believe Shea deserves to continue on as mayor, one of her opponents for the post, current City Council member Farrah Khan, is also capable of tackling the enormous job and we believe she would someday make a good mayor in the future, perhaps even in 2022 or 2024.

In fact, Khan has already served the council well by providing an independent viewpoint on most issues the city is facing. Also, she serves as chair of the Great Park Board which holds tremendous responsibility. Regardless as to whether or not she wins the mayoral race this year, Khan will stay on the City Council. And, frankly, we believe that it will be a better governing body if both Shea and Khan are still on the City Council after the dust settles from the November election.

We respectfully endorse Christina Shea for mayor of Irvine.

MIKE CARROLL FOR CITY COUNCIL

CARROLL'S EXPERIENCE WILL PROVIDE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL BENEFIT ALL IRVINE RESIDENTS.

BY: IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

There will be two elected seats, and potentially a third, open for the Irvine City Council in November. With more than a dozen candidates running, voters in Irvine will have tough decisions to make. What's needed most after all the votes are counted is steady leadership.



That is why Irvine Weekly is endorsing Mike Carroll for Irvine City Council.

As the current Vice Mayor of Irvine, Carroll's experience has well-prepared him for the challenges the city will face over the next few years. These challenges include COVID-19 recovery, helping the local business community, and maintaining Irvine's status as the safest city in America.

Carroll has demonstrated a community-first attitude, which is evident through his active community engagement and the programs he has championed. For example, he helped to establish Irvine's Small Business Relief Program, in which more than 500 local businesses received financial support to assist in reopening safely.

Vice Mayor Carroll also worked to keep Irvine residents safe by spearheading the county's first free COVID-19 testing facility at the Great Park in Irvine, a tremendous accomplishment that demonstrated the importance of local leadership in helping combat the virus.

We also like that Carroll has worked closely with all of the members on the council and had bipartisan support for his own ap-

pointment to the council. Both Mayor Christina Shea and City Council member Farrah Khan, who are both running for mayor, voted to appoint Carroll to his current seat.

We were impressed with Carroll's real-world solutions for traffic, including his Three-Step Traffic Plan, that includes "Smart Traffic Control Systems" and reversible lanes.

Additionally, Carroll's experience as vice chair of the Irvine Planning Commission, and chair of the Community Services Commission, played in the endorsement selection. We feel that Carroll's experience will provide leadership that will benefit Irvine residents for years to come.

We respectfully endorse Mike Carroll for Irvine City Council.

ABOUT IRVINE WEEKLY'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS:

Irvine Weekly undergoes a thorough study of the positions and backgrounds of each of the candidates running for City Council and mayor. As part of that process, we send questionnaires to all of the candidates to better understand their beliefs, values, vision for the city and the policies they would prescribe if elected. Irvine Weekly believes that Irvine is one of the most desirable places to live in Orange County because of its safety, quality education, strong business climate, commitment to open space and the environment and its diversity. Those guiding principles influence who we endorse for elected office here. We also realize that not everyone in our community shares the same beliefs or political positions, which is why we also provide information about all the candidates running so that each member of our community can make up their own mind about the candidates and support the candidate that best shares their values. We also welcome feedback and letters to the editor which may be submitted at IrvineWeekly.com.

ELECTION



NOVEMBER 3 ELECTION PRIMER

WE BREAK DOWN THE RACES FOR CONGRESS, STATE ASSEMBLY AND STATE SENATE THAT IRVINE RESIDENTS WILL SEE ON THE BALLOT.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

For Irvine residents, the ballot for the November 3 election is packed. In addition to the race for Irvine City Council and mayor, president of the United States, and state ballot measures, Irvine voters will also have the opportunity to vote in a Congressional election, a State Senate race and two State Assembly races.

Election for Congress

In the battle for the 45th Congressional District, which includes Irvine, Villa Park, Laguna Hills, Lake Forest and North Tustin, first-term Democratic Representative Katie Porter is challenged by Republican Mission Viejo City Councilman Greg Raths.

Porter is the first Democrat to represent the 45th District since the district was formed in 1983. Porter has gained national attention with the use of a white board in Congressional committees, along with an interrogation-style method of questioning during Congressional hearings.

The congresswoman, a former Professor of Law at UC Irvine, garnered both acclaim and criticism on Capitol Hill for her questioning of the likes of JPMorgan

Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon and Robert R. Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control. Among the key message points of her campaign are gun control, housing affordability and health care. She has also been one of the top political fundraisers in all of Congress.

Considering the 45th District's Republican-leaning voting trend over the past decade, Porter's progressive-leaning politics will undoubtedly stand out in comparison to Raths' conservative viewpoints. Republicans have a slight voter registration advantage in the district, about 3,000 voters, which accounts for roughly 0.6% of voters.

Raths, a veteran with more than two decades of service in the U.S. Marine Corps, is the former mayor of Mission Viejo where he currently serves as city councilman. Coupled with the on-going conversation about building a veterans cemetery in Irvine, voters might find hope in Raths' mission to support veteran causes.

Raths, who defeated five other GOP candidates for this congressional seat earlier this year in the primary, is campaigning with a message of lowering

taxes, lowering health care costs and changing back-tax law to allow for state and local taxes (SALT) to be deducted, including mortgage deductions.

In terms of fundraising, Porter is ahead. Porter's re-election campaign generated more than \$8 million, according to OpenSecrets.org. While Raths' campaign raised less than \$1 million.

Election for State Senate

The 37th District of the California State Senate will feature a race between Republican incumbent Senator John Moorlach (R-Costa Mesa) and Democrat challenger Dave Min, an Irvine resident and UC Irvine law professor.

Moorlach has a rich history of political experience in Orange County. His career began in 1995, when he was elected Orange County Treasurer-Tax Collector. In 2006, the Republican was elected to the County Board of Supervisors, on which he served for nearly a decade. Moorlach went on to defeat current 3rd District Supervisor Don Wagner for the State Senate seat in 2015.

