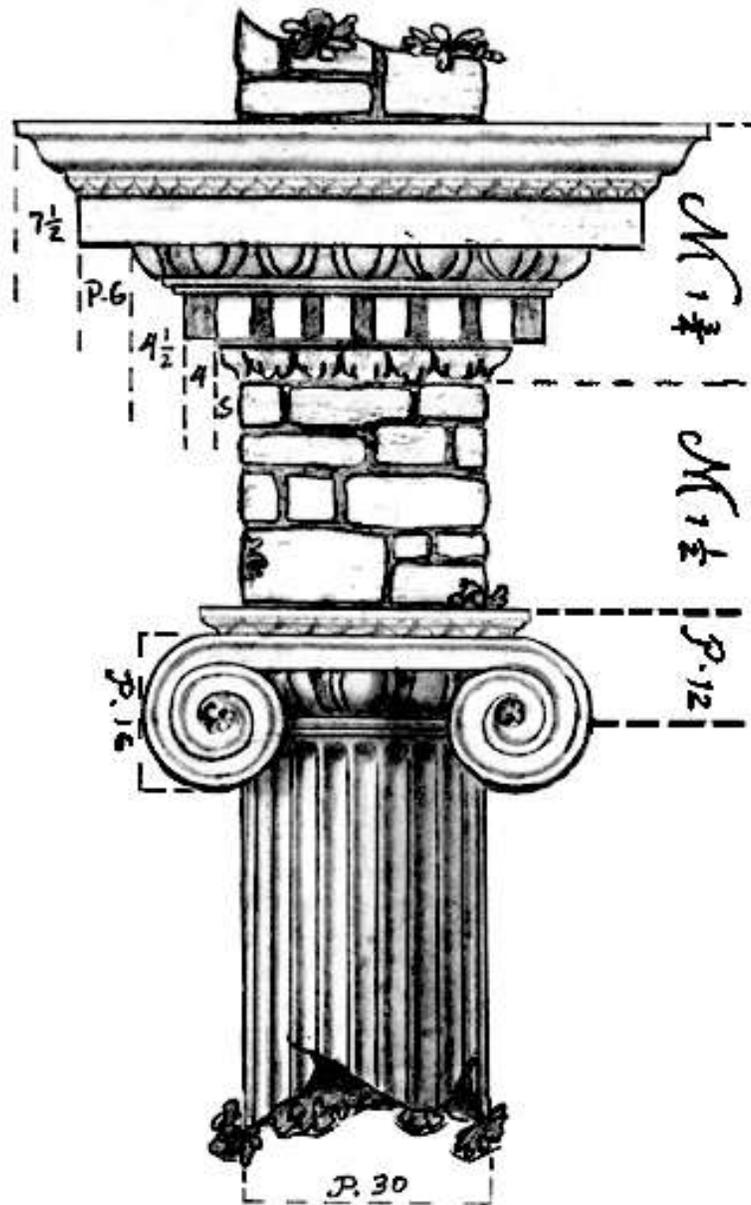


CREATIVE STONE

MASONRY CONSTRUCTION AND STONE SALES



11291 BIGELOW RD, DAVISBURG, MI. 48350

248-625-3046

EMAIL: CREATIVE.STONE@ATT.NET

CREATIVE STONE

Masonry Construction and Stone Sales

To Whom It May Concern,

Please let me introduce myself and acquaint you with the work we do at Creative Stone.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief background sheet which details our past work experience and some of the clients we have served.

In addition to our masonry construction services, we have available a full service fabrication shop including granite and marble slabs, limestone fabrication, stone milling, carving, and stone sales. Please call for quotes.

We will be looking forward to working with you on any future projects you may have. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (248)625-3046 or you can reach me by cell at (248)245-5382.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Shell

Stone masonry has been a family trade since 1960. I began my apprenticeship in 1970 and started Creative Stone in 1975. Since that time I have constructed and specialized in all different types of stone masonry, historical restoration, and fabrication.

Our clients consist of successful and knowledgeable builders as well as appreciative homeowners. We have worked in some of the most exclusive subdivisions in Southern Michigan.

Below is a partial list of some of the builders we have worked with and the subdivisions their projects can be seen.

Michigan Historical Society
Jennifer Radcliff

Ritter House Restoration
Clarkston, MI.

Village of Clarkston

Lakeview Cemetery Entry
Cemetery Wall Restoration
Township Hall Restoration
Clarkston, MI.

Montgomery and Sons

Historical Restoration & Rebuild
Private Residence
Lake Orion, MI.

Jerome York

Foundation, Michigan Basement
and Chimney Restoration
Lake George Road
Oakland, MI.

Summit Properties

Numerous Private Residences
Bridge Valley
Clarkston, MI.

Dale Frenkel Homes

Autumn Shores Entry
Miller Farms Entry
Clarkston, MI.

Pebble Creek Development

Pebble Creek Entry
Clarkston, MI.

National Farm and Garden
Clarkston Branch

Custom Memorial Planters
Clarkston, MI.

Robertson Brothers

Hidden Ravines

Birmingham, MI.

The Heathers Entry

Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Heronwood Partnership

David Johnson

The Heronwoods Entry

Bloomfield Hills, MI.

G. Fisher Construction

Hermelin Residence

Bingham Farms, MI.

Newport Development

Snug Harbor Entry

Waterford, MI.

John Richards Homes, Inc.

Yun Residence

Heron Bay

West Bloomfield, MI.

Fritz Holmann

Cooper Mausoleum

Clarkston, MI.

