



Bicyclists enjoy a ride along historic Victoria Avenue, which is lined with trees, roses and orange groves and dates back to 1892. It also is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Main squeeze

Orange trees have an important role in Arlington Heights' past, present and — hopefully — future

Written by Amy Bentley
Photos by Gabriel Luis Acosta

IN ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, orange trees are the stars of the neighborhood.

The sweet-smelling orchards that blanket many fertile acres in this historic agricultural area have come to symbolize Riverside's beginnings, and are well-loved today.

"Arlington Heights is the meeting place for the Riverside of yesterday and the Riverside of today," states the city's website in a description of the neighborhood.

That couldn't be more true. Housing tracts and commercial nurseries have popped up in and around Arlington Heights, but Riverside's residents have preserved the area's semi-rural way of life from days gone by, leading a successful effort to keep housing density low and developers at bay. Only one house can be built on a lot of five acres or more in most of Arlington Heights. And you can still buy a bag of fresh, locally grown oranges or lemons from a few corner stands.

Councilman Chris Mac Arthur, who represents Ward 5, which includes Arlington Heights, fully appreciates the area's citrus heritage. Actually, he lives in the midst of it — on five acres in a house that was built in 1897, and he grows juicy navels on another 10 acres.

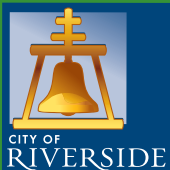
"It was the orange that made Riverside famous," he said.

10 Years of Tree Power

100,000 TREES

RPU's **Tree Power** program has given customers more than 100,000 trees. RPU gave away 14,081 trees in 2010, saving the equivalent of 2.2 million kWh. RPU gave away 6,388 trees in 2005. If planted side-by-side **Tree Power** trees would cover more than 17 square miles. RPU gave away 7,797 trees in 2006. By 2006 RPU had given away more than 41,000 trees. RPU received a 2006 Golden Tree Award from the American Public Power Association for the **Tree Power** program. Trees can cut heating bills by \$50 each year. City of Riverside named a Champion in Urban Forestry by America in Bloom in 2005. The **Tree Power** program pays you \$25 towards the purchase of any tree except palms and dwarfs. RPU gave away 12,744 trees in 2009. By 2010 RPU had given away more than 87,000 trees. RPU gave away 14,081 trees in 2010. Trees replenish the ground with vital nutrients. Over their lifetime, **Tree Power** trees will absorb 100,000 tons of carbon dioxide. Riverside has more than 100,000 street trees and more than 50,000 park trees. Trees provide privacy around homes. Trees can create jobs associated with tree care. 2011 is the 10th anniversary for the RPU's **Tree Power**. Trees reduce cooling costs. Since 2001, the **Tree Power** program has put \$3.6 million back into Riverside's economy. Trees reduce heating and air conditioning costs. Trees planted in the right place, can make buildings up to 20 degrees cooler in summer. Trees help maintain a healthy of ecosystem. In 2001, the first year of **Tree Power**, RPU gave away 3,700 trees. Trees beautify our city. Trees lower the air temperature. The **Tree Power** program supports local nurseries, accounting for millions of dollars in tree sales each year. Trees can increase home value by up to 20%. Riverside's trees are valued at more than \$332 million. In 2002, when RPU put **Tree Power** Coupons on the back of the March bill, we gave away twice as many trees. Trees combat the greenhouse gas effect. Trees support local wildlife. Trees filter water runoff, protecting streams. **Tree Power** trees produce 26 million pounds of oxygen each year. By 2003 RPU had given away more than 19,000 trees. Trees reduce noise pollution. One local nursery has distributed more than 50,000 **Tree Power** trees through the program. RPU gave away 7,950 trees in 2004. Trees conserve water by slowing evaporation. RPU gave away 9,183 trees in 2007. Since 1987, Riverside has been recognized as a "Tree City, USA" by The National Arbor Day Foundation. **Tree Power** trees remove approximately 800,000 pounds of Riverside's air pollution each year. RPU gave away 9,625 trees in 2008. By 2009 RPU had given away more than 73,000 trees. Residential tree planting accounts for 42% of all trees planted in the United States. The **Tree Power** program has grown each year since 2005.

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Mac Arthur and his family still enjoy the lifestyle, but others couldn't make a go of it and let their orchards die off, leaving a smattering of vacant lots.

"It's tough being a citrus farmer; you've got to have another source of income," he said.

Mac Arthur's 96-year-old father, M. Hebbard Mac Arthur, is a retired dentist who bought his first grove in 1946 and has been in the citrus business for 65 years. To this day, he enjoys driving a small pickup truck around to inspect the orchards.

Preserving the agricultural heritage is important to many people in Riverside, not just Arlington Heights growers and residents.