While Min has never held public office, his campaign has received endorsements from some of California's top democratic leaders, including Secretary of State Alex Padilla, current Vice Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris, and California Governor Gavin Newsom. The 37th District seat has been controlled by the Republican Party since redistricting took place in 2011.

One complicating factor in the race is that the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (the prison guard union) has committed to spend nearly \$1 million against Moorlach, according to state campaign filing reports.

Election for Two State Assembly Races

Voters will also have a chance to decide on California State Assembly elections for two neighboring districts in Orange County. In California State Assembly District 68, Irvine city councilmember Melissa Fox, a Democrat, will be running against Republican incumbent Assemblyman Steven Choi, who is a former Irvine mayor.

Choi has a long tenure of political dealings in Orange County, particularly Irvine. In 2004, Choi was elected to the Irvine City Council, then mayor of Irvine in 2012. This year, Choi is adamant about protecting the public from COVID-19, and improving health care. As one of his main points of emphasis, Choi co-authored Assembly Bill 251, which provides an income tax credit for

family caregivers, giving families the ability to purchase medical equipment, transportation and/or make needed modification to their homes.

Choi has endorsements from several public office holders in Irvine including Irvine City Councilman Anthony Kou, and current Irvine City Councilman Michael Carroll. Choi is also endorsed by Irvine Mayor Christina Shea, and has support from the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs and the California Republican Party.

Fox is not seeking re-election to the Irvine City Council in November, instead trying to unseat Choi, who is running for a third-term. In Irvine, Fox has become well-known for her local political blog. Her campaign is focused on housing affordability, health care, education and a number of other issues. And she has made COVID-19 "response and recovery" her top priority in her message to voters.

Fox has received endorsements from both federal and state leadership, including U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Representative Katie Porter, California Governor Gavin Newsom, along with several organizations, including the California Democratic Party.

In Assembly District 74, which covers portions of Irvine, Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach, incumbent Cottie Petrie-Norris and Newport Beach Councilwoman Diane Dixon will compete.

The Democratic incumbent Petrie-Norris, a resident of Laguna Beach, has held office since 2018, after she defeated Republican incumbent Matthew Harper. This round, Petrie-Norris will be running with a focus on education and schools, along with a wildfire prevention and response program. Petrie-Norris will look to defend her seat against Dixon with endorsements from the Association of California State Supervisors, the California Professional Firefighters, California Governor Gavin Newsom and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Dixon, a Newport Beach City Council member and former mayor, is working to defeat Petrie-Norris with a focus on financial stability, and a plan to decrease the state's unfunded pension liability. Dixon also has plans to create a Harbor Department to manage the harbor infrastructure in Newport Harbor. Dixon carries an endorsement from Orange County Supervisor and congressional candidate Michelle Steel, along with the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and former California Governor Pete Wilson.

ELECTION



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

WE ASKED THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR IRVINE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL, “WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR OFFICE?” THESE WERE THEIR RESPONSES:

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Christina Shea



I believe this pandemic requires experienced leadership as we move forward in the coming few years. My ability to problem solve and find reasonable solutions to difficult

problems makes me the right person to lead Irvine in these difficult times.

Farrah Khan



I'm running for the office of mayor because we need leadership that is stable, understands the needs of our growing community and is ready to

take on the challenges we face because of this pandemic and economic crisis. Irvine has drastically changed over the many years since 1971.

Katherine Daigle



The mayor of Irvine has failed to be responsive to the needs of the commu-

nity in a time when prompt action by a leader is required. The same issues come up every year by our residents and still we have no successes with traffic, housing, increase in homeless, veterans cemetery, the Great Park and now our budget for the city is in arrears by at least 22 million dollars.

Luis Huang



I hope to inspire and motivate 50,000 Irvine voters who decided not to place a vote in 2018. There are countless tens of thousands who have made the conscious decision not to educate themselves on their local candidates, have no idea who their mayor or City Council members are.

ELECTION

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



Tammy Kim



Mike Carroll



Mark Newgent



Lauren Norris-Johnson



Laura Bratton



Larry Agran

Tammy Kim

I am running for Irvine City Council to bring my experience as a small business owner, nonprofit leader, community advocate and a mother to better serve our residents and businesses that help to make Irvine such a wonderful city. This is my opportunity to give back.

Mike Carroll

I am running for City Council because there is much more work left to do. We need someone who will fight for our residents, and now is not the time for experiments in leadership. I will continue aiding and assisting our residents during COVID-19, work on safely re-opening our community, ensure Irvine remains the Safest City in America, implement solutions to reduce traffic, and support our public schools.

Mark Newgent

Out of loyalty to my city, colleagues and my family. We need to bring back honor and integrity to local government. For far too long people that lack basic values have and are using City Hall for their own personal gain, dishonoring our city.

Lauren Norris-Johnson

I decided to run for office because I have a passion for solving problems that matter to all of us: public safety, traffic and rising housing costs. As a small-business owner,

mother, attorney and Irvine Community Services Commissioner, I understand how these issues impact Irvine families.

Laura Bratton

Clean air and traffic reduction, police accountability and public safety.

Larry Agran

When I previously served as mayor and on the City Council, Irvine became the safest, smartest and greenest city in America. But in the past eight years, I've watched the City Council abandon good planning and good government, rubber-stamping massive development schemes and catering to the interests of developers rather than standing up for the best interests of Irvine residents.

John Park

As a 21-year resident and as one who considers Irvine our forever home, I felt compelled to run to preserve and protect Irvine's way of life. Keeping Irvine, Irvine is a priority for me and that means adhering very closely to our original Master Plan for the city.

Hai Liang

I am a 27-year retired Army Master Sergeant and in the fortunate position to have a pension which gives me a lot of free time. I really miss being a leader of a great organization that takes care

of its people. During that time, I had the opportunity to travel to many different countries and interact with many different kinds of people in a very diverse environment. Irvine is such a diverse environment. With my experience as a leader in the Army, I want our community to continue to thrive and move in a positive direction for our families and our future.