CBC Building/DesRosier Architects

Mehta Residence

Heronbay

Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Gurka & Siler/DesRosier Architects

Devireddy Residence

Heronbay

Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Pulte Homes

Country Club Village Entry

Novi, MI.

Fox Run Development

Northville, MI.

Enviromental Artist

Sheringham Place Entry

Clarkston, MI.

Beech Forest Entry

Troy, MI.

Michigan Deck Builders

Oakland Hills Country Club

Bridge and "Walk of Champions"

Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Kay Land Development

Orchard Ridge Development
Oakland Township, MI.

Wilshire Homes

Private Residence
Bridge Lk. Bluffs & Bridge Valley
Entries at Oakhurst Development
Clarkston, MI.

Nationwide Fence

Adams Ridge Entry
West Bloomfield, MI.

Troon, L.L.C.

Royal Troon Entry
Lake Orion, MI.

Jeffery Kuhn

Ryner Residence
Elizabeth Lake, MI.
(as seen in Building Ideas)

Robertson Brothers

Hidden Ravines
Birmingham, MI.
The Heather's Entry
Bloomfield Hills, MI.

S.R. Jacobson

Maple Hill Entry
Northville, MI.
Mission Springs Entry
West Bloomfield, MI.
Chichester Entry
Rochester, MI.

T. Sullivan Building

Reddy Residence
Heron Bay
West Bloomfield, MI.

O'Dywer Building

Brody Residence
Cranbrook,
Birmingham, MI.

Oak Pointe Development

Oak Pointe Condos and Entry
Brighton, MI.

Portfolio Available Upon Request

HISTORICAL RESTORATION

SOUTHEAST
CORNER OF ORION
ROAD AT MILLER
ROAD
LAKE ORION,
MICHIGAN



THIS HISTORICAL HOME HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY A LARGE CONSTRUCTION TRACTOR DEMOLISHING MOST OF THE FRONT PORCH. THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT ENTAILED CAREFULLY DISMANTLING THE DAMAGED PORTION OF THE PORCH, REMOVING AND SALVAGING THE VIABLE STONE. INSPECTION OF THE REMAINING MASONRY FOR STRESS CRACKS, STRUCTURALLY SOUND FOOTINGS, AND NECESSARY SUPPORT. THE USABLE STONE WAS THEN RE-LAID IN THE HISTORICALLY CORRECT FASHION IN A STRONG MORTAR MIX, WHICH HAD BEEN DYED TO MATCH THE AGED ORIGINAL MORTAR. WHEN WORKING ON A PROJECT LIKE THIS SOME OF THE AREAS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED IS EXACT DIMENSIONS SO THAT AREAS THAT ARE ALREADY IN PLACE MAKE A CORRECT MATCH TO THE NEW BUILD.



HISTORICAL RESTORATION

1080
LAKE GEORGE RD
OAKLAND,
MICHIGAN



THIS HISTORICAL HOME,
KNOWN AS THE “TRACY-
LANDON FARMHOUSE” WAS
MOVED FROM ITS ORIGINAL
LOCATION TO A MORE SUITABLE
SITE ON THE PROPERTY. WE
WERE REQUESTED TO USE AS

MUCH AS THE ORIGINAL STONE FROM THE FOUNDATION AS
POSSIBLE. THIS REQUIRED US TO REMOVE ALL OF THE OLD
MORTAR ATTACHED TO MOST OF THE STONE AND SPLIT EACH
STONE SO THAT IT COULD BE RE-LAID ON NEW NARROWER
FOOTINGS. THE PROJECT INCLUDED BLOCK WORK AND STONE
FACINGS ON THE NEW OUTSIDE FOUNDATION WALLS, INSIDE



BASEMENT WALLS, CHIMNEY,
FIREPLACE, STONE FLOOR, AND
STONE CAPPING.

THE ORIGINAL POST AND BEAM
STRUCTURE NOW SITS ON TOP OF A
NEW FOUNDATION AND STONE BASE
MAKING EXACT MEASUREMENTS A
MUST.

HISTORICAL RESTORATION OF LAKEVIEW CEMETERY

CLARKSTON,
MICHIGAN



AND EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS IN MICHIGAN. THIS PROJECT INVOLVED REMOVING THE OLD MASONRY WALLS, WHILE STABILIZING THE EXSISTING EARTH BEHIND THE MASONRY. THE FOOTINGS AT THIS PROJECT WHERE NOT UP TO CODE AND THEREFORE HAD TO BE REPOURED. NEW BLOCK HAD TO BE INSTALLED WITH A WEEPING SYSTEM FOR THE DRAINING OF RAIN AND GROUND WATER. THE STONE WAS LAID IN A STYLE TO MATCH THE ORIGINAL WORK, AND LIMESTONE CAPS WERE FABRICATED AND REINSTALLED. NEW 8' TALL BE 3' SQUARE PILLARS WERE CONSTRUCTED FOR THE NEW ENTRY GATES.



WE WERE FORTUNATE TO WORK IN COOPERATION WITH THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENCE, ON THE RESTORATION OF THE RETAINING WALLS AT THE LAKE VIEW CEMENTARY. MOST OF THE WALLS WERE COMPROMISED DUE TO THEAGE

DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

CLARKSTON, MICHIGAN



FOR A BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT WE WORKED TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF THE CLARKSTON FARM AND GARDEN CLUB TO CREATE PLANTERS THAT WOULD REFLECT THE HISTORICAL STYLE OF DOWNTOWN CLARKSTON. THIS PROJECT STARTED WITH A VISION, AND A FEW SKETCHES, TO SCALE DRAWINGS AND PROTOTYPES, THROUGH TO THE COMPLETED PROJECT.

