



*Near Westside Neighborhood Assoc., Inc.
30th Annual Holiday Home Tour
Brochure Preview ~ Enjoy!*



*424 West Church Street
Shane Searfoss & Brandon Seager*

This Eastlake-style Queen Anne Victorian home came about through many construction phases. The original small, T-shaped structure was built in 1864 by Alexander Walsh and heavily modified in 1876 as the rest of the residential construction on the block began to evolve into high-end architectural designs. This modification process included building additions and adding upgraded design embellishments. In 1894, Theodore Friendly purchased the house. He and his brother, Meyer, emigrated from Bavaria, Germany and owned a carriage and wagon factory located on State Street. Their other business of selling commodities (such as dry goods and cotton) along the western frontier earned them tremendous wealth. They were also known to exchange their commodities with Native Americans for buffalo robes. Because of this, the brothers became one of the largest dealers of buffalo hides in the country.

The present-day owners, Shane Searfoss and Brandon Seager, share a deep fondness for their Near Westside community. Shane is a real estate agent with Realty USA and also serves on the board of directors for the Near Westside Neighborhood Association. Brandon is the Chair of the Wine Marketing Program at Tompkins County Community College and travels extensively to wine regions around the world. As you'll see from their home's interior décor, they have a passion for quality antique pieces. Shane calls it an addiction. They purchased their

home in 2008 and have taken on numerous renovation projects both on their own and with contractors.

The exterior of the house has a color palette of Heavy Cream, Sage Green, Cranberry Bog, and Mallard Green which beautifully accentuates the fabulous Victorian design elements of this one-of-a-kind structure. The façade offers stacked first and second story bay windows, a hip roof with projecting gables, a small front porch with turned posts, and a combination of clapboard siding and fish scale shingles. Twin windows above the porch are framed in trim with a decorative, block-style frieze to finish it off. The home boasts an amazing 3,438 square feet of living space and is split up into three units; the homeowner's residence on the first floor and two luxury apartments on the second floor.

The home is entered through a set of glass security doors, a small vestibule, and a second set of doors before entering the communal foyer with its grand, open oak staircase. The splendor of the holiday greets you inside this room with a ten-foot Christmas tree trimmed in brilliant red poinsettias and antique Christmas cards. A vintage bearskin rug is used as a unique tree skirt. Be sure to take a moment to admire the double staircase with oak paneled walls and the ornate window at mid-landing with its intricate stained glass accents. The second floor is not opened for today's event.

Back on the first floor, a door off the foyer opens into Shane and Brandon's residence. Their formal dining room, with its ten-foot table, can seat up to fourteen guests and is decorated for today's tour with the couples collection of Old English-style Wedgewood china. The room has oak hardwood trim and floors, like the foyer, while the rest of the first floor is trimmed in cherry. It also has a built-in corner china cabinet where they store additional pieces of their fine china collection. The antique Wilton area rug is from

Portland, Oregon and matches the rug in the neighboring music room. A set of eight-foot pocket doors (the home has four sets in all) separates the two rooms. Unique to this set is the fact that the dining room side is oak and the music room side is cherry to match the respective woodwork in each room.

The music room, with its working wood-burning fireplace, adorned with twin Chinese terracotta warriors, holds many antique instruments from around the world including bag pipes—which Shane informs us Brandon plays well—and a magnificent restored grand piano by Steinway & Sons decorated for the holidays with their collection of nutcrackers. This model of piano is one of about only 250 left in the country and was built in 1876 and coincides with the year of the house's major building modification project. The homeowners like to furnish the house with items from that year. Just one of many other stand-out pieces from 1876 is the Eastlake-style antique secretary as well. Shane likes to call their decorating style "deserted mansion" meaning he wants guests to look upon the items inside their home as if they'd always been there, giving the illusion they've been handed down through the generations within the family. Both the front parlor and the music room have working cherry pocket shutters built into the window jams. Most of the rooms have parquet hardwood floors and each of the window frame and doorframe treatments offer milled embellishments bearing a shield design on each corner. The banner crossing the shield diagonally is called a bend. This "parting of the field" symbolized defense or protection while the thin top band represents leadership or wisdom.

