

Friday, October 24, 2008

Halloween treats at the Great Park

Newly-decorated balloon and brand new preview farm will highlight Saturday's Great Park Pumpkin Harvest.

By SEAN EMERY
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

IRVINE – Halloween comes to the Great Park on Saturday, when children and families will gather under the watchful gaze of the newly-decorated Orange balloon to enjoy a pumpkin harvest and taste of the park's agricultural future.

Great Park workers this week added a holiday twist to the now-familiar balloon ride, adding eyes and a mouth to make the iconic feature more closely resemble a giant floating Jack O'Lantern. That holiday spirit continues on Saturday, with a family friendly harvest featuring free pumpkins for kids under 12, along with a costume parade, a "monster mash" dance and pumpkin decorating.

Families are also being asked to bring canned food items for the less fortunate, with donation bins planned to help support Second Harvest Food Bank and the Community Action Partnership.

In keeping with the harvest theme, Great Park leaders are also unveiling a brand-new preview farm. The approximately 2 acre farm will provide food to struggling families through Second Harvest and Community Action, said Councilman Larry Agran, who also serves as Chairman of the Great Park.

"We expect the Great Park to be a major food basket for Orange County," Agran said. "And of course we want to reconnect younger generations with the heritage of the area."

Located adjacent to the preview park, the preview farm was basically a field of weeds before Great Park officials, with the help of a local farmer, began clearing the area and planting crops three weeks ago, said Tom Larson, a consultant with the Great Park Design Studio who oversees the agricultural efforts.

"We're trying to improve agricultural literacy, so people will understand more about food production," Larson said. "We want them not only to learn about Orange County's agricultural history, but what they can do at their own homes."

The preview farm is but a prelude to what Great Park leaders expect to be a much larger agricultural component of the final park plan. As a result,

Larson said the preview farm is built with the idea that its components could be moved quickly.

Also joining the fall spirit is Lennar Corp. who will host a petting zoo and Ghost Town Main Street at the developers nearby "Hangar 10," located within the future home of the private Great Park Neighborhoods.

Contact the writer: 949-553-2911 or semery@ocregister.com

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FIXING A SMILE:

Balloon pilot Erik Garcia reattaches the jack-o-lantern face in preparation for Saturday's festivities. Some 3,000 pumpkins will be given away and many other activities are in store for the day.

KEN STEINHARDT,
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THE GREAT PUMPKIN: The Great Park is sprucing up the balloon and the grounds in preparation for the Pumpkin Harvest being held Saturday. Attendees are encouraged to help fight hunger by bringing non-perishable foods.

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FIXING THE GREAT PUMPKIN: Balloon pilot Erik Garcia reattaches the jack-o-lantern face, with a 30-foot lift, to the great pumpkin at the Orange County Great Park after the Santa Ana winds blew off the original face.

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The Great Park balloon is on the rise as seen through an old base hangar.

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Halloween treats at the Great Park

The Great Park balloon peeks through an old air base hangar.

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