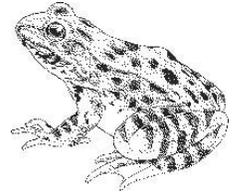


# FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK



MARCH 2005

E-MAIL ADDRESS: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

WEB SITE: <http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>

## President's Message

For the past year, the Friends of Huntley Meadows and the Friends of Historic Huntley have begun a closer association, working on one or two common projects, and generally moving closer together. Historic Huntley is the name given to the Thomson F. Mason house situated on Harrison Lane about a quarter mile from the Huntley Meadows Lockheed Boulevard entrance. It is an imposing structure on the hill looking down onto the valley below. Much of the land that is now Huntley Meadows was part of a plantation belonging to Thomson Mason in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mason, a grandson of George Mason IV of Gunston Hall, was a prominent Alexandria resident where he practiced law and served several terms as mayor. The house on Harrison Lane is presumed to be a summer home for the Mason family. Since the two properties, Huntley Meadows Park and the Huntley house were once part of the same estate, the modern connection of the two Friends groups seems very logical.

The Park Authority has owned the Huntley mansion for 16 (some twenty) years, but only recently has had the funds to begin restoration planning. To



date, a great deal of research has been conducted on the structure, building techniques, and purposes of this unique dwelling. Detailed analyses on the arcana of historic restorations have been prepared by the Park Authority staff and an assortment of contractors, and include a Historic Structures Report, Cultural Landscape Report, Archaeological Report, Paint Analysis Report, and several planning documents including General Management Plan, Conceptual Development Plan and Verbal Design.

While there is some money to continue the restoration work, there is not enough to complete the job. Nearly \$2 million is needed to bring the house, surrounding buildings and the grounds to complete restoration. Planning for a massive fund raising effort is underway. Meanwhile, staff and volunteers are beginning the initial work to develop interpretative themes and programs for the eventual visitors. Immediate plans call for work to secure the main house so that further decay and vandalism is stopped. After this first phase of construction, the main house and dependencies will outwardly appear as they did during the period of significance, 1825-1835. Renters will be found to occupy the adjacent tenant house, thus adding more protection.

The Huntley mansion is an important anchor in the Groveton and Huntley Meadows parts of Fairfax County. It helps define the area from the beginnings of its early settlements, and guides us through to the present, rapidly urbanizing Fairfax County. A strong linkage to Historic Huntley is a natural step forward for the Friends of Huntley Meadows. We will routinely bring our membership news of events around the house. We encourage you to join The Friends of Historic Huntley and to join the effort to restore this beautiful and mysterious piece of American history.

Harry

## Historic Huntley Open House

Sunday, May 15, 2-4 p.m.

Enjoy this twice-a-year opportunity to visit Historic Huntley, a Federal-style villa built c. 1825 for Thomson F. Mason. Sponsored by Friends of Historic Huntley.



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Tom Kelley

## Winter by Kitty Keller

*Kitty Keller served as the educator naturalist at Huntley Meadows until last summer when she and her husband, Roger, and their dog Sydney moved to Sayre, Pennsylvania. Kitty is a woman of great and varied talents – one of which is writing. I asked her recently if she would write a little piece about winter for publication in the Friends of Huntley Meadows Newsletter. Here it is. . . . .*

During one of my visits back to the park this fall, Carolyn and I took a walk. It was at the time, just past the trees' color-peak, when everything starts to seem brownish. The cattails were in seed and almond fluff capped each spike. We walked past one plant in particular from which a tail of soft cotton hung, swinging slightly with the breeze. Carolyn commented it resembled the distaff of a spinning wheel. This winter, I have seen what is spun from that delicate fiber- yarn enough to weave the flannel sky. When the snows come over the mountains, this blanket tucks tightly under their chins disguising them as the ashen sky and distorting your sense of distance. Everything begins to feel close as the snow creeps down off the mountains and blankets the valley as well.

This was my first northern winter in some years and by far the coldest in many more. Roger and I worried, with reason, we'd become thin-blooded from our time down south. We tried not to seem too pathetic lest we be recognized as flatlanders (folks who move up from the coastal cities). This was particularly challenging during the week when the lows didn't clear 5 degrees, transforming into 20° below with the wind. Twenty below hurts, even the natives.

