

FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY

Meadows Park



APRIL 2006

E-MAIL ADDRESS: info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org
WEB SITE: http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Note from the President

As spring is quickly approaching, I am feeling very inspired, not just because of the warmer temperatures, flowers blooming, birds returning and singing, but I've also had some recent experiences associated with HMP that have warmed my heart.

Just last week, I was at the Park with a very enthusiastic group on a cold Saturday morning, who were there to pick up trash! Later that day, I joined an evening program hoping to catch a Woodcock or two doing their courtship display. It was still cold and windy, but we were all well prepared and ready for whatever came our way!

Recently I received a letter from a former park visitor and teen volunteer, who participated in a dragonfly survey P.J. Dunn and I coordinated more than 10 years ago. First of all, he said that he still looks at dragonflies wherever he goes! He also shared that his experiences at HMP influenced his choice of career and he is currently working as a wetland specialist for a consulting company.

We've had good news on the North Hill issue. In February, the Mt. Vernon Council of Citizen Associations considered arguments on both the sides of the issue (development for housing vs. parkland), and voted in favor of retaining the existing language in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, which preserves the entire property as parkland. These recommendations were then submitted to the Mt. Vernon Area Plan Review (APR) committee, which supported the Mt. Vernon Council position in a preliminary vote to keep the entire property desig-

nated as parkland. The final APR committee vote on the subject is expected in March. After that, public hearings are expected before the Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors. You can still write or call your Supervisor and let them know your feelings on this issue.

These and many other shared experiences are collectively a powerful force. Every little thing that you do to enhance the education and experience of others and to preserve a sanctuary for wildlife counts and makes a difference!

Gordon Shaw, former park visitor and volunteer writes, "Will you please thank the volunteers and staff of Huntley Meadows that have made it a wonderful place to visit. The things that I learned at Huntley Meadows while growing up will continue to affect my life for a long time to come."

Our dear Norma Hoffman has donated \$1000 on behalf of The Citizens Alliance to Save Huntley Meadows Park (CASH) to FOHMP. This is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what she and others have donated in time and funds over the past thirty years to secure the preservation of the land that we now know as Huntley Meadows Park. She has worked miracles, always respecting her adversaries and approaching problems with determination, solid research, and grace. Thank You Norma! Starting on the next page is a timeline of CASH's history as recorded by Norma.

Kathi McNeil

A Short History of CASH

The Citizens Alliance to Save Huntley Meadows Park (CASH) has donated \$1,000 to Friends of Huntley Meadows Park to promote that organization's mission.

Formed more than 30 years ago, CASH's first great accomplishment came in 1990, when it successfully blocked an effort to build a four-lane extension of Lockheed Boulevard through the north side of the park. Such a road would have seriously disfigured the park's beauty and caused severe environmental damage.

Since then, CASH has focused its energy and resources on enhancing the park's capacity to serve visitors and its wildlife inhabitants. We trust that in the future this contribution will be carried on to promote the values for which CASH has stood.

The following is a brief history of CASH's campaign, and eventual victory, in defense of Huntley Meadows Park:

1968...Fairfax County began planning a fourlane highway to connect U.S. Route 1 with Van Dorn Street.

1973...A year before Huntley Meadows was designated as a county park, residents of Hybla Valley, surrounding communities and county planners envisioned a road connecting Route 1 with Van Dorn Street and the rest of Fairfax County.

1974...Under the Legacy of Parks Program, the Federal Government gave surplus land in Hybla Valley to Fairfax County, with the stipulation that the land be used for conservation and recreation purposes only and in perpetuity.

1975... Huntley Meadows Park was dedicated. However, the park master plan included a road to bisect the park. At this time, CASH was formed to oppose the highway.

1978...Public hearings were held. Conservationists and area homeowners raised questions concerning the highway's placement. CASH actively mobilized.

1979... As a result of CASH's efforts, the county granted a 90-day extension before finalizing plans.

Department of Interior (DOI)officials, who would make the final decision, questioned the need for the highway. Controversy heated up between those for and those opposed. CASH asked for an environmental study.

