

# Life in Carpenter: It's warm as a sweet potato pie

By Roxanne Powers

When our family moved to Morrisville (more precisely, the township of Carpenter) four years ago, we didn't need to contact a Welcome Wagon. Our Welcome Wagon was in the convenience store "two blocks down," the farm supply store "one block over," the Runtan park "across the street," or better yet, Good Hope Baptist Church "just over yonder."

I don't suppose anyone in Carpenter ever needed a Welcome Wagon. Any time a body moves into or out of Carpenter, it automatically becomes news, and neighborly manners automatically kick in. Neighbors drop in to introduce themselves and their home-grown or home-baked specialties...and good humored warnings (proffered with a twinkle of an eye) of "Oh, and be careful who ya talk about around here; we're all kin to each other in one way or another ya know!"

I must confess that I was a bit intimidated by the above statement, and in my prayers would wail, "Oh Lord, what have we done? Have we moved to a community that will always consider us the newcomers, and therefore the outsiders?"

How ironic that the good-natured warnings that initially intimidated me later became the balm that soothed the worrywart heart of this mother of five!

It started out simply enough. Our teens were befriended by the local teens. Before we knew it they were spending more time at the Good Hope Baptist (just over yonder) youth meetings than they were in front of the television. So of course, we moved our membership to Good Hope Baptist.



**SWEET HOME**--Roxanne Powers stands on her front steps and glances at a tobacco field on the other side of Morrisville-Carpenter Road. Ms.

Powers, in a progress article, describes the Carpenter area as an ideal place to live.

Next thing we noticed was that not only were we not the only "weird" parents who won't allow their children to date until they are sixteen (to our knowledge, none of the youth here are allowed to date before the age of 16), but also our kids no longer complained about it. Next, we noticed that (so far, at least) none of the kids involved in the church youth group have been in trouble with the law (or at least obviously) or experimented with drugs, alcohol, sex or shoplifting, etc.

When we talk to the teens of the community we don't see bloodshot eyes, or confused, dazed expressions. We see young adults who seem happy, well adjusted and

responsible. When my children are riding with them, I don't worry that the driver is under the influence of anything more powerful than Mello Yello.

Things really got eerie when not long after moving here we noticed that the two oldest children no longer seemed to hate each other. (The Stepford Children?)

It was also comforting to know that while spanking was obviously not the preferred method of discipline (these people know that God gave parents the more sophisticated brains for good reason), the young people of the community no doubt know that if they create enough "pomp and circumstance" their parents can create a time and place to rid them of it.

When it gets down to it though, there's something about this community (beside the marvelous sweet potato pie and generous praise when a job's well done) that leaves a warm and safe feeling in a parent's heart. It is the sure knowledge that around here, everyone is "kin in one way or another," and that translates into: "With all these kindfolk, young-uns 'round these parts don't get away with right much!"

## Move over; more people on the way

Here's some news that won't surprise you: there'll be a lot more people living in Wake County by the year 2020.

The annual population estimate prepared by the Office of State Planning calls for a population of 835,562 in 2020. That's 62.9 percent more than the 1995 figure of 512,944 and 28,000 more than the Office of State Planning predicted a year ago.

Projections call for the population to reach 478,491 in 2000, 641,732 in 2005, 705,271 in 2010 and 770,548 in 2015.

The population of the three counties making up the Research Triangle (Wake, Durham and Orange) will reach 1,259,052 in 2,025 according to projections.

The projected rate of growth in Wake over the next 25 years is far higher than both of its Triangle neighbors. Durham County is expected to grow 42.3 percent to a population of 276,028 and Orange County is expected to grow 38.4 percent to a population of 147,462.

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