

## Looking for a Place to Nest? Watch the Birds

*By Irv Sternberg*

Having no training in sociology or psychology, I must rely on a lifetime of experiences to answer the question: Where Do I Belong? So I fall back on an old piece of folk wisdom. *Birds of a feather flock together.*

Look around this room this morning. There are more than 3,000 people living in Windsor Gardens but about 20 of us have found each other and meet every Monday morning to share what we all have in common—a desire to write and share those words with like-minded people.

I think the same forces are at work when we choose a spouse, decide where to live, select a job or career, pick our friends, join a church or clubs. We look for birds of a feather. We flock together. Here in Windsor Gardens, there are more than 40 clubs and organizations. Some of us belong to so many that by the end of the week, we're exhausted.

I recall years ago when whole neighborhoods were composed almost exclusively of immigrant ethnic families—Italians, Poles, Irish and Jewish. They felt more comfortable, more secure living among their own kind. Some of this is still true today, but less so as people have become more tolerant of others. Diversity is more the norm. Blacks still have trouble being accepted into largely white neighborhoods as do Jews in non-Jewish neighborhoods. "They are not one of us," is the usual explanation.

In recent years, politics has emerged as a major classifier. Do we belong to the Democratic Party or the Republican? As the presidential election draws closer, millions of Americans are wrestling with that question. The answer will also tell us: What kind of a nation do we want to be? And whether or not we're still comfortable living in the country we love.