1982 ...The highway project was still on hold pending final environmental assessment by DOI. County and state officials planned to push hard for approval.

l983...The National Park Service, under DOI, approved the highway. CASH continued vigorous opposition. Lack of funding, however, delayed county construction of the highway.

1984...CASH questioned the accuracy of the environmental study performed by the county. CASH called the study "superficial and slick," providing scientific information supporting its position.

1985...Fearing that county funds would become available, among other things CASH held a two-mile hike to show opposition. More than 100 people turned out. DOI officials agreed to reevaluate the environmental study done by the county. Then approval of a \$135 million road bond provided funds for the highway.

1986...CASH, 350 members strong, enlisted the help of the law firm Covington and Burling and prepared to go to court if necessary. CASH appealed to members of Congress. DOI ordered a new environmental assessment. Dr. Eleanora Robbins, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and a CASH member, found the environmental assessment done by the county inadequate and provided valuable scientific information to support her position. William Penn Mott, Director of the National Park service, visited the park at CASH's invitation.

1987...CASH insisted the highway placement would, among other things, endanger water flow into the wetlands. A new county environmental assessment proposed to incorporate bridges, elaborate piping, and ponds into the road design. CASH responded: "We have examples of similar structures that have been unsuccessful." A CASH panel composed of scientists prepared its own

study, which proved that the highway would cause irreparable damage to the park.

1988...CASH had more than 600 members and was supported by many environmental organizations. The National Park Service asked the county to respond to 264 questions posed by volunteer experts recruited by CASH.

1989...County officials did not respond to the questions, but they asked for a full environmental impact study.

1990...November 30, the Department of Interior denied permission to build the highway, known as the Lockheed-Van Dorn Connector, because of potential environmental damage.

The success of this effort was thanks to the persistence and dedication of many devoted supporters of Huntley Meadows Park.

by Norma Hoffman, President and founder of CASH

Park Manager's Message

The stream stabilization project for Barnyard Run began the second week of March, 2006. It is anticipated that the restoration activity will be completed in six weeks, weather permitting. The contractor, Environmental Quality Resources, Inc., is restoring a 500 foot segment of Barnyard Run within Huntley Meadows Park just north of the central wetland. Construction access will traverse the gas easement next to the park entrance at Lockheed Boulevard. An existing berm along the easement will be breached in three locations to redistribute runoff to the wetland. A stilling basin will be installed upstream, along with step pools down stream, to reduce water velocity. Stream banks are being re-sculptured to a 2:1 slope or less to reduce bank erosion. Affected areas are to be replanted with native vegetation and stabilized with biodegradable coir matting to prevent erosion.

A special technique will be employed to minimize siltation during construction. Small seg-

ments of the stream will be completed by the contractor, as he progresses downstream, in order to minimize potential erosion. During construction, each segment will be cut off from stream flow. A pump, with an extended hose, will divert the water around each segment, restoring flow downstream from the segment. Once each segment is complete, stream flow will be restored in that segment. Another protective measure is in the area of the historic monarch trees. Construction access will be diverted south of two champion swamp chestnut oaks and one pin oak, outside of the drip line of these trees, so as to avoid compaction of their root systems. As you may recall, the FOHMP received a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry last year to enhance the health of the magnificent swamp chestnuts. It is believed their origins date back to early 1800s occupation by Thomson F. Mason, the grandson of George Mason IV.

The restoration project should greatly reduce future siltation in the central wetland. In its current condition, the small stream simply cannot handle the increased runoff velocity caused by residential development to the north during the 1980s and 90s.

Gary Roisom Park Manager

Celebrate Wetlands Awareness Day

Wetlands Awareness Day is fast approaching and preparations will be starting soon. We'd love to see you on May 7 from noon to 3pm. Volunteers are always welcome or you can just come to enjoy the fun. We'll need folks to give away prizes at the Fun Fair and interpreters out on the boardwalk. And there's always room at the FOHMP membership table to talk to visitors about the park. If you'd like to help out but can't be there that day, there are cakes to be baked for the cake walk. Call Melissa Gaulding if you're interested in volunteering and we'll put you on the list.