Dylan Green

I'm running for City Council to make a government that works for all of us, and not just the wealthy developers or the well-off. In 2016, I went to watch Bernie Sanders speak at the Verizon Amphitheatre, an amphitheater that not only no longer exists, but its replacement was built and funded by FivePoint, a developer company with deep pockets of dark money that have been influencing our election for years.

Diana Jiang

I am running for City Council to be the independent voice for the people, to preserve and improve our great city.

Carrie O'Malley

As a 23-year Irvine resident, community leader and public policy expert, I am running

for Irvine City Council to be an advocate and resource for ALL Irvine residents. I am running

in order to utilize my talents to help keep Irvine the amazing city that over 280,000 of us call home.

Anshul Garg

Helping and working with people and communities has always been a passion of mine, whether in the job or in the business. To extend the same passion helping everyone, I decided to run for the local office so I can do more for every resident of Irvine, in terms of the benefits available to them throughout the city and how they can be part of the decision-making of the policies of their city.

Abigail Pole

The Veterans Cemetery has not been built, the Covid-19 response is wanting, and there have been policies put in place that harm the people that I love. In short, I am running for office because I am angry. I'm angry we have elected leaders who have forgotten they serve the people and have failed to serve us, the citizens of Irvine, in any meaningful way. I am running to show them that if they forget whom they serve, we the great people of Irvine will remind them.

Christina Dillard did not submit responses to our candidate questionnaire.



John Park



Hai Liang



Dylan Green



Diana Jiang



Carrie O'Malley



Anshul Garg



Abigail Pole

NEWS

IRVINEWEEKLY.COM | OCTOBER 10, 2020 | 8

With more than two decades of public office experience, transitioning into the role of Irvine's newly appointed interim city manager feels like just another day at the office for Marianna Marysheva.

Marysheva, an Irvine resident and mother of 11-year-old twins, has served as Irvine's assistant city manager since July 2018. Now, with the retirement of former City Manager John Russo, Marysheva moves into the interim role.

However, it is a role she is familiar with.

Marysheva is a problem solver, and her work history can attest to such a claim. Prior to Irvine, Marysheva has held public office across the state, including budget director and assistant city manager for the city of Oakland and town manager of Mammoth Lakes. She also worked alongside her predecessor, former Irvine City Manager John Russo, in Riverside County.

Marysheva attributes her successful tenure in public office to her early career in Oakland, where her first public office position was budget director for the city of Oakland from 2001-2005.

In Oakland, Marysheva explained that as a young public official, she was able to glean insight from some of California's most-established political personalities, which helped shape her professionally.

Early on, Marysheva said she was inspired by the well-known former mayor of San Francisco Willie Brown, and Gavin Newsom, who was a member of the County Board of Supervisors at the time.

Born in Kazakhstan, Marysheva and was 19-years-old when she first came to America. Marysheva considers this transition a life-changing experience that she credits for shaping her world perspective.

"Being able to appreciate the diversity and the people around you, and what they bring to the table, and how we all coexist and work together – especially nowadays given what's happening in the world, that experience has been invaluable," she said.

In essence, Marysheva's story encapsulates the American Dream – while her personal accomplishments may seem impressive, the accolades remain insignificant in comparison to the hardship required to endure such a monumental shift in culture and environment.

"The culture shock was coming from a country that was barely developed,



SIT DOWN WITH IRVINE'S NEW INTERIM CITY MANAGER

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

to a country that is a leader in so many different senses," Marysheva explained in an interview with Irvine Weekly. "I think I had culture shock on so many different levels – from walking into a supermarket and seeing the wealth of the nation, through products available to

people. We didn't have that. We barely had very limited items available to us to eat, and to consume and to see it here in this country, I was just amazed."

Marysheva earned a bachelor's and master's degree from two well-known Bay Area universities, and admits her

story is a prime example of what can be accomplished, when you work hard to achieve set goals.

"I came here, I got my bachelor's degree from San Francisco State, I had to work to support myself, and then I went straight for my master's at UC Berkeley," Marysheva explained to us. "But what was clear in my mind, and my story

"BEING ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE DIVERSITY AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU, AND WHAT THEY BRING TO THE TABLE, AND HOW WE ALL COEXIST AND WORK TOGETHER – ESPECIALLY NOWADAYS GIVEN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, THAT EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN INVALUABLE."

proves it, is that if you put your mind to something, there's a high likelihood, in this country, that you can actually accomplish it."

While it may seem cliché for some to believe that simply working hard will lead to success, from Marysheva's perspective it becomes more about the opportunities available.

"Hard work really pays off, and that's not always the case in the underdeveloped world," she said.

Marysheva's dedication to her craft will continue in Irvine. In terms of future plans, Marysheva explained that she's excited about the future and looks forward to implementing the policies set forth by the City Council.

"I believe, subscribe to, and fully support the vision that our mayor and City Council have established for this community," she said. "I believe this trend will continue; and that is, to continue seeing this city as a leader in green space, in being walkable, and of being inviting."



J. MICHAEL
VAUGHN

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FOOD

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COURTESY OF SOTIRI MANTAS

POACHED KITCHEN

PUTTING BREAKFAST ON THE MAP IN IRVINE.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

Everyone knows breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but nobody takes it as seriously as the folks behind the counter at Poached Kitchen in Irvine.

With locations in Downey, and now Irvine, the main theme of Poached Kitchen is a combination between breakfast and brunch, with a little farmers market-style vibe mixed into the atmosphere.

Having found success in Downey, Calif., after opening in 2018, Poached Kitchen has opened a second location in Irvine at 17595 Harvard Avenue, Unit A.

Sotiri Mantas, General Manager of Poached Kitchen, explained that the company's philosophy is based on using locally sourced ingredients with no frills.

"All of our supplies and ingredients are handpicked and made from scratch, to

ensure that everything we serve is of the highest quality," Mantas explained. "We use local and organic produce when available, and our humanely raised meats are free of GMOs and nitrates. It's a farm to table concept."

