

## **Home on the Range**

by

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*Valley News Dispatch 1/18/07 – Community Columnist*

Oh give me a home where the buffaloes roam. Ok so it's been more than a few years when you could drive along Route 356 and see the buffaloes roaming next to Jack's Restaurant near Freeport. I thought that it was pretty novel to be grazing inside while they were grazing outside. As I ate there, I would often drift off and visualize myself in buckskin clothes and moccasins sneaking up on these guys with a spear in my hand getting ready to provide for my tribe or being a cowboy feeling overwhelmed by the site of these creatures for the first time when suddenly.... I knocked my coke to the floor trying not to get trampled by the stampede.

Speaking of cowboys, the American dream used to be to move out of the city with our goldfish and into the suburbs with a big dog. But now people are getting in touch with their inner primal selves. We're morphing into something else. The new American dream is to bust out of the suburbs, get back to nature and play where the buffaloes roam. We're wannabe cowboys who want 5 acres, a barn, a horse, a big tractor, power tools and all the necessary conveniences of suburban living like Hi-Def cable TV.

Even though the plan to put 1,000 homes on the Saxony Farm fell through, it won't be long before 1,000 more homes are added to Jefferson Township one way or another. The owner of the Myers Farm in nearby Winfield Township wants \$10 million for 140 acres. That price might seem outrageous now but it will be a bargain before long. The reason - people like me want beautiful spaces yet we still want to be able to get to the Penguin games in under an hour.

Laptops, broadband Internet access, and cell phones have made working remotely from home as productive if not more productive than going into the office. We can not only attend seminars from home, we can present seminars to a wide audience from home, no matter where we live. The push is on. Places like Jefferson Township are on the radar screen for many people.

But are places like Jefferson Township all that they are cracked up to be? The answer for my family so far is a resounding "yes". One downside is we have to drive a little further to get to McDonalds. Therefore we don't get there as often for the kids as we used to.

Wait a minute. Did I say downside? All right so getting to the Christmas light show at Hartwood Acres seemed to take forever. We used to go down there a few times each year. But I started a new tradition, driving the kids through some nicely decorated homes on the streets in Saxonburg. "Ah, this is the way we used to do when I grew up in the big city, kids. This is way better than the big light show." is what I told them. Well I almost had them convinced.

While I was confident my wife and kids would like it out here, I wasn't completely sure I'd like it. So part of the deal to get me moving last summer was the promise of a new puppy. The only stipulation was I had to walk with the dog in the morning and at night. Well if you know puppies, they have boundless energy and if you get a big dog, they walk you. Naturally we ended up with a dog, Thunder that gets up at 5AM each morning. Sound horrendous? If you live in Jefferson Township, it's awesome. I have discovered something I haven't seen since I was a kid - the stars. I don't know if you've seen these things lately but they are great. I keep asking my hyperactive dog "have they always been this bright"? Suddenly I see a shooting star heading for Orion's constellation and I visualize myself in buckskin clothes and moccasins tracking down big elk in the moon shadows. I'm just about ready to draw back my bow when Thunder knocks me down wanting to play ball.

I'm going to enjoy it while the big spaces still exist out here.



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