

Victoria Avenue

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Lewis Family Celebration

The Lewis family celebrated Mother's Day in the Dr. Lewis Garden

by Darleen A. DeMason



The Dr. Peter M. Lewis Garden, which is at the corner of Jane and Victoria Avenue, is one of only three named gardens on the Avenue. This garden was planned and planted by the Board of Victoria Avenue Forever in the early 1990s when Rosie Francisco was President. The garden was named after a long time and well respected physician in town, Dr. Peter M. Lewis. Mary Humbolt led the fund-raising effort and Rick Catron designed the garden as one of the first "water wise" Mediterranean style plantings in the area.

Dr. Lewis' first wife, Ms. Lilla Lewis, was born in Riverside and was a member of the Irving/Gage family that settled in Riverside beginning in about the 1880's. Early family members were civil engineers and attorneys who were involved in the design and construction of the Gage Canal, and were also orange growers. Her aunts were among the ladies who planted the original ragged robin roses along the Avenue. The Lewis children grew up hearing stories of early Riverside and were instilled with a strong connection to their roots in Riverside and to the land.

Peter and Lilla's children were raised on Hawarden Drive between Maude and Horace in a house that the Irvings built in 1917 and that the family occupied when Peter started his medical practice in 1955. Although Peter was born in Redlands, he loved Riverside dearly, and all of his children were raised with an awareness of the importance of giving back to our community and of caring for the environment. He was active in city beautification efforts for many years.

Peter and Lilla's children feel their family life was a blessing, and they are honored that Victoria Avenue Forever named the park in their father's memory and honor.



Front row, left to right – Lilla Lewis (mother of the Lewis children and his ex-wife, who still lives in Riverside), Suzy Lewis Marzalek (Dr. Lewis' daughter, living in Santa Rosa, CA)

Back row, left to right Michael Lewis (Dr. Lewis' son, living in Long Beach, CA), Paige Lewis (Dr. Lewis' granddaughter, Michael's daughter, living in Anaheim), and Peter M. Lewis, Jr. (Dr. Lewis' son, living in Riverside).

Bits & Pieces

by
Lori Yates

It is with pleasure that we report the return of Susan McClintock, a Master Gardener and VAF supporter to the VAF Board of Directors. She has a long track record of success in working on many of the nitty-gritty tasks that keep the organization running. We still mourn the loss of her long-time partner Ron Bridges, and are grateful for her return.

Also joining the board is Kathy Swanson, Rosarian and Master Gardener, with lots of experience in managing landscapes. Kathy loves everything associated with Riverside's history and is very active in the community. We are proud to have such a notable addition to our Board of Directors.

Have you been out to drive Victoria Avenue lately? The long spring confused some of the flowering trees into blooming early, late or both. Some of the heat-loving, white blossoming crepe myrtles between Harrison and Myers bloomed weeks ago. However, the deep pink ones between Monroe and Irving are reaching their peak of bloom now. The parkways in the same stretch still show off the stately Southern Magnolias with their cup-and-saucer sized white blooms poised above dark green leaves on one side of the street, and the bright green new foliage of the young Jacaranda trees on the other side, still with clusters of purple blossoms.

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Victoria Avenue: Developer's Dream

President's Report by Frank Heyming

Matthew Gage came to Riverside in 1881 from Kingston, Ontario, Canada. His first venture in Riverside was a jewelry and clock repair business. His friends George and William Chaffey were very successful in land sales on their 1000 acres of barren land known as Etiwanda. Matthew Gage was determined to do the same. The 1877 Desert Land Act provided that a person could acquire 640 acres for 25 cents an acre if reclaimed by irrigation within 3 years. Gage bought the land known as Section 30, bordered by current day Pennsylvania, Chicago, University and Iowa Avenues (part of present day University of California, Riverside).

Section 30 had no water other than a few seasonal creeks flowing from the Box Springs Mountains. After much research Gage determined that it was feasible to bring Santa Ana River water from Colton and let it flow by gravity via a canal to his property. The 11.9 mile canal involved an arduous construction project including tunneling through mountains. The canal, known today as the Gage Canal, was the culmination of his efforts to bring water to his property and resulted in a great economic boon to Riverside. The canal was later extended another 8.2 miles through an area known as Arlington Heights, by the construction of a flume over the Tequesquite Arroyo (think Andulka Park and Victoria Country Club).

In 1888 Gage had a plan to develop a wide boulevard on the barren Arlington Heights land beyond the Tequesquite Arroyo. He even envisioned a streetcar running along the median strip to bring tourists who might buy tracts of land. Queen Victoria allowed the avenue to be named in her honor after Gage and William Irving petitioned her. In 1890 Matthew Gage sold his irrigation canal and 11,981 acres to an English group named the Riverside Trust Company. The right of way for Victoria Avenue was granted but construction of the road was delayed until a bridge could be erected across the Tequesquite Arroyo connecting the area with downtown Riverside. In September 1891 the Trust Company began construction on a cantilevered truss bridge over the arroyo. The 560 foot long bridge had a plank floor and granite block foundation. The bridge cost \$12,000 to build and later became known as Victoria Bridge.