TODAY A TOTAL OF 22 LINE THE DOWNTOWN STREETS OF CLARKSTON.

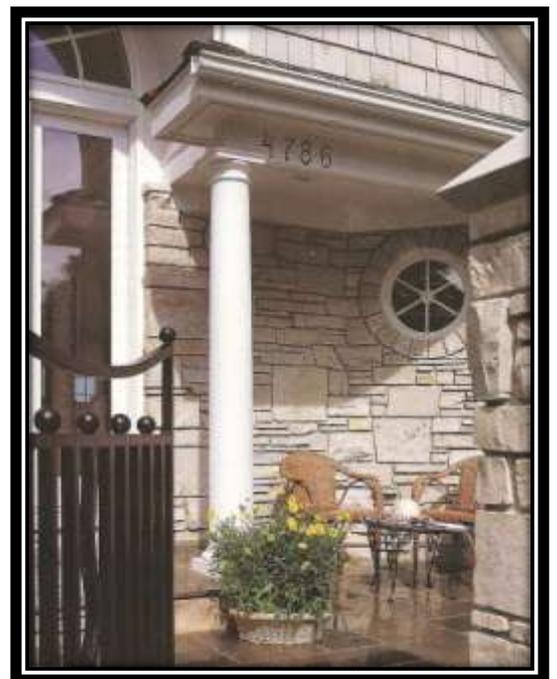
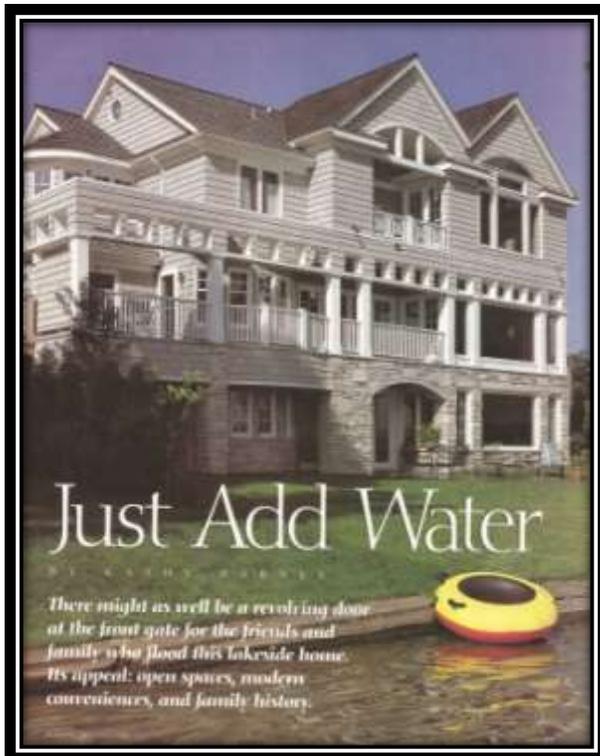
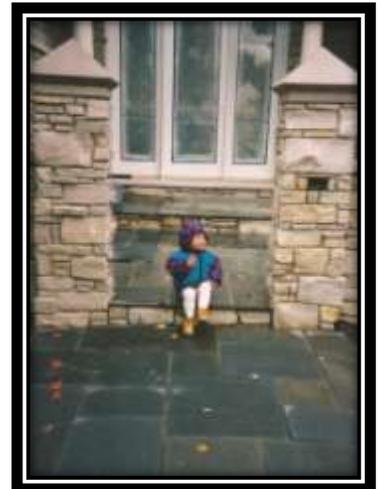
EVERY PLANTER IS CRAFTED FROM REGIONAL STONE AND CAST CONCRETE. EACH PLANTER MEASURES 36" TALL X 26" SQUARE, AND INCORPORATES AN MEMORIAL PLAQUE WE ENGRAVE WITH A STATEMENT FROM EACH PATRON.

