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Fall 2009 • Volume 32, Number 3

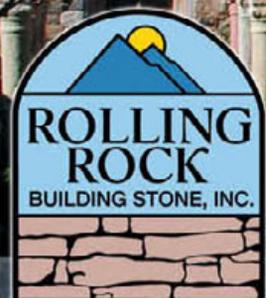
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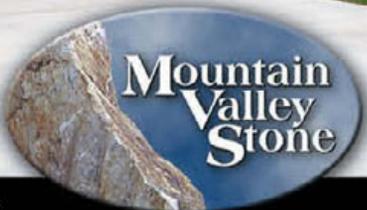


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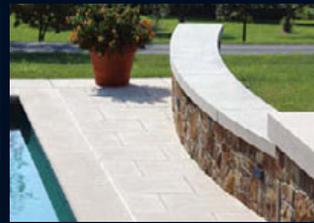
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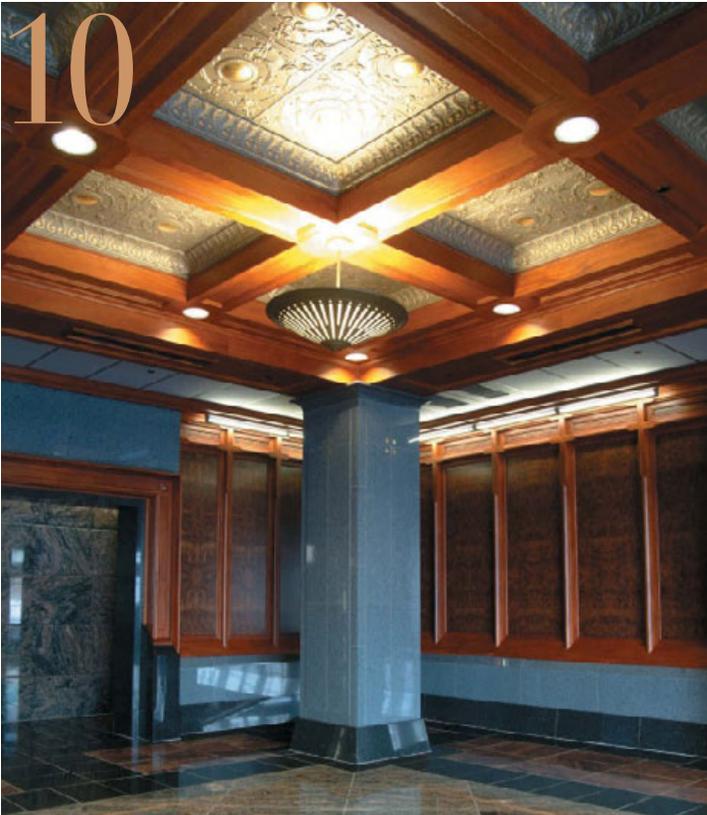


BuildingStone

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Fall 2009 • Volume 32, Number 3

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Four civic and government buildings demonstrate natural stone's strength, endurance and sense of continuity—the same characteristics people expect from their governing institutions.

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The New Parliament House in Canberra, Australia showcases the splendor and versatility of natural stone. Australian granite adorns its remarkable courtyard landscape and curving sidewalks as well as this large forecourt mosaic by Aboriginal artist Michael Nelson Jagamara.

Photo © Canberra Convention Bureau

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Making history

IN THIS ISSUE, the emphasis is on national treasures. We focus on the Retirement Services of Alabama headquarters in Montgomery (p. 11), the Cedar Hill Government Center in Texas (p. 12), the rehabilitation of the Iowa state Capitol's west terrace (p. 12), the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, Mo., (p. 13) and the award-winning New Parliament House in Canberra, Australia (p. 23).

These monuments are a testimony to diverse architecture. It is interesting to note that Kansas City was the site of the first Federal Reserve Bank built in 1921. The architect was Graham Anderson of Probst and White, and the structure was steel with a granite façade in a Neo-Classical style. The most recent Federal Reserve Bank replaces the original and was completed in 2008. This magnificent building was designed by Henry N. Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed and Partners. The structure is concrete with a limestone façade of contemporary design and classical values. This is an example of how stone can be used to convey two entirely different visions. Both styles are majestic and timeless in their own way. We admire the buildings, but it is the people who design, fabricate and build these treasures who make history.

At the Building Stone Institute, we would like to welcome Kris Daily as our association services coordinator. Kris will join Jane Bennett full time to facilitate the work of the BSI administrative office in a role that combines the duties of reception and administrative support along with a team approach to coordinating events.

As always, we welcome reader comments to guide our editorial direction and to ensure that we publish the most informative articles and technical data necessary to facilitate the continued use of natural stone in design.

Douglas J. Bachli

Douglas J. Bachli
2009 President, Building Stone Institute
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Correction

In the summer issue of *Building Stone* on page 30, we inadvertently listed an inaccurate phone number for Keith Phillips. His phone number is (360) 264-4506. On page 42, we discovered an error in the 2010 Tucker Design Award jurors. The correct jurors are Cesar Pelli, FAIA, Harold Roth, FAIA and Peter Rolland, FALSA. We do apologize for these mistakes.

Building Stone magazine wants to hear from you!

We encourage BSI members, architects and designers to submit information for publication, and we are eager for your input. Have you recently worked on a natural stone project that our readers should know about?

Is there a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue? Please send high-resolution photos with photo credits, details about your impressive projects and article ideas to *Building Stone* editor Colleen Raccioppi at colleenr@naylor.com.



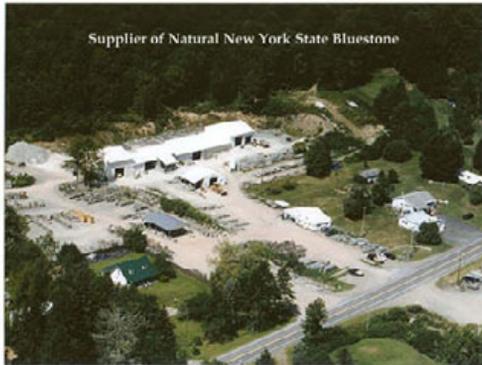
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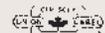
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A

new national TREASURES

STONE SETS THE RIGHT TONE FOR GOVERNMENT BY MARY LOU JAY

STONE IS A NATURAL FIT FOR GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, INCLUDING THE FOUR structures featured here, because it projects strength, endurance and a sense of continuity—the same characteristics we seek in our governing institutions.

RSA Headquarters, Montgomery, Ala.

