



*A newsletter published by the Staunton-Augusta History and Arts Alliance*

## Life-long community builder

# History and art center named for R.R. Smith

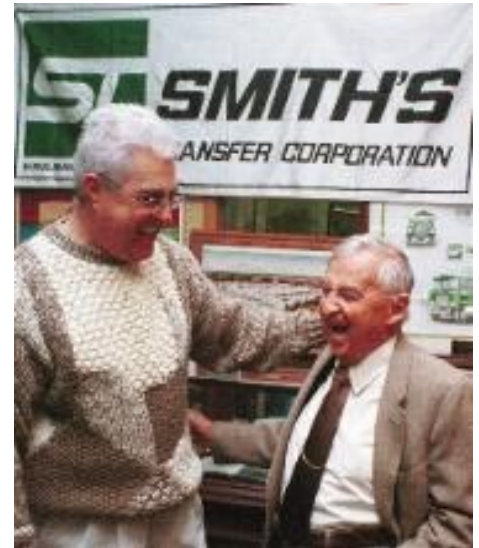
The Staunton-Augusta History and Arts Alliance announced recently that its new facility now being restored on New Street will be named in honor of one of Staunton's most prominent citizens. Once completed, the building will bear the name of R.R. "Jake" Smith, a life-long resident and business leader in Staunton and Augusta County until his recent death. Jake and his wife Doris are well-known as quiet, but generous, donors to many Augusta County institutions and organizations.

Staunton Mayor John Avoli, upon learning of the announcement, stated: "Jake Smith is a classic example of a true philanthropist. His successes in life have yielded the fruits that have enabled him to become one of Staunton's great benefactors. From the city's perspective,"

added Mayor Avoli, "it is about time such recognition was given to him."

In making the announcement, Dr. Don Wilson, chairman of the Alliance committee, said: "The membership of the Alliance is honored and pleased that Jake Smith would allow us to recognize his many contributions to the community in this manner. Not only has the Smith family been very generous on this project, Jake has been very supportive of downtown revitalization over the past 20 years. It is most appropriate," he added, "that this major structure in downtown Staunton bear his name."

Originally built as the Eakleton Hotel and more recently known as the Tuning Furniture building, the structure is undergoing a major renovation that will house three of Augusta County's largest cultural  
**(See Smith Center, page 2)**



*R.R. "Jake" Smith, right, shares some happy Smith's Transfer Corporation memories while at the Waynesboro Heritage Museum last year.*

*(Photo courtesy Daily News Leader)*

## Phase One of restoration work is underway

Preliminary architecture and planning efforts for Phase One (the stabilization and rehabilitation of the building's exterior) of the history and art center are well underway. Phase One includes restoring the storefronts and rebuilding the lost balconies and central tower fronting New Street. Construction of this phase is scheduled to begin this summer.

In addition to exterior plans, the process of refining the program of building requirements is also underway. This information is being gathered through questionnaires, interviews and workshop sessions with the three member organizations. On another front, favorable bids have been received for the removal of asbestos, pigeon guano and other hazardous mate-

rials from the building. This portion of work is scheduled to begin immediately, so keep an eye out for activity in and around the building.

The project team from Frazier Associates includes Kathy Frazier, AIA as Principal in Charge; Carter Green, AIA as Project Manager; Bill Frazier, AICP as Architectural His-  
**(See Restoration, page 6)**



*Jennie Runnels, left, assistant registrar at the Virginia Museum, discusses the restoration of the history and art center while standing outside the building. Looking on is Alliance member Betty Vellines.*

## Virginia Museum representatives tour future history and art center

Members of the Alliance braved the cold in January to take Virginia Museum representatives, Coordinator for Statewide Programs Jeffrey Allison and Assistant Registrar Jennie Runnels, on a tour of the Eakleton Hotel.

The Staunton-Augusta Art Center, Historic Staunton Foundation and the Augusta County Historical Society are all anxious to comply with the Virginia Museum's high-security standards and this meeting was the first practical step toward doing so. Alliance representatives guided the Virginia Museum staff through the historic building, discussing exhibition, storage and archival needs along the way. Allison and Runnels asserted some reservations when the discussion of catering kitchens and loading docks came up but Kathy Frazier and Carter Green of Frazier Associates rallied with creative solutions.

The challenges involved in rehabbing a historic building to cre-

ate a center for history and art are many. The T.J. Collins structure, however, presents a plethora of opportunities as well. Touring the building with the museum officials helped define the difference between the art center's wants and needs and allowed all three organizations to explore their plans for the future of the building with museum input. Allison and Runnels addressed issues of lighting, access, climate control and storage that are significant to all three groups.

Upon the museum representatives return to Richmond, Allison sent a lovely note to the art center commending the cooperative nature of the Alliance efforts.

He praised the sensible pairing of three non-profits with similar goals and added, "I wish everyone at the museum could see what you're doing in Staunton." The R.R. Smith Center for History and Art is making waves all the way to the capital.

