

Great Scott!

Jordan Scott of **4GM Brick and Stone** will gladly work on your house if it needs a touchup. In fact, he does a goodly amount of those type of jobs.

"I work directly with homeowners," he said. There are two primary instances where he does this. The first is when there is a major "Oopsie!" and Scott's restorative brickwork is needed. "A lot of people hit their garage," he said, "like when it's two or three in the morning, for some reason. I meet a lot of embarrassed people."

The second reason is when the homeowner is trying to sell the house and it needs some TLC in order to make it presentable. A new house that's, say, 10-15 years old "is going to need a little bit of love," Scott said.

Compounding the issue of weather extremes in central Texas which affects the masonry work on a house, is sometimes the initial quality of the house is



Jordan Scott at the continental divide in Colorado last year

affected by the rapid pace in which it can go up. The explosive growth in the Austin area sometimes means the builder wasn't as precise as he needed to be.

"As long as they're going up quickly, they're going to need to be repaired shortly after," he said.

What really excites this fourth-generation mason (that's what "4GM" means) is the restoration of historical buildings. When Scott can take a building that's in serious need of repair and then transform it back into its original beauty, well—that is special.

"I really do enjoy this," he said of his restorative work.

Case in point is a recent project on Congress Avenue. The building is one of the oldest in the city, built in 1879, and was in terrible condition. "It was just crumbling," Scott said.

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"I just think it's a beautiful thing to go in and use the techniques they used back then and some of the same mortar combinations" to bring the structure back to its formal glory.

"Man, what a reward," he said.

Scott's family has been doing masonry all over Texas for a long time now. After learning the craft from his father and apprenticing with him, Scott founded 4GM in 2010.

When Scott works on an old building, he can tell what company made the original brick and even at times where it was quarried from. "You can figure out where it came from," he said.

Even though Scott will gladly use a modern piece of equipment if needed, like a hydraulic lift, he will go old school and use the equipment and techniques of the original builder. "As far as physical work," he said, "you've got to use the old tools. You have to use the trowel and the brush [in order to get] the same finish."

And even in the era of smart phones, Scott knows when to be amazed at the skills of the old folk. "It's kind of mind-blowing how they have these stones which are several tons and they

got them 30 feet in the air," he said.

The original builders even took great care when they built parts of structures that weren't visible. "You go in there and it's still immaculate; everything's perfect. They didn't cut corners just because they didn't think [you'd ever see it]," Scott said.

Scott's love of things historical extends to what he sees his post-masonry future to be: preserving endangered species of plants. "I'm really into botany now," he said.

"Texas is one of the most diverse areas of the country," he explained. The massive growth of construction projects in Texas means that what has been undisturbed for millennia is at risk, and Scott would like to be a part of the solution of preserving it.

"I only do things that I'm comfortable with," Scott said. It's a good thing he's comfortable with fixing your ran-into garage as well as buildings from Texas's past, to be used and enjoyed by Texas' present and future. Throw in saving endangered fauna, and it's a great thing.

4GM Brick and Masonry is a masonry business, located in Austin. -dsz

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