While breakfast is the menu's common theme, the approach to the food is what has helped this two-location chain set itself apart from other restaurants.

With options ranging from the tra-

ditional avocado toast (\$9), to vibrant dishes like chile verde Benedict, served with chile verde pork, poached egg, serrano aioli, cilantro, hollandaise, paprika and hash browns, or the baked apple pancakes, topped with cinnamon baked apples, bananas, walnuts, cinnamon butter and powdered sugar – Poached is really built on the concept of serving made-to-order brunch items, in a fast-casual setting.

FOOD



COURTESY OF SOTIRI MANTAS

For Mantas, he said currently, Poached Kitchen's number one selling item is the verde chilaquiles. Served with crispy tortilla chips, salsa verde, two sunny up eggs, queso fresco, creamy cilantro sauce, pickled onions, cilantro and black beans. Pro tip: Both the red and green chilaquiles can be modified to fit vegan dietary restrictions.

While the Irvine location opened in August, Mantas explained that there were setbacks, considering the difficulty of opening a restaurant during a pandemic. For Mantas' staff, having to navigate new COVID-19 regulations, also added to the difficulties.

"Challenges have been operating with such limited seating," Mantas explained in an interview with Irvine

Weekly. "Overall, I think adapting to the new norm of operating our establishment to the new required guidelines has taken some getting used to. Opening up a new establishment is challenging enough and then we had double the load with opening up a new restaurant with such limited seating and the new guidelines we're required to follow to keep Poached a safe and sanitized place."

While Orange County remains in the Red Tier for COVID-19 monitoring, restaurants are able to host up to 25 percent of indoor capacity. Restaurants will be able to resume full indoor capacity when county metrics meet criteria for the less restrictive Orange Tier.

IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT 4

MARY AILEEN MATHEIS



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SAFEDINE OC INCREASES GRANT AMOUNTS

LOCAL PROGRAM AIMS TO HELP RESTAURANTS STAY OPEN SAFELY DURING THE PANDEMIC.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

As Orange County looks to move into the Orange Tier on the state's COVID-19 monitoring list, restaurants that are looking to reconfigure service outdoors, or are in need of personal protective equipment (PPE) can receive financial incentives through the SafeDine OC Program.

The SafeDine OC Program was established in August, through a partnership between the Orange County Business Council, the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the Orange County Environmental Health Division.

Natalie Rubalcava, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Investor Relations of the Orange County Business Council, said, "This is a program we've

taken on with the county and the County's Environmental Health agency, and their main objective is make sure that businesses stay open safely – this partnership really helped keep the county up and running."

On Sept. 17, the OCBC announced new enhancements to the SafeDine OC program which increased the financial incentives available.

While grants were limited to \$1,000 during the first month of the program, OCBC is ramping up benefits by offering restaurants three different reimbursement options – and removing some of the program's challenging registration requirements.

Restaurants can now apply for \$1,000, \$2,500 or \$5,000 grants – to be used for

CARES Act-qualified purchases, such as masks, gloves and other PPE, site reconfiguration, employee training and cleaning supplies.

"The other enhancement we made to the program was eliminating the requirement for [restaurants] to provide receipts for expenditures at the time of application," Rubalcava explained in an interview with Irvine Weekly.

"That created major issues, because many of these restaurants need this money to make some of these safety enhancements to their restaurants," she said. "Although they don't have to show their receipts, they do have to spend the grant money on COVID-19 related items – and they have to spend it by Dec. 30." Rubalcava added that as of Tues-

day, Sept. 22 the OCBC has received more than 1,600 applications, which she called "a great response" for this program.

"We've seen an uptick in applications since this modification. Currently we are at about 1,627 applications," she said. "We have approved 837, and we're working on reviewing and approving the rest, so – so far so good."

To apply, visit Safedineoc.com to fill out an electronic application. The process is estimated to take approximately 10 minutes. Applications will be required to submit official documents including a W-9, and a current health permit issued in Orange County.

Applications for the SafeDine OC are open until Oct. 16.

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CULTURE



IT'S PUMPKIN SEASON

IRVINE PARK RAILROAD PUMPKIN PATCH IS RETURNING WITH MODIFICATIONS.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

The Irvine Park Railroad Pumpkin Patch will return this year with COVID-19 modifications in place. The family-friendly pumpkin patch opened to visitors on Oct. 1, however, customers will not be able to browse the patch on foot.

Due to the pandemic, organizers are "modifying and scaling the event down to ensure safety of all visitors as well as our staff," according to the Irvine Park Railroad website. This year's festivities will be open daily from Oct. 1 through Oct. 31. Once the park's limited capacity is reached, visitors will be admitted at a one-in, one-out ratio.

While pumpkin patch enthusiasts might not be able to walk the patch, staff will be equipped to show a variety of pumpkins to visitors from behind the counter.

While the annual tradition of picking pumpkins will look and feel different from other years, access to the train and hay rides will still be available. Everything will be sanitized after each use.

Additionally, games and photo opportunities will be available in a safe, and socially distanced, setting. Although the pumpkin patch is held outdoors, visitors will be required to adhere to health and safety protocol, which includes maintaining a six-feet of social distance, along with mandatory face coverings.

The Irvine Park Railroad will be open on weekdays from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., and on weekends from 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Visit the Irvine Park Railroad website for more information: www.irvineparkrailroad.com.

While the Irvine Park Railroad is limiting guests due to COVID-19, there's another pumpkin patch in Irvine that's worth the visit as well.

Tanaka Farms Pumpkin Patch is also open, and visitors are allowed to pick their

own pumpkin directly from the patch. There is also the option of remaining in one's vehicle.

Tanaka Farms is situated on a 30 acre farm, and is offering wagon rides through the pumpkin patch. In fact, it's the only pumpkin patch in Orange County where visitors can actually pick their pumpkin right from the vine.

This year, there are a few options for visitors to select their pumpkins and reservations are required.