Melissa Gaulding

FOHMP Birds and Bagels

On Saturday, March 11 we had our annual Birds and Bagels program with Ben Jesup as our leader assisted by Sarah Jesup (age 7). It was a beautiful spring-like morning and I believe the birds were just as pleased as we were with the weather! We had a total of 36 species, including a Pied-billed Grebe, Shovelers, Pintails, Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, Swamp Sparrows, a Tree Swallow and a Snipe. We also heard great numbers of Spring Peepers and Southern Leopard Frogs, and saw literally "piles" of Painted Turtles basking. Thanks to all who participated and to Ben and Sarah!

Historic Huntley Spring Open House

Sunday, May 21 2-4 p.m.

We've said it before, but this time we think we mean it. This may be your <u>last chance</u> to see Historic Huntley "in the rough." Restoration work could begin next fall. Hurray! In the meantime, you should take the opportunity to tour the house and dependencies with the knowledgeable Friends of Historic Huntley volunteers. Children are invited to participate in a scavenger hunt and watch the puppet show at 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served.





Adopt-a-Highway Project

It was a little chilly getting started but everyone quickly warmed up to the clean up of Lockheed Blvd. and Harrison Lane on March 4. We had 11 participants, collected 10 bags full of trash, and then gathered together at 11am for snacks and photo documentation!

I asked Malcolm McNeil (age 12) a few questions about his experience. Did you think there was a lot of trash? "Yes. Loads! Too much." How do you think the trash got there? "Trash being blown out of the garbage cans of people in the neighborhood. (Bleeping) people throwing trash out of their car window!" What were some of the most surprising things you found? "A television, a fork, a clean dollar bill, a shoe, a lunchbox and a pair of underwear." Would you like to do it again? "Yes, because I realized how much these clean ups help the environment."

Many thanks to Ana Arguelles, Jeff Wneck, Connie Carpender, Ken Larsen, Suzanne and Fred Lepple, Robbie, Madalena, Malcolm McNeil and Ben Jesup.

Our next scheduled clean up is Sat., April 29th, 9-11am. Please call the Visitor Center at 703 768-2525 if you'd like to come and help.

Kathi Mcneil

EXPLORE WITH NEST

Do you enjoy being outdoors? Do you wish you knew more about local streams, plants, and soil? Do you want to get more involved in your community? Then participate in the free Neighborhood Ecological Stewardship Training (NEST) program. Explore your NEST! Adults are invited to learn about natural resources through a series of free experiential workshops and outings that will be held at various locations around Northern Virginia on weekends and some weeknights from March - June, 2006. These include: (1) classes about streams, soil, native and invasive plants, stewardship programs; (2) land-based exploration including walks, hikes, and bike rides; (3) waterbased exploration including kayaking, canoeing, and boating; (4) outdoor arts including photography, music, drawing, and journaling; and (5) evening educational programs. You have many options for participation. Participants that commit to entire series will be given priority in class choice and will receive various incentives like park passes and more. As part of the NEST program, participants will be asked to complete two surveys about stewardship. No prior experience is needed. The surveys are the basis for a dissertation project at George Mason University.

For more information and to register, check out http://mason.gmu.edu/~jcornell/NEST and contact Joanna Cornell at jcornell@gmu.edu or 703-324-1425. Register early as the program will fill quickly.

Does this all sound wonderful but you just don't have the time to participate? Then we invite you to take part in one or two surveys about stewardship. Your responses on the survey will greatly assist a doctoral student at George Mason University and local agencies and organizations. No experience or background is needed to participate in the surveys. If you participate in the survey, you will be eligible to win free recreation center passes and many other items. For more details on incentives, see our Website.

NEST is coordinated by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. Partners include: Fairfax County Park Authority, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Clean Fairfax Council, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners Programs, National Wildlife Federation, Friends of Little Rocky Run, Earth Sangha, Fairfax Audubon, Audubon Naturalist Society, George Mason University's Hemlock Overlook Center for Outdoor Education, and Adventure Links.