The Christmas tree, positioned in front of the bay windows of the front parlor, is decorated in majestic red, purple, and silver ornaments. A spandrel with turned wood spindles offers an ornamental partition along the ceiling that separates the main room from the bay window section. This room serves as the

couple's media room and has repurposed theater curtains in plush red velvet adorning the side wall. The same red fabric was used to upholster dining room chairs and make a table cloth in the dining room. Located on the other side of the music room is the bedroom. The homeowners believe this room was either a library or billiards room at one time.

The kitchen can be accessed through two different doorways in the formal dining room. The doorway on the far side of the dining room opens into the former butler's pantry which has been transformed into a full bathroom. It is decorated with Cornell University's 1876 row crew memorabilia with items such as crew photos and an old rowing oar. How nice it is to see some alumni pride for Big Red and even better with the sentimental tie-in to the year! The bathroom also serves as a pass-through to the 1940's themed kitchen with white and red enamel-top table and vintage white step-back cupboard. The color scheme is crisp white with red enamel detail. Shane likes to collect red enamel kitchen gadgets and fixtures as displayed throughout the room. The white ceiling is a shallow box-beam design. A side door with an intricate leaded stained glass window is believed to have been used off the rear pallor and lead to a smoking porch. The former servants' staircase has been converted into a pantry.

Guests will be asked to exit through a small rear vestibule, off from the kitchen, where they can continue their tour through the home's fenced in backyard garden which will be decorated for the tour. As you can see from the arranged Adirondack-style chair seating area, with chiminea fireplace, Shane and Brandon like to spend time outdoors and entertain guests in their landscaped yard. The two-story former carriage house is used as a garage and has a large second floor loft known by the homeowners and their friends as "The Beach." An ongoing restoration project is in the works to turn the loft into guest quarters.

We hope you enjoyed visiting this exquisite home. If you love these old houses and their rich history, maybe you're ready for your own Near Westside Neighborhood home! Shane would love to hear from you and help make your real estate dream come true!

***529 West Church Street
Rob & Mia Ricketson***

The Ricketsons purchased this two-and-a-half story Near Westside Neighborhood home in March of 2012 knowing full well they had their work cut out for them. Even though the house had been occupied until they purchased it, the former owner, after long-endured financial straits, allowed it to slip into disrepair. He also fell victim to unscrupulous types who took advantage of him and even resorted to stealing pipes from out of the basement. In other sections, water damage from an ancient roof had spoiled the structure. Sections of wallpaper and the papered ceilings hung down and plaster was cracked or missing. Beyond its sad state, the Ricketsons saw the beauty beneath. They recognized the proud history and grand potential the dwelling held.

Notable to local history in the late 1890's, well-known architect Joseph Pierce designed the house for Alexander Morrow's son, J. Edwin Morrow. After construction, Edwin resided there until 1925 when the house was purchased and occupied by Dr. Raymond A. Turnbull who had a thriving practice at 404 South Main Street and was also appointed to a temporary term as Chemung County Coroner after the death of Coroner John A. Westlake. Raynesford Bacorn, owner of The Bacorn Company (perfumes, flavors, and topical medications) and (Dimon & Bacorn Trucking, purchased the house in the 1930's. He and his wife, Dolores, lived there with their son, Raynesford Taylor "Toppo" Bacorn. Toppo owned the house until 2012. The Bacorn Company of Elmira was founded in 1909. At that time, there were

only a handful of manufacturers of perfume and flavor extracts located in the United States. They sold their products by mail order, door-to-door sales, and in pharmacies. Despite losing the factory to a devastating fire in 1927, Raynesford continued mixing formulas and filling orders off-site and later from his "laboratory" inside the basement of this residence. While exploring the many rooms of their catacomb-like basement, Mia and Rob found quite a collection of The Bacorn Company's bottles and paperwork. The antique bottles and their labels are highly collectable due to their Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles of yesteryear.