With the building of the bridge land on both sides of Victoria Avenue blossomed with tracts of oranges. A landscape gardener named Franz Hosp was hired to beautify the street landscapes. He planted hundreds of *Washingtonia Robusta* (fan palms) and *Eucalyptus* on both sides of Victoria Avenue and within the median strip. And so began the story of our beloved Victoria Avenue. (source: *Pursuing Eden* by Joan Hall)

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The Hal Snyder Garden looks wonderful! Over 80 frost damaged plants were replaced in March and April, and the gophers routed for the time being. The garden is glowing with color. The central tree, the Boy Scout's Sycamore, is growing rapidly. The two white crepe myrtles that flank the bench are in full bloom. In fact, a few weeks ago I spotted a young woman in a white, ruffled sundress walking into the garden as a young man with a tripod-mounted camera filmed her. Later I saw them again, sitting together on the bench under the flowering trees, the camera apparently operating remotely. Curious, I stopped and learned the young pair were doing their own engagement photos surrounded by all the gorgeous blooms of Hal's garden. I didn't get names, just the pleasure of seeing Hal's garden being so appreciated.

Annual elections to the governing board of Victoria Avenue Forever take place in August. You will receive your ballot the same way you regularly receive your newsletter. We need your input to keep us on track, working to preserve Victoria Avenue and to reach out to the community to inform folks of our activities and goals. Please take the time to add your comments to the ballot. We need more hands working, especially to help in community outreach and education. You don't have to wield a shovel to be a big help!. Can you spare a couple of hours a month? Please contact us by phone, email or note at the numbers or addresses in every newsletter.

FYI, VAF's volunteer work days "go dark" in the summer, except for occasional small weeding projects. Regular work days will resume in October when the temperatures begin to drop. Until then, have a great summer!

2010 - 2011 Officers

Frank Heyming, President
Frank Yost, Vice President
Jim Dudek, Treasurer
Darleen DeMason,
Recording Secretary
Directors
Kurt Gunther
Jim Montgomery
Susan McClintock
Kathy Swanson
Adam Timura
Lori Yates
Lynn Yost

Special Projects

Publications:

Kurt Gunther • Lori Yates
Marsha Loveridge
Darlene DeMason

Victoria Avenews is published
4 - 6 times a year
by Victoria Avenue Forever

The VAF board meets at 6:30 on
the 2nd Wednesday of each month
(except August).
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or call (951) 398-1032

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Endowment Fund Contributions

April 2011 - June 2011

Thank you to all who contribute to Victoria Avenue in memory of, or in honor of, your loved ones. Your gift will be used to help protect and care for Riverside's living legacy. Recently the late Art Miller, who was widely known and respected, was acknowledged with an outpouring of memorial gifts to Victoria Avenue Forever. We want to be sure to acknowledge every one. If your gift is not acknowledged in this issue of *Avenews*, it will be in the next issue.

Contributors in memory of Art Miller

Rosemarie Richardson, Veda Brown, Robert Hamilton, William Johnson, Patricia Winterton, Alfred Bonnett, Michael Chizzo, Richard Francisco, Jean Schroeder, Gloria Thomas, Robert Castle, Marie Cotter, Richard Perry, Roy Kelly, Paul Trotta, Robert Kimmel, Dennis Timmons, Frankie Dietzman, James Gardner, Walter Parks, John Beal, Margaret Fletcher, James Miller, David Moore, Donald Morrow, Basil Pafe, Gayle Meehan, B.J. and Terry Mylne, Harry Nelson, Betty Swoffer, Mary Speck, Clinton Marr, Brian Zagon, Lyn Lyon, Stephen Cunnison, Rex Salyer, Charles Field, Robert Kollar, Anthem Legal, Dwayne Mickelson, John Gless and John Miller.

Monika Ittig	In honor of Hal Synder
Dennis Timmons	In memory of LouElla Walling
Marie Cotter	In memory of Robert Anderson
Evan Vail	In memory of Jim Douglas
Steve Francis	In memory of George Otto
Audrey Neblet	In memory of Anne Tourtelotte
Jerry Kelley	In memory of Ruth Elida Holt
George Weimer	In memory of James M. Baylor, MD
Susan McClintock	In memory of Ron Bridges
Rosemary Richardson	In memory of Elizabeth Woodford, Judy Borden
Elizabeth Marsh	In memory of Eleanor Crabtree
Cathy Zimmer	In memory of Bobbie Estudillo
Steven Francis	In memory of Florence Lorenz
Lalla Neblett	In memory of LuElla Walling, Margaret Fast
Shirley Lewis	In memory of Katherine Newton

Commemorative Trees

Craig & Linda Riley and Debbie Gelsomino	In memory of Yvette Marie Krol
Claire Bartos	In memory of Marsha Dean Norris
Evelyn Guin	In honor of Christina Guin & Paul Guin
Ruth Anderson Wilson and Jim Montgomery	In honor of Dan Bernstein
Frank & Lucy Heyming	In memory of Bill & Mary Bottenberg