PRIVATE
RESIDENCE

ELIZABETH
LAKE,
WATERFORD,
MICHIGAN

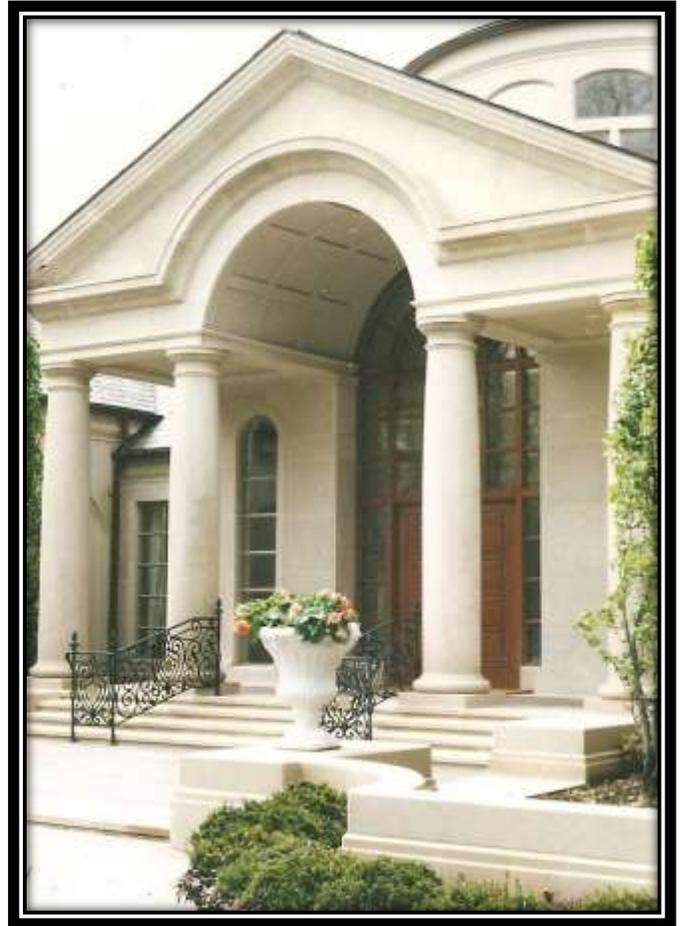


FEATURED IN BETTER HOMES AND
GARDEN, FALL 1996, THIS HOME FEATURES
FOND DU LAC STONE. LAID IN A “DRY-
STACK” FASHION TO GIVE THE HOME AN EAST
COAST, CAPE COD ARCHITECTURAL FEEL.



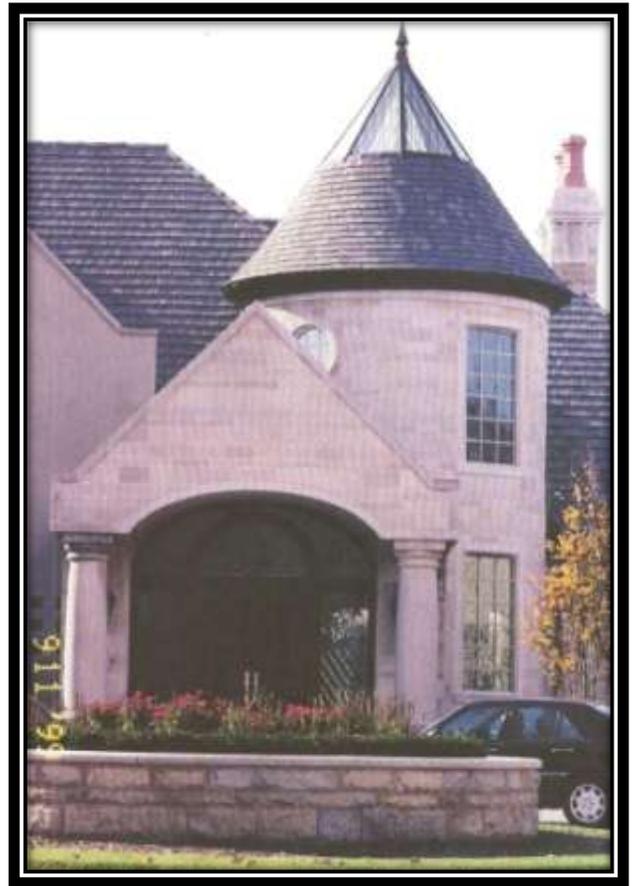
PRIVATE
RESIDENCE

HERON BAY
DEVELOPMENT
BLOOMFIELD HILLS,
MICHIGAN



PRIVATE RESIDENCE

HERON BAY
DEVELOPMENT
BLOOMFIELD HILLS,
MICHIGAN



ENTRIES



THE HERONWOODS
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICHIGAN



COUNTRY CLUB VILLAGE
NOVI, MICHIGAN



ENTRIES

ROYAL TROON AT
INDIANWOOD
LAKE ORION, MICHIGAN

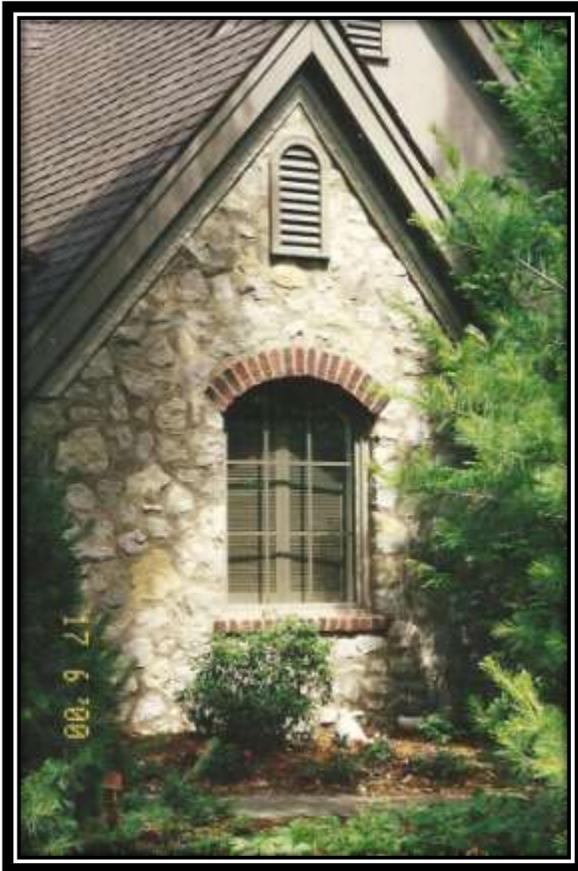
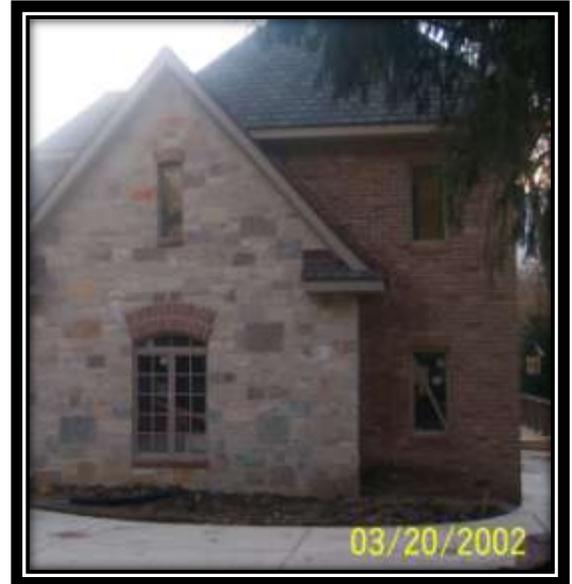


