

Business of the Week

A. Jeffrey Masonry



By Dan Rankin
Our Business of the Week is your local destination for quality home stonework, A. Jeffrey Masonry, based in Harmony and owned by Andy Jeffrey.

Jeffrey, 62, was in Tavistock this week working on a doorway to a home he'd done work on 25 years earlier. "I can look down a street here and see four or five jobs I've done over the years," he said.

This is his 40th year in the masonry trade, having first gotten into it back in 1976.

"We used to put up fireplaces in every house, with two chimneys," he said. "That's a thing of the past. One thing now is going to take chimneys

I've put up 30 years ago, and taking them down. That's a part of the work now."

In the past, Jeffrey said he's had as many as 11 apprentices working for him, many of whom have gone on to start their own masonry businesses. "One being my son Brad," he said. "He's started Jeffrey Custom Masonry out of Stratford."

Today, he has two employees working with him, including valued employee and St. Marys native Josh O'Hearn. The majority of their work is done in St. Marys, or a roughly 20-mile radius around Harmony.

Services offered by A. Jeffrey Masonry include custom stone and brick

work for homes ranging from newly built custom homes, to century-old Victorian homes. He estimates half of his work is for new, custom homes, while repair work, particularly restoring brick and mortar walls or "pointing," makes up another large portion of calls. Granite work, and detailing around exterior windows and doors are some other specialties. "Trying to make your home stand out, that's what I do," he said.

"I think the highlight of my career might have been pointing Knox Church in Stratford in 1993," Jeffrey said, noting that for the project he got to work alongside noted Toronto-based architect Spencer Higgins. "He looks at the walls and tries to find out why a wall is going bad there, and why the bricks are falling apart," Jeffrey said. "He wants to know why it's happening.

I learned a lot from him. I got a certificate from him for the quality of the job, which I was told doesn't happen very often."

Another unique job that Jeffrey is proud of is the cairn stone standing in St. Paul's Anglican cemetery in Kirkton, which was built to commemorate the former St. Paul's Anglican, using bricks from the church and containing its original bell.

Jeffrey offers a free quote for jobs. He supplies materials and labour, and prices customers accordingly. "I provide a detailed, itemized invoice with time and dollars per hour for each employee," he said. "My motto has always been quality before quantity. That's still number one. That and the customer is always right."

For more information, email ajinharmony@hotmail.com, or call 519-274-3690.

Independent Shorts

- The Thames River Clean Up takes place across the watershed on Saturday, April 23. Over 1,500 volunteers cleaned up 200 km of the Thames River last year. Register for the event through Todd Sleeper by emailing td.sleeper@hotmail.com or drop off, mail or fax a filled out registration form (available at ThamesRiverCleanup.ca) to The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, 1424 Clarke Rd., London, Ont. N5V 5B9. Fax # 519-451-1188.
- New in theatres this week are Disney's new live action version of The Jungle Book, directed by Jon Favreau (which currently has an excellent 91 percent rating on the movie review site RottenTomatoes.com), the spy thriller Criminal, starring Kevin Costner, Gary Oldman and Ryan Reynolds (rated a regrettable 17 percent), and the comedy sequel Barbershop: The Next Cut, starring Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer and Nicki Minaj (81 percent).
- The men's and women's golf leagues get underway soon at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club. The Ladies League opens Tuesday, May 10, with the Men's League starting the following day, Wednesday, May 11.

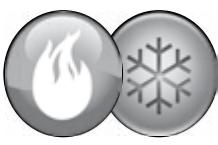
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