

I hope you are all enjoying the beautiful spring flowers as much as I am. This is the season that makes us love our neighborhood the most with all its huge old trees, flowering bushes, and beautiful gardens.

Springtime reminds me how lucky we are. We live in what may just be the best urban neighborhood in America. Quiet, tree-lined streets, close "magnets" as our home-base schools, a wonderful city pool, a nearby greenway, duck ponds, beautiful old homes (like they don't make 'em anymore,) and big backyards. Sometimes I have to pinch myself to remember that we have all these amenities — inside the belt-line and close to downtown. I think we have the best-kept secret in Raleigh.

That, however, is a shame. Our neighborhood nearly is a secret. How many times have you told someone you live in Longview Gardens — only to get a blank stare. We've even had such stares from people in the real estate business. With all the growth in what used to be rural and now has become suburban Raleigh, established neighborhoods are often forgotten. Why should we care? We already know the secret.

We have to care because neighborhoods are dynamic, always changing communities. People need to know about a neighborhood in or-

der to choose to live here. In order for our neighborhood to remain the wonderful place it is, it has to remain mostly owner-occupied. Most landlords just can't and don't take care of homes and yards the way that homeowners do. Renters come and go more quickly than homeowners. Don't get me wrong — I spent the first decade of my married life as a renter and I know that some of the houses in Longview Gardens have been rented for years. That's terrific. What wouldn't be terrific is if too many of the houses became rentals. A first-class neighborhood with residents who have long-term interests in the community has to be a neighborhood comprised mostly of homeowners.



Now, this isn't really a problem since only rarely are houses even for sale in Longview Gardens. But when homes do go up for sale, I have a suggestion: let's help our

neighbors sell their homes to families that want to live in them. Word-of-mouth is the best way to sell anything — a home *and* a neighborhood. This is much easier than you'd think. I know because I found out recently by doing it.

What the experience taught me is that our neighborhood is easy to sell, and that we are the best salespeople around. When a home opens up near you, think of whom it would be perfect for and you'd like to have as a neighbor. Tell them about it. It doesn't matter that they aren't house shopping — they might just start! And if you decide to sell your home, let me know, so I can spotlight it here in the Longview Gardens Gazette!

I've two ideas for our neighborhood organization to help out with this visibility campaign. First, in the next issue I'll spotlight whatever homes are currently for sale in the neighborhood. That way, we can let our friends know when a house is up for sale in Longview Gardens even if we don't usually drive by it ourselves. Second, I'm going to institute a "visibility" committee to put together a packet of information about our neighborhood for real estate agents. Please let me know if you're interested in working with me on this project (821-2506.)

Take time to smell, touch, look at, walk around and enjoy the flowers.

Barbara Risman

Thanks...

Have you noticed how terrific and short the grass along Longview Lake shoreline at the intersection of Chatham and Bertie looks? Our City Council Representative, Brad Thompson, stepped in and helped me convince the city that that the shoreline desperately needed extra attention. Remember to thank Brad if you get a chance.

I know everyone from Longview Gardens joins me in a BIG THANKS to Catherleen Thomas for all her dedication and leadership as Chairperson of the East Raleigh CAC. Catherleen steps down (in order to focus her attention on other worthy projects) having accomplished a great deal. The flowers blooming every year on New Bern Avenue will always remind us of her many contributions to East Raleigh. Thank you, Catherleen!

And thanks to Jim Reid for his superb job as Newsletter Editor. The great graphics and neat design exist because of Jim's hard work and dedication. (Thanks Jim, for leaving this in.)