SHERINGHAM PLACE
CLARKSTON, MICHIGAN



PRIVATE RESIDENCES

NORTHVILLE, MICHIGAN



LAKE ORION, MICHIGAN



ORCHARD LAKE, MICHIGAN

PRIVATE RESIDENCES



BRIDGE VALLEY, CLARKSTON, MICHIGAN



TURTLE LAKE, BLOOMFIELD, MICHIGAN

From boulders to building facades

By Dan Vandenhemel

Some say stone masonry is a dying art, but an Independence Township company is at work keeping the intricate craft alive.

John Shell, his brother Dick and Tony Lieder have had their business, Creative Stone, in Independence Township since 1980.

They grew up in Southfield, where they learned the time-consuming craft.

"There aren't many left who do it," John Shell said. "It's very physical work, but I've been doing it long enough to know enough styles to know what a customer would want."

Most of their contracts have been for building facades, pump houses, barbecues and fire places. Other work consists of floors and walkways.

Shell just completed the foundation facade of the John Green home that's being renovated by Hank and Jennifer Radcliff on Main Street, Clarkston, next to the village parking lot.

"We've done a lot of historical work, too," Shell said. "You have to match the existing stone work with the new stones."

They start out as boulders weighing anywhere from 30 to 120 pounds before Shell and his partners trim them down to 5-inch slabs.

A stone mason doesn't have to be a geologist, but knowing your stones helps.

"Michigan stones come in every color in the rainbow," Shell said. "The glacier deposits in Michigan left a lot of stones. Quite often we find fossils in the stones. Michigan stones are also extremely hard; it's mostly granite."

With Oakland County being mostly on top of a gravel pit, Shell doesn't have far to go for his materials—except when he or a customer is looking for a specific type.

"We also get stones from Georgia, California, from all over," he said. "In Georgia, they've got that gorgeous white stone."

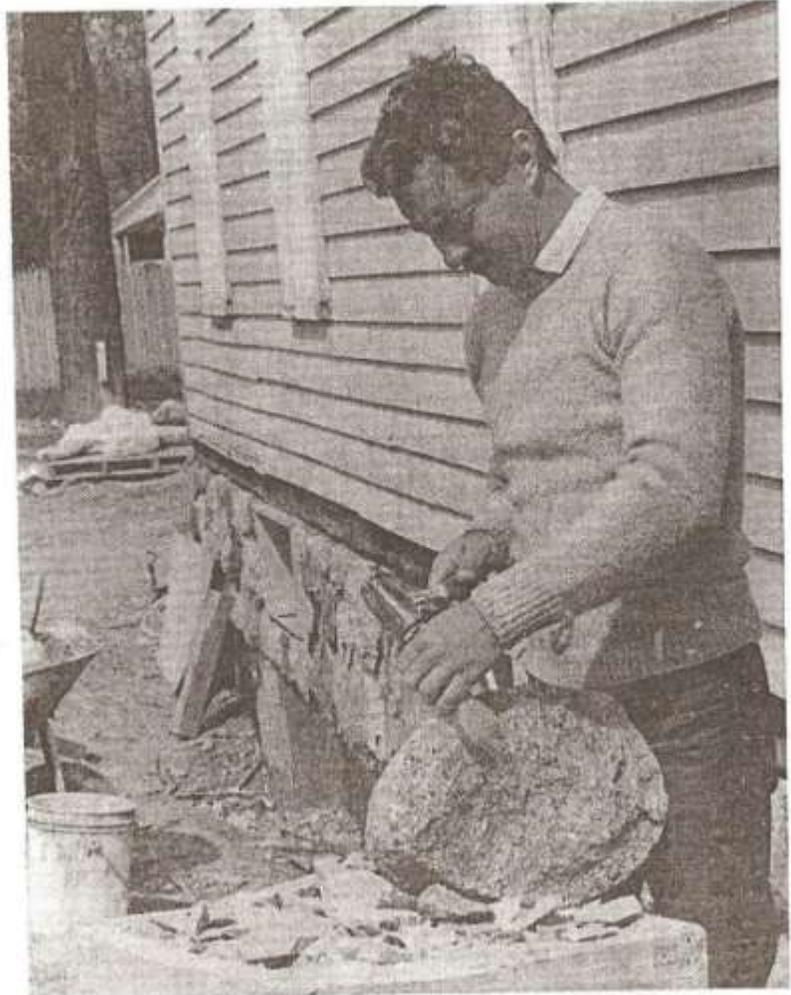
As long as people like the looks of stone masonry, Shell thinks he will have a business. He adds that his craft is more expensive than normal masonry.

"It takes about two or three times longer to get the material ready and the labor takes about two or three times longer, too," the 28-year-old Shell said. "There's no production in this, it's all handwork. People really appreciate the work."

Stone masonry became popular during the mid-1800s because the stones were abundant and they are a very strong material.

The next step for Shell is the possibility of building stone houses.

"People come by when we're working and look and talk to us," he said. "Things like that keep you going. It's very gratifying."