When the bitter cold broke and the days reached a balmy 35°, the dog and I ventured out to a park. It was near sunset and the park, apparently busy with cross-country skiers earlier, was vacant. We trekked, a mile or two, through the snow, in places as deep as Sydney's belly. After several dips into gullies hidden by snowdrifts, I finally noticed the squirrel and deer tracks suddenly stopped at

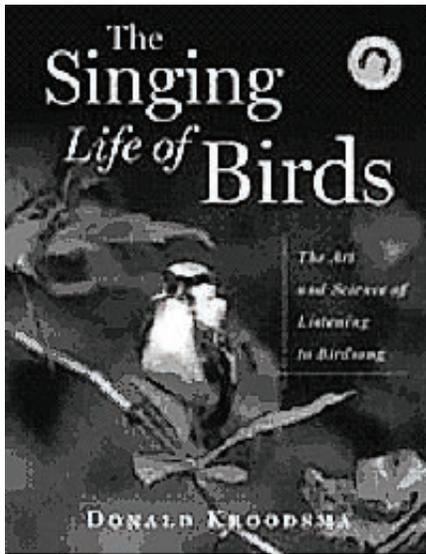
the low spots and restarted after great leaps to the other side. In an open field we passed an oak leaf surrounded by concentric rings etched into the snow. With its petiole shackled by the ice, the leaf seemed doomed to circle and circle perpetually until spring. Where the wildflowers once bloomed I tried to imagine the vivid colors that had faded since fall. Grasses bowed under the snow forming tunnels with entrances marked by the coming and going of many little feet. The sturdier teasel wore the snow piled up on top but punctuated by its bristles. Goldenrod galls looked like miniature birdhouse gourds from the discovery of the tasty morsel inside. Stories were continuing to unfold even in the midst of winter.

We paused every so often at a curious scent or just to listen. I was taken aback by the silence. It wasn't a silence without sound, but as if the world was so cushioned that no sound could reverberate. Convinced it must be there, my ears searched, trying to squeeze something from the stillness. The effort was rewarded by a dog barking in the distance but no more. It reminded me of a picture in a book about Paul Bunyan I had as a child. The winter that left Babe blue was apparently so cold that even words froze as they left the lumberjack's mouths. The words were left propped by the woodstove until they thawed and could be heard.

We finished our walk as the shadows stretched long across the undisturbed snow that now blushed pink and blue in the fading sunlight. The shadows had such distinct edges and such amazing clarity. Light was or was not. Shadows were or were not. The identity of every tree was there clearly silhouetted to the finest twig. Winter is truly a time of seeing things rightly.



## Upcoming Author Event



### Donald Kroodsma

THE SINGING LIFE OF BIRDS: The Art and Science of Listening to Birdsong

Sunday, April 24, 8 to 11 a.m., Huntley Meadows Park

Meet author Donald Kroodsma for a “Listen to the Birds” walk in the park from 8 to 9:30 a.m. After a coffee break from 9:30 to 10, enjoy his audio-visual presentation followed by a book signing. Space is limited for the bird walk. Call the park at 703-768-2525 for reservations.

Donald Kroodsma, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, has studied bird-song for more than thirty years and was recognized as the “reigning authority on the biology of avian vocal behavior” in the citation for his 2003 Elliott Coues Award from the American Ornithologists’ Union.

This event is co-sponsored by FOHMP and Olsson’s Books & Records.

## Art in the Park

When you visit the park this spring, be sure to stop in the Visitor Center and enjoy the nature inspired creations of talented local artists. Art work is for sale and a portion of the proceeds is donated to the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park.

### *The Many Moods of Nature*

Nature Photography of Dan LaRusso

March through April



photo by Dan LaRusso

### *Views of Huntley Meadows*

Paintings by Brenda M. Sylvia

May through June

Opening Reception with the artist on Sunday, May 8, 1-4 p.m.