John Grady of PH&J Architects chose familiar granites for the new headquarters of Retirement Services of Alabama (RSA)—the same types of stone he used in the five previous buildings he designed for the agency. “But we’ve used the stone in a different manner this time,” says Grady. “For example, we designed a pattern that uses a combination of thermal and polish finish on the site walls.”

One unique element is the four-way book-match layout on the main lobby floor. “The entire floor was laid out and approved by the architect prior to shipping to the jobsite,” says Todd Jensen, Cold Spring Granite Company’s southeast regional sales representative. “For the book-match flooring, we also had to match an aluminum template for the bronze inlay that went into the stone.” Careful handling of the book-match pieces was critical, since one broken piece would render the other three unusable.

Carnelian granite is used for the building’s exterior cladding, plaza walls, benches, piers and interior flooring. The building’s exterior entry cladding, site wall facings, exterior paving and eighth floor balcony are done in deep Royal Sable granite. Rainbow granite appears in the book-match floor, courtyard paving and benches, while Agate and New Imperial Red granites cover other interior floors.

“Cold Spring furnished numerous samples, and large samples, of different stones and finishes,” says Grady. “They gave us confidence that we made the right selection.”

A. Full-flamed Rainbow granite with intricate graining is laid out in a unique four-way, book-match pattern on the lobby floor at the **RSA headquarters**, and the walls feature a combination of thermal and polish finish. *Photo courtesy of Cold Spring Granite Company*



Cedar Hill Government Center, Texas

When the Cedar Hill city government and independent school district both needed more space, architects crafted a unique solution—a 115,000-square-foot building with separate spaces for the city, its police force and the school district, plus shared meeting rooms and lobby.

The city’s desire to make the building contextual led designer Holzman Moss Architecture to look at regional materials. The architects chose TexaStone Rose, quarried in Garden City, Texas. It is the only limestone of this unique color in the United States, according to Brenda Edwards, owner of TexaStone Quarries.

Three stone blocks on the building’s front define each department, while the building is unified through the use of the Rose limestone. The architect accommodated differences in budget by blending economical and more expensive stones across the building’s expanse.

“These are very large buildings, so we wanted to do something to break up the volume for interest and shadows,” says Patty Chen of Holzman Moss Architecture. “The lowest, rough-back section is 8 inches deep to give it solidity to meet the ground. The main portion is 2x2 units of split-face block and random ashlar, interrupted with horizontal bands that extend out from the stone anywhere from 2 to 4 inches. The cornice is articulated with four or five different sizes of smooth stone.”

In the interior, TexaStone Rose defines the different departments while red clay Texas tile is used to delineate shared spaces.

“The building needed to be unique to us as a community, and it also needed to say a lot about the personality and the values of the town,” says Greg Porter, deputy city manager. “The architects did a good job of taking the spirit of the community and putting it into physical form.”

Iowa State Capitol West Terrace, Des Moines

The new terrace landscape along the west side of Iowa’s Capitol provides an attractive approach to the building while linking it to the Des Moines River. “Our goal was to create a public space around the Capitol that also tied into the recently revitalized East Village area,” says Matt Carlile, project manager for Confluence, which designed the site. The granite used



B. At the front of the **Cedar Hill government center**, three stone blocks define the city’s space from its police force and the school district, while TexaStone Rose limestone provides a unified look to the building. *Photo © Craig Blackmon, FAIA, courtesy Holzman Moss Architecture*

C. The **west terrace landscape of the Iowa State Capitol** features five levels that descend more than 33 feet from east to west to accommodate grade changes. *Photo courtesy of Confluence*



Built of Cottonwood Falls and Silverdale limestone, a low wall surrounds most of **the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City** and pairs nicely with the building's limestone exterior. *Photo courtesy of the Building Stone Institute*

in the terraces, for example, includes many of the colors featured in surrounding streetscapes.

One of the west terrace's most popular spots is the 56x33.5-foot map of Iowa. The map required 1,729 square feet of granite, and 2-inch-thick slabs of Rockville White were cut with water jets to the shape of each Iowa county by stone supplier Cold Spring Granite Company. The map's orientation is dictated

by a 12-foot-diameter stone compass, which points to true north. The compass features Rockville White, Charcoal Black and Carnelian granite.

The west terrace consists of five levels that descend more than 33 feet from east to west to accommodate grade changes. Other design features include walls, benches, planting boxes and ramps with no more than 5 percent incline to make the site ADA accessible. Stair treads and curbs feature Charcoal Black granite in rub and sand finish.

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Mo.

The new Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is a 618,000-square-foot complex featuring a two-story operations structure and a 14-story office tower. The building's Cottonwood Falls limestone, quarried in Kansas, complements the Indiana limestone in the adjacent WWI Liberty Memorial. "The third floor up is stone set on precast panels; the bottom section, where we wanted a tighter joint tolerance, is hand laid," says Barry Huhn of Ellerbe Becket, which designed the building with Pei Cobb Freed. Cottonwood Falls limestone also lines the lobby walls, with Englishman's Bay granite bordering the walls and the terrazzo floor.

Landscaping presented several challenges. "It's a very public setting, very open, so we had to come up with different strategies on how these public sides of the new development are expressed," says Peter Stegner, an associate with Olin Partnership Ltd., which worked with Bowman Bowman Novick Inc. (BNN) on the landscaping. The west side, close to Penn Valley Park, features

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informal plantings, while the steep-sloped south side is planted with vegetation for runoff control and a pedestrian pathway. For the east side along Main Street, which includes tree bosques, "we made sure there was a real rhythm both in the land form and the texture and even the color of the landscape," says Scott Bingham of BNN.

The north side, paved in granite, also features a granite "council ring" that provides public seating and doubles as a security barrier. "The driving force

of the landscape design was to ensure that we could meet the security requirements of the site and still make it look very natural, very inviting to the eye," says Bingham. Laying the granite and the tiles in the lobby, was a painstaking task, since the grout lines were designed to line up with a focal point on the adjacent WWI memorial.

A low stone wall made from Cottonwood Falls limestone and a slightly darker Silverdale limestone surrounds most of the bank's property.

Natural stone's unique characteristics and features, as showcased in these projects, are what make stone the preferred material on so many high-profile government buildings. ♦

Mary Lou Jay is a freelance writer based in Timonium, Md.