Trimming boulders into rough 5-inch squares for stone masonry is very physical work, but

John Shell and partners Dick Shell and Tony Lieder are keeping the craft going.

BY DAN VANDENHEMEL

Garden club brings new planters to downtown area

BY ALICIA DORSET
Clarkston News Staff Writer

Good-bye, whiskey barrels. Hello, custom-created stone planters!

The Clarkston Farm and Garden Club was ready with green smocks and new plants to welcome five new planters to downtown Clarkston's Main Street on June 30 as part of an ongoing effort to keep the city tied to its historical roots with an updated look.

"This is just another amenity that makes people stop and think when walking," Sharron Catallo, Clarkston mayor and club member, said. "This is years and years of planning."

Five of the 11 contracted planters arrived for the ribbon cutting ceremony at Main and Washington from local designer John Shell of Creative Stone. The club hopes to have all 11 downtown by the end of the summer.

The planters were designed to complement Clarkston's numerous historical buildings.

"We looked at what people we're doing and what would be in character with Clarkston," Mary Jane Scharfenkamp, club publicity chair, said.

Under the guidance of Elena Forbes and Linda Meadors civic improvement committee, the club began setting aside funds from major fund-raisers for the planters. Each planter cost more than \$1,200.

"These are beyond amazing," Catallo said. "They're beautiful."

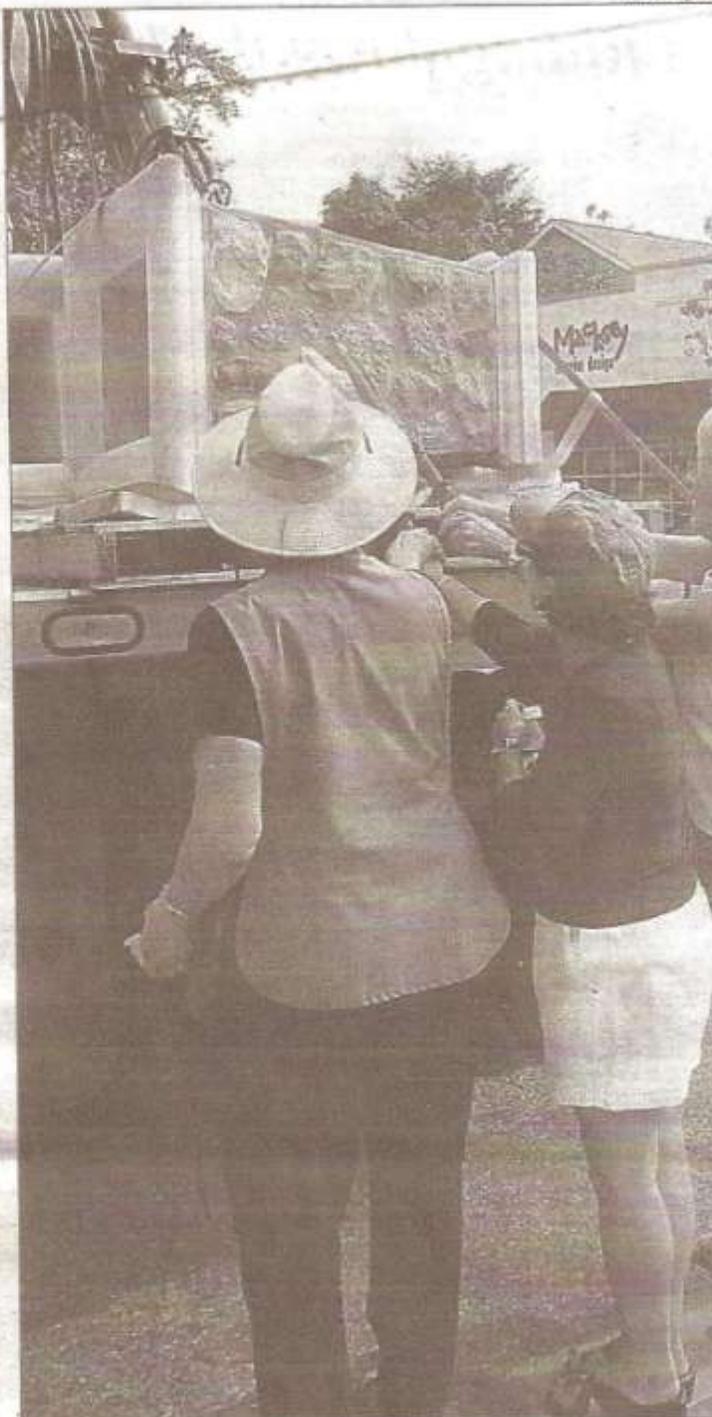
Keeping in spirit with Clarkston's historic past, many of the planters have been purchased to celebrate past and current community members who have contributed to the city.

"They add another human element to the city. They've been purchased for the people who have lived and worked in town," Catallo said.

The club hopes to have 24 planters total throughout Main Street. Out of the 11 already accounted for, 13 are still available for donation.

"It was their (donors) overwhelming response to this project, their flexibility as we worked out the details and their devotion to their honorees that sustained us as we moved forward," Julie Piazza, club president, said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

For more than 15 years, the club has been responsible for the planting and maintenance of the old barrels found along Main Street.



Civic improvement committee and garden club members Linda Meadors, Sharron Catallo cut the ribbon off the first new planter to arrive on Main Street. Designer John Shell created new planters that kept in style with the downtown's historic architecture.

