

The Chelsea Standard

A Silver lining

Community's warmth and location made big decision easy

Moving is never easy, but a move from a community where you've lived and worked for 40 years to a new retirement community can sometimes be one of those life changing moments.

But for Johan and Donna Stohl, it was relatively easy. And quick. After a couple of visits to Chelsea and a stay at Silver Maples, the Stohls went from a five-year tentative timeline to a two-month deadline.

"Two months ago, 'soon' meant in five years," recalled Johan Stohl, a professor emeritus of religious studies at Albion College. "After a weekend stay, it dropped to about two years, then one-two years."

And now, with a 25 percent off year-end special as further enticement, the Stohls are packing up to move to Chelsea by Christmas.

"Like many retirees, we were ready to forego the chores of maintaining house and home," said Johan and Donna, a retired elementary school teacher. But they wondered when the time would be "right."

"This was a big step for us, a leap of faith into the unknown, kind of scary, and at the same time exciting. Is the time 'ripe' for us to make a move? Are we ready?" they asked themselves.

And it was Chelsea and the Silver Maples community that helped the Stohls see that the time was indeed right.

"Chelsea's interest in and support for the arts, its stores, the variety of restaurants, the overall fit and feel of a high quality of life, the opportunity to volunteer in the community in meaningful ways, easy access to nearby communities, and living closer to some of our friends and especially to our children, contributed to our decision to move to Silver Maples," said Johan.

They were also impressed with Silver Maples' amenities, services, and sense of community.

"During each of our visits, the authentic way the Silver Maples' staff at all levels treated us - from the servers in the dining room up through the CEO - and the warm and accepting way the residents greeted us, gave us the feeling of being in a gracious, genuine, open and vibrant community. We were made to feel comfortable and at home," added Donna.

"After spending some time at Silver Maples via the VIP program, we also came to see it as a community of like-minded folks," Johan reflected.

"Those we met were friendly and interesting, and we noticed several who used the in-house library to borrow books, where we also can keep up on events with daily newspapers and weekly news magazines. Many residents take and/or teach lifelong learning adult classes. They attend concerts, art exhibits and museums, travel near and far, and regularly exercise at the outstanding Chelsea Community Hospital Health and Wellness Center."

During their visit to Chelsea, they joined a Silver Maples expedition to the Common Grill and afterwards attended the Chelsea Chamber Players fall concert at the Chelsea Depot.

Although it's hard to say goodbye to the Albion community where their roots are deep, they are both excited about the move.

Donna and Johan have been stopping by their apartment to check on furniture fit and other practical issues, and to carry in pieces of furniture. One evening recently as they rested on their sofa and watched the woods fill up with snow, Johan commented, "I'm already beginning to feel at home here," and Donna responded, "So am I."

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