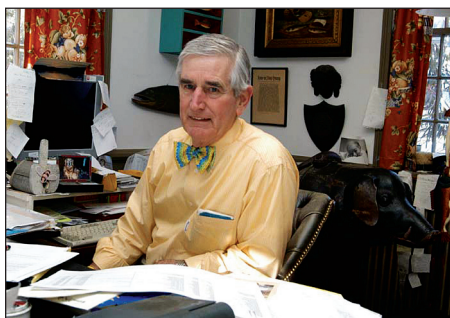


Scudder Smith

2006 ADA Merit Award Recipient

by Lauren Byrne

“It was an easy decision,” ADA president Skip Chalfant said of the Association’s choice of Scudder Smith as the recipient of its 2006 Merit Award. Getting Mr. Smith, the editor and publisher of *Antiques and The Arts Weekly*, to comment on his award wasn’t quite so easy. After nearly forty-five years in the print trade, and thirty-three years at the helm of the publication called “the Bible” in the antiques business, he is still putting in sixty-five-hour weeks. Aside from that, he is a man who has always believed that work is its own reward. However, when eventually tracked down he submitted to our questions with the graciousness that, along with his fondness for bow ties, is his distinguishing feature. “I was surprised,” he said, referring to the Merit Award. “I think it’s wonderful.”



Discussing his career, Mr. Smith reveals his flair for understatement; preferring to downplay his unique achievement in combining his passion for antiques with his role in the family newspaper. *The Newtown Bee* has been published in Newtown, Connecticut, since 1877, and the Smith family’s involvement is almost as long. When Reuben Hazen Smith acquired the newspaper in 1880 it was a shaky proposition. He quickly revived it and when he departed for California the following year, handed it over to his brothers, Allison P. and Arthur J. The brothers successfully ran the

publication for the next forty-two years, until Arthur’s son Paul took the editor’s chair in 1934, and guided the paper for the next thirty-nine years.

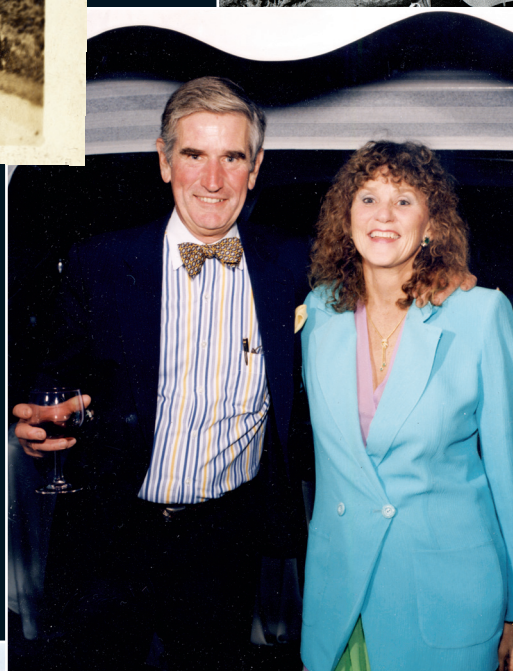
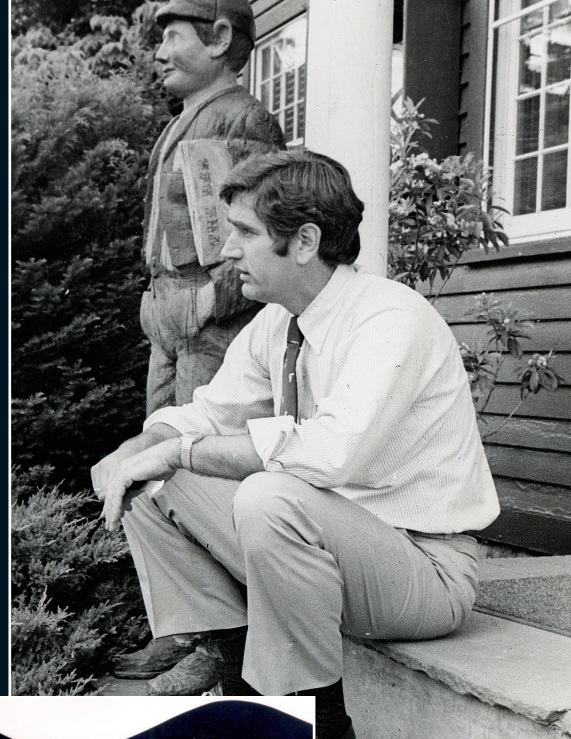
R. Scudder Smith entered the picture in the early 1960s. He began his career in the composing room but soon showed his inventive flair in a series of columns he wrote for the paper. Outside office hours, he developed a growing enthusiasm for antiques. In 1963, with his father’s permission, his pastime found an outlet in the pages of *The Bee* when he launched four pages devoted to antiques. By 1969 the four pages had grown to a complete section called *Antiques and The Arts Weekly*, and enthusiasts from all over the country were subscribing to *The Bee* for its antiques section. In 1976, *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* was spun off from *The Bee* and became an independent paper, though it’s still known to many by its old name. Explaining the paper’s familiar name, Mr. Smith, editor

of both *The Newtown Bee* and *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* says, “We’ve always said that bees scurry around getting pollen everywhere, similar to the way our reporters scurry around. The people who subscribed originally used to get *The Newtown Bee* and the antiques section, and many people still call the younger paper *The Bee*.”

