Couple Gets the 'Belleville Itch' to Renovate
Historic Hartmann Manor

Belleville, Ill. – January 8, 2020 – After spending time studying
art in Chicago and New York, Paula Haniszewski and her husband Tom left New York City for
something different, although they didn't exactly have a plan in that moment.

"I graduated right around the time of the financial crisis and housing crash, and there were no
jobs anywhere," said Haniszewski. "So, we really weren't sure what to do with ourselves at that
time and ended up traveling and kind-of living like a bunch of gypsies."

After traveling to Tom's native Colorado, the couple made its way back to Illinois, and settled
into Belleville, which is just minutes from Paula's hometown, Freeburg., Ill.

"We didn't intend to stay here, but the truth of the matter is that we both immediately found jobs
and affordable housing, which made it impossible to leave, and I couldn't be happier about how
life lined up for us in that time because we're very happy here in Belleville," said Haniszewski.

Since then, the couple purchased a starter home on N. Oak St. and stayed there for five years.
But in 2017, the couple got that "Belleville itch" and bought the historic Hartmann Manor on S.
Charles St., built circa 1885.

"When we were ready to start looking for our next home, we looked in St. Louis, O'Fallon (Ill.),
and Mascoutah, but they didn't seem quite right," said Haniszewski. "We weren't ready for the
'suburbs.'"

Haniszewski mentioned that the idea of leaving Belleville was hard for them because they felt
the city's unique culture and note its walkability, art, history, and sense of community as aspects
that drew them to stay in Belleville. Then, the former owners of Hartmann Manor invited the
couple over for tea to discuss the possibility of them purchasing the home, and the rest, as they
say, is history.

With that, the couple moved into a small two-bedroom apartment in the manor and began
renovating the space to turn it back into a single-family home. Most of the work was completed
by Tom, who grew up working with his grandfather and volunteering for Habitat for Humanity,
building homes for those in need.

*The City of Belleville, Illinois, incorporated in 1814, is the St. Clair County seat and the largest city in southern Illinois. With a
current population of 44,478 (2010), Belleville is home to the longest contiguous main street in the United States, excellent
education and healthcare organizations, and thriving businesses and neighborhoods, including three National Historic Districts.
Mayor Mark Eckert runs the municipal government along with elected officials including City Clerk Jennifer Gain Meyer,
Treasurer Dean Hardt, and 16 aldermen representing eight city wards. The vision for the City of Belleville is one where all
sectors of the community work together to help the city grow and prosper and to become a model for other communities to
follow.*

"We were committed to loving this home again, to not throwing it away, but to restoring it to its original glory, and with Tom's talents, we've been able to do that," Haniszewski said.

The couple also worked closely with neighbors, historic societies, and local artisans to help restore the home. For instance, as they were rebuilding the grand staircase, the couple called local business Turned Treasures to create historically appropriate staircase spindles. They also turned to neighbor Will Viall who showed them historical restoration techniques and tools.

"Sometimes when I stop to think about the fact that we've restored a 5,000-square-foot historic mansion, it's unbelievable," said Haniszewski. "But it's been through this process that we've become folded into the fabric of this community, and I wouldn't change that for anything."

Haniszewski said that since she's lived in Belleville, she's seen the city transform. Ten years ago, when she moved back, the downtown looked quite different, but now, she notes that there are always pedestrians enjoying Main Street, that there are cars that fill up parking lots, and there is always something going on downtown Belleville or throughout the city.

"Main Street does a great job of maintaining its history, but of also moving the city forward," she said.

Haniszewski said that she and her husband intend to stay in Belleville and raise their family here. In fact, their four-year-old daughter Scarlett has quite a busy schedule, making her rounds to visit her friends at her favorite downtown locations like Pour @ 322, the Old Town Farmer's Market, and Bennie's Pizza Pub, to name a few.

"When she's 35, I want her to come home and visit and her favorite places to still be there," said Haniszewski. "This is the kind of community Belleville is, and we are proud to be part of it."

To learn more about the City of Belleville, visit www.belleville.net.

Cutline: Belleville resident Paula Haniszewski is pictured here at one of her favorite downtown Belleville locations, Pour @ 322, 322 E. Main St., Belleville.

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