Rob, a skilled craftsman with an eye for detail, and Mia, handy in her own right, have solely taken on this restoration challenge one room at a time. This is more than evident when you walk into the entryway and see the room to your immediate right. The living room ceiling, with its mural, light fixture, and medallion, was recently completed since their participation in the previous holiday home tour in 2012. Close to their hearts are the unique antique pieces they have collected over the years and placed throughout the house. Located in the living room is one such piece. The fireplace surround was purchased from a rectory while they were living in England. It is their desire to hold onto the history of the house by adding furnishings that would reflect the time period in which it was built.

The piano room, located to the left of the entry, has many keepsake items on display that are related to the house or to Rob's and Mia's families. As you walk from room to room, take notice of the original woodwork, winding grand oak staircase, and chestnut hardwood floors as well as the old push-button and turn-key style brass plate light switches. From the informal dining area, with its English furnishings and built-in cupboards, a short hall leads to the butler's pantry which holds the house's original

built-in ice box refrigeration. An access door, to replenish the ice, is located inside the former back porch which shares a wall with the pantry. When Rob and Mia purchased the house, the kitchen had a stained drop ceiling and a linoleum floor that were both beyond saving. Thick cooking grease clung to everything and anything. Mia says the last major remodel completed by the former homeowners happened sometime in the 1950's as is evident from the yellow tiled walls. The kitchen is also the latest location to receive Rob's undivided attention when one of the old lead pipes, from a second floor bathroom, sprung a leak and proceeded to leach through their newly renovated ceiling and wall. Adding to the problem was the fact that the pipe was encased in concrete—which also meant it had been leaking in secret for quite some time before the evidence came to the surface. Mia noted it was a painstaking task since Rob had to chip away at the concrete before he could get to the actual leak. Old houses often offer unplanned projects like this and I'm certain many of the homeowners on our tour can commiserate. Despite the temporary setback, Rob and Mia took it in stride, refusing to let it sway their commitment.

One of the most interesting rooms on the first floor is Rob and Mia's formal dining room. At the time the house was built, it was a porch. When the Bacorn family purchased it in the 1930's, they enclosed and finished off the room with marble flooring and quarter-sawn oak paneling to create an elegant parlor/game room for entertaining. Built-in benches were positioned along two walls and over the room's radiators to allow for plenty of extra seating. It is noted that Topy Bacorn was said to have taught several neighborhood children how to play chess in this very room. Rob and Mia have decorated in a style to help perpetuate an old world feel. Items on display have been collected from all over the world since the two have traveled extensively. Mia is from Sweden and Rob, who served as an Army engineer, is originally

from Enfield, New York. You will see swords from Spain and England, items from Scotland and Sweden, as well as antique furniture from England. The chandelier is original to the informal dining room and was recently refurbished by Vicki from Antiques Revival in Big Flats, New York. Mia tells us that while the fixture was away, someone in the house wasn't very happy about its absence, but things settled down as soon as the chandelier returned to the house. This same someone even seemed fine about its new location in the house. Don't be shocked if, during the tour, you experience the sensation of having someone lovingly stroke your hair—only to find no one near you! The presence is believed to be that of Mrs. Bacorn who passed away in 1998.

The second floor offers four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a servant's lounge that can be accessed from either the grand staircase or the servants' staircase. The bathrooms truly offer a glimpse into the past since Rob and Mia have kept them as close to original as possible. The marble surround shower stall, in the first bathroom, features exposed plumbing and the flooring is subway tile. Rob installed a shower in the second bathroom as a modern update, but worked diligently to make the new blend with the old. Even the wall fixtures around the sink are original to the house. Such history!

As you end the tour, it is important to understand that taking on a project such as theirs requires the proper mindset. Time, money, and elbow grease, as well as being able to locate authentic period fixtures, truly comes into play. Rob and Mia are well on their way to having their house completed and it is bound to be a showstopper for future Near Westside Neighborhood tours. Just look at how far they have come in two-and-a-half years!

