



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

Restoration & Rehabilitation under way!



Don Wilson, president of the L.L.C., and Ed Covert, vice-president, sign a contract with Harrisonburg Construction for \$671,030 for Phase 1 (exterior restoration) of the R.R. Smith Center. Work will include restoration of the former balconies and cupola along with the terra cotta frieze that once accented the building front. The roof and skylight will be replaced. This will return the building to its 1900 appearance. Nearly three years of planning and fundraising preceded this step.

Success with private foundations: Halfway to our Goal

The Staunton-Augusta History and Arts Alliance is pleased to announce that the first round of grants has brought in \$155,000. The original goal of funds to be raised from private foundations for the R.R. Smith Center was \$300,000, putting the Alliance over halfway to its goal. Each of these grants will be used for Phase I exterior renovations which are currently under way. These Virginia foundation gifts range from \$75,000 to \$10,000 and must be expended

(See Fund-raising success, page 2)



Exterior work set to begin

“Look out below!” In a couple of weeks, scaffolding will be going up on the outside of the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art as Phase 1 - Exterior Rehabilitation and Structural Repairs - begins. At last we will begin to see the tangible results of the considerable planning and fund-raising efforts. Closed alleys and sidewalks will be a small price to pay to see the ornamental metal balconies, domed tower roof and arched storefronts restored to the building.

Work will be directed by Harrisonburg Construction, with major subcontract work performed by Richmond Primoid (masonry restoration), Custom Ornamental Iron of Waynesboro (balconies), Black Brothers Painting of Harrisonburg, Lifes Roofing of Harrisonburg and Door and Window Pros of Charlottesville.

Once Phase 1 is complete, we will have a weather-tight building and the exterior of an important architectural landmark in downtown Staunton will be restored. Then we'll be ready to move on to Phase 2 - Interior Work.



Pottery from the "Sense of Place" Exhibition.
(Photo by Ken Keller)

• Fund-raising success

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prior to June 30, 2002. Many of these grants required that the Alliance match the award amount. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, each of these grants has been matched.

Phase II funding requests, which focus on the interior spaces, will begin in June 2002. Again the Alliance will be writing to area foundations. The committee is hopeful that allocations from the second round of grants will be as favorable as the first.

In addition to private foundations, the Staunton-Augusta Art Center was able to secure a National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America Grant for \$10,000 for the architectural design and construction documents for the main floor galleries. This grant had a matching requirement, which has now been fulfilled.

One matching grant fund, in the amount of \$50,000, is still outstanding. This grant is from a private donor who wishes to remain anonymous. If you would like to assist the Alliance in matching this grant, please contact Historic Staunton Foundation, the Staunton Augusta Art Center, or the Augusta County Historical Society.

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'Sense of Place' provides glimpse of Augusta County art and culture

An exciting show entitled "Sense of Place: Collecting the Objects of Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County" drew good crowds to the Staunton-Augusta Art Center in January and February. What made this exhibit significant was the fact that it was conceived and curated by both the art center and the Augusta County Historical Society.

From utilitarian pieces to portraits on canvas to business advertisements, the exhibit used the material culture of the community to give a glimpse into the depth and variety of the area throughout history. Included in the exhibition were rare and unusual pieces such as 18th-century longrifles crafted in the area and associated hunting accoutrements such as powder horns and hunting bags. Local pottery, including a rare inscribed piece of Augusta County redware and woven coverlets, were displayed next to bottles, tins, pen-nants and military memorabilia.

The show was well reviewed in a number of local newspapers. A noon television spot also brought weekend visitors. Margo McGirr, director of the art center said, "This is just the beginning of what we can do together. When we have the increased gallery space in the Smith Center we can create a show of state-wide significance." Ed Covert and Rick Chittum, who co-curated the show, agreed. They remarked that there is a wealth of material culture in Augusta County that needs to be surveyed and studied. The possibilities are limitless.