## Birders Exchange Program

For a birder there's no greater thrill than traveling to a tropical country such as Costa Rica and seeing its spectacular avifauna through a good pair of binoculars or a scope. And spotting Neotropical migrants as they return each spring is one of the joys of North American birding. But many conservationists, educators and researchers working on avian conservation issues in poor tropical countries have access to no or only woefully bad optics. Since the 1960's there has been a steady decline in the populations of more than 130 species of Neotropical migrants that breed in North America and winter in the Central and South American tropics. One way for birders to help stem this decline is to donate used optics to the American Birding Association's Birder's Exchange Program. Birder's Exchange promotes conservation at a grassroots level in Latin American countries by putting binoculars directly into the hands of those who protect birds and their habitats and who educate their countrymen about bird conservation.

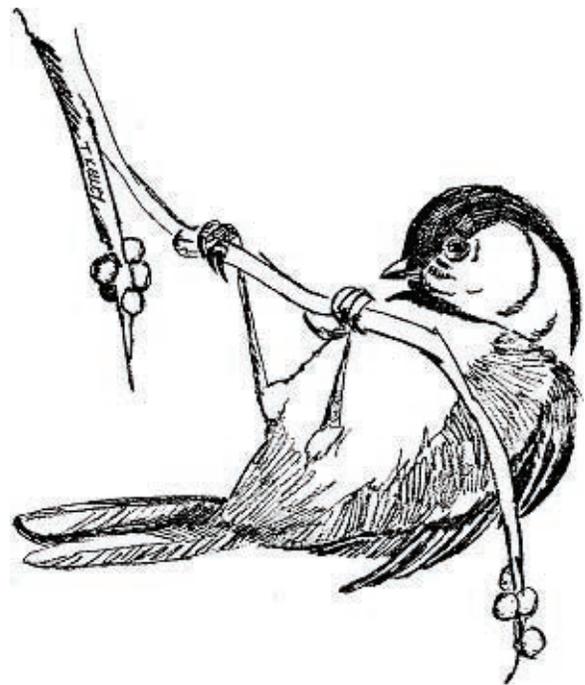
The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park will be running a drive this April and May to collect used binoculars, scopes, field guides, ornithology texts and even backpacks to donate to Birder's Exchange. Bring your donations to the Huntley Meadows Park Visitor's Center, with your name and address attached and the Friends group will take care of shipping the equipment to the ABA. The Park's address is 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA. The Visitor's Center is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but closed on Tuesdays. Weekend hours change from noon to 5 p.m. on April 17<sup>th</sup> to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the rest of the month and into May. All optics should be in good working order.

As you search the treetops this spring for warblers, thrushes and tanagers, remember where these birds winter and how you can help in their conservation with your donation. We're hoping for a great response to this drive from all the generous birders in our area.

For more information on the Birder's Exchange program, go to [www.americanbirding.org/bex](http://www.americanbirding.org/bex). The park's phone number is 703 768 2525; the contact person for this collection drive is Marianne Mooney, FOHMP board member.

## Help Wanted

Individual with intermediate level of knowledge of fresh water aquarium care to consult and possibly assist staff with the exhibit aquarium. If interested, call Suzanne at the park at 703-768-2526.



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Tom Kelley

## Huntley Meadows Birdathon 2005

After a reasonably mild winter, the birds are once again on the move. Cardinal, chickadee, and house finch can all be heard singing in the morning. Waterfowl numbers are rising, woodcock are appearing in the meadows, and some raptors are already working on their nests. Before you know it, there will be reports of warblers appearing in trees which a short time ago were covered with snow. And that means it will also soon be time for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Birdathon on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Every year, staff and volunteers set out in the wee hours of the morning to count exactly how many species are present. This event has grown from what was once an annual survey of species by park staff into something far more important. It gives us an opportunity to remember two exceptional men, Ken Howard and Ed Weigel, volunteers who for years inspired a love of nature in the Park visitors they met. They shared their time, wisdom, wit, and enthusiasm with everyone they knew, and were true ambassadors for Huntley Meadows. Their good work continues to this day through the internships made possible by the donations made annually to this event.

An internship provides a young person with an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a future in conservation. Just think, your donation today could help the next Ed Weigel or Ken Howard get started. This year, as always, we will be hoping to reach 100 species for the day. We've done it three times now, with 108 species in 2004 the record. If you donate, say, a quarter per species, then reaching 100 species would produce a donation of \$25. That would go a long way towards our reaching our annual goal.

I believe this is a wonderful cause. Like many of you, I knew Ken and Ed well, and count myself fortunate for the insights into the natural world that they provided me. I want to see their good work continue, and I hope you will feel the same way.