Today *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* is read across the nation and in several European countries, and has a website that receives 75,000 visits a week. “We don’t direct our publication at any one group,” says Smith, explaining the popularity of the publication. “Anyone who has an interest in antiques is going to find something of interest in our paper.”

The New England Press Association has acknowledged Mr. Smith’s achievements by inducting him into their Hall of Fame. His civic contributions have been legion too. In 2004, along with his wife, Helen, Mr. Smith

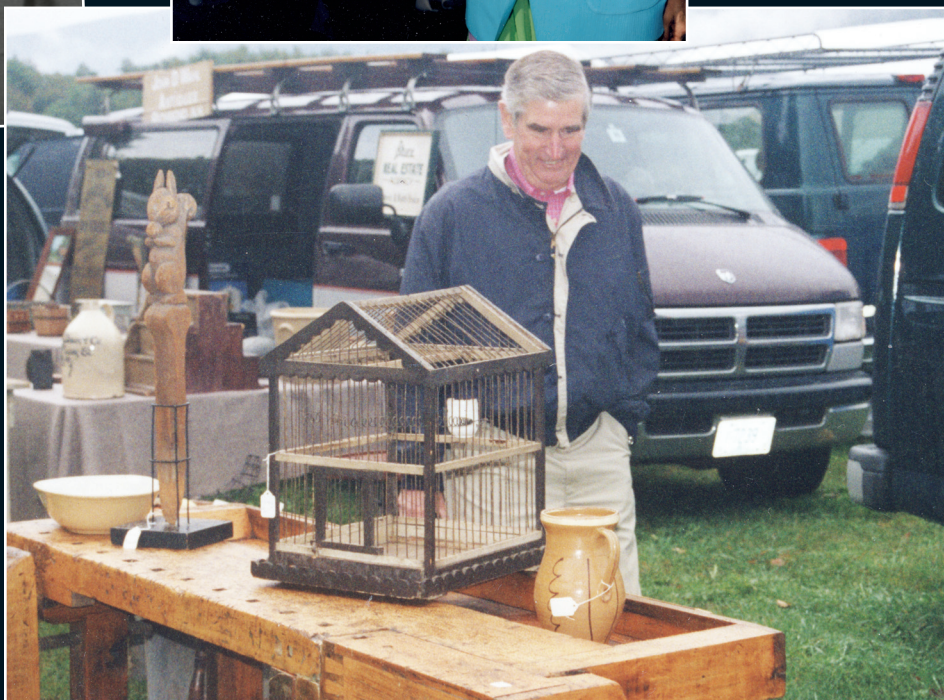
The Bee Publishing Company's Church Hill Road offices in Newtown, Connecticut, as they appeared not long after they were built in 1903. The company dates to 1877.

