

KATHY and SAM SMITH

- o Residents since 1972
- o Eaton parents from 1973 to 1980
- o 44 and 46 years old

KS--We moved to Cleveland Park so that our children could have some freedom to run around and be out by themselves on their tricycles. I wanted a quieter place than our busy street on Capitol Hill.

People are very neighborly here, just as I remember my own childhood neighborhood. I love the way people come out of their houses and sit on porches and steps and talk together. And I like the idea that I feel comfortable going to at least four or five houses right around me to borrow a cup of flour.

I've shopped all these years up on Wisconsin Avenue. I know the people at Murphy's, deKun Photo, Modern Shoe, the Giant and I love seeing the familiar faces....there's a lady down in the basement of Murphy's who's always so friendly and efficient and Mrs. deKun who always makes time to talk.

Sam and I were both involved one year in the Safety Patrol Parade. We helped the John Eaton patrol make a float with a great big rocket ship made of chicken wire and tissue paper. It took weeks to do it with all the members of the patrol and other parents. We drove down to the Mall the day of the parade and it was windy and all this pink tissue paper that we had stuck in the chicken wire began to blow out all over the streets. People honked and laughed and waved at us as we went by.

Twice we had a Newark Street block party and closed the street from Connecticut to 34th Street. Bobby Abbo ran the first one, I think. He and Lou Stovall cooked hot dogs for everyone on grills in front of our house. Nancy Harter created games for all ages. We had games painted on the street in all different colors. I remember all the kids riding their big wheels down the hill in the dip on Newark Street right in the middle of the street. What joy! I knew most of the people on the street, but there were some houses that were a mystery to me. It was great fun because everyone came out of their houses and I met some people for the first time.

SS--I was born in Washington. And I remember that during the Second World War there was gas rationing. If we were up near Cleveland Park heading home down Wisconsin Avenue, my father would just turn off the engine and coast down to Georgetown. I also remember skating at an ice skating rink that was on the second floor of the shopping center where WJLA is now on Connecticut Avenue.

I think I was the first father to be president of the HSA at Eaton. Afterwards Bill Robinson was co-president with Terry. It was a lot of fun and a lot of work. There were so many people who had so many good ideas. That was about the time that we started selling Christmas trees....Terry Robinson's idea. One year the trees arrived and weren't too fresh and I remember there was a man who brought back a whole paper bag full of needles from his tree, complaining that he had gotten a bad tree.

We made a lot of good friends through our years at John Eaton School. Kids have a lot to do with how good a community is. Through the kids, the parents meet each other. We share our joys and headaches through our concern for our kids and often become good friends because of that.

I like the porches. I think porches are very important because they bring people to the front of their houses instead of to the back. If they are at the back of their house, then you never see them. In the summertime we put some chairs out on our front porch, and sometimes when we're sitting out there late at night, friends just come up and talk for a while. And the other thing that happens on this block is that there's a lot of standing in the street and on the sidewalk and talking with neighbors. A lot of people come out on weekends. You'll find four or five people just standing around talking.

Cleveland Park politically is pretty liberal....this particular precinct for which John Eaton is the voting center. The Cleveland Park people tend to be fairly active politically and they get involved in local political campaigns. One of the things that struck me when I was the first Neighborhood Commissioner here, however, was how little practice the neighbors had in organizing to protect their own interests politically....as Pogo used to say, "Standing up on my piano and demanding outrage action." Zoning, however, is a case where they have been very effective.