Harry Glasgow

Danielle McCallum Takes Position at Headquarters

Perhaps you saw Danielle hiking through the park with a plant in hand and a GPS unit. After a year of work, she has completed the mapping of invasive plants at Huntley Meadows Park, and she is now the Volunteer Coordinator for the Park Authority's Invasive Management Program. Congratulations Danielle and thank you for your excellent work at Huntley Meadows.

Wetland Wonders

"See the park as you never have---off trail and after dark!" Sunday, April 23, 2006 4-9 pm Adults/ adults with children 8 and up \$20 per person Call the Park for reservations

Melissa Gaulding

Author Event at Huntley Meadows Park

June 10 at 7:00 p.m Co-sponsored by Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and Olsson's Books and Records

The Grail Bird: The Rediscovery of the Ivorybilled Woodpecker by Tim Gallagher

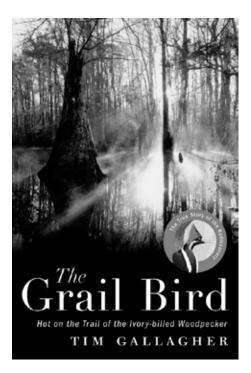
Tim Gallagher will discuss his recently published book and sign purchased copies. An award-winning writer and photographer, he is editor in chief of Living Bird, the flagship publication of the renowned Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. For many years Gallagher has traveled to faraway places, from the high Artic to the tropics, to study and photograph birds and report on research.

"The best birding book that's been written in years."

--Minneapolis Star Tribune

"This is the whole vivid and enthralling inside account."

--Wildlife Activist





Teapots

Thirty-seven teapots, each one unique and inspired by nature, are on display and for sale in the visitor center auditorium until April 30. Created by Kentucky artist Laurie Hughes, the small teapots range in price from \$75 to \$125 with 20% of the sale donated to the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and Northern Kentucky University. Please stop by the center and enjoy this exquisite teapot collection.



Insects added to FOHMP Nature Workbooks

We have recently added some images of Dragonflies and Butterflies to the Nature Workbooks helped by the generosity of Fred Siskind and Mike Ready who donated a group of excellent images. In addition, Fred has agreed to join the editorial board for the workbooks to assist with the images collection. Take a look at the images next time you are in the visitor's center.

Ken Larsen

HUNTLEY MEADOWS BIRDATHON 2006

As spring approaches, the birds are once again on the move. Juncos and kinglets will soon be heading north, making way for returning thrushes and warblers. Shorebirds, herons, and wood duck will be found where recently there was mostly just snow and ice. The dawn chorus will build to a volume not heard here in almost a year. Strangers will become allies while straining to identify some elusive, high-pitched song deep in the woods. And that means it will also soon be time for the 10^{th} annual Huntley Meadows Birdathon on May 2^{nd} .

It's hard to believe it's been ten years now. Every year, staff and volunteers set out early in 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 more important. It provides an opportunity to remember two volunteers, Ken Howard and Ed Weigel, who for years inspired a love of nature within the Park visitors they met. They shared their time, wisdom, wit, and enthusiasm with everyone, acting as 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 four 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 helping us reach our annual goal.

I believe this is an outstanding 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 very much.

Andy Higgs

Birdathon at Huntley Meadows Park

NAME:		
ADDRESS:	CITY:	ZIP:
DONATION AMOUNT:	 	
Mail this Birdathon , H	o FCPA-HMP and a tion - Park ops. form and check to: luntley Meadows Pa Blvd, Alexandria, VA	rk,
If you would like to be sent a hard	d copy, please chec	k this box. □

The results will be on friendsofhuntleymeadows.org by June 1

Upcoming Events

Adult programs

Saturday May 6 - Advanced Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 7-10am. This walk is intended for experienced birders. Visit parts of the park 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

Saturday May 6 - Photography Show Reception

2-4pm. Meet artist Norma Heim at the opening for her two month exhibition, "Nature in Mixed Media." FREE

Saturday May 13 - Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 7-10am. This is the height of neotropical songbird migration. 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

Saturday May 20 - Birding for Beginners

(Adults), 7-10am. (SEE 3/5).

