

# The Troweller

a publication of the Manitoba Masonry Institute

Fall 2004

290 Burnell Street Winnipeg MB R3G 2A7



## Developing Tradespeople

One of the biggest challenges in the next decade for the masonry industry is to make up for the shortfall in experienced masonry workers.

As in so many sectors of the economy, the Baby Boomers are getting ready to retire, Harry Laarveld, of Euro-Can Enterprises says. "We can no longer rely on immigration to fill the gaps with tradespeople. With the changing demographics of immigration to this country, we have to develop our own bricklayers."

That was one of the reasons the Manitoba Masonry Contractors Association was reactivated some eight years ago, also leading to the re-establishment of the Manitoba Masonry Institute (which

includes the masonry suppliers as well as the contractors) some five years ago.

The contractors association acts on behalf of the industry in negotiating with the unions and also provides quality control for its members.

However, more and more the MMCA is beginning to look at the development of locally qualified masonry workers.

Harry, himself, was part of the European trades immigration to Canada in the 50's, 60's and 70's, originally arriving on these shores from Holland back in 1969 at the age of 21.

Harry was raised in Groenlo, famous for its beer. He took three years of vocational training in high school looking at drafting and mathematics while receiving some

practical training in the masonry industry. This was followed by night classes and one day in school while working in the trade. He then made the decision to emigrate to Canada with his new bride and they settled in Winnipeg.

Harry came to Canada for "the chance of something new". One of the reasons was that Holland was too wet, something he marvels at following the summer of 2004 here in Manitoba.

Harry Laarveld started his own business in 1983 as HJ Masonry and incorporated in 1988 as Euro-Can Enterprises Ltd. Both his wife and one of his sons are involved in the family business which usually employs about 25 bricklayers and labourers at peak construction periods.

For many years, it was the Europeans, like

Harry who made up the shortfall.

But this pool of workers is drying up as the pattern of immigration shifts to Asia rather than Europe. Very few of the Asians bring with them the skills needed in the masonry industry.

Because it takes four years to work through the apprentice program (described in President's Report, page two) to reach journeyman status as a mason, the time to target a replacement workforce has already begun.

There is a need to identify the various sources from which to draw new people to the industry. Mr. Laarveld believes.

(con't page two)

### Sisler High School.

Three years ago Harry Laarveld approached the principal of Sisler High School, George Heshka, to see



Harry Laarveld of Euro-Can Enterprises and president of the Manitoba Masonry Contractors

whether or not a one day demonstration of bricklaying could be held at the school.

Heshka who was recognized by Macleans Magazine in August of this year for running one of the

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Remember This Photo From our Last Issue?  
Turn to Page Four.

## MMI President's Report



Well, its been a very busy but difficult six months for the construction industry since the re-introduction of *The Troweller* last spring. Mother Nature just didn't co-operate with a robust building industry this past spring and summer.

Many people have expressed very positive feedback regarding the content and timing of our spring 2004 issue. One of our objectives is to create a flow of information on happenings in masonry and issues to the construction and design professions. In that regard we have a full page in this edition showcasing some of the projects recently

completed in the Winnipeg area.

One of the highlights of the past year was witnessing the Skills Canada Competition hosted by our city in May. The competitors were from all regions of Canada and represented many of the construction trades, including masonry. If you were fortunate to attend this event at the Convention Centre I believe you will agree our future tradespeople are very competent and are receiving professional instruction.

A perfect example of this aspect of training at the National Skills Competition from a Manitoba perspective was that the winner of the masonry competition, Kris Benedictson, was enrolled in his fourth year of the Apprenticeship

Program at Red River College in Winnipeg, with Brian Gebhardt as instructor.

Did you know the Bricklaying Program at RRC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2005?

The Masonry Shop occupies 5000 square feet and hosts three levels of bricklaying training each year.

In order to graduate to a journeyman, an apprentice must complete 4800 hours of on-the-job training and three levels of school training (720 hours). An average of 35 students are enrolled in the program annually.