Rick Chittum, Augusta County Historical Society board member and co-curator of the "Sense of Place" Exhibition, stands in front of a display case. Seen here are a quilt, longrifle, and other colonial hunting accoutrements, all from the Augusta County area.
(Photo by Nancy Sorrells)

Project sets high standards

All restoration work on the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art will meet or exceed the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The History and Art Alliance wants this to be a quality project the community can use as an example of how to preserve architectural character and give new life and use to a building.

Alliance members, who represent Historic Staunton, the Augusta County Historical Society and the Staunton-Augusta Art Center, know that following the standards brings out the best architectural qualities of a building while

producing a building that can be well maintained. These standards are achieved by respecting the qualities of building materials used in the period construction through appropriate repair materials and methods.

Restoration of the T.J. Collins-designed building means working from period photos, original drawings and original details found during architectural investigation of the building.

From start to finish this will be a community project completed with community resources and community support. The end result will be a community facility.

**R.R. Smith Center Fundraising Summary
February 2002**

The Alliance, representing the three organizations that will be in the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art, is grateful for the opportunity to share this summary of its fundraising campaign to date. The Alliance looks forward to receiving continued community support to complete the project.

Funds Raised to Date

Total \$2,006,396



In pledges, gifts, and grants

Funding Sources

Government

T-21	\$500,000
HUD	\$150,000
	grant committed but not yet received
NEA	\$10,000
	grant committed but not yet received
City of Staunton	\$250,000
County of Augusta	\$5,000
Private Foundations	\$155,000
Individuals	\$936,396

Fundraising Expenses Total \$18,205 - less than 1% of total funds raised!

This campaign has been a grassroots effort run by volunteers and conducted on a person-to-person basis. The donors to the Smith Center encompass a broad base of local support among the three member organizations with approximately 300 individuals, families and local businesses contributing.

Debt Free:

- The campaign has paid off the debt on the building and, at this time, the Smith Center is debt free.

Projected Endowment Funds:

- This project has been designed to qualify for State and Federal tax credits which will result in \$600,000-800,000 in revenue. The campaign has committed these funds to an endowment fund for long-term building maintenance.

The R.R. Smith Center for History and Art will provide educational benefits to all area schools in art, history and research techniques, and facilities. Visitors to the center will be able to use state-of-the-art facilities to trace their ancestry, review original historic documents, access rehabilitation, preservation, and historic architectural information, and participate in classes and lectures on a variety of subjects. Opportunities to view nationally recognized art collections, and take part in the educational process associated with each exhibit will now be available.

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
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Phone: (540) 248-4151
Office Hours: W & Th 9:30-2:30

Historic Staunton Foundation

120 South Augusta Street
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Staunton-Augusta Art Center

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Don't miss the opportunity to invest in Staunton's newest downtown feature, the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art. Donors who make gifts in the \$500-\$2,999 range may elect to buy a memorial brick, while dona-

tions from \$3,000-\$9,999 will be recognized on a special plaque. There are still a few rooms available to name in honor or memory of loved ones, but other naming options also exist. Remember that all donations are tax deductible. 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. Please join us as construction begins on an exciting project.

Eakleton Hotel designed as a showpiece in 1894

Built in 1894, the Eakleton Hotel building was designed by noted regional architect, T.J. Collins, in the Second Empire style. Grand in scale, the four-story brick structure dominated the block of New Street and its surrounding commercial buildings. It was one of a number of large hotels built in Staunton during the late 1800s to serve the booming economy and expanding railroad traffic.

As originally constructed, the Eakleton building featured a slate mansard roof (one of only a few in Staunton) with pedimented dormers, a central tower, decorative cast iron cresting on balconies, and corbelled cornices and chimneys. An elaborately molded brick cornice framed the re-

cessed first-floor level of the facade, with brick arches surrounding the wide arched window and door openings.

Over time, the hotel changed hands and in its more recent past was used as a furniture store. Architecturally, the building is missing its tower roof, balconies, and some molded brick; and the storefront level has been remodeled with some loss of historic material. However, overall the building is in sound structural condition and maintains a significant amount of its character-defining detail. Because the building was designed by a Staunton architect, some of the original architectural plans, including the facade elevations, are available for use in the restoration work.

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