530 West Church Street Capriotti Properties

This former single-family, three-story home was built in 1910 by Elmira businessman I.D. Booth for his daughter, Mabel, and her husband and local lawyer, Alexander S. Diven. Both families shared equal prestige in Elmira and owned homes within a block of Mabel and Alexander's home on Church Street. As Jim Capriotti puts it, Booth had the house built where he could "keep an eye on his daughter." Alexander's father was Union General Alexander Diven who was known for his commitment to civic-minded causes throughout the city. In addition to being a lawyer and soldier, the elder Alexander served as a New York State senator, a New York representative in the U.S. House of Representatives, and was even a contender for New York State Governor in 1859.

Capriotti Properties purchased the house in January of 2014 from TPPM, a medical care supply company. Before that, it was owned by the Southern Tier Heart Association. Jim notes that, overall, the structure was in relatively good condition. The exterior, with its shingle siding, flared eaves, and shingled hip roof, had even been painted within the past seven years. As with most of their properties, in order to make the renovations and upkeep affordable on these historic homes, they turn them into rental apartments while attempting to stay true to the flow of the original architecture. This is always a huge challenge for Jim and his crew. Normally, such a project would involve dividing the house by floors, but due to the back to back staircases (one served as the grand staircase and the other the servant's staircase), they were able to divide the house vertically right down the middle. In essence, creating a three-story double.

“Apartment A” or the front section:

Unique in its construction, the home’s façade was positioned, not on the street side, but on the east side facing the neighboring house. The open porch with columns has built-in benches along the railing and offers shelter to those entering the vestibule of the south side apartment. Both the outer and inner doors are original to the house and the space holds nice details with its woodwork and embossed wallpaper. The inner door is mahogany and measures an impressive 42 inches. The intricate iron scrollwork offers security when the functioning window is opened to allow summer breezes into the home. The entry is large enough to hold a small dining room set and the grand staircase. A former bath, located next to the entrance door, was converted into a small laundry room. Capriotti Property’s signature Mark Twain Gray paint covers the walls and white trim accents the baseboards, crown moldings, and partial wall with column at the foot of the stairs. The chair rail was added during renovations. This room was part of the home’s original formal dining room and had a set of facing French doors on each side. The set to the left was kept in place and open into the living room which now shares space with the kitchen. A kitchen island was put in to separate the two rooms in a 40-60 split. The kitchen has Amish-made cherry cabinets with granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, gray tile backsplash, and slate tile flooring for a more contemporary look. The living room has a traditional bay window, built-in bookcases (one bookcase was found in storage in the basement and needed reinstalled), original, working fireplace, and arched, leaded glass windows, with amber accents, are recessed above each bookcase. The arches are an architectural element repeated throughout the house with doorways and windows. Jim’s tenants have the space decorated in lovely, warm earth tones! The entire house’s original hardwood floors had been covered in commercial-grade carpet that took the work crew multiple containers of paint

remover (the gel variety) and ice choppers to remove. He points out that the finish is imperfect, but also adds character to the house. I have to agree.

Before heading to the second floor, take notice of the fabulous C-shaped closet that runs under the staircase. The house was built in a manner that did not waste space and allowed for plenty of storage through multiple closets, full basement, and full attic. Many details of this house pays tribute to famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright's signature style. From its leaded glass windows, with amber accents, to the squared spindles and newel posts of the grand staircase, there are plenty of Prairie design touches. As you reach the mid landing, take a moment to admire the stunning large window collection with leaded glass accent windows. This very window is one of the main reasons Jim did not want to divide the house between floors since it would mean eliminating or reconfiguring to work around this element. I think you will all agree this staircase and window needed to be kept intact.

The second floor holds a full bathroom, a large master bedroom, and guest bedroom. The wall between the two bedrooms had been opened up while the house was owned by the medical business. The wall was put back in and crown molding was added to the guest bedroom. Jim selected a coordinating paint color by Valspar called Polished Silver for the bedrooms. The wall sconces in the bedrooms are original to the house and the single, pendant light in the master bedroom is as well. Brass fixtures were cleaned and polished while other fixtures received a coating of paint to maintain a consistent, vintage look. The rooms also offered ample storage space with built-in cupboards and closets. The bath room is painted in Mark Twain Gray with white trim. A new toilet, cherry vanity with sink, and cherry medicine cabinet were added as well as marble tiles for flooring and shower surround. The

American Standard tub is original to the house and another detail Jim wanted to save. All of the plumbing fixtures were updated for the tub.