The "Drive-Thru Pumpkin Farm Experience" runs every Saturday and Sunday from Sept. 19 through Oct. 31, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The "U-Pick Pumpkin with Wagon Ride" runs Monday through Friday from Sept. 21 through Oct. 30, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Visitors are asked to arrive 15 minutes before their reservations, and there will be a, "you touch, please pick it," policy.

The wagon ride will include social distancing and the use of face masks. The Drive-thru experience includes a pumpkin, and a scenic trip around the 30-acre farm, which is more than a mile long. While on the drive, guests can experience a scarecrow contest, a barnyard exhibit with farm animals, and watch the sunflowers peak bloom in late October.

Voting for the scarecrow contest ends Oct. 25. All scarecrow entries can be found on Tanaka Farms website: www.tanakafarms.com

In terms of food and refreshments while on site, the Tanaka Grill will be open for drive-thru service on the weekends.

Cost:
All persons ages 3 and over (\$20 per person)

2 Years and under (FREE, but do not receive items included)



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JOE KELLY'S NEW MURAL

MURALIST JONAS NEVER TALKS ABOUT INSPIRATION, INFLUENCES BEHIND THE TOPICAL WORK OF ART.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

On the latest episode of L.A. Weekly's Riding the Bench Podcast, hosts Evan Lancaster and Isai Rocha welcomed acclaimed Los Angeles-based muralist Jonas Never, also known as "Never1959," onto the show.

For anyone visiting Los Angeles, Never's art can be seen from Santa Monica to Grand Central Market and beyond.

His signature style features monolithic, realistic portraits, plucked from a historic landscape of notable personalities, celebrities and athletes who have

inspired the people of Los Angeles.

Outlined with an unmistakable blue glow, artist Jonas Never's iconic portraits include the late Kobe Bryant, future hall-of-famer LeBron James and even a tribute to the late great globe-trotter, Anthony Bourdain.

Never's newest Silver Lake-based enshrinement of Dodger's reliever Joe Kelly's now legendary pouty face is the latest testament to Never's personal admiration for the city of Los Angeles — all sparked through the relevant grit of a pitcher's mocking taunt.

The taunt came after Joe Kelly airmailed a pitch over the Alex Bregman's head — a pitch that Kelly said was unintentional, but the league felt otherwise, as it was part of the reason Kelly was suspended for eight games, later shortened to five after an appeal. Words were exchanged by both teams over the offseason after the Astros were notoriously found to be cheating throughout the 2017 and 2018 seasons and MLB warned teams that there would be a zero-tolerance policy for hitting Astros players this year.

As the inning continued, Kelly struck out the Astros' Carlos Correa and both immediately exchanged words. The benches cleared and a yelling match ensued, where essentially Kelly's now-iconic pouty face single-handedly caused the first baseball fight in the COVID-19 era.

"I've always been a Joe Kelly fan, we actually played baseball at the same college — we both played at UCR — along with Austin Barnes and a couple other guys — I kind of followed his whole career — to Boston with the Joe Kelly

ARTS

IRVINEWEEKLY.COM | OCTOBER 10, 2020 | 18



Fight Club out there. I was a reliever myself, so I totally dug his style," Never explained on L.A. Weekly's Riding the Bench Podcast.

The former UC Riverside pitcher-turned-muralist said he was in Atlanta, GA when he saw Kelly frown and grimace unapologetically toward Astros shortstop Carlos Correa, and remembers thinking it was instantly heroic.

"I was actually painting in Atlanta, but I was rained out one day in the hotel room, watching the Dodgers against the 'Stros – 'Dude, like did that just happen?'" he said. "After such a crappy year and everything going on, it was so cool to see Joe Kelly do what was right for a change."

As he sat in an Atlanta hotel room waiting for a storm to clear, the Los Angeles native decided to do what he does best – paint.

It was later reported and confirmed by Astros manager Dusty Baker, that Kelly told Correa, "Nice swing bitch," after striking him out, a detail Never included as the backdrop of the first inspirational canvas featuring Kelly.

"I felt kind of helpless being across the country – you can't really paint a Dodger in Braves country," he said. "So I went out to Blake's, in the middle of a rainstorm and bought a canvas, spent overtime of the Blue Jackets game watching that and working on the canvas," he said.

To acknowledge Kelly's unforgettable display of character – and protest Kelly's newly announced suspension – Never posted the original canvas he painted in Atlanta on his Instagram page, which caught the attention of Dodger's veteran third baseman Justin Turner.

"Justin Turner hit me up and was like, 'Dude, Joe loves the painting, that's so cool! Would you do another one for Joe?'"

Never said he instantly agreed and painted another canvas for Kelly. Still, a bit of time had passed after Kelly's frown-seen-round-the-world, Never said he felt like L.A. had fully embraced Kelly's heroism, but wanted the piece to be relevant to Dodger fans.

"Man, that'd be really fun on a wall, but I don't know if it will still be relevant when I get back into town," he said. "I looked at the schedule and saw the 'Stros were coming back again."

Any hardcore Dodger fan will notice the subtle differences between the original canvas and the mural – in terms of Kelly's pose. Never explained that he painted the pitcher a few times, but the Silver Lake wall is his only painting of Kelly's viral frown.

"The first canvas I did was him yelling at them, then I did another one of him making one of the faces, but I was like, 'Man, I haven't done the pouty face yet – this has gotta be the wall.'"

Now occupying wall space behind Floyd's 99 Barbershop in Silver Lake, Dodger fans have been lining up to pay

homage to Never's newest creation.

"It's on the corner of Sunset and Parkman, behind the Floyd's 99 Barber Shop – it's real close to the stadium, fans can go to it on the way to the game, but it's still really cool to see fans lining up."

In a year filled with so much uncertainty, this mural symbolizes the metaphorical return of Dodger baseball to the city of Los Angeles. From the shutdown of sports on a global scale, to the long drawn out discussions over pay between Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association. The 2020 MLB season is the season that almost never happened.