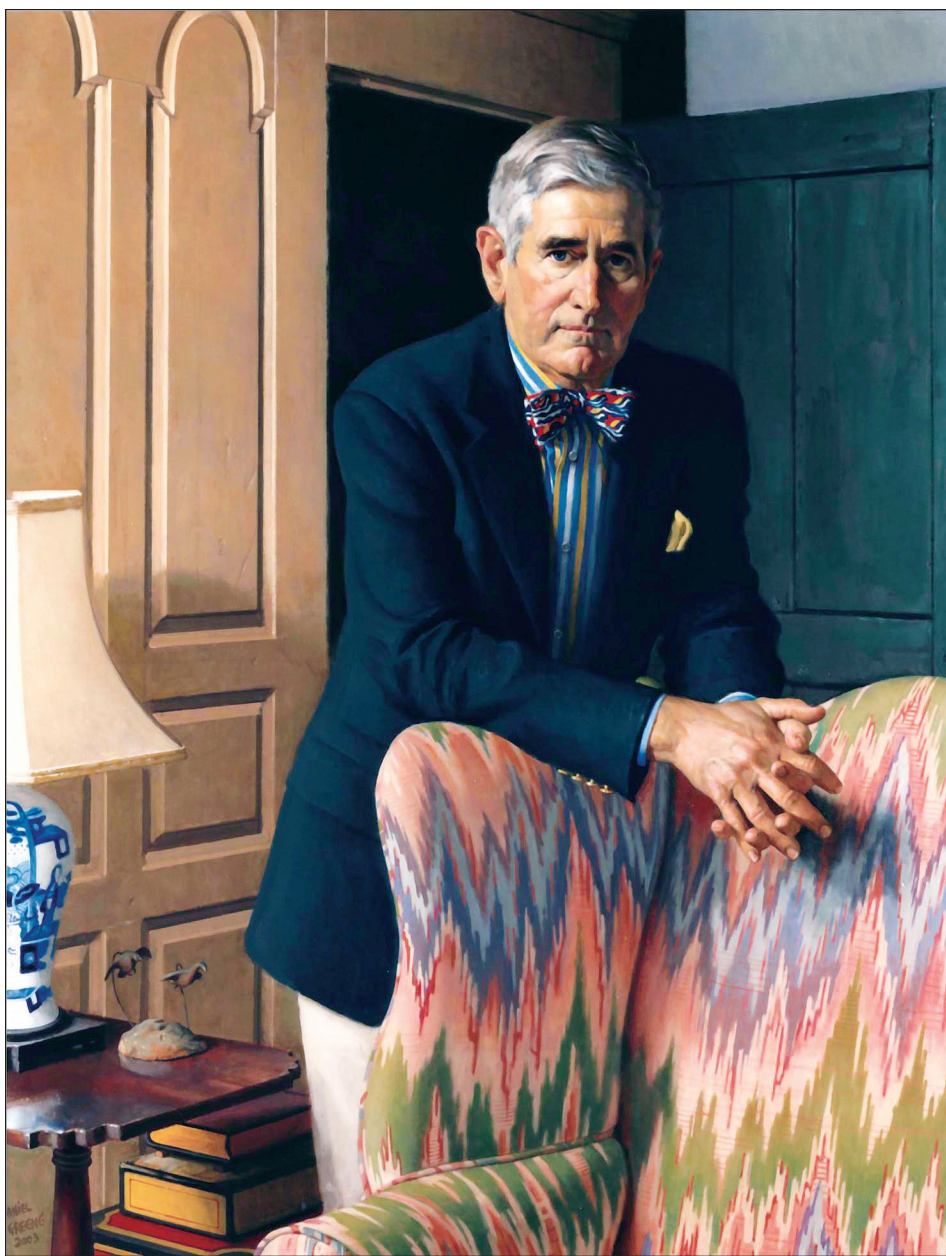


R. Scudder and Helen Smith.

R. Scudder Smith, center, succeeded his father, Paul S. Smith, left, as editor and publisher of *The Newtown Bee* in 1973. Scudder's son, David S. Smith, right, is *Antiques and The Arts Weekly's* associate editor. He joined the company in 1975.

Antiques and The Arts Weekly started in 1963 as just four pages of antiques editorial and advertising in *The Newtown Bee*, both owned by Bee Publishing Company. Then, as now, Scudder rarely missed an important antiques show or flea market.





Scudder Smith, by Daniel E. Greene, N.A., 2003. Oil on canvas, 50 x 38 inches. Courtesy of the artist, www.danielgreeneartist.com.

received the Newtown Economic Development Commission's award in acknowledgement of the public park *The Newtown Bee* established in 1998 in the center of town.

Even across a phone line Mr. Smith's relief is palpable when the topic shifts from him. He is much happier talking about his interest in American folk art and wrought iron work, and about the changes he has witnessed in the antiques business over the decades. "There are a lot more collectors today, and a lot more dealers. And unfortunately merchandise is getting harder and harder to find. There have always been important collectors, but right

now there seems to be more of them, and right now, the demand for the really top things is terrific. But no matter what things seem to be priced they always find a market. If they're really terrific and the price is strong they generally sell. That was witnessed at the Winter Antiques Show this past January."

Combining business with pleasure, Mr. Smith and his wife attend the major shows and auctions each year. "We cover the shows in New York, New Hampshire, and Maine," he says. "We've covered Philadelphia for the last twenty years."

This year's trip to the Philadelphia

Antiques Show will be somewhat different. He'll be the guest of honor at a dinner hosted by the ADA on Saturday, April 8. There he'll join a select band of Merit Awardees (Albert Sack, Elinor Gordon, Wendell Garrett, and Betty Ring) whose contribution to the business has been deemed exceptional by the ADA and the antiques field in general. Doubtless, any account of the event that subsequently appears in *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* will feature Scudder Smith in a modest role. @

The ADA Award of Merit is voted on by the membership of the ADA (Antiques Dealers' Association of America) and is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field of American antiques. The Award of Merit dinner will be held at the Philadelphia Antiques Show at 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 8. It will feature cocktails and dinner followed by a variety of guest speakers and friends. The ADA Award of Merit is sponsored in part by Antiques and The Arts Weekly, Antiques & Fine Art, Flather and Perkins Insurance, and The Magazine Antiques. Seating is limited to 285 and tickets are \$85 per person \$65 for ADA members. A portion of the proceeds and donations will be accepted towards a gift in Scudder Smith's name to Historic Deerfield to help toward the acquisition of the William Guthman engraved powder horn collection. For additional information and reservations, call the ADA at 203.259.8571 or send your request to: Antiques Dealers' Association of America, Inc., Box 335, Greens Farms, CT 06838.

The ADA is a nonprofit trade association. Its major objective is to further professionalize the business of buying and selling antiques. Its membership is composed of antiques dealers who are dedicated to integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct in the antiques trade. All members are required to guarantee their merchandise in writing on a sales receipt that states approximate age, origin, condition, and any restoration of pieces sold.