

# Sherman Garden Cooperative Apartments

*A monthly publication for residents of Sherman Garden Apartments, 1856-66 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL*

AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER

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## **Garden Roots**

By Joan Cotter

Imagine the Sherman Garden trees 30 feet shorter. Imagine the City of Evanston's skyline 60 years ago. Sixty years ago Johnathan Harding (1862, 4SW) was a student at Northwestern when, on November 1, 1948, his parents moved into the unit Johnathan still owns. The first buildings (1862 and 1864) had just been completed with 56 units selling at \$4000 each; assessments were \$125 plus minimal fees for each major appliance and \$1 for connection to the rooftop antenna. The courtyard consisted of planks and dirt and often mud, while construction continued on the other two buildings. There was a restaurant called the Big Dipper on the corner of Sherman and University Place, which the developers had wanted to buy, but the owners wouldn't sell.

In 1949 Johnathan's father rented a banquet room at the North Shore Hotel and convened the Sherman Garden residents for the formation of the Mutual Owners' Association. He believed it was important to bring owners and trustees closer together, and so building directors were named who communicated with the management company, which then brought the items to the trustees for action.

Johnathan eventually became a trustee himself, serving two consecutive three-year terms and then more recently another term which just ended in 2008. He says he enjoyed that work, especially the interview process, as his career in hotel and restaurant management required refined interview skills. That career took him to New York City at one time where he was banquet manager at the 21 Club. (There he planned 1400-1500 parties a year!) But he has always considered the Chicago area home and 4SW in 1862 has been his base of operations since his student days at Northwestern.

The university has grown, Evanston has developed, and Sherman Garden has become a place of beauty and quiet. "The developers did the right thing to build around the young trees," Johnathan affirmed.