



Operation Bay View Re-do

It was difficult—
and sometimes
downright scary—
to restore the crumbling
Victorian cottage from
top to bottom. But
summer living in
charming *Bay View*?
It doesn't get much
better than this.

By *Karen Norton*
Photography by *Gary Lee*



FAR LEFT: The Nethercuts achieved an airy living room by tearing out layers of previous renovations. The couple did all of the demolition work themselves, and the cottage floor plan was redesigned by Suzu, leaving bright, inviting spaces like this one. **LEFT:** Original doors and windows were reused wherever possible, giving the cottage a sense of authenticity.



A screen door slams shut. Down the street, someone is practicing a violin.



Children on a scavenger hunt trek from porch to porch seeking a red ruler and a \$2 bill. A blond in a vintage red convertible waves as she heads to the farmer's market for sweet corn and raspberries.

It's summertime in Bay View. And the living is so, so easy.

David Neithercut drops into a wicker chair after a morning of tennis and starts phoning family and friends to organize the evening cookout. Bay View is stocked with four generations of Neithercuts who've spent their summers palling around with cousins up and down the tranquil, twisting streets.

The enclave was founded in 1875 as a Methodist summer resort and within four short years became a thriving Chautauque: a community dedicated to intellectual, artistic, spiritual and recreational pursuits.

David and his wife, Suzu, own one of the 400 Victorian cottages that comprise this National Historic Landmark: a heartbeat north of Petoskey. Their summer cottage stands on Glendale Street, two blocks up from the bay, across from the Terrace Inn.

LEFT: Simple is best; the Neithercuts decided, when restoring their Bay View cottage. Dominating the kitchen is an enormous butcher block-style table—ready to seat a household of friends. The Neithercuts found the table top in a barn in Harbor Springs and asked Jim Tusk at Kitchens North to design legs for the piece. **ABOVE:** Adirondack chairs graze in a newly kept back yard get heavy summer use. Just add tall glasses of lemonade and dozens of cousins for a true Bay View get-together.



A Few Words

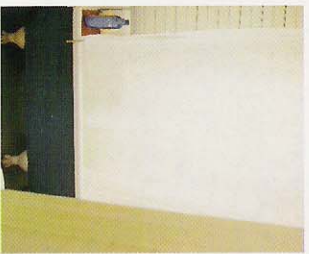
from the Fix-it-up Chappy

Jim Knibbs has great fondness for the cottages of Bay View. He's been involved in a number of remodeling projects there, from simple additions to total revamps. No two surfaces in these century-old cottages are level, square or plumb. Open up a wall, you'll likely find dry rot. Still, these old places have special appeal for the Petroskey contractor:

"I enjoy it because it's challenging to try to take something that needs a lot of work and make it look really nice when you're done," he said. "Every single item in there is a challenge. A lot of the guys around here feel that way and enjoy working in Bay View."

It's not unusual to find old cottages resting on stumps, rocks or cedar posts, Knibbs said. In the case of the Neithercut cottage, the structure had to be placed on jacks as a new block pier foundation was built for walls that had warped or had never been straight in the first place.

A plus in the Neithercut project was being able to install all new wiring and plumbing, which was easier than trying to meld new with varying degrees of antiquated, Knibbs said. Because all four bathrooms were relocated, he simply started from scratch.



When David and Suzu first inspected the cottage, the dwelling had enough daunting deficiencies to keep most prospective buyers away. For starters, there was no foundation. In 1888, the builders simply chopped down trees and erected the cottage on the stumps. More than a century later, when the Neithercuts peered under the house, most of the stumps had rotted away, leaving sections of the structure teetering precariously in midair.

In addition to the gravity problem, David didn't like the way the stairway sliced the cottage in half, creating small, dark rooms. He told Suzu that if she could create a floor plan that opened up the rooms, he'd consider it. An interior designer by trade, she scamppered home to

ABOVE: The Neithercuts added a wrap-around upstairs porch and expanded the first floor porch in their redesign. The top gable still bears carved gingerbread and "1888," marking the year the cottage was built. LEFT: Authenticity reigns, down to the private claw-foot tub.