Saturday, June 3 - *Summer Birds and Bagels

(Adults) 8-10:30am. Explore the woodland and wetland to observe summer bird life. Following the walk, cool off and enjoy juice and bagels at the Visitor Center. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot. Binoculars and field guides recommended. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$8

Sunday, June 4 - Birding for Beginners

(Adults) 8-10:30am. Summer is a great time to begin birding. Program starts with a discussion about field guides and optics, then we'll walk to look for resident birds. Reservations required. \$2

Saturday, June 10 - Wetland in Bloom

(Adults) 9-10:30am. Take a plant ecology hike to the wetland during peak bloom of buttonbush, swamp rose, and lizard's tail. Search for birds and animals that use the plants for food, shelter, and nesting. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$2

Sunday, June 18 - *Introduction to Fly Tying

(16 yrs. & up) 12:30-1:30pm. If woolly buggers and hare's ear nymphs pique your interest, you may want to try your hand at the intricate art of fly tying. Equipment and materials provided.

Reservations required. \$10

Saturday, June 24 - *Summer Stroll

(Adults), 8-10pm. Glittering fireflies, gnawing beavers and a parade of raccoons. Huntley Meadows Park never sleeps! Learn about Huntley's night life through a short lecture and a walk to the wetland. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$2

Sunday, June 25 - Dragonflies

(Adults) 9-11:30am. Learn about the life cycle, behavior and identification of Huntley's many dragonflies and damselflies. Walk to the wetland to observe these acrobatic fliers in action. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$2

Family programs

Sunday May 7 - Wetlands Awareness Day

Noon-3pm. 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

Sunday, June 4 - Sssnakes!

(Families) 12:30-2pm. Through discussion and a walk learn about some of Huntley's scaly inhabitants. Appropriate for families; children must be six years or older. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$2

Friday, June 30 - Café Cattail

7-9:30pm.Welcome to Huntley Meadows' very own coffeehouse! To commemorate the settlement of Jamestown in 1607, enjoy music, poetry, and readings inspired by the time period. Reservations required for performers only. FREE

Saturday, July 1 or Sunday, July 2 - Video-Feathered Jewels

10-10:30am. Hummingbirds are a marvel of nature. Learn about these beautiful, agile flyers. FREE

Saturday, July 15 - Bat Watching

(Families) 8-9:30pm. Families can search twilight skies for bats on the wing. Learn to use a bat detector and see a slide show for a close look at these fascinating animals and their habits. Children must be 6 years or older. Reservations required. \$2

Saturday, August 19 or Sunday, August 20 - Video-Insects

10-10:30am. Take a close-up look at the amazing world of insects. FREE

Saturday, July 29 or Sunday, July 30 - *Buglover's Paradise

(Families), 10am-noon. The park is buzzing with insect activity-grasshoppers, butterflies, ladybugs and leafhoppers. Stop by our classroom for self-guided activities, a craft and videos. Appropriate for children 4 years and older. Children must be accompanied by an adult. \$2/child

Children's programs

Monday May 15 - Young Explorers – Turtles

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm. Through a story and walk learn about sliders, snappers, and box turtles. Reservations required. \$3

Wednesday May 17 - Nature Detectives - Turtles

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. Through story, activity and craft learn about sliders, snappers, and box turtles. Reservations required. \$5

Thursday May 18 - Nature Detectives - Turtles

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. (SEE 5/17.) Reservations required. \$5

Monday, June 12 - Young Explorers- Fish

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm. Scales, tails, fins and gills-learn about our fishy friends through a walk and an activity. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

Wednesday, June 14 or Thursday, June 15 - Nature Detectives- Fish

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. Find out about our fishy friends through a story, an activity and a craft. Reservations required. \$5

Wednesday, July 26 or Thursday, July 27 - Nature Detectives- Cool It!

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. Through story, craft and an activity find out how animals stay cool in the summer. Reservations required. \$5

Thursday, August 3 - Young Explorers- Senses

(6-8 yrs.) 3:15-4:30pm. Through a walk and an activity, explore the five senses, and how animals use them. Reservations required. \$3

CAMP

June 28-30 (W-F) 9:30-11:30 am or 1-3pm. - Nature Snoopers

Children ages 5-6 years, who have completed kindergarten, can discover meadows, woodlands, and aquatic habitats through