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 Stone used: Royal Sable, Rainbow, Agate and New Imperial Red granites

CEDAR HILL GOVERNMENT CENTER

Location: Cedar Hill, Texas
 Designer: Holzman Moss Architecture
 • holzmanmoss.com
 Stone supplier: TexaStone Quarries • texastone.com
 Stone used: TexaStone Rose limestone

IOWA STATE CAPITOL WEST TERRACE

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
 Designer: Confluence • confluence.com
 Stone supplier: Cold Spring Granite Company
 Stone used: Rockville White, Charcoal Black and Carnelian granite

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK

Location: Kansas City, Mo.
 Designers: Ellerbe Becket • ellerbebecket.com
 Pei Cobb Freed and Partners • pcf-p.com
 Landscape: Olin Partnership Ltd. • theolinstudio.com
 Bowman Bowman Novick Inc. • bbnarchitects.com
 Stone suppliers: U.S. Stone Industries
 • usstoneindustries.com
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www.onvia.com ↗

A service that provides procurement information about RFPs and government bids.

www.findrfp.com ↗

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fresh Approach

**NEW WORLD STONWORKS'
CONTEMPORARY METHOD
FOR A TRADITIONAL CRAFT**
BY STEVEN CUTLER

NATURAL STONE IS ENJOYING A RESURGENCE AS MORE architects, designers and builders come to discover its unique attributes and the added value it brings to a project.

Here's the rub: when they put pencil to paper and face some of the challenges using natural stone can bring to a job, they may decide not to use stone in favor of a more predictable to install, if mundane, material. But thanks to a few enterprising entrepreneurs, a new technology could help keep natural stone on jobs that otherwise might have gone to manufactured stone, other synthetic products, glass or brick. And it seems to be catching on in a big way.

New method takes off

Ken Jackman, founder of New World Stoneworks, based in Uxbridge, Mass., developed and patented a stonecutting method that provides users with unprecedented control over the finished product and enables masons to install stonework up to 90 percent faster when compared with traditional techniques.

Opened in 2004, New World placed its first order for stone with Champlain Stone, Ltd., a quarry with headquarters in Warrensburg, N.Y. "Ken started out doing fireplace kits," says David Abodeely, project coordinator at Champlain Stone. "And all of a sudden he's working on multimillion dollar homes. His business grew beyond his wildest expectations."

Indeed, despite the downturn in construction, says Jackman, "the business has exploded. A lot of masonry guys are selling their tools, but we're increasing capacity and opening new locations. We have a 10,000-foot facility, and by the end of this year we'll be at maximum capacity at our first location."

A. With the pre-cut stone, a section of this size exterior veneer **would take two masons just two days to install**, including details such as the corners and the flat arches over the windows.



A

INNOVATIVE applications

How it works

New World cuts stone to the architect's specifications using machines equipped with ultra-high-speed waterjets that shoot water out at three times the speed of sound, mixing it with sand to naturally shape each stone. "What the architect lays out in CAD [design and drafting software]," explains Jackman, "is exactly what is shaped using the water."

The stone is delivered to the jobsite ready to install in numbered order and wrapped to remain dry.

Each stone is engraved with a number on the back indicating its position in the final layout. Because the stones come pre-cut, there is no dust or waste. Masons simply follow the detailed instructions that come with the stones, putting them in place as they would the pieces of a puzzle; the stones are arranged in a numerical sequence on the pallet.

More design control

"What architects love about our system," says Jackman, "is that they can control the design and

view it in CAD, and they can proof it on paper before it is set in stone."

The process also allows the designer to make last-minute changes easily. "If there's a window opening and they want to switch to a full-corner return," says Jackman, "they can do that on their CAD system without paying to take down a section once it's been built."

The system allows designers to experiment with colors, providing instant, accurate visual feedback. "Let's say you have a project that is 50 percent gray granite, 30 percent buff quartzite, 20 percent dark fieldstone," says Jackman. "If the client looks at the rendering and decides there's a bit too much gray, we would bring the gray down to 40 percent and increase the buff color."

Saving money, saving time

Often the time-saving feature is what wins the contract. In mid-June, one client requested backyard landscaping to be finished before July 4. The stonework included three curved walls around a hill with 790-square-feet of dry-fit square and rectangular South Bay quartzite and three sets of steps and knee walls.

"You figure the average mason can do 15 square feet a day," says Jackman. "Every mason who looked at this project said, 'you're insane; there's no way we can do this.' We sent two guys down, and in two days, they installed the entire project."

What's next for New World? Intent on making stonework increasingly more accessible and appealing to architects and designers, Jackman is developing a plug-in for CAD that allows them to detail every specification of the stone on their computer, easily manipulate drawings and create their own custom color renderings—all while keeping a running total of the final cost.

As the recovery of the construction industry meets the green revolution, innovative companies like New World Stoneworks will make stone, the ultimate sustainable building material, ever more viable, affordable and ubiquitous. ◆

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Steven Cutler is a freelance writer based in New York, N.Y.

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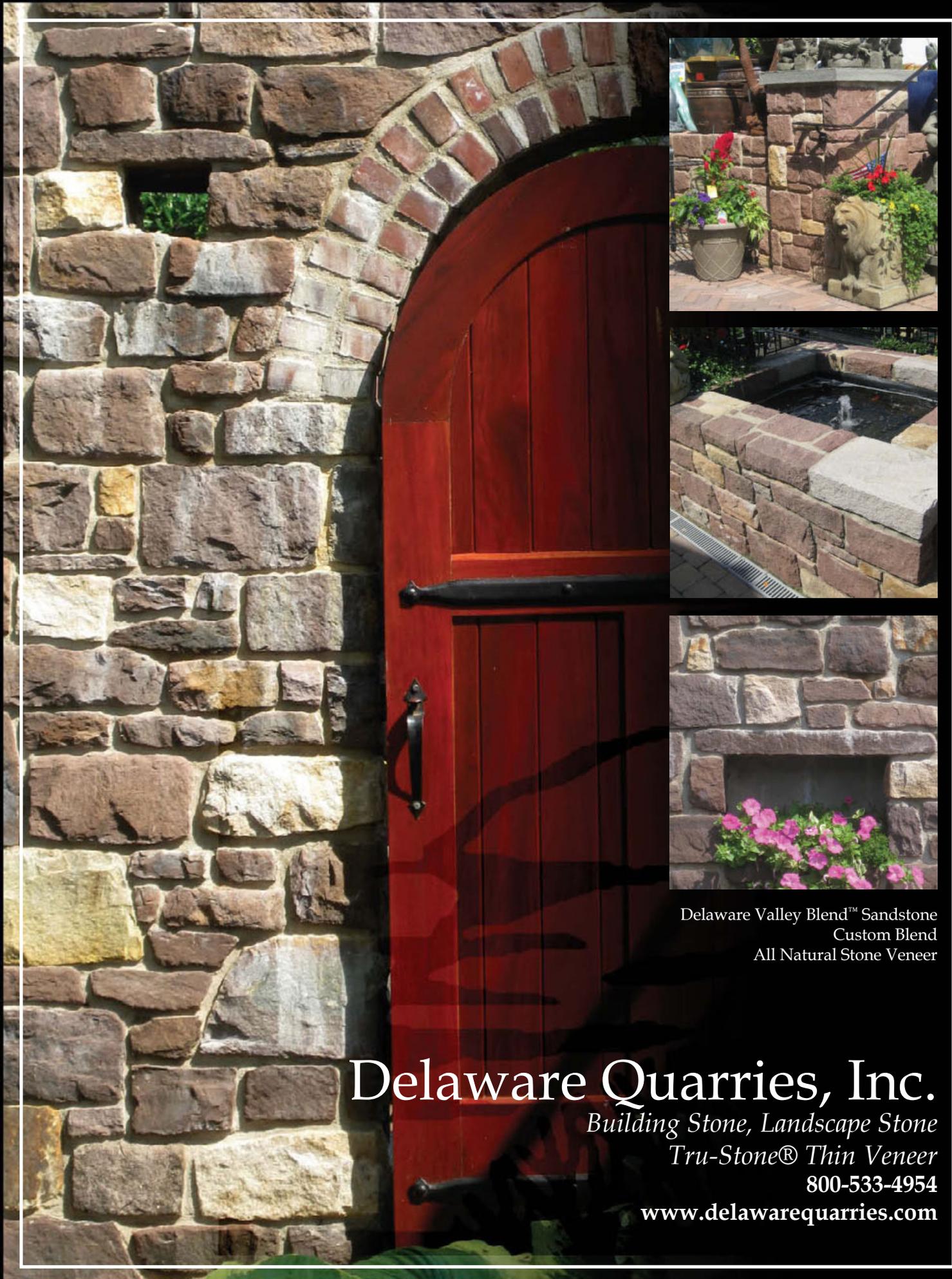
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All About Marble