Stonework takes a special dedication

By Joe Gitter
of the Clarkson News

The stonemason, hand-crafting his field-stone masterpieces, is going the way of the violin maker and wood crafter... inward eventual extinction. It is a dying art, says Carston Seales, a member of that disappearing craft.

"There are just so few stonemasons around," he said. "Many of the more prominent ones have died or retired in the last few years."

It is not difficult for Seales to understand the reasons behind his trade's plight. The work is difficult and physical; tedious at times and exacting always.

"It is hard to learn and it's hard to find someone to teach

you if you do want to learn."

Seales has taken on two apprentices, the Shell brothers, Dick and John, and taught them the trade. They are now working together building a fieldstone fireplace, chimney and stone front for the Joseph Duris home on Deer Lake.

This summer has been an unusual one for Seales and his masons. Last winter I didn't do a job for two months. Then suddenly I'm saturated with work," he said. He's not complaining.

"There's just so few people that really like stone work and will take the time to find a stonemason. They'd just as soon have brick."

The problem really is that few

people have really seen stone masonry. The art begun out of necessity by early settlers and pioneers has evolved to a carefully thought out and intricate arrangement of subtle multi-toned stones.

The long process begins with fieldstones that are often literally dug out of fields. Seales carefully examines each boulder to determine its grain pattern, and then it is cut using a heavy combination chisel/sledge hammer.

"It's like splitting wood," he said. "You can pound on a rock all day if you don't hit it in the right spot."

By cutting along the grain, one face of the split rock is flat. It is then chiseled to the appropriate size and fitted very carefully into the lattice work of the overall pattern.

A hammer, chisel and mallet are the only tools used in the stonemason's craft. The only innovation, modern technology has contributed has been the incorporation of carbide tipped chisels, which provide a much harder striking surface and last longer than typical steel tools. It still doesn't take very long to go through one of those \$30 chisels, Seales said. They are made of a soft steel to prevent chipping and sparking under constant hammering. But, by the same token, the constant pounding will wear an eight inch chisel down to nothing in short order.

As the hammers fly during construction, so do the rock chips. It can be dangerous to stand too close to a working stone mason. One day a rock chip punctured a hole in a five gallon bucket. It went through it like a bullet," says Seales.

The work is difficult,



20-year-old John Shell trims one of the few remaining fireplace fieldstones high atop the scaffolding inside the Joseph Duris home.

The roof is like a furnace, the fireplace is a sauna and the front porch is just plain hot.

All three masons live no closer than Pontiac. Two reside in

guess you just have to be dedicated," Dick said.

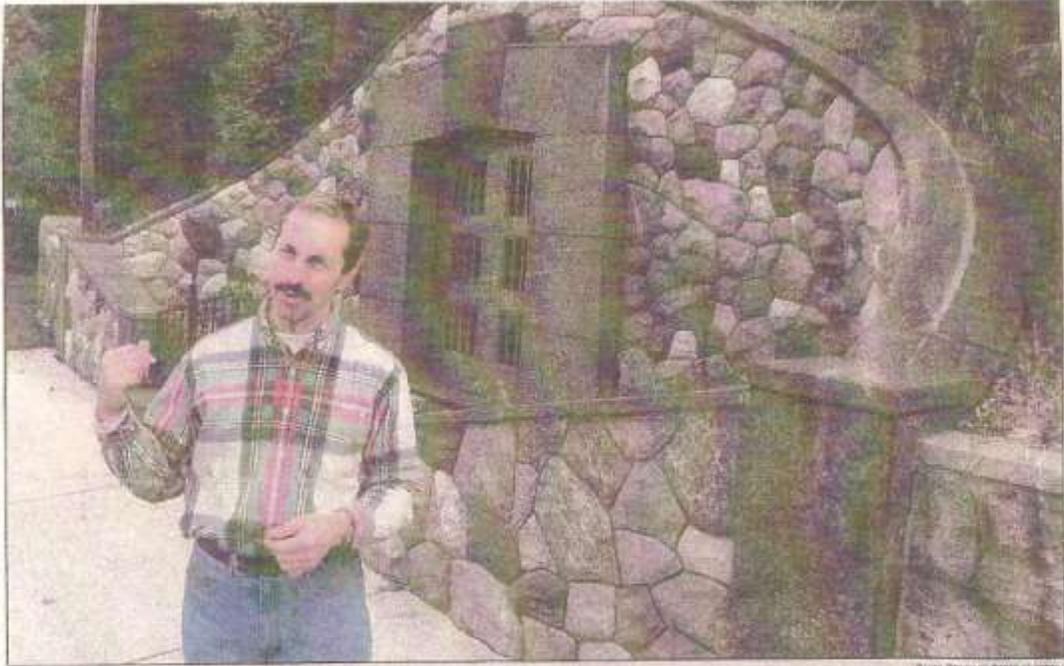
"It is creative work," Seales claims. "It's different and it's unique," said Dick. "Every job





Chipping away

JOHN SHELL and his brother Richard Shell (not pictured) of Creative Stone, Springfield Township, will spend about two weeks creating two stone pillars for the entrance to Lakeview Cemetery, White Lake Road, Independence Township. After the \$5,000 job is completed, a gate will be installed, followed by fencing for the entire cemetery.



Staff Photo by STEVE CUMMEL

Master mason: John Shell, owner of Creative Stone in Springfield Township, stands in front of old stonework in Clarkston's Lakewood Cemetery, for which he does repairs.

The Stone Age

Demand for mason's work rock solid

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

nstafford@mc.honoluluanews.com

The fruits of John Shell's labor bear less back to bygone days. To days when a home's beauty took precedence over the cost of building it.