“Apartment B” or the rear apartment:

While Jim’s tenants are happy to have their apartment opened for today’s holiday tour, only the first floor will be open for visitors. Please respect their privacy.

The apartment is accessed by a small covered porch at the rear of the house. To the left of the porch is the former stacked porch that was closed in for additional living space by a previous owner. As Jim pointed out, whoever did the construction project, was able to do a fairly decent job matching up the shingle siding to the rest of the house to maintain continuity. The first room you will enter is the large, updated kitchen with its stainless steel appliances, cherry cabinets with a corner lazy Susan, and top quality Formica countertops. The space provided by the enclosed porch was opened up to provide an eating nook. The far wall was flared to allow more space to accommodate.

The French doors used to separate the kitchen from the living room were repurposed from the former formal dining room. Remember its twin set of French doors from Apartment A? Jim and crew closed in the opening between Apartment A’s entry and the former dining room to create the large living room of Apartment B. A large bay window offers ample light for the room. The other half of the former enclosed porch was turned into a full bathroom with a contemporary design.

Since the second floor isn’t open today, this is a brief description. The unseen part of the second floor is accessed through a door off from the kitchen. The former servants’ staircase provides access to the basement, an exterior door, the second floor, as well as to the finished attic. The staircase repeats the same Prairie-style railing

and spindles (although not nearly as wide) and leads to a small landing connecting a master bedroom, guest room, and the upper level of the enclosed former porch. Two-thirds of the former porch section, with an independent heating unit, can be used as an office or sitting area and the other third has been converted into a half bath. Just as Apartment A, Apartment B has its original brass hardware, register vents, and sconce lighting in the bedrooms. The attic, complete with heating and air conditioning that was installed by the previous owners, who used it for medical records storage, is being used as an art studio by the current tenants.

As always, Capriotti Properties leads the way with another Near Westside rehabilitation success story. Please check out their website at www.capriottiproperties.com or their Facebook page by the same name for more before and after stories.

519 Euclid Avenue Bob & Martha Roberts

Known throughout local historical circles as the “Mother Orcutt House,” this Queen Anne Victorian was built in 1891. In 1997, Bob and Martha purchased the home and began the task of renovations while steadfastly holding on to its true architectural splendor. This also included using an historical New England-style color palate for its exterior paint: Nutmeg Brown, Spiced Cider, Dark Chocolate, and Mark Twain Tan. Queen Anne-style architecture was predominant throughout America during the late 1870’s through the early 1920’s, and represented the era of grand scale homes with ornamental embellishments. Their Victorian cousins in San Francisco even had extravagant color schemes which often labeled them as “Painted Ladies.” With a Queen Anne, too much was never enough in this endearing style

that thrived during our nation's Industrial Revolution as robber barons prospered. The city of Elmira's Near Westside Neighborhood has many of these splendid gems.

Nestled among large trees on its corner lot and secured behind a black wrought iron fence, the Mother Orcutt House invites you into the coziness of her dormant gardens through salvaged doors that have been repurposed to create whimsical arbors. The homeowners purchased and installed the antique wrought iron fence and painted it the customary black while using metallic colors on the finials as another nod to New England-style tradition. The winding walkway gives the front yard a "Secret Garden" feel as you approach the covered porch. Martha and Bob enjoy gardening and have, in the past, taken part in the association's summer garden tour. Before entering the house, it is important to note that, over the years, the homeowners have taken great pains in restoring the structure to its glory days including details down to finding period-correct lighting fixtures and installing them since the house only had a few of its original fixtures when they purchased it.