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Most people are familiar with marble. From Greek statues to Roman baths, it has been used for centuries in just about every possible interior, exterior and landscape application. The United States is one of the chief producers of dimension stone in the world, having generated an estimated 1.3 million tons in 2006. Marble sales comprised 14 percent of this market by tonnage, most in the form of rough blocks for construction.

A metamorphic stone, marble is formed when limestone is subjected to intense heat, pressure and chemical solutions, causing the stone to reform into an interlocking structure of calcite, aragonite and sometimes dolomite crystals. Marble formed from very pure limestone is white, but the presence of other minerals, as well as clay, silt and sand, can give it richly varied coloration.

Marble is found in the mountainous regions of most countries, but relatively few quarries exist in the United States. The majority of these quarries have been in existence for 75 years or more. Some marble quarries in the United States offer fabrication services, while others sell block material for others to fabricate. Many blocks are exported through Canada, and the United States imports marble from a variety of nations across the globe. Canada, China, France, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Spain and Turkey frequently sit at the top of this list with respect to quantity purchased.

Common dimensions

Characteristics of quarried stone are dependent upon the attributes of the deposit from which the stone was extracted; each quarry is able to offer a range of products unique in dimensions, color and structural properties to its deposit. Therefore,



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TEXTURED	BUSH-HAMMERED	ROCK FACE	SHOT-SAWN	CHAT-SAWN
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ASTM STANDARDS

PROPERTY	REQUIRED TEST VALUE
DENSITY, MIN LB/FT ³	(KG/M ³) 162 (2590)
ABSORPTION BY WEIGHT, MAX, %	0.20
COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH, MIN, PSI (MPA)	7500 (52)
MODULUS OF RUPTURE, MIN, PSI (MPA)	1000 (6.89)
ABRASION RESISTANCE, MIN, HARDNESS*	10
FLEXURAL STRENGTH, MIN, PSI (MPA)	1000 (6.89)

*Pertains only to stone subject to foot traffic.

Adapted from C-503 "Standard Specification for Marble Dimension Stone," copyright ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, West Conshohocken, PA 19428. A copy of the complete standard may be obtained from ASTM (www.astm.org).

STONEshowcase

It is preferable that the designer and stone supplier collaborate closely prior to and throughout the design process, since planning a project around readily available stone reduces the environmental impact of raw material extraction. Nevertheless, the most common dimensions of marble on the market are as follows:

BLOCKS: Maximum size of 8 ft x 5 ft x 5 ft

SLABS: Maximum size of 8 ft x 5 ft with thickness of 2-3 cm

Custom cubic also may be offered.

Common building applications

Marble often is used in exterior and interior cladding, landscaping projects, statuary, flooring and moulding.

A wide variety of marbles exist on the market, both foreign and domestic, and these can be drastically different in density, hardness, porosity and aesthetics. Architects should verify that the marble they plan to use is applicable to the demands of the project and has a successful history in such installations. ASTM test data is the most common data

available to compare the properties of any stone, including marble.

Durability

- Countertops: lifetime
- Flooring: 100 years with proper maintenance
- Exterior applications: lifetime

Reuse and recyclability

- Ensure reclaimed marble meets ASTM specifications before using for structural purposes
- Example applications include landscaping, retaining walls, walkways, fill, reinstallation on new buildings and statuary

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

- None emitted directly from marble
- May source from adhesives and sealants applied; low-VOC options are available on the market
- Resources: Refer to MSDS of chemical(s) used

ASTM C-503 "Standard Specification for Marble Dimension Stone"

- Includes material characteristics, physical requirements and sampling appropriate to the selection of marble for general building and structural purposes.
- The table on page 21 lists the required test values for marble; the necessary tests are prescribed by and located in the ASTM standards. ♦

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award-winning Landscape

**ARCHITECTS COLLABORATE ON THE
GROUNDS OF AUSTRALIA'S NEW
PARLIAMENT HOUSE**
BY MARIANNE KUNKEL

ON THE GROUNDS OF CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA'S New Parliament House, black, gray and red granite makes a striking impact in everything from the courtyard fountains to the curving sidewalks. This combination of stone uses is fitting for a landscape project that also saw collaboration from a team of designers, including landscape architect Peter G. Rolland, FASLA, and a few of his colleagues.

A pact between friends

More than 30 years ago, while on a landscape architecture fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, Rolland reunited with Romaldo Giurgola, FASLA, a world-famous architect and professor at Columbia University. Rolland's web of contacts grew, and among many new friends was a painter and her Australian husband, architect Rick Thorp. Giurgola, Rolland and the couple promised to work together on future projects.

"I got a phone call from Giurgola asking if I'd be interested in collaborating with him as a team member to enter a competition for the New Parliament House in Australia," recalls Rolland. "One of the requirements of the competition was that we either were registered in Australia or would associate with someone in Australia," says Rolland. "Lo and behold, we thought of Rick Thorp!"



