

# Anonymous donor gives courthouse \$10,000

By **BENNIE SCARTON JR.**  
MANASSAS JOURNAL MESSENGER

## ■ BRENTSVILLE

The Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre got an early Christmas present last week.

An anonymous person gave the group a check for \$10,000 to be used for the restoration and revitalization of the historic 1822 Courthouse, located on the Brentsville Historic Centre

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**Pam Sackett**, secretary of the Friends of Brentsville Courthouse; **John White**, a member of the Brentsville Historic Centre Trust and **Wilkie Smith Leith**, vice chairman of the Friends, display the check that was given to them to help in the restoration of the historic courthouse behind them.

HISTORIC SITE FILE: PwC Courthouse (Brentsville)  
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grounds on Bristow Road in Brentville.

"The wishes of the donor to remain anonymous stems from the desire to focus attention directly on the project and to inspire individuals and corporations to make similar contributions to this outstanding history-making endeavor," said Wilkie Smith Leith, vice chairman of the Friends.

Leith said the mission of both the Friends and the Brentsville Historic Centre Trust, a unique partnering of the county, the Park Authority, the Historic Commission and Friends is "to bring an exciting and instrumental period of history to life that many adults and children still know little about."

The courthouse is undergoing restoration to bring it up to what it looked like 178 years ago. In addition to a courthouse, it also served as a school house before the present white-frame school house was erected on the same site in 1928.

"This donation acts as a major kick-off for this project. To have this kind of recognition from an individual donor should be an inspiration to others, especially businesses that recognize the value of this site for educating children at the colonial times, providing a quality of life for residents, and promoting tourism throughout the state," Supervisor Ben Thompson, R-Brentsville said.

The Friends hope not only to restore the courthouse and school house but also a nearby church and jail and make it a miniature "Williamsburg attraction." They have 21 acres on the site.

Leith said the Friends also have received a \$10,000 tourism grant for a joint Civil War weekend in July planned by the Friends, the Trust and the Manassas Museum.

Those interested in seeing the restoration work going at the complex can attend the second annual "Christmas Open Courthouse" on Saturday from noon-5 p.m.

The event will feature a Victorian Santa Claus, the unveiling of the second ornament in the "Brentsville Series," (the school) and preliminary plans for the future revitalization projects.

For information, call (703) 361-2318.

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