For Dodger fans, this underscores the poignancy of enduring back-to-back World Series losses – against two teams that used electronic devices to steal signs. Considering the disappointment that has reverberated through the Dodger's fanbase since 2017, Kelly's action became sweet revenge in an on-going war.

And it is as though Never heard the battle cry.

Heavily inspired by Los Angeles graffiti and tattoo culture, Never's countless artistic contributions to the City of Angels are a reflection of the environment he occupies. One example is Never's memorial of former Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim pitcher Tyler Skaggs.

As a former Santa Monica High School baseball player, Never spoke about the mural he dedicated to Skaggs, who also played at Santa Monica High School.

Skaggs's mother also coached softball at

Santa Monica High when Never attended.

While on the road with the Angels in 2019, Skaggs was found dead in his hotel room with narcotics in his system.

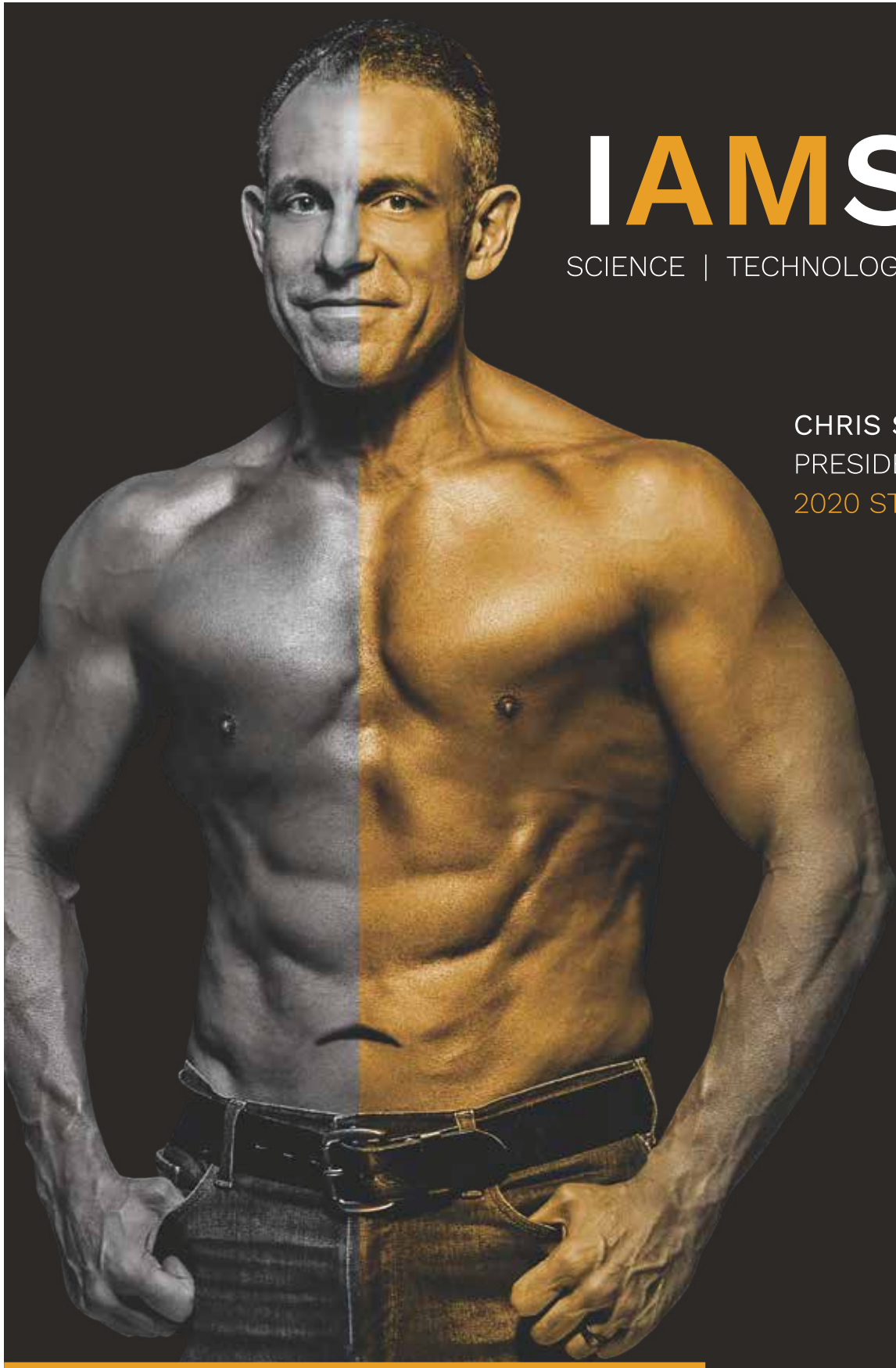
"When Tyler died – we wore the same jersey number in high school – it really hit home, one of those 'it could've been me' type situations," he said. "It was right around the time that I was debating not doing memorial murals anymore. I didn't like the sadness, but then I realized how powerful they were and I realized he probably wouldn't get one from anyone else. It was a positive thing to keep his memory alive, kind of where we all grew up."

Having dedicated countless images around the city, Never's art has become a piece of the fabric of Los Angeles. But when tasked to choose a favorite, the list is constantly evolving.

"When you get to meet your childhood heroes, that really wins," he said, referencing the recent Cobra Kai mural he painted. "Seeing my work become a part of L.A. culture is a dream come true, and now with the Joe Kelly one seeing such a positive in such a more or less crappy year for everyone – it's constantly changing," he said.

"At some point, I'll have to sit down and make a list."

The complete interview with Never1959, and more episodes of L.A. Weekly's Riding the Bench Podcast can be found on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.



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Tilda Cobham-Hervey
in *I Am Woman*

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IRVINE WEEKLY MOVIE GUIDE

I AM WOMAN, BUOYANCY, KAJILLIONAIRE AND MORE MAKE THE LIST.