A. At the **New Parliament House**, Australian granite is used in many ways, including the striking courtyard landscape. *Photo courtesy of Peter G. Rolland & Associates*

HISTORICAL feature

Giurgola, Rolland and Thorp, plus a number of American consultants, completed a design proposal for the landscape of the government building, and in June 1979, the Australian government announced that, out of 329 entries, the jury chose Giurgola's team to lead the project. The winning team was ready to hit the ground running.

Several challenges

Although the project's design phase was serendipitous, the team encountered a few hurdles as construction got under way. First, the Australian government stipulated that Giurgola's team establish an office in Canberra, which required Rolland to travel to be onsite three to four months per year. Second, the government requested that 75 percent of the team's six-person staff be Australian.

The team had a budget of \$85 million—which allowed 75 percent for granite and 25 percent for concrete—and the Australian government insisted that most supplies, and all granite, come from Australia.

The team also negotiated with government forces over curb material. Rolland explains, "We

considered the landscape to be a series of outdoor spaces that were directly related to the buildings. Most of the building was granite, so granite or native stone was used for the outside pavements, walls, benches and fountains. Unfortunately, we had to have asphalt roads and concrete curbs—we fought a big battle over this, but the city of Canberra had never used granite curbing."

A huge stroke of luck

When the team found itself stuck between a rock and a hard place, their good fortune returned. Using granite from only Australian quarries, which are less prevalent in the country than quarries in the United States, and sharing their granite supply with builders of the New Parliament House, Giurgola's team was crushed when they discovered a mistake in their paperwork. Their order of three-quarters granite and one-quarter concrete was reversed, and the team's measly supply of granite meant the project's possible compromise.

Desperate for help, the team found relief in other designers' cast-offs—the architects of

the New Parliament House building had large panels of granite that they deemed unsatisfactory for their applications. Already quarried, cut and onsite, the granite was perfectly useable for small-scale projects. Giurgola's team chopped the panels into 16 x 16-inch and 36 x 36-inch pieces and applied them to the overall planting areas. The project was on track again, and it was completed in 1989.

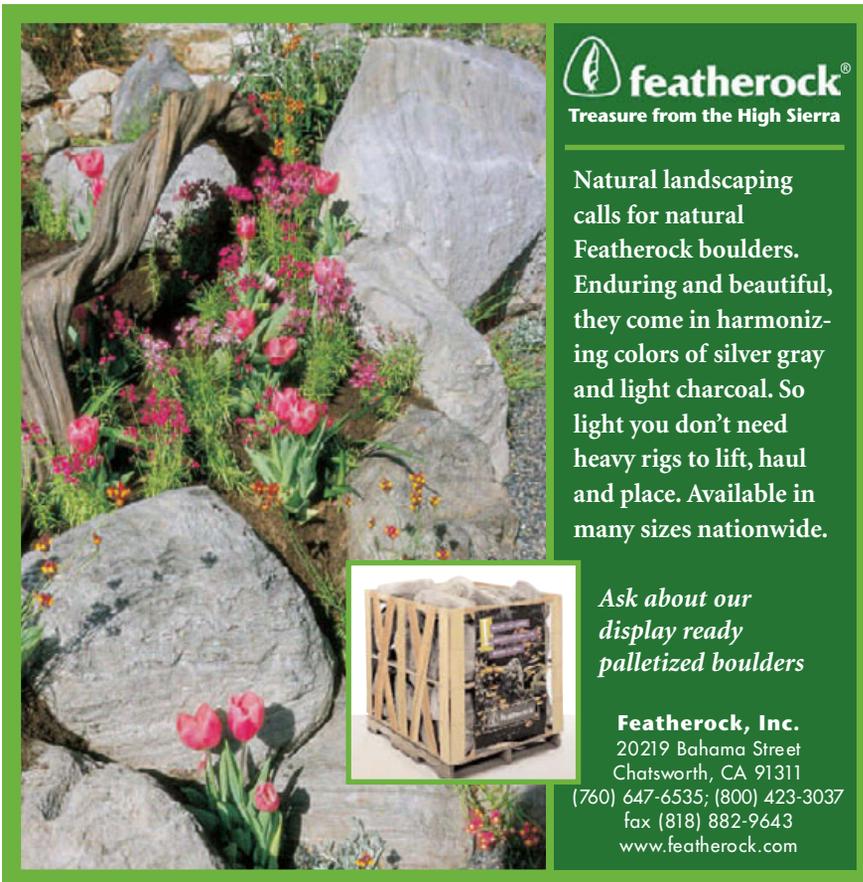
Decades later

Today, Rolland still receives praise for the New Parliament House's landscape architecture. "The granite has held up considerably well," he says. "They've kept the grounds in impeccable condition." The project caught the eye of the Building Stone Institute (BSI), which awarded the team its prestigious Tucker Design Award in 1990.

Rolland, his former associates and Giurgola, who currently resides in Canberra, still oversee any changes—big or small—made to the landscape. "Canberra is in the middle of a 10-year drought, and all plant, grass and fountain areas have been put under restriction and the fountains turned off," says Rolland. "We've changed some of the plant materials to be more water-tolerable, and we're trying out new grasses."

Besides the precious memory of working alongside good friends, Rolland views the project as extremely valuable because of its contribution to America's long-standing role in Australian architecture. "The city of Canberra was designed by Walter Burrey Griffin, winner of a competition back in 1912, and he was an American," says Rolland. He feels proud to have carried on this tradition. ♦

Marianne Kunkel is a freelance writer based in Lincoln, Nebraska. She currently is working toward earning her Ph.D. in English, with a concentration in poetry writing.



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Nathen Blackwell

MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF TAPS, A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT IN STONE
BY STEVEN CUTLER



STONEFEST, AN ANNUAL convergence of practitioners and devotees of the craft of stonework, honored the legendary master letter and sculptural carver Nathen Blackwell with its Lifetime Achievement Award in September at the Marenakos Rock Center in Issaquah, Wash.

The gathering, its fifth to date, celebrated the life and more than 65 years of work by the 87-year-old, which includes the monumental headstone and presidential seal for the late President Ronald Reagan, extensive work at the Ronald Reagan Library and restoration of the Hearst Castle in San Simeon, Calif.

"He's had such an amazing life and done so many wonderful things," says fellow carver and longtime friend Peter Andrusko, owner of The Andrusko Group in Portland, Ore. "It's inspiring to see what he's accomplished—his lettering and sculptural work and the ability to cross through so many different areas and display competence at so high a level."

An avid teacher, Blackwell has led workshops at previous StoneFests. "I love to go to StoneFest," he says. "It gives me a chance to meet a lot of people and show them the skill and direct them."