Retired Riverside County Judge Dallas Holmes was a

co-creator of Proposition R, a measure city voters passed in 1979 to save scenic Victoria Avenue from development. As a bonus, the measure also limited growth and housing density in Arlington Heights.

Prop. R essentially was a rezoning measure for Victoria Avenue and Arlington Heights from Washington Street to the city limits with Corona, a large area that today still has about 5,000 acres of active citrus orchards.

"There's nothing like that in the country today, in any city," Holmes said. "It's a unique amenity for Riverside, and it's unequalled anywhere else in the country."

Victoria Avenue, a nearly nine-mile scenic parkway created in 1892, is perhaps the best-known



M. Hebbard Mac Arthur with his son, Riverside Councilman Chris Mac Arthur

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icon specific to the neighborhood, and is cherished by many. The lushly landscaped, two-lane divided roadway is a popular place for locals to take a bike ride or leisurely stroll.

"I walk my dogs down Victoria Avenue, and I usually take a visiting judge or somebody down from town to see it when we have guests," Holmes said.

Victoria Avenue is a city Cultural Heritage Landmark and also is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The landmark portion runs from the Tequesquite Arroyo to La Sierra Avenue.

Visitors pass thousands of trees, special gardens with ornamental plantings, rose bushes and an information kiosk. Trees include citrus, palms of different varieties, eucalyptus from Australia, flowering jacaranda, pepper and magnolia. Many are more than 200 feet tall and tower over the street, shading the road and the front yards of homes that flank its sides.



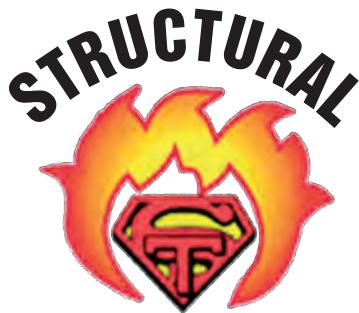
Photo by Frank Perez

Frank Heyming and Lori Yates, both with the preservation group Victoria Avenue Forever

Victoria Avenue was created by Mathew Gage, a jeweler from Ireland who moved to Riverside in 1881 and developed the Gage Canal, which allowed for the Arlington Heights citrus groves to be planted.

Gage wanted to create a showcase parkway named for Britain's Queen Victoria, to help promote land sales in the newly formed Arlington Heights, according to the preservation group Victoria Avenue Forever. He modeled

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Youth soccer teams square off at Arlington Heights Sports Park.

this two-way horse-and-buggy road after Riverside's landmark Magnolia Avenue. Grading and planting began in 1892. In June 1902, Victoria Avenue was deeded to the city of Riverside.

Victoria Avenue Forever formed 20 years ago to help maintain and restore the avenue and its gardens, says Lori Yates, a retired master gardener and 15-year board member who has lived in Arlington Heights for 34 years.

Before Victoria Avenue Forever was organized, she adds, there had been several efforts to protect the avenue because members felt the city's efforts were lacking and trees were dying from neglect.

City fathers are now on board, and, during the past few years, irrigation systems have been upgraded and 800 new orange trees have been planted along the avenue with

Riverside Renaissance funds.

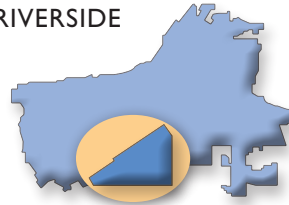
Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful, another volunteer group, helped do the planting and residents donated money to buy trees. New roses were planted too, and students, Scouts and volunteers pitched in to plant.

"Keeping a grove on the avenue is an act of love," Yates said. "We should be very grateful to everyone who still does have a grove. You pray every spring you'll see that grove harvested. As long as it's irrigated, you know it will be there for another year."

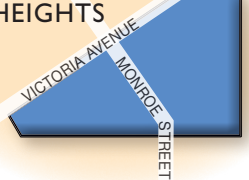
Holmes also hopes the Arlington Heights groves will grow forever, so future generations will be able to experience the living history.

Otherwise, he says, "There will be a time when people will ask, 'Where do oranges come from?'"

RIVERSIDE



ARLINGTON HEIGHTS



More Arlington Heights highlights

- The California Citrus State Historic Park, a citrus preserve with active groves and a visitor's center outlining the history of citrus globally, also tells the story of Riverside's citrus history. (Story on Page 39.)
- The attractive Arlington Heights Sports Park, which opened in August 2010, pays homage to the area's agricultural history. Interpretive panels at the park tell the story.

A water feature that looks like an orange and a blue line at the park that imitates the Gage Canal are two of the features. Shade structures are named after Riverside places or pioneers, including John Gage, and lampposts are vintage-style.

Three rows of orange trees line the park's perimeter, and interior buildings appear as if they came from a working citrus ranch circa 1880 or 1890. Storage containers near the baseball fields look like packing containers.