Sweetshade Tree

By Darleen Demason
Professor of Botany,
UC Riverside

Sweetshade or *Hymenosporum flavum* is a member of the family *Pittosporaceae*. This family consists of 8 or 9 woody genera of trees, shrubs or vines from Old World (Australia, Southeast Asia and Southern Africa) tropical and temperate areas but has its greatest diversity in Australia. Family members have resinous stems, simple, rather linear, evergreen leaves and blue, white or yellow flowers with 5 sepals, 5 petals and 5 stamens. Sweetshade has many characteristics typical of its family. It is a native of eastern Australia and thus thrives in the Mediterranean climate of Southern California. Sweetshade trees have a distinctive shape in that they are tall (reaching 20 to 40 feet) and slender due to their short and widely spaced lateral branches. They are green all year round with glossy, firm to leathery leaves. Sweetshade trees are spectacular in bloom which lasts for many weeks from spring to early summer. The flowers are clustered and open a creamy off-white color but turn orangey, yellow with age. The most pleasant aspect of the flowers is their strong sweet scent that "perfumes" their immediate environment. These trees tolerate full sun to partial shade but need well drained soil and protection from wind. You can view this species in the median of Victoria Avenue between Washington and Hill streets.



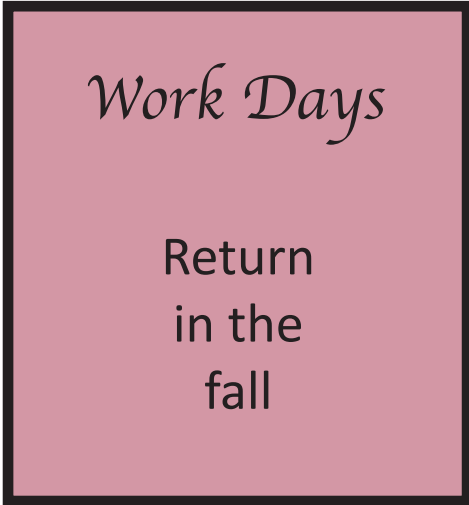
Another close relative of Sweetshade, also in the *Pittosporaceae*, is *Pittosporum tobira* or Mock Orange. It is originally from subtropical coastal forests of China, Japan and Korea, but is commonly used as dense hedges in the Southern California landscape. The flowers are also clustered, cream colored and very fragrant. The leaves are thick, glossy and dark green with recurved margins. A variegated variety is very common. It has leaves with gray-green centers and white margins.



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JOIN VICTORIA AVENUE FOREVER
(Current members will be notified when their membership expires)

Victoria Avenue Forever (VAF) is a non-profit organization founded in 1990, dedicated to the preservation and beautification of Victoria Avenue. Through fund raisers and membership support, VAF has purchased plants and trees, organized tree planting parties, planted over 600 trees, organized tree care activities, and informed our members about the history and value of the plantings on the avenue. Present goal is to take cuttings and fill in missing 'Ragged Robin' roses which frame the trees and larger plants in the medians.

To find out more about the history of Victoria Avenue, to find out how you can become a member, and to volunteer for activities, please fill in the form below and mail today. We'd love to have you join us!

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

Make your tax-deductible checks payable to Victoria Avenue Forever
and mail to PO Box 4152 • Riverside, CA 92514

\$20.00 Individual \$35.00 Family
 \$75.00 Sustaining I would like to volunteer

\$_____ for VAF Endowment Fund in honor/memory of _____

Please mail to Victoria Avenue Forever • P O Box 4152 • Riverside, CA 92514



Victoria Avenue Forever

Election of Board of Directors for 2011 - 2012

As per the by-laws of Victoria Avenue Forever (VAF) it is time to name the Board of Directors to guide the group for the coming year. Please indicate that you affirm the following 13 nominees and add any relevant comments. Fold the ballot in thirds, tape, add a stamp and mail to the address on the other side by September 1, 2011. Thank you very much.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Darleen DeMason | <input type="checkbox"/> Frank Heyming | <input type="checkbox"/> Adam Timura |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Dudek | <input type="checkbox"/> Susan McClintock | <input type="checkbox"/> Pati Weir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kurt Gunther | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Montgomery | <input type="checkbox"/> Lori Yates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marilyn Harris | <input type="checkbox"/> Kathy Swanson | <input type="checkbox"/> Frank and Lyn Yost |

It would be a great help to the board if you would also take the time to share your opinions and suggestions on the following topics:

- What is your reaction to what the Renaissance Project has accomplished to make Victoria Avenue more beautiful?

- How can we make more people aware of our group and increase membership?

- How can we increase volunteer participation in our activities?

- What new projects might we undertake on the Avenue?

- How can our newsletter be improved? What kind of information would be useful or interesting?

- Any other suggestions?

AFFIX
POSTAGE
HERE

VICTORIA AVENUE FOREVER
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