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DESTINATION ENTERTAINMENT

Daisy Chain a link to Irvine's future

City officials hope festival taking the stage Saturday will set precedent for Great Park's rising profile as a vibrant venue

By Victoria Le
VICTORIALE@SCNG.COM

Along with putting Irvine's Great Park on the entertainment destination map, Olivia Rodrigo's one-day Daisy Chain Fields Music Festival is expected to net about \$517,000 for the city. Irvine, Orange County's

INSIDE: What residents can expect before Olivia Rodrigo's music festival comes to town on Saturday. **Page A9**

second-largest city, probably best known for its universities and suburbia, was thrust into the entertainment spotlight in June when Rodrigo announced the

Great Park grounds would host her debut festival. City officials said she's toured the park multiple times and has been hands-on with creating the vision for its transformation.

When the music goes live Saturday, the city will see its

See **FESTIVAL** on Page A9



Olivia Rodrigo arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party on March 15 in Los Angeles. The pop star is set to headline inaugural Daisy Chain Fields festival alongside an all-female lineup Saturday at Irvine's Great Park. **EVAN AGOSTINI INVISION/AP**

ADDICTION TREATMENT



People congregate outside a methadone clinic in Santa Ana in 2024. The methadone clinic system has changed little since the 1970s; at the same time, opioids have grown terrifyingly stronger, addiction has become epidemic and overdose deaths have skyrocketed across the country. **PHOTOS BY MINDY SCHAUER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Public payments, private profits: A half-century of methadone in America



Teri Sforza
COLUMNIST

They must be observed taking their daily medicine, at least in the beginning.

The clinician often wears a white lab coat and works behind protective glass. She'll pour a dose into a small plastic cup — it's often reddish and clear, like cold medicine — then pass it through a low opening. The patient, who may be fidgety or testy or dangerously late for work, may throw it back with a resentful snap, as if it were a shot of cheap whiskey. It is appallingly bitter, often masked with an even more vile fruit flavoring.

The clinician watches all of this to be sure the stuff is actually swallowed. Methadone must not be "diverted" (that's government-speak for "stolen") and resold as



People arrive in the early morning to receive methadone treatment at a clinic in Stanton on July 29. America's methadone clinics are strictly regulated and federally sanctioned. Many are supported by for-profit entities.

a recreational drug on the black market.

This almost morbid fear of diversion — far more than any desire to help patients — has been a big part of America's methadone clinic system, critics say. For more than half a century, that fear also has handed clinics an exclusive, nearly unbreakable iron grip on what remains a gold standard treatment for opioid addiction.

Methadone clinics are strictly regulated, federally sanctioned and primarily owned by for-profit corporate chains. Many are backed by private equity or publicly traded healthcare companies, which has attracted the ire of lawmakers.

Still, the system has changed little over the decades, even as opioids grew terrifyingly stronger, addiction became epidemic

METHADONE IN AMERICA

This is the first installment of a four-part series.

Part 1: Can one medicine be a Nixon-era relic, an effective sobriety aid and a controversial profit center? Say hello, again, to methadone.

Part 2: "Liberate Methadone!" A drug inspires patients to write a manifesto.

Part 3: Reform? Clinic operators hire Danny Trejo to push "Program, Not a Pill."

Part 4: Did methadone rules kill Sherry Lynn James? New ideas are back on the table, and legislators say they're meeting the industry halfway.

and overdose deaths skyrocketed.

"Coming off opioids is horrible," one clinic regular told us. "You want to die, like your skin doesn't fit anymore. You want to crawl out of it."

Methadone makes that agony go away.

See **SFORZA** on Page A7

HEALTH

Record West Nile spread this year

Presence of the virus in SoCal has reached all-time high, far exceeding the 5-year average

By Madeline Armstrong
MARMSTRONG@SCNG.COM

As another heat wave overtakes Southern California, the presence of West Nile virus has reached record levels.

While West Nile virus has always been present in the state, this year's numbers have far exceeded the five-year average in many regions, from the

See **VIRUS** on Page A8

WASHINGTON

U.S. and Canada fall deeper into a trade war with new tariffs

By Paul Wiseman and Rob Gillies
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The United States and Canada, historic allies along an undefended border, fell deeper into a trade war Saturday marked by angry recriminations and new tariffs that are expected to raise prices for products in both countries.

See **CANADA** on Page A17



HOLLYWOOD BOWL

Gustavo Dudamel says goodbye

The beloved maestro marks his final performance as L.A. Phil-harmonic conductor tonight. **C1**

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FORECAST



Coastal: High 82/Low 70
Inland: High 99/Low 70
Full weather report A15

INDEX

Earthweek A5
Focus A16
Local A3
Lottery A2
Nation+World .. A12,13,14
Obituaries A10,11

Volume 120, issue 235

Pets A4
Playlist C1
Today's Economy Y1



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