The program offers a variety of courses including such areas as bricklaying fundamentals, mortar mixing, masonry materials, the masonry code and building code regulations, blueprint reading along with trade related

mathematics.

Also included in the training, apprentices work on fireplace, chimney and arch construction, stonework, reinforced masonry and refractory masonry along with various veneer applications.

This apprenticeship program is supported and funded by the Manitoba provincial department of advanced education and training.

This training facility at Red River College and the industry's training program is one in which we are very proud and is a reflection of the commitment by the Masonry Contractors of Manitoba and the Manitoba Masonry Institute to make sure we continue to replace the retiring masons with younger bricklayers as they are required.

-Neil Ingram.

## Developing Tradespeople (Con't)

Some of the market is to be found in the high schools where not all students are heading toward university.

"The trades are a viable alternative," he states en-

thusiastically. The look into attracting more experience at Sisler High women as well as School, identified in an investigating the possibility accompanying article, is but of luring high school one method of addressing dropouts. These may be the issue. Further, Harry the very people who can be attracted to the trade believes there is a need to

Harry also believes there must be advances in the university faculties of engineering and architecture to acquaint students there with the world of masonry.

## Sisler High School (Con't)

best 40 high schools in Canada agreed to the proposal.

Mr. Laarveld chose Sisler because that's the area of the city where he lives and both of his sons attended Sisler High and he knew the principal was open to ideas of expanding the

choices for students.

It was proposed the one day workshop would include a hands-on demonstration. A journeyman bricklayer would show how the job is done and students would also be given an opportunity to try their hands at the trade.

A video presentation from the National Contractors Association was also shown to the students.

An explanation of the trade from apprenticeship to journeyman was given with some discussion exploring work experience and women in technology. After the first year

experience the school called the second year to see if the industry could provide another one-day demonstration.

This year the school called and didn't ask 'if' but 'when' Harry could bring the demonstration of his trade to the school.

The Spring 2005 issue of *The Troweller* will feature masonry at Red River College and the University of Manitoba

## Showcasing Masonry Construction in Winnipeg



The Inn at the Forks: Smith Carter Architects and Engineering; B & F Masonry.



Red River Co-op C. Store and Car Wash on St. Mary's Road: Cochrane Engineering; Roma Masonry.



The Arthur Mauro Student Residence at the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus: L M Architectural Group; B & F Masonry.



One of the Smart Park buildings at The University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus: Raymond S.C. Wan Architect Inc.; Alpha Masonry.



Hampton Inn & Suites, Main Street and St. Mary Avenue: Nejmark Architect; Alpha Masonry.



McNaught Motors, Waverley Street: Michael Macey; Euro-Can Enterprises Ltd.

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## Internet Links

Alsip's Industrial Products Ltd.	<a href="http://www.alsips.com">www.alsips.com</a>
Brick Industry Association	<a href="http://www.brickinfo.org">www.brickinfo.org</a>
Canadian Masonry Contractors Assoc	<a href="http://www.canadamasonrycentre.com">www.canadamasonrycentre.com</a>
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The Masonry Society	<a href="http://www.masonrysociety.org">www.masonrysociety.org</a>
Winnipeg Construction Association	<a href="http://www.wpgca.com/home/index">www.wpgca.com/home/index</a>
Euro-Can Enterprises Ltd.	<a href="http://www.euro-can.com">www.euro-can.com</a>



MTS Entertainment Centre—Photo taken Nov. 14, 2004. Number 10 Architectural Group; Heymann's Construction (1998) Ltd.

### Skills Canada, 2004

The 10th annual Canadian Skills Competition saw some 2500 talented young people gather in Winnipeg May 26-30 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Thirty-nine categories of trades and technology, from computer graphics and design to landscaping, electrical and mechanical engineering brought regional winners to Manitoba.

The focus at The Troweller was on the brick masonry competition. Our congratulations go to Kris Benedictson, (shown above with his winning structure in the national competition), a graduate of Red River College and currently employed by Euro-Can Enterprises Ltd. Bendickson was provincial and national winner at the Skills Canada Competition.