BY ASHER LUBERTO AND CHUCK WILSON

Irvine Weekly's Movie Guide is your look at the hottest films available on your TV sets, electronic devices and in select drive-ins throughout Southern California. Theaters remain closed, but the good news is that there's no shortage of diverse and engaging films to see at home. And as always, our film critics (this week: Chuck Wilson and Asher Luberto) let you know what's worth the watchtime and what's not – from indie art house gems to popcorn-perfect blockbusters to new movies garnering buzz – indicating where you can catch them whether it be digital Video on Demand (VOD) or streaming subscription services.

I Am Woman / VOD

How is Helen Reddy not in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame? The iconic singer, now 78, charted eight number one singles, including the anthem for National Woman's Day, "I am Woman," and was a crucial catalyst for the Feminist

Second Wave. Thankfully, Unjo Moon's biopic preserves her voice while detailing her career and impact on the music industry.

The narrative begins with Reddy's (Tilda Cobham-Hervey) early days in New York as she struggles to become the singer who would captivate America in the 1970's. *Woman* follows her from begging to get paid in a nightclub to charming audiences on television in Los Angeles, where she moves with her husband/manager Jeff Wald (Evan Peters). For a while, Moon is simply checking off female biopic clichés. A sexist boss? Check. A coked-out husband? Check. A script that jumps ahead years at a time? Check. That said, the movie eventually finds a catchy tempo within its classical structure.

I Am Woman is handsomely made, particularly in its period details and cinematography, which uses lens filters to recreate the vivid texture of '70s Los Angeles. And Hervey strikes just the

right chord as Reddy, her performance offering as much insight as the dialogue. Those unfamiliar with Reddy's life will find plenty to chew on here, while fans will continue to wonder why this strong, invincible, roaring woman isn't in the Hall of Fame. **(Asher Luberto)**

Kajillionaire / VOD

Other than Lorene Scafaria's *Hustlers*, most TV and movie narratives about cons and con artists focus on male protagonists. Refreshingly, *Kajillionaire* takes a different route, but it isn't just for feminism's sake. Director Miranda July brings her own heist story to the screen, giving audiences a picture of women rarely represented in film.

Meet Old Dolio (Evan Rachel Wood), a grifter who lives in a bubble factory with her mother and father, Theresa (Debra Winger) and Robert (Richard Jenkins), who rob PO boxes for a living. Despite their gift for stealing letters, ties

and soap, the family is behind on rent, and they need 1,500 dollars by next Friday. This leads to an insurance scam at LAX, where they run into Melanie (Gina Rodriguez), a peppy, well-adjusted woman who is intrigued by the family and joins their scheme. At first, Dolio is suspicious of Melanie. But it's through Melanie that Dolio is finally able to step outside of her parent's bubble, to see the world as more than just a place to con. *Kajillionaire* turns on the rhythms of Emilie Mosseri's score to create a warm, coming of age vibe, while July's surreal style compliments the confusion of a young woman making sense of the world.

Because of that, it's hard to nail down what *Kajillionaire* is about. Is it a comment on friendship? Or is it about the steps we take to form our identities? Whatever the case, it's endlessly imaginable and eternally wistful, alive with characters you might run into at a hipster coffee shop on Sunset Boulevard and bustling with women rarely seen on screen. Dolio is the antithesis of the sexy scammers in *Hustlers*—she's shy, clumsy and awkward, a 25-year-old who doesn't have her shit together. She may not rob a casino, but she's sure to steal your heart. **(Asher Luberto)**