Blackwell entered the carving trade after studying commercial art in his native England, aiming to become an illustrator for print advertising. "When I came out of college in 1943, the war was on," he recalls, "and there was no advertising being done. Someone said to me, 'go to a monument company and design monuments. It's a chance to use your artwork.'"

Applying to a monument company in Hull, Yorkshire, he told the foreman that he could design letters, a skill he'd never tried before.

Picking up a hammer and chisel for the first time, he recalls, "I just felt that it was so wonderful. I was very quick in learning and got my first inscription on a monument in two weeks. I felt that I had done it before. Maybe in another life I was a stone cutter."

It starts with a fingertip

Blackwell's introduction to sculptural carving began when the foreman of a jobsite in which he was working accidentally lobbed off the finger of a large, precious statue dating back to the 1700s. Blackwell was asked to carve a replacement, and the new pinned and beautiful white finger he created looked out of place on the old gray marble statue.

So, Blackwell recovered the entire statue, carving the intricate floral patterns that had fallen off over the years. "The statue was in the entrance of the stone company on the main road, and people would get off the street cars and come and watch me do it," he said. To this day, he loves to interact with a crowd while he works.

Success across the pond

In 1954, Blackwell packed up his tools—the tungsten hammer and chisels he forged himself, many of which he still uses—and left England seeking fresh opportunities in Canada, and soon after, California. His first contract in the United States was with Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles (for which he continued working for 40 years), and soon he was carving for 20 other cemeteries and gaining a reputation as a master carver. "I traveled up and down the California coast and cut for everybody," he recalls. "I was *the* guy."

His enumerable commissions have included carving an 18th-century-style bathtub for Michael Douglas from a two-ton block of Italian marble for the actor's castle in Spain; tombstones for Hollywood starlets; and an English viscount's family crest for a church memorial.

Blackwell was hired to restore marble walls on a portion of the Hearst Castle in San Simeon, Calif., all the bookcases in the library and, amazingly, something the contractor called a jewelry case.

"But it was not a jewelry case at all; it was a reliquary," he says, created in the 14th century to contain the remains of a Russian czar and decorated with an effigy of his mistress.

Presidential carving

Blackwell's most celebrated work was accomplished while he was in his 80s. His carving for the Ronald Reagan Memorial Library includes three presidential seals, the president's granite headstone and a mammoth wall of names at the Library's Air Force One Pavilion.

Containing more than 1,700 2-inch V-cut letters, the Air Force One wall was easily a three-month job—which Blackwell had to complete in a month and a half. "I finished the last letter a day before the opening," he says. "I was there at 5 o'clock in the morning. They are all perfectly cut."

Good advice for up-and-coming artisans

Blackwell's key direction to young carvers is to practice. Indeed, he tells them, without a hint of grandiosity, "Even without putting a mark on the stone, I carve a letter that is so perfect that it just blows people away." Of course, he concedes, "If you think of the millions and millions of taps on my hammer and chisel that I've done over the years, after all this time, I'd better be good."

To learn this exquisite art of correcting mistakes, Blackwell encourages young carvers to be sure to make plenty of them. He tells the story of a letter carver who came looking for a job at the shop in which he apprenticed as a youth. When asked by the boss whether he made mistakes, the young job seeker said he never did.

"Then you wouldn't know how to fix them, would you?" the boss said. "You see this kid here?" pointing to Blackwell. "He makes lots of mistakes—and he knows how to fix them. That's the kind of guy we want here."



As a young 80-something, Nathen Blackwell finished his most celebrated work for the Ronald Reagan Memorial Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

"I TRAVELED UP AND DOWN THE CALIFORNIA COAST AND CUT FOR EVERYBODY. I WAS *THE* GUY."

Staying busy to stay young

Blackwell won't hear of retirement. He still takes commissions and wears a stiff collar, tie and vest, as did the masters back in the day. Keeping busy keeps Blackwell young. He does ballroom dancing with his wife, Millie, exercises with weights and sketches constantly in the pad he carries with him.

Blackwell's latest commission is to carve a wall of granite with names of donors to a Methodist church in Westlake, Calif. "Last week I carved, 'In loving memory' in large 4-inch letters above a name," says Blackwell. "I've already done 30-odd names. There are going to be 400 names on the wall." ◆

Contact Nathen Blackwell at 147 Petit Ave., Ventura, Calif. 93004 or 805.647.2734

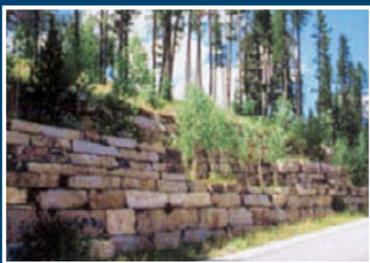
Steven Cutler is a freelance writer based in New York, N.Y.

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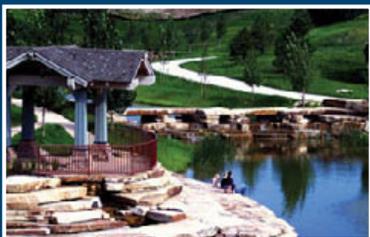


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ARTISAN profile

Passing the torch

Peter Andrusko carries on tradition of quality

WHILE 40 YEARS his junior, master carver Peter Andrusko has much in common with his friend and colleague Nathen Blackwell. Like Blackwell, Andrusko almost completely is self-taught and thrives on inventing innovative solutions to technical challenges and creating works of art that set new standards for stonecarving.

"That's what I appreciate so much about Nathen," says Andrusko. "His inquisitiveness and inventiveness—he's got genius in his approach."

Explaining his own approach to the craft, which he has been practicing for more than 20 years, he says, "I have a gift for being able to elaborate—to take the basic tools that everybody has and hybridize and change the nature of the output."

A featured carver at every annual StoneFest to date, Andrusko operates The Andrusko Group in Portland, Ore., where he serves as the principal artisan, producing and installing extraordinarily complex, detailed stonework for architects, designers, institutions and landscape artists.

Andrusko's work varies widely—The Andrusko Group includes nine separate companies with different specialties—and often is grand in scale. Recent commissions have included carving on a monolith designed by celebrated landscape architect Maya Lin as part of the of the Lewis and Clark Confluence project at Cape Disappointment State Park near Ilwaco, Wash., and a series of custom-designed ancient Byzantine mosaic panels for the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Portland, Ore.

"What I'm doing is creating something that will far outlast any of us. These pieces cannot be taken away," says Andrusko. "In the meantime, I'm having fun, making a living and doing what I love. How great is that?" ♦

Contact Peter Andrusko at 503.760.5207, pandrusko@prodigy.net or andruskogroup.com.