---Margo McGirr

### • Smith Center

*(Continued from page 1)*

institutions—the Staunton-Augusta Arts Center, Historic Staunton Foundation, and Augusta County Historical Society. All three organizations unanimously agreed to officially name the building the **R. R. Smith History and Art Center**.

Jake, the youngest of three sons of Philip and Marian Smith, was born in 1914. The family lost their Augusta County farm in the Great Depression and the father died in 1930 when Jake was 16 years old. That was the same year that the three Smith brothers founded their trucking company. In 1938 the Smith's Transfer Company opened its first terminal on Greenville Avenue in downtown Staunton. They began a 24-hour operation doing lo-

cal deliveries for national freight carriers along with their own long-distance hauling. Jake's older brother, Raymond, died in an accident in 1942 at the age of 33 and this placed the burden of operating the company on Jake, who was only 28 years old at the time. Continuing to grow over the years, Smith's Transfer Corporation moved to a new terminal in Verona in 1956. By 1960 operating revenues were \$12.4 million and the company owned over 1,100 hauling units. In 1969 Smith's Transfer Corporation topped \$50 million in revenues and had over 2,700 employees. By the year of its Golden Anniversary in 1980, Smith's Transfer Corporation was one of the top 10 in the trucking industry, with revenues exceeding \$300 million.

Jake was also active in state and national professional organizations. He served as president of the Virginia Highway Users' Association in the 1950s, served on the Board of Governors of the Regular Common Carrier Conference of the American Trucking Association, and in 1959 served as president of the regular Common Carrier Conference. Smith was also elected to a seat on the Staunton City Council in 1955. Following the merger of the Company with ARA in the early 1980s, Jake continued his business ties with the company for several years before retirement. He continued to actively support many organizations and programs in Staunton and Augusta County until his recent death.

---Don Wilson

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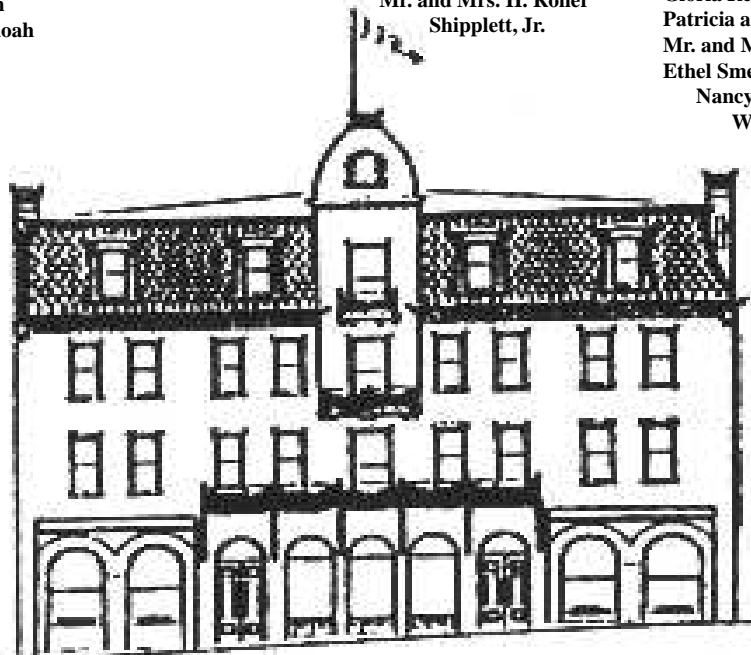
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## How you can help

For more information, contact any one of the three alliance organizations. We have answers.

### **Augusta County Historical Society**

P.O. Box 686  
 Staunton, VA 24402  
 Phone: (540) 248-4151  
 Office Hours: M, W, F 9-noon

### **Historic Staunton Foundation**

120 South Augusta Street  
 Staunton, VA 24401  
 Phone: (540) 885-7676  
 Fax: (540) 885-5976  
 e-mail: hsf@cfw.com  
 Office Hours: M-F 9-5 p.m.

### **Staunton-Augusta Art Center**

One Gypsy Hill Park  
 Staunton, VA 24401  
 Phone: (540) 885-2028  
 Fax: (540) 885-6000  
 e-mail: SAArtCenter@aol.com  
 Office Hours: M-F 9-5; Sat. 10-2

Investing in your community's heritage is easy. All gifts are tax-deductible. Pledges may be spread over a four-year-period from 2001 to 2004. Donors who make gifts in the \$500-\$2,999 range may elect to buy a memorial brick, donations from

\$3,000-\$9,999 will be recognized on a special plaque, and rooms are available to name in honor or memory of loved ones. Also, remember that more than 8,000 corporations match financial contributions of their employees, retirees and board members to their favorite nonprofits so that donors to any one of the three non-profit organizations above can double and even triple their contributions. Here are a few companies with matching programs: First Virginia Bank, Merck Co., R.R. Donnelly & Sons, Fleming Foods, State Farm, U.P.S., Virginia Power.