From the moment you enter their foyer, which includes gorgeous oak flooring, antique pressed-tin ceiling tiles (found at a rummage sale and installed by the homeowners), and hardwood staircase, guests will be greeted by the delightful sight of treasures from days gone by. The Roberts have an extensive collection of antiques and memorabilia that are on display throughout their house. Many are beloved family items passed down through the generations while others were purchased with careful thought during Martha and Bob's travels both nationally and abroad. Prepare to step back in time as you enter the room to your immediate left. The room is called the "Antique Christmas Parlor" which is a year-round display. Inside you will find all sorts of toys, game boards, and repurposed items such as the antique

playpen that has been converted into a coffee table. The period-correct fireplace was purchased at *Oldies But Goodies in Big Flats, New York* and its mantel is home to a set of Staffordshire spaniels Bob took a liking to during one of their trips to Galway in western Ireland.

During renovations, the dining room, with its striped wallpaper accent wall and warm yellow and sage green painted walls, led to the discovery of the home's original double fireplace that is shared by the neighboring kitchen. The room is furnished with antique items like ladder-back chairs, in two distinct styles, that embrace the large dining room table, a hutch, cupboards, ice box, and oven—all complete with vintage displays of canister sets and food containers. The “General Store” doll house has detailed furnishing crafted by Martha's grandmother. You'll also see Bob's “orphaned” Staffordshire spaniel he came upon while antiquing in *Owego, New York*.

Next to the dining room is the living room with its recently installed period fireplace the couple found in Ohio. The chilly day we toured their home, a fire was blazing and Bob declared, “I can't wait until the first snow storm, when I can sit in here with a book and a beverage of my choice, and enjoy the fireplace.” Helping to add to the inviting atmosphere of the room are two of their antique stained glass windows they have displayed on either side of the fireplace. As you may have already noticed, the Roberts have a wide collection of such windows throughout their home. Sitting upon the area rug is an antique single bed Martha has repurposed into a coffee table by placing an antique beveled mirror over it. Along the walls are examples of American folk art and an adorable cowboy costume complete with cap, gun, and belt among other toys and collectables.

Located in the rear of the home is their updated kitchen with its deep red walls, rich tongue-and-groove wood ceiling, and modern

stainless steel appliances. Martha chose to remove the doors on the top cupboards in order to have exposed shelving to display her vast collection of Blue Willow china as well as pieces of green Depression glass and Gay Fad dishes and glassware. In lieu of a traditional valance for the window over her sink, Martha has hung vintage rolling pins from a primitive rod for a truly original display idea. Central to the room is a long, narrow zinc-top work bench. Off from the kitchen, the former butler's pantry has been converted into a laundry room. Built-ins offer the perfect storage space. From this room, the second floor can be accessed by a rear staircase that opens to the upstairs hallway.

In the hallway, Martha has displayed framed needlepoint samplers crafted by her mother as well as her collection of vintage wedding dresses which adorn the walls up to the formal staircase located farther down the hall. The second floor has four bedrooms and a recently renovated bathroom that still holds the original charm of this old home. Antiques from both Bob's and Martha's families can be found throughout the upstairs such as the mink coat in the fourth bedroom that used to belong to Martha's grandmother as well as family quilts. Martha's sister's room has Empire-style furnishings including a cabinet that used to belong to Martha's mother and a roll-top secretary. The master bedroom has a sleigh-style bed and the bedside tables hold matching Renaissance-style accent lamps the couple found at a sale in Pine City. They were told the lamps came from a mansion in Montour Falls, New York. The white cradle beside the window dates back three generations on Martha's side of the family. Located at the front of the house is the former bedroom of Bob and Martha's son which she has tastefully decorated with maps, hat boxes, adding machines, and a typewriter—all very masculine while paying tribute to the past.

A room, formerly the old telephone room, located at the top of the formal staircase, has been transformed into a vintage apothecary shop the couple calls "Roberts' Pharmacy." Inside this small space, you will find all sorts of pharmacy paraphernalia commonly found in eras long passed. Bob, a pharmacist himself, has collected many of the items over a thirty-year span while some of the items came from Martha's father, David M. Collins, who, for forty years, served as the former lab coordinator of Arnot Ogden Medical Center. Perhaps the most prized possession in their collection is the large volume prescription file book that hold hundreds of old processed prescriptions—a veritable history book of old medications!