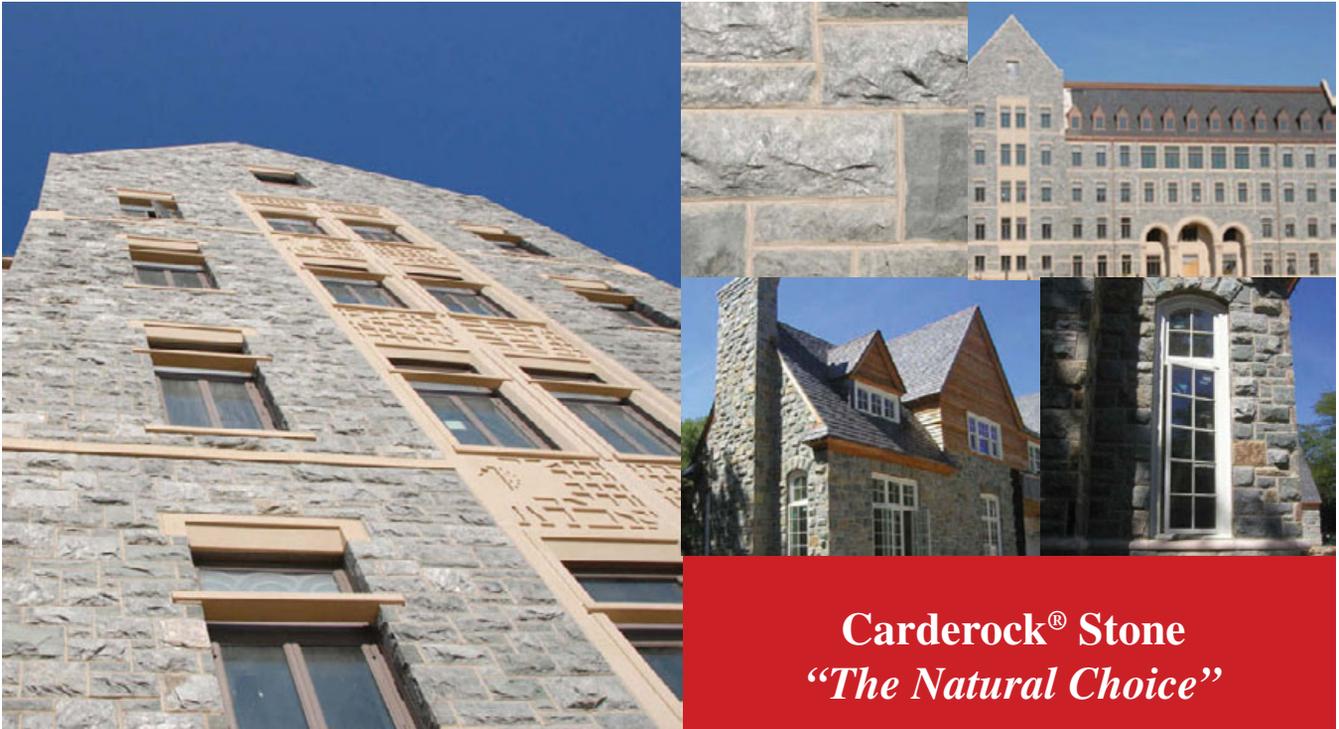
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B

A. Andrusko completed the stone carving on this basalt monolith, which serves as a fish-cleaning station on the viewing platform that overlooks Baker Bay on the Columbia River in Washington.

B. The mosaic panels and altar at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Portland showcase natural stone—and stonecarving—at its finest.



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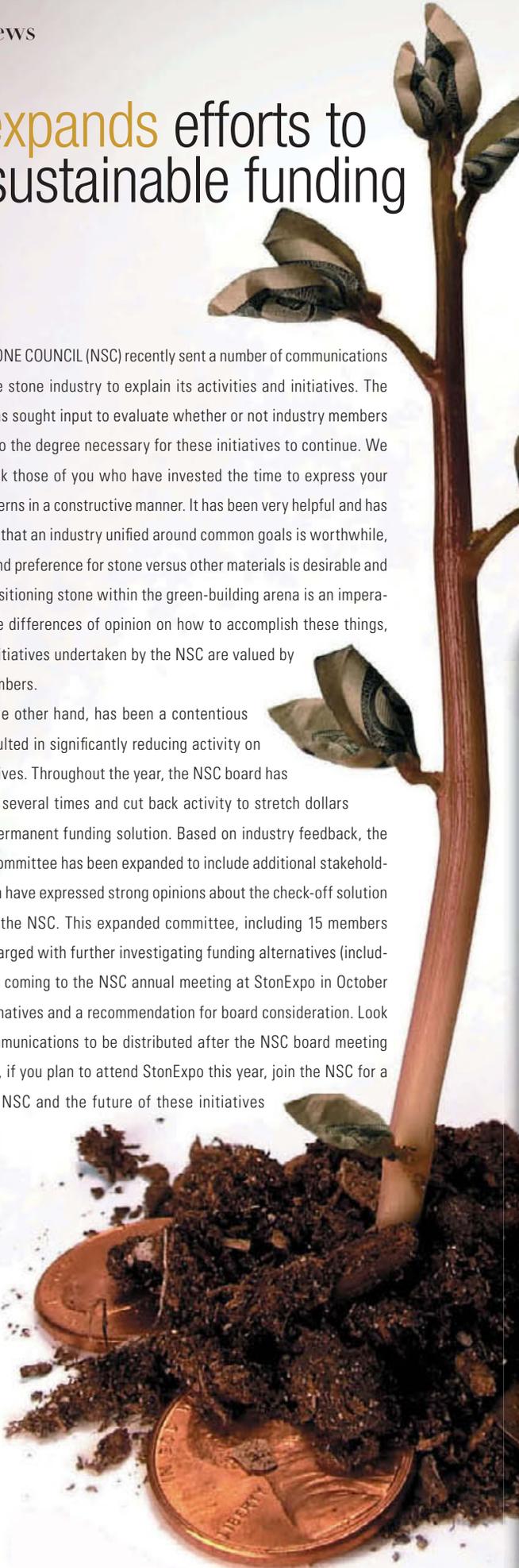
NSC expands efforts to seek sustainable funding

THE NATURAL STONE COUNCIL (NSC) recently sent a number of communications to members of the stone industry to explain its activities and initiatives. The NSC board also has sought input to evaluate whether or not industry members support the NSC to the degree necessary for these initiatives to continue. We would like to thank those of you who have invested the time to express your thoughts and concerns in a constructive manner. It has been very helpful and has led us to conclude that an industry unified around common goals is worthwhile, that building a brand preference for stone versus other materials is desirable and that a focus on positioning stone within the green-building arena is an imperative. There may be differences of opinion on how to accomplish these things, but the primary initiatives undertaken by the NSC are valued by most industry members.