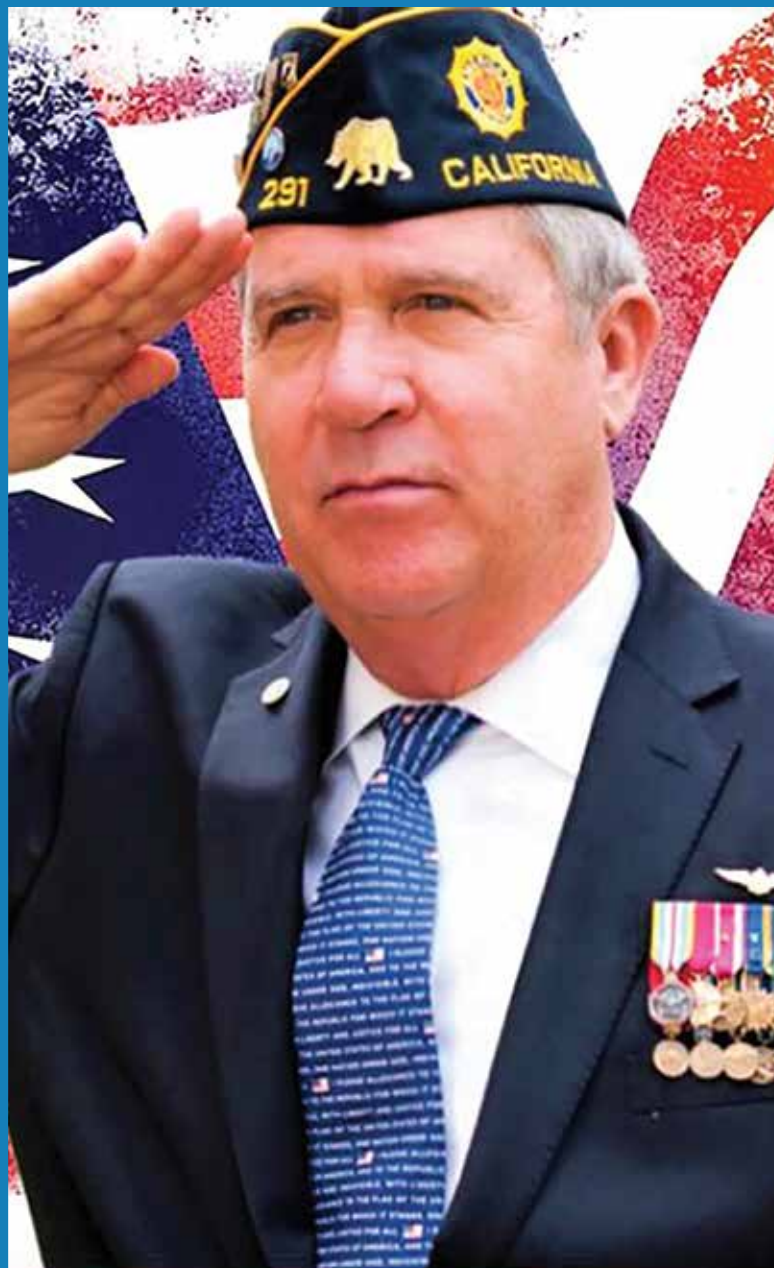
Buoyancy / Laemmle Virtual Theater

As I type this review and as you read it – right this very second – there are some 200,000 men and boys being held as "sea slaves" aboard Thai fishing ships that catch the herring that ends up in the canned pet foods that stack so prettily on American supermarket shelves. In the wrenching new film, *Buoyancy*, Australian writer-director Rodd Rathjen offers a fictionalized account of one boy's experience on one of those ships.

At 14, Chakra (Sarm Heng) is realizing that the daily grind of working the rice fields alongside his family in Cambodia is all he'll ever know. Angry, he runs away to find more prosperous work in Thailand but finds himself tricked and sold to a fishing boat captain known as Rom Ran (Thanawut Kasro). A relatively young man who's spent his life on the sea, Rom Ran finds true joy in exerting a brutal, unforgiving power over his naïve young crew.

One worker who is perceived as weak is thrown into the sea while another who dares confront Rom Ran is killed in a hellishly elaborate ceremony involving other slave trawlers called in for the occasion – death as an occasion

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to party. Chakra watches the horrors in silence, but he's clearly taking mental notes and appears to be trying to decide if he can live with doing evil to escape evil. Buoyancy has the tension of a good thriller and the moral resonance of a truth too terrible to be fiction. **(Chuck Wilson)**

Blackbird / VOD

In the dull dying mother drama, *Blackbird*, Kate Winslet plays Susan Sarandon's daughter, a casting choice that makes zero sense, although the film's producers must have been thrilled to land such an esteemed duo. Sarandon is the formidable Lily, who's decided to end her life before ALS takes away her strength of body and mind. She's set a date, and on this final weekend, her daughters (Winslet and Mia Wasikowska) arrive with their respective spouses (and one grandchild) to say goodbye.

First produced as a 2014 Danish film, *Blackbird* is earnest and predictable, right down to the animosities and secrets that bubble up over the course of the long weekend. The cast, which includes Sam Neil, Rainn Wilson, Lindsay Duncan, and scene-stealers Bex Taylor-Klaus and Anson Boon, work wonders with material that's literate but never revelatory. Visually, director Roger Michell (*Notting Hill*) hangs back, with the camera on one side of the room, and the family forever clumped together on the other. In this movie, close-ups, like honest emotion, are hard to come by. **(Chuck Wilson)**

Oliver Sacks: His Own Life / Kino Marquee and Film Forum Virtual Cinema

As a boy, Oliver Sacks was an amateur chemist who carried a copy of the Periodic Table in his back pocket. Painfully shy, he suffered migraines, like his mother, and later watched in horror as schizophrenia got a grip on his brother Michael. In director Ric Burns' first-rate documentary, *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*, the deeply empathetic neurologist-writer tells his own story in footage shot shortly before his 2015 death as friends gathered to celebrate the completion of Sacks' final book, *My Own Life*.

Despite his brilliant, searching mind, Sacks struggled all his life with terrible self-doubt. After his mother called his homosexuality an "abomination," Sacks began abusing drugs, taking "milkshakes of speed" in medical school, even while beginning the revolutionary work that would later be

documented in the film, *Awakenings*. In a beautiful sequence, Burns includes archival footage of the real *Awakenings* patients literally dancing with joy as Sacks' L-Dopa treatments bring them out of catatonia.

Sacks' insights into his own psychological journey, which includes a poignant late life romance after decades of celibacy, are wonderfully perceptive, but equally invaluable are those of his colleagues – a brilliant assemblage of artists and scientists who love him dearly. The word "love" isn't mentioned much in their deep-dive discussions of Sacks' work but it's clearly the core theme of the man whose philosophy from beginning to end was: "Treat the person, not the disease." **(Chuck Wilson)**

Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Candace Against the Universe / Disney +

Disney's *Phineas and Ferb The Movie: Candace Against the Universe* is equally suited for Saturday morning cartoons or a lazy Sunday afternoon. While this debut film from Bob Bowen is a spin-off of a kids show, don't discount its moving message on how all of us are special.

After six seasons on the Disney Channel, Candace (voiced by Ashley Tisdale) is still trying to bust her little brothers Phineas and Ferb for building stuff in the backyard, this time in a long-form feature on Disney +. She's jealous of how much fun they are having on summer break, so when she sees a spaceship in the front yard, she marches over, clenches her fist, starts to yell, and... realizes it's not her brother's. Moments later, Phineas (Vincent Martella), Ferb (David Errigo Jr.), their friends Isabella (Alyson Stoner), Buford (Bobby Gaylor) and Baljeet (Maulik Panchoy), and of course Dr. Doofenshmirtz (Dan Povenmire), all set out to save Candace from aliens; Perry, the secret agent platypus, hitches a ride to space as well.

In traditional *Phineas and Ferb* fashion, the animation is bright and colorful, there are plenty of musical numbers, and the aliens aren't scary – they actually welcome Candace as "the chosen one," with spa days to boot! But something isn't right. There's a reason the citizens on this strange planet don't talk, and it isn't bad writing. The script is a wonder, full of both humor and sweet moments that give Candace, Phineas and Ferb time to bond. Amid its sharp jokes about Siri, *Star Trek* and animated shows, it reveals emotional truths on why all of us are special, even a tattletale like Candace. **(Asher Luberto)**

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