We hope you have enjoyed your journey into the past as you complete your tour of the Mother Orcutt House. Many of you will leave inspired by Martha's use of repurposed items and with fresh ideas for your own household renovation projects. In addition to that, may the magic of nostalgia and holiday splendor of Bob and Martha's old Queen Anne Victorian renew your sense of spirit for the season upon us!

***310 Grove Street
Edwin & Amanda Morse
Restoration-In-Progress***

Edwin & Amanda Morse purchased this two-and-a-half-story American Foursquare-style, with Craftsman influence, in May of 2014. It has a hip roof with exposed rafters, central gable dormers, and a side-facing façade with a covered porch. The first floor features large wood sash ten-over-one fixed windows and the second floor has six-over-one windows. The exterior siding is traditional beveled wood clapboard. The homeowner has demolished the covered square porch which had multiple squared

columns. As renovations started, newspapers found inside the walls were dated 1875 and the property is included on an 1876 survey map of Elmira. Dr. Howard Duncan, a surgical veterinarian, was the original owner. It is recorded that an addition was added between 1876 and 1896. The architecture of the house leans towards an 1890's building trend. What sold Ed on the house was the unique skywalk that connects the house to the carriage house. One portion of the foundation is concrete and the rest is stone. The house also has a beautiful, fully exposed clay brick chimney.

When I spoke with Ed, he told me how he instantly saw the promise the house held and couldn't wait to take on the challenge of revitalizing it. He has a true appreciation of Elmira's rich history and learning about the homes in the Near Westside Neighborhood. Although the house isn't currently in the designated historic district, he hopes to see this change in the near future and is willing to do his part to make it happen. With each designation, it helps ensure that these fantastic old homes will be around for another one-hundred years. He even said, if this project goes well, he'd consider tackling another! The rehabilitation bug has bit Ed. As a matter of fact, he's already keeping his eye on other potential neighborhood properties. He really likes the row homes on Water Street, but says with a chuckle, someone beat him to it. As some of you may recall from last year's tour, Capriotti Properties started a rehab project on some of them. While Jim was hoping to have the row homes finished for this year's tour, unforeseen circumstances arose that prevented this from happening. He is currently working on obtaining grants for the project and will move forward as soon as he can.

Since this is Ed's first real estate project, he is learning everything as he goes. At some point over its long life, the 1,936 sq. ft. house was divided into a duplex. To make the dwelling work for itself, Ed is leaning towards keeping it a duplex with upscale apartments. The first floor consists of a living room, kitchen,

bathroom, and three bedrooms. The second floor has a living room, kitchen, bathroom, five bedrooms, and skywalk to the carriage house's second floor. Ed says the attic could easily be transformed into additional living space for an office, personal gym, or studio and has wonderful natural light due to the gabled dormers.

Just to name a few of the many former owners of this residence: James Mack (1911), a former assistant brew master; Newton Fassett (1920's) of Hemphill Oil Company; Arthur Fairchild (1935) of Elmira Light, Heat, & Power Corporation (which became part of New York State Electric & Gas Corporation in 1936); and Stanley Gilbert (1950) the owner of Admiral Heating & Plumbing before later becoming the equestrian riding instructor at Elmira College.

*We were happy when Ed offered to allow our tour guests into his project home at this early juncture of rehabilitation and look forward to being invited back to see the finished project for upcoming *Homes for the Holidays* tours. There are other houses in the neighborhood just waiting for their second chance. During Elmira's 150th Anniversary and the Near Westside Neighborhood Associations' 30th Anniversary, there is no better time than now to learn about our city's heritage. The Chemung County Historical Society (www.chemungvalley.org), Mark Twain Country (www.marktwaincountry.com), and the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce (www.chemungchamber.org) offer wonderful places to start your historical journey.*

