

**IRVINE**

**Free balloon ride**

Someday, **Orange County Great Park** will be one of the biggies—think San Diego’s Balboa or San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. Its 1,347 acres will be a web of lakes, trails, botanical gardens, even museums and an amphitheater. But not yet. Right now, bulldozers rumble around parts of the former El Toro Marine base. Get in on the early excitement by launching 400 feet into the air on a tethered orange helium balloon. Or hop on the carousel, with illustrations from vintage O.C. citrus crates. And at the Farm and Food Lab, Master Gardeners teach free classes on growing tomatoes, planting natives, and, for small spaces, 1-square-foot gardening. *Carousel and balloon rides: Thu–Sun; free. Off I-5 or I-405 at Sand Canyon Ave.; [ocgp.org](http://ocgp.org)* —**CHANTAL LAMERS**

