

“In the Neighborhood Contest”

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It was 6 a.m., and I could hear the radio coming on in my parent’s room. Dinah Shore was singing...”I love those dear hearts and gentle people that live in my home town.....” I’d doze off listening to the farm report, then Joe Tennessen’s familiar voice coming over the radio would remind me that I had better get up and ready for school.

That’s how I have always thought of Greeley, “dear hearts and gentle people. We never locked our doors. I rode my bike all over the city, gone for hours, and no one ever worried. We knew our neighbors. We knew that if we needed anything they would give us more than we needed and would be there even if we didn’t ask them to, and they knew it was the same for us. Still is.

Greeley was a great place to grow up. We had good schools and a teacher college right in our backyard. (Literally, I lived near the college.) We had good stores, Montgomery Wards, and Penny’s and Joslins and the Denver Dry and Jones Company and Otis Brothers and Fashion Bar, Woolworth’s and Dodd’s and Florio’s and the Maternity store where my Mom worked. It was exciting when the Mall came in south of Greeley, but sad when all our favorite downtown stores moved out there.

The University of Northern Colorado, has always been a prestigious institution of higher learning; and its colors were purple and gold not blue and gold. Greeley was a happening place with well manicured lawns, two drive-in theaters, a country club, and McDonald’s hamburgers.

Even when I moved away from Greeley for 12 years and lived in Los Angeles, I never forgot about those dear hearts and gentle people and that great place, my hometown. We moved back here, in 1992, after twelve years in Los Angeles, to raise our girls in a good place, with good schools, and low crime, well

manicured lawns and parks, and the only “wild life” we could find in the city were the geese in the Bittersweet and Sanborn Parks.

The only things that have changed about this city, are the perceptions. Greeley is a great place. But when you look up anything about Greeley or hear anything about Greeley in the news, it is usually bad. Why is it that the school district can only tell us about how we were on watch and we have low performing schools? Why don't we hear about having more Boetcher scholars from Greeley than just about any city in Colorado?

Why don't we hear about all of the doctors, lawyers, successful actors, business people, and scholars who have come out of Greeley schools? “Crime in Greeley?” Sure, like anywhere we've had some, but after living in LA., this is better than Lake Woebegeon, and statistics show it is better than most places and I have never felt afraid anywhere in this town. Greeley has an odor problem occasionally, but not nearly as bad as when I lived here as a kid. Our University has one of the top business schools in the country as well as a top ranked jazz music program– from a top notch music school.

Business people and the hospital and UNC have a hard time now recruiting people to come and work and go to school here. They read all the bad press about Greeley and believe it. It is about time we changed that. If only we could get them to meet the dear hearts and gentle people who live here that perception would change.

Bio statement

Beverly Wallace – is currently a fifth grade teacher and a native of Greeley, She believes Greeley has problems, but nothing a few elections of some dear hearts and gentle people with brains wouldn't cure. She is a graduate of UNC and has a degree in Communication. She has worked in the publishing field, and in marketing and advertising.