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# RAT CREEK PRESS

BUILDING COMMUNITY . ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION . INCREASING CAPACITY

CIRCULATION 13,000

PH: 780.479.6285 EMAIL: info@ratcreek.org

## Rescuing perfect little houses a labour of love

MARI SASANO

Joe Clare loves the little houses of Norwood. The realtor has lived there for three years, knows his neighbours, and wants everyone to see the beauty of the homes in the Alberta Avenue area. But after a century of so, sometimes in order to reveal those good looks, a house needs a makeover. That's what he thought when he spotted a little house on 96 Street earlier this year, and with some TLC, what was once a hopeless case is now waiting for another hundred years of turning heads.

"I always have an eye for what I think is good design. Thoughtfulness in design," he says. "This house was terribly neglected and destined for the wrecking ball. I use my intuition—I love this house, but it was a mess. They used 125 gallons of paint stripper to remove all the peeling paint."

The two bedroom bungalow is now a real looker—hardwood floors have been polished, and all the original details that made the house unique when it was built 90 years ago have been restored.

"It was painstaking atten-

tion to detail. It's about respect. We rescued this house," he says.

What attracted Clare and his investors—pharmacist Daniel Cyr and Stephan Veilleux of Boreal Construction—was the obvious care of the man who built it. According to neighbours, a Mr. Miller built this house, as well a couple more on the block. You notice right away the beautiful architectural details on the doors and hardware, the original cedar siding, and the way the light streams in from the original glass windows.

But the point of this project wasn't turning a quick profit—around \$55,000 was sunk into the home, going into a rebuilt foundation, insulation,

plumbing, electrical, and interior design.

"This was the nastiest, stinkiest house. It's not a flip, it's a restoration—you have to understand it's going to cost you, but it was a fun project to work on. People who flip properties tend to put as little in as possible, and don't care about the neighbourhood. For us, this is about caring for the community. The neighbours love this little house."

To cap the project, a smudge ceremony was performed by elder Leonard Cardinal, in order to mark a new beginning for the home.

"He said he felt a presence of somebody still living in the house, and felt the sense of neglect. But after smudging the house, everybody was smiling."

This is Clare's twentieth project like this, and it took around 90 days to complete it, from top to bottom. For everyone involved from the investors to the day workers hired from the Bissell Centre, to the professional craftspeople, it was a labour of love. And it's their hope that their labour will bring further good karma into

the area.

"I choose to live here. I'm a patron of the arts. This is a great neighbourhood—there are single people, families, immigrants. And still a lot of Portuguese, Italians. I'm impressed with what the city is doing in this area. This neighbourhood is changing. We really want nice people to live here, someone thoughtful and intelligent and cares about the community. We have to invest in people."

"There are a lot of condos downtown, for a lot more money. But you won't get such a charming house. This house can live another 100 years, no problem."



LIVINGROOM OF RESTORED HOUSE ON 96 ST. PHOTO:



RESTORED HOME ON 96 ST.

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**You are invited to the Rat Creek Press' 10th Anniversary**

The Rat Creek Press will celebrate its 10th Anniversary on Sunday, November 8, 2009 beginning at 3 p.m.

Please come and join past volunteers, writers, editors and your neighbours as we celebrate the 10th birthday of our community newspaper.

You are also invited to attend the Rat Creek Press' Annual General Meeting which will be held at 2:30 p.m. the same day.



**Hey Kids!**

Wanna be published in the newspaper? Join the Rat Pack! Send in your stories, photos, and drawings to editor@ratcreek.org with your name and age.

**TRICK OR TREATING?**

COME TO THE CARROT CAFE FOR CANDIES AND TREATS ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT!!!