## CAMPAIGN UPDATE from the Chairman

**Don W. Wilson**

The fund-raising effort to renovate the Eakleton Hotel building and establish the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art has passed the halfway point in its \$2.6 million effort. We are pleased to report that gifts and pledges as of February total more than \$1.3 million. One of the most remarkable things about this particular campaign has been the manner in which it has been conducted, both in style and efficiency.

According to national standards, capital campaigns usually

cost between 6 and 8 percent of the goal, i.e., a \$3 million campaign would normally have somewhere between \$180,000 and \$240,000 in expenses like printing, consultants, publicity, travel, salaries and supplies. Because of the large number of in-kind commitments and the generous amount of time provided by campaign volunteers, **the costs of this effort to date have amounted to only \$15,000**, primarily for video production and printing. Volunteers have written

scripts for videos, given dinner events and coffees, stuffed envelopes, made presentations, and solicited gifts. No consultants or paid staff have been retained to this point. **"This campaign has been a totally volunteer effort," said Don W. Wilson, the Alliance Chairman, "so all costs associated with raising the money have been kept to an absolute minimum.** We are very proud of this fact and hope to complete the second half of the campaign in the same manner."



### Staunton-Augusta History and Arts Alliance newsletter

*An occasional newsletter published as a means of information regarding progress of the restoration of the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art*

Editors: Nancy Sorrells  
& Ed Covert

For more information contact:

**Historic Staunton Foundation**

540-885-7676

**Augusta County Historical Society**

540-248-4151

**Staunton-Augusta Art Center**

540-885-2028

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## Local history will be remembered in restored railroad hotel

The project to provide an exciting and beautiful history and art center in the heart of Staunton's Beverley Historic District continues to make great progress. A significant milestone in the Augusta County Historical Society's campaign toward the new center is a generous gift for the Reading Room and Research Library. The family of the late Sarah East Nutt of Staunton will name the room in her memory. She was a beloved figure whose own civic commitment did much to benefit the community and its residents from all walks of life. The family and friends of the late Reverend Howard McKnight Wilson and his wife Virginia Prichard Wilson have named the society's office suite in the new facility in memory of that remarkable couple whose research and writing did so much to save and spread the history of Augusta County in the colonial and revolutionary period.

Pledges to the campaign have reached \$1.3 million. More than 157 individuals, couples, families, businesses and governmental units in the greater Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro area have pledged to the campaign. The restored and rehabilitated 1895 Eakleton Hotel will provide the Augusta County Historical Society its first permanent home, research library, archival storage area, exhibit gallery and gift shop.

---Katharine Brown

## The Collins Collection: Preserving An Architectural Legacy

With the donation of the T.J. Collins & Sons architectural drawing collection by Joseph Johnson in late 1997, Historic Staunton Foundation embarked on one of the most complex and unique preservation projects in its history. Although already familiar with helping people plan and implement actual restoration and renovation on Staunton's historic buildings, taking on the preservation of historic documents was totally new.

The foundation gratefully accepted the charge. It felt strongly that the collection should be kept in Staunton because of the visual imprint the Collins' work left on the city and because the drawings and materials are significant to the overall mission of preserving Staunton's history and its buildings. The challenge of how to conserve, house and

use this tremendous collection of historic drawings and resource materials will be on-going, and was one of the primary factors in the renovation of the Eakleton Hotel building.

A portion of the new center, to be housed in the Collins-designed building, will be equipped with a state-of-the-art facility for the research, preservation and exhibition of these materials. In the meantime, the collection will be moved to a renovated space in the upper floor of the current HSF building for basic documentation and condition assessment. Once there, preparations for professional conservation of the documents will be made.

Spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Collins collection includes over 1,100 project files with architectural drawings, many renderings of projects, a library of

bound periodicals, magazines and reference books and files of correspondence, photographs and notes. Collins began his architectural firm in Staunton in 1891, designing or remodeling over 200 structures before his retirement in 1911. The legacy of his work, and of his sons who followed him, left a distinct impression on the area's landscape, scattering unique residential, commercial, and religious architecture in the varied and popular styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The T.J. Collins & Sons office has been in business for over 100 years. It exists as a vital link to Staunton's history and physical development and is an instrumental tool in its preservation. Thanks to the generosity and family knowledge of current architect and Collins' grandson Joe Johnson, HSF will be able to exhibit and interpret the Collins materials in the context of Staunton history, as well as use the collection to study the vast architectural influences and styles during these periods. A special fund for the collection has been created to help finance the extensive conservation work required. For info or to make a donation, contact HSF.

### • Restoration

#### *(Continued from page 1)*

torian; and Peter Aaslestad as Director of Photogrammetry. Joining the Frazier Associates team is McMullan & Associates of Vienna, Virginia, structural engineers who specialize in historic buildings, Masters Engineers of Lynchburg,

electrical and mechanical engineers with extensive experience in design of museum and archive spaces; and KSA Interiors, award-winning interior designers from Richmond. Project Cost Inc. of Alexandria will provide cost estimating during the design process.

---Carter Green

---Deneen Brannock

Historic Staunton Foundation  
120 South Augusta Street  
Staunton, VA 24401  
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