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This Week at the Great Park: Ecologist honored by architecture group

Second Harvest moves its headquarters to Great Park site

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Award-winning ecologist

Steven Handel, the lead ecologist for the Great Park Design Studio, received an honorary membership to the American Society of Landscape Architects, along with Michael Bloomberg and Robert Redford. Honorary membership is given each year to people who are not landscape architects but have done work that enhances the field of landscape architecture. This year, 13 people received honorary membership.

Handel was nominated by five landscape architects. In the fall he will receive the award at a meeting in Philadelphia. He has also worked on the Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York and done landscaping for the master plan in Beijing for the 2008 Olympic Games.

The ecologist is working to restore native plant life at the former El Toro base.

New headquarters

The Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County is moving its headquarters to a new building on the former El Toro base. There will be a grand opening from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 26 at 8014 Marine Way. There will be tours of the facility, nutrition activities for children, music and food.

Directions: Turn right after passing the Heritage Fields gate and continue down Marine Way 1.4 miles. Second Harvest will be on the right. Information: 949-653-2900 or www.feedoc.org.

Balloon flying high

The Great Park orange balloon is back up after being grounded for three weeks. The tires on the balloon's gondola were damaged during heavy winds in December. The balloon was back up Jan. 10. The balloon's first day back there were 198 passengers, that Friday 205 people came out to see the Great Park from above.

The balloon is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets for the free ride are given out in the visitor's center. The rides may be canceled or delayed due to weather. Wind conditions are best between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Flight information can be found at www.greatparkballoon.org.

Contact the writer: For more details, go to www.ocregister.com/greatpark.