

**SADDLE UP!** Our Ultimate  
Guide to Local Horse Culture

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# Orange Coast

## 8 GREAT Burgers

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**ROCKIN' THE LAB**  
UIC Irvine Stem Cell Star  
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## Q: I just joined Toastmasters International. Any ideas on a topic for my first speech?

**A** ● How about “Where did Toastmasters International get its start?” It happened right here in Orange County. Ralph Smedley formed the group in the basement of the old YMCA building in Santa Ana in 1924. Today, more than 12,500 clubs with more than 250,000 members are spread across 106 countries. The organization now is based in Rancho Santa Margarita, and it’s staging the World Championship of Public Speaking Aug. 12 through 14 in Palm Desert, where 81 presenters from around the world will try to “dazzle the judges with a poignant message and powerful delivery.”

## Q: How much should I tip the pilot of the giant orange balloon at the Great Park?

**A** ● Park officials say tipping is not permitted on the free balloon ride. But your question does raise an interesting point: How much “piloting” actually is involved? The balloon is 118 feet tall, can accommodate 25 to 30 passengers at a time, depending on weight, and soars as high as 400 feet. But it also uses helium, not hot air, and it’s always tethered—no free flight. That means it’s safer, and flying it doesn’t require a degree from the Air Force Academy. Regardless of whether you tip, here’s a tip from me: The best times to ride are before noon and after sunset, because that’s when it’s least windy.

## Q: A marquee at Huntington Beach High School says it’s the ‘Home of the Oilers.’ What’s an Oiler?

**A** ● See those oil wells across the street from the school? That’s your clue. An oiler is someone who works in the oil business, and there were a lot of those in Surf City nearly a century ago. Huntington Beach sits atop a huge fault structure that once held lots of oil. After Standard Oil’s first successful well came in in 1920, hundreds of derricks—and a huge oil boom—followed. Some area wells are still producing, including those tapped by offshore rigs, but the city relies more on tourism these days. Today, most of the black gold is gone—not necessarily a bad thing, considering the recent unpleasantness in the Gulf of Mexico. Side note: Famous HBHS Oilers include members of the band Avenged Sevenfold, mixed martial arts champion Tito Ortiz, and NFL player Tony Gonzalez.

*The O.C. Answer Man is* **CHRIS EPTING**. Have a question? Send your inquiries to [cepting@orangecoastmagazine.com](mailto:cepting@orangecoastmagazine.com).