To days when the smallest of details — carvings on mantels and doorway arches — were never overlooked.

As a stone mason, the day-to-day labor that Shell performs even requires up images of another period in time.

"It's like plowing the land," said Shell, who has owned Creative Stone, a stone masonry and fabrication business, in Springfield Township since the 1980s.

Stone masonry "is still very physically demanding," he said. "We're constantly lifting over 100 pounds every day."

But a photo of the past is



Simply beautiful: Old-style ornateness can remind homeowners of simpler days.

exactly what Shell and his customers are seeking, the 43-year-old Davisburg stone mason said.

"Personally ... I don't like doing a lot of paperwork ... sitting behind a computer all day doesn't do it for me. Doing it the old-fashioned way makes me feel good."

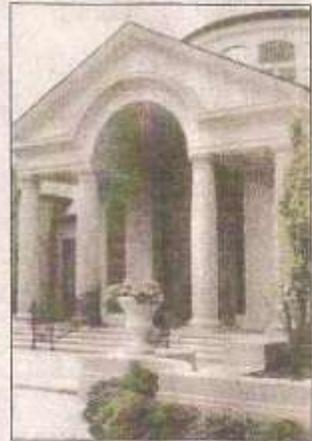
Likewise, Shell's customers appreciate his work — intricately fieldstone walls and hand-carved, stone mantle pieces, to name a few examples — for the same reason.

"It's the fact that someone ... is taking a step back in time and doing it the old-fashioned way. I mean, why aren't we using a laser gun?" said Shell.

Shell also sees a connection between society's advancement and people's desire to incorporate elements from simpler times into today's lifestyle.

"I just think that the more technological we become as people, the more people appreciate natural and high quality materi-

Please see **STONE**, A1



Down-to-earth design: Shell says the more technologically-oriented society becomes, the more people want their homes to reflect the hand-crafted, natural beauty of bygone eras.

als in their homes," he said. "People come back down to earth when they come home."

Although the nature of Shell's work has evolved over the years, he and his crew still spend many hours logging heavy materials, chiseling away at rock and splitting gigantic boulders.

Stone is being used less often as a structural building material and more often as a decorative veneer, which also makes stone work more affordable, Shell said.

The trend also allows Shell and other stone masons to focus on craftsmanship and details, he said.

masonry, in general ... but it's become crafted a little bit more," because of the increasing popularity of veneer work, he said.

Not only does Creative Stone, one of a handful of stone masonry businesses in southeast Michigan, continue to do projects like restoring the walls and pillars at Lakewood Cemetery in downtown Clarkston, but also to create new stone structures for residential developments and wealthy homeowners throughout Oakland County.

Shell is currently doing work on the Bridge Valley develop-

ment in Independence Township

Shores, a residential development in Davisburg. Although stone is particularly well-suited to the Clarkston area for historical reasons — many of the area's older structures were built with stone, an abundant resource in North Oakland County — the material "is everywhere, now," Shell said.

But the trend — like a resurgent interest in older cultures and the cities of stone created by the Mayas, Incas, Greeks and Romans — ultimately has to do with human nature. "Shell said

Stone mason chisels a living out of old craft

BY RANER SMITH
CONTRIBUTOR



The new stone planters in downtown Clarkston are a product of John Shell's company.

Southfield neighborhood where he grew up.

Today, he builds facades for cemetery mausoleums, bridges for golf courses, fireplaces and solid stone entrances for mansions.

When he was 8 years old, John Shell got a job assisting a stone mason down the street.

Twenty-nine years later, the Springfield Township resident is still working with stone.

"I stayed interested in it because of consistently challenging myself to take the next step," said Shell, owner of Creative Stone in Davisburg.

Shell started out "carrying rocks around" for the stone mason in the



PLEASE SEE SHELL, A5 Stone mason John Shell uses a hammer and chisel to cut stone by hand at his Davisburg business.

SHELL

FROM PAGE A1

Just recently, he was contracted by the Clarkston Farm and Garden Club to build a dozen stone planters for downtown Clarkston.

"He did a wonderful job," said Clarkston Mayor Sharron Catalo, a member of the Farm and Garden Club. "I can't imagine anything better."

Made of Michigan field stones, the planters blend perfectly with the stone on historic buildings, decorative walls and homes in the city, she said: "He captured exactly what everyone had been looking for."

Shell learned masonry the old-fashioned way, as an apprentice. He trained under several masons, including the one in Southfield who gave him and four of his five brothers their first jobs.



John Shell built this mausoleum at Lakeview Cemetery on Holcomb Road at Dixie Highway.

Shell was the only one of the boys to make stone masonry his profession. "I have a hard time sitting behind a desk," he said. "I'm a hands-on guy. I need to feel that satisfaction of completing something at the

end of the day."

Shell, who does most of his work with a hand chisel, is self-employed. His wife, Laurie, does the computer and book work. Their four children, ages 5 to 14, also assist.

Business has fluctuated over the years with the demands of home builders and buyers, Shell said. For a time, aluminum siding was the fad. Now stone is becoming more popular again.

"It's reverted back to the '20s with classic Tudors and estates," Shell said.

Lately, stone planters, benches and arbors have become popular choices for gardens, so Shell has started a new side business specializing in those products, Davisburg Stone Co.

One thing that has remained the same over the years is the quality of Michigan stone, Shell's favorite to work with. "It's got the most color, but it's also the most difficult to work with," he said.

But that makes it challenging — and keeps Shell interested in the ages-old profession.

ksmith@poe.homecomm.net |
(248) 651-7575, ext. 14