Funding, on the other hand, has been a contentious issue and has resulted in significantly reducing activity on these other initiatives. Throughout the year, the NSC board has reduced spending several times and cut back activity to stretch dollars while seeking a permanent funding solution. Based on industry feedback, the NSC fundraising committee has been expanded to include additional stakeholders, many of whom have expressed strong opinions about the check-off solution being pursued by the NSC. This expanded committee, including 15 members total, has been charged with further investigating funding alternatives (including check-off) and coming to the NSC annual meeting at StonExpo in October with several alternatives and a recommendation for board consideration. Look for additional communications to be distributed after the NSC board meeting at StonExpo. Also, if you plan to attend StonExpo this year, join the NSC for a discussion of the NSC and the future of these initiatives

Thursday, Oct. 22 in the StonExchange presentation area on the show floor.

In the meantime, if you would like to know more about this or other activities the NSC has undertaken on behalf of the stone industry, please visit www.genuinestone.com. ◆



Calendar of events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND PLAN TO ATTEND THESE UPCOMING EVENTS.

BSI EVENTS

2010 Annual Convention

Feb. 28-March 3
Austin, Texas

2010 Tucker Design Awards

May 14
New Haven, Conn.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

StonExpo 2009

Oct. 22-24
Las Vegas, Nev.

Greenbuild International Conference and Expo

Nov. 10-13
Phoenix, Ariz.

ASLA 2010 Annual Conference

March 11-12
San Antonio, Texas

Coverings 2010

April 27-30
Orlando, Fla.

AIA 2010 National Convention

June 10-12
Miami, Fla.

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Notable Kansas architect, the late John G. Haskell, designed the courthouse in the French Second Empire architectural style, and it is distinguished by its unique mansard roof and ornate clock tower. The building stands 113 feet tall and remains a testament to the strength and splendor of natural stone. ◆

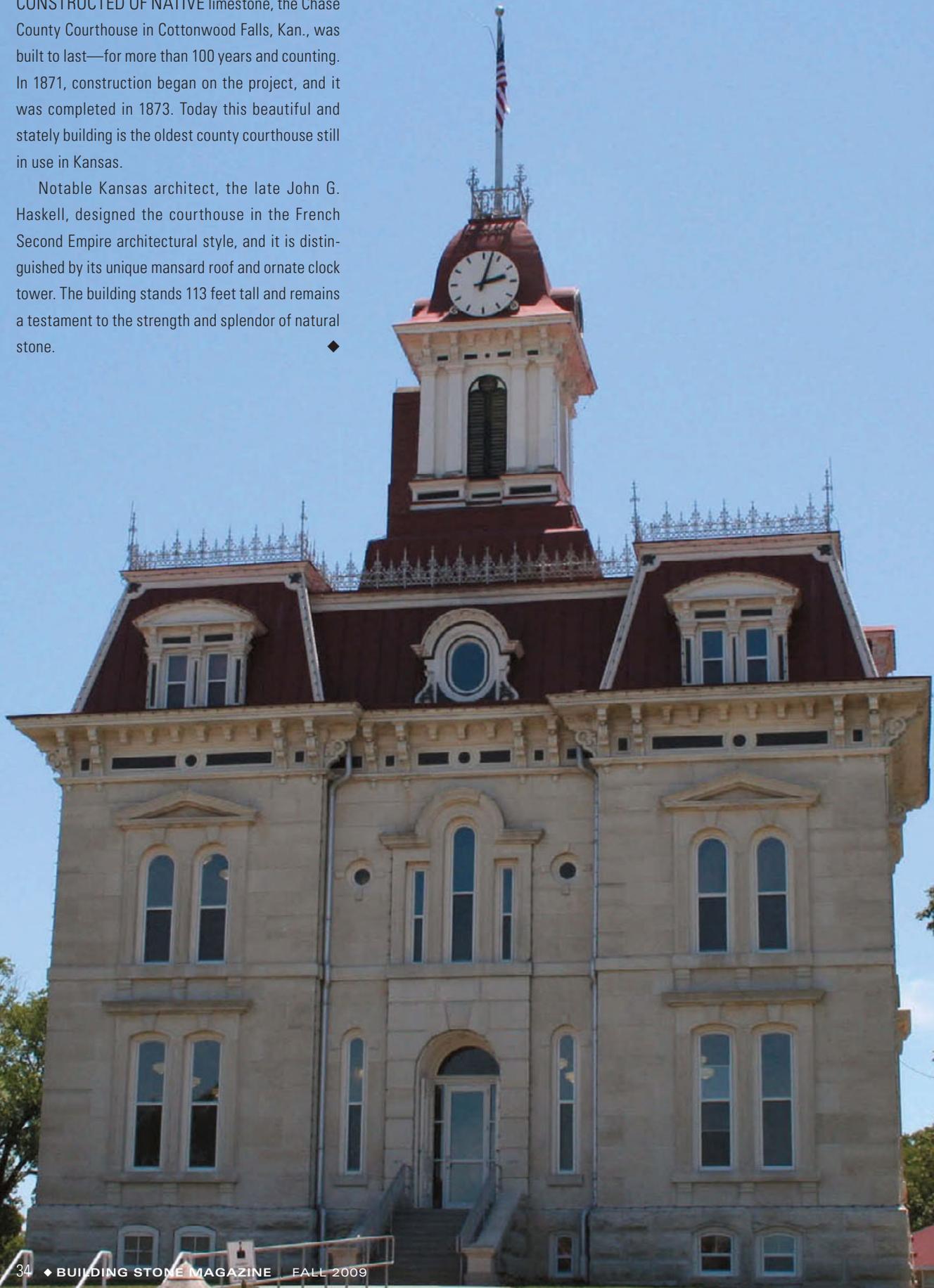
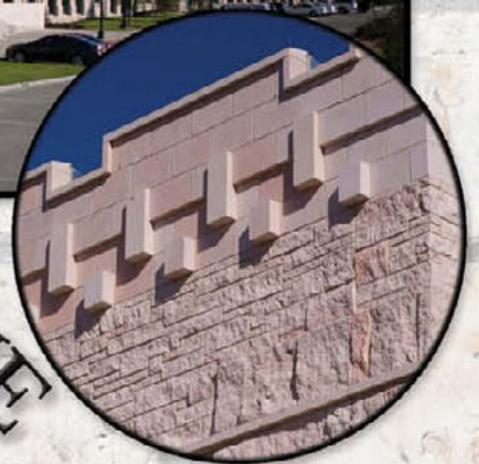


Photo courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society

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