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Home to Stay

by Kay Steele Faulk

Moving South is something many Northerners don't understand, but the ones who do it by moving to Oldham County, Kentucky, declare they will never go back.

One such couple is Maureen and Joe Capalbo, Massachusetts natives who lived ten years in Michigan before moving to Kentucky for Maureen's new position with Louisville's Norton Hospital. While waiting for their Michigan house to sell, the Capalbos lived in a Louisville apartment and discovered Oldham County on their own. They found the perfect 4-bedroom traditional in Crestwood's Heritage Place where their lot backs up to a farm, giving them a beautiful view of horses and cows grazing on an open meadow.

Maureen's fast-paced 12-hour day makes her truly grateful for the oasis she and Joe—a retired school principal active in local Chamber and civic affairs—have created. She said, "The easy 30-minute commute allows me just enough time to decompress at the end of my day so I can leave it all behind."

For their acre lot, the Capalbos have developed a 5-year plan for a perennial garden that culminates in the addition of a sunroom. "With the mild climate and room in our home for grandchildren and family to visit," Maureen said, "I don't think we'll ever go back North!"

Two other newcomers who can't stop comparing the quality of life in Oldham County to that left behind in the North are Kim and Vincent Tinebra. When Vincent accepted the opportunity with VMS to transfer from New Jersey to Louisville, the couple's family and friends

were baffled. Kim said, "People in the North just don't realize the higher quality of life that's available here."

One example she gave was their 3,800-square-foot Tudor in Crestwood's Northwood East subdivision that was priced in the high 280s. With a finished basement and one-acre lot, Kim compared it to their similarly priced New Jersey home with only 1,900 sq. ft. and a 1/4-acre lot. She said, "The quality of workmanship, especially for the cabinetry and counters, is so much higher here, there's no comparing them. In New Jersey, even padding for carpet is considered an upgrade!"

A stay-at-home mom with children ages 2, 4 and 6, Kim has enjoyed making friends at the local chapter of MOPS (Mothers of PreSchoolers). The Tinebra children enjoy Daisy Scouts and swim lessons at All About Kids.

Local realtors aren't at all surprised by the strong sentiments expressed by these and other Oldham County newcomers from the North. Said one realtor, "With lots sized at 1 to 1.5 acres, people move here looking for elbow room. But what they find is a lifestyle they hadn't dreamed of." Despite the country's sluggish economy, Oldham County's housing market is still strong with the MLS average home price in the high 150s, while the average home price for the five counties surrounding Louisville is only 135. "This is because Oldham County's low taxes and great school system continue to attract people," he said.

Another Northern couple, Dr. Bill Trent and his wife, JoAnn, moved to LaGrange after Bill was recruited by Baptist Hospital Northeast to head their Obstetrics Department. Living in a rural area of Michigan, the couple had been looking to relocate for over a year because of healthcare needs for their 6-year-old son.

Today, with their son's health problems nearly resolved—he's even learning Karate through the school system—the Trents are able to relax and enjoy their 4-bedroom, 2-bath ranch home in the Fox Trail area. Describing JoAnn as a "super wife," Bill credits her with doing the footwork in finding their home, which cost under \$200,000. "We also had a very good realtor who got all of our preliminary information before we ever came down," he said.

Impressed by LaGrange's small town friendliness, Bill recalled the September night they arrived from Michigan. "Our next-door neighbor came over that very night to welcome us and even offered the use of his lawn mower for the remainder of the grass-cutting season. But best of all," he said, "was seeing our son off to a neighborhood birthday party within our first 24 hours. After that, we knew we were home to stay!"