Thank you so very much.

**Andy Higgs**

Birdathon at Huntley Meadows Park

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DONATION AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to FCPA-HMP and add on the memo line,  
**Donation -ParkOps.**

Mail this form and check to:  
Birdathon, Huntley Meadows Park,  
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306

We are trying to reduce paper use, so you can check the birdathon results at  
[friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org) after June 1.

If you would like to be sent a hard copy, please check this box.

## Upcoming Events - March 19 - May 27

Huntley Meadows Park and Visitor Center 703-768-2525

In March the Visitor Center is open 9am-5pm, Monday, Wednesday-Friday; noon to 5pm Saturday and Sunday. Beginning April 16, the Visitor Center is open 9am-5pm, Monday, Wednesday-Sunday. The Visitor Center is closed Tuesday. Grounds open dawn to dusk.

### March

#### **Saturday, March 19** - Watershed Cleanup Day

9-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Be a part of the stream team! Individuals, families and groups can help clear out the earth's arteries by collecting tires, bed springs, bottles, cans and other debris. Give the waterways in your community a clean bill of health and earn the gratitude of your furred, feathered and scaled neighbors. Wear boots, old clothes and bring gloves. Trash bags and appreciation provided. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

#### **Sunday, March 20** - Birding for Beginners - Optics and Field Guides

(Adults), 7-10am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Interested in birding? We can get you started! Learn about the birds in the park and some basic identification skills. Program begins with a discussion of field guides and optics. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

#### **Sunday, March 20** - Leave it to Beaver

(6 yrs. & up), 5:15-6:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Families will look for signs of beavers and, if we're lucky, catch a glimpse of these nocturnal engineers. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$5/family

#### **Tuesday, March 22 - Thursday, March 24** - Spring Break Camp - Wildlife Watchers

(6-8 yrs.), 9-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. The park is waking from the cold winter; birds are singing, plants are greening up and amphibians are emerging from hibernation. Experience this seasonal excitement through nature activities, walks and crafts at our three-day camp, Tuesday through Thursday. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$60

### April

#### **Friday, April 8** - Lecture - Frogs in the Changing World

(Adults), 7:30-8:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Zoo biologist Ed Smith shares images and information about amphibians and their place in the evolving world. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. FREE

**Monday, April 11** - Young Explorers - Backyard Birds

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through indoor and outdoor exploration learn more about our backyard feathered friends. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

**Wednesday, April 13** - Nature Detectives - Backyard Birds

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15 or 10:45-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through story, activity and a craft, let's learn about our backyard feathered friends. Reservations required. \$5

**Thursday, April 14** - Nature Detectives - Backyard Birds

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15 or 10:45-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 4/13) Reservations required. \$5

**Thursday, April 14** - Swamp Serenade

(5 yrs. & up), 7:15-8:45pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Listen to the singing frogs and toads as their courtship songs fill the wetland. One flashlight per family is recommended. Canceled if cold weather. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$5/family

**Sunday, April 17** - Birding for Beginners - Optics and Field Guides

(Adults), 7-10am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 3/20) Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

**Friday, April 22** - Café Cattail

7-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Welcome to Huntley Meadows' very own coffeehouse! Enjoy a relaxing evening applauding our community's talents. Musicians, dancers and poets are encouraged to share their arts with a nature theme. Reservations required for performers only. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

**Saturday, April 23** - Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 7-10am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. This is the height of neotropical songbird migration. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Meet at the park's South King's Highway and Telegraph Road entrance. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

**Saturday, April 30** - Advanced Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 7-10am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. This walk is intended for experienced birders. We will visit parts of the park typically known for warblers and other neotropical songbirds. Dress for off-trail hiking. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Meet at the park's South King's Highway and Telegraph Road entrance. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

May

**Sunday, May 1** - Wetlands Awareness Day

Noon-3pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Enjoy an afternoon of wetland interpretation, wildlife presentations and a "Fun Fair" for kids. Bring your friends and family to celebrate the importance of wetlands to wildlife and you. There is a modest fee for some activities. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

**Saturday, May 7** - Spring Birds and Breakfast

(Adults), 7:30-11am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Search for warblers, thrushes, waterfowl and a host of other birds as we approach the peak of spring migration. Following the hike, relax and recap the sightings during a continental breakfast at the center. Binoculars and field guides recommended. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$5

**Sunday, May 8** - Art Show Reception

1-4pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Meet landscape artist Brenda M. Sylvia at the opening reception for her two month exhibition, "Views of Huntley Meadows." FREE

Sunday, May 15 - Historic Huntley Open House

2-4 p.m. Enjoy this twice-a-year opportunity to visit Historic Huntley, a Federal-style villa built c. 1825 for Thomson F. Mason. Sponsored by Friends of Historic Huntley.

**Monday, May 16** - Young Explorers - Duck, Duck, Goose

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Waddle over and learn about ducks and geese through indoor and outdoor exploration. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

**Wednesday, May 18** - Nature Detectives - Duck, Duck, Goose

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Waddle on over and take a gander! Through a story, an activity and a craft, learn about ducks and geese. Reservations required. \$5

**Thursday, May 19** - Nature Detectives - Duck, Duck, Goose

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 5/18 Reservations required. \$5

**Friday, May 27** - Lecture - Environmental Film

(Adults), 7:30-8:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Filmmaker and environmentalist Dave Eckert will show one of his films and answer audience questions. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. FREE

# Wetlands Awareness Day and Huntley Turns 30 Bigger Than Ever!

Sunday, May 1, 2005 from noon to 3 PM is Wetlands Awareness Day, and the Park will be having its 30th anniversary! You won't want to miss our Kids' Fair, the Cake Walk, lively music, and boardwalk interpretation. We are expecting more than last year's 600 visitors, and hope you can join us for cake and celebration! Call Melissa Gaulding for more information, 703-768-2525.

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## Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

### Board of Directors:

Harry Glasgow (President)  
Sarah Stromayer (Vice President)  
Glenn Curtis (Secretary)  
Sally Cureton (Treasurer)  
Ken Larsen (Newsletter Editor)  
P.J. Dunn (Web Site Manager)  
Connie Carpender (Membership)  
Andy Higgs                      Suzanne Lepple  
Norma Hoffman    vb      Kathi McNeil  
Ben Jesup                      Marianne Mooney  
Chuck Studholme



Web address:  
Email addresses  
General Information:  
Membership Info: Harry Glasgow  
Donations and dues: Sally Cureton  
Newsletter Inquiries/submissions: Ken Larsen  
Questions For Park Staff

<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>  
[info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
[membership@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:membership@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
[treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
[newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
[staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

# Are You A Member?

*Please*

help support Huntley Meadows Park and join

*The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park!*

Become a member of FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK. (FOHMP) and help to protect and preserve the park. Your annual dues (tax deductible) will keep you informed and help support the nature center's programs. Please fill out and mail this application today!

## *Membership Information*

*Note* Our new dues schedule is as follows:

- |              |         |                       |          |
|--------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|
| ◆ Senior     | \$5.00  | ◆ Family              | \$15.00  |
| ◆ Individual | \$10.00 | ◆ Lifetime Membership | \$150.00 |

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes! I would like to join FRIENDS!**

\_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to renew my membership. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_.00 annual dues for a \_\_\_\_\_ membership. (*Please make checks payable to FOHMP.*)

Additional \$\_\_\_\_.00 donation enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have some comments and/or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm interested in learning more about volunteering at the Park.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to volunteer at the Park.

If you checked that you would like to volunteer, please help us by indicating your areas of knowledge and/or interest. \_\_\_\_\_

- FOHMP Volunteer Coordinator     Park Watch     Promoting Friends     Special Events     Mailing
- Phoning Members For Lectures and Special Events     Letter Writing Campaign     As Needed

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

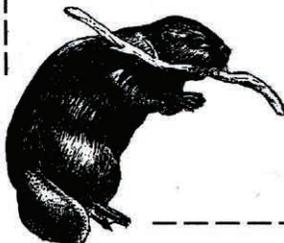
***Please Mail To:*** FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK

c/o Huntley Meadows Park  
3701 Lockheed Boulevard  
Alexandria, VA 22306

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

**PHONE:** 703/768-2525

**WEB SITE:** (<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/index.html>)



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Your membership expires on the date in the upper left corner..  
NOTE: Please check your mailing label for accuracy & notify us of any changes .