

Living... A Project of Love



For Jeanette Hubert, her home is for living in.

She and her husband, Joe, have raised their children there, have spent countless hours working together, and, have an interesting tale to tell.

Their home, a beautiful century-old showpiece thought to have been built in 1912, was originally located on the South Dakota side of the Big Stone River near Hawarden, Iowa.

"It was 1995 when we moved the house in," Jeanette said. "We had met this guy who lives in Beresford and he said he had just bought an acreage with a house on it that needed to be moved. He asked if we were interested in looking at it. We honestly had not even been really looking. I think it was just an old house that was unique and interesting. It didn't take us long to make a decision. I fell in love with it. I don't know if it was just the project or the concept of what we could do. The house itself was in great shape."

The house had sat empty for a few years and would require substantial updating, but Jeanette said she never thought about the hours of work, just what could be accomplished when done.

"It was a very unique experience moving the house," she said. "It really didn't take us very long to get it moved to rural Vermillion. It was probably a seven month process from the day we bought the house and got it all organized."

She said the biggest challenge was finding someone willing to take on the challenge of creating a basement for the house, with all 20 corners, to sit on.

"We found a guy in Wakonda, Bernie Stephen, who did it for us," Jeanette said. "He worked backwards by taking measurements of the house, then drawing up blueprints. He told us they don't make houses like this anymore. I think he said it was all perfect angles. You also had to allow for the windows in the basement so the beams could sit in the window wells so the house could sit on the basement."

Jeanette said that during the planning phase, she concentrated on the design aspects of the old home, while Joe focused on the infrastructure.

"There were a few things that made us think through the process so we could be happy," she explained. "For instance, one bathroom upstairs wasn't going to cut it. The bedrooms were real small so we took out wall and expanded two of them into a master and added a closet. Once we figured those things out, it didn't take us to long. I think if we had thought about it too long we would have changed our minds."

One major change was the Hubert's chose to completely update the heating, cooling, electrical and plumbing of the house.

"I kind of feel like we got the best of both worlds - the old house, but being able to put in the new infrastructure," Jeanette said. "What we did, was while the house was still over there, we knocked out all the things we couldn't move, like the old chimney. All of the stuff just piled up in the basement over there and we left it."

Saying that they completed as much of the demolition before moving the house as they could other changes included opening up the old maid's quarters to the main house, moving the kitchen from the basement to what was a second dining room, combining two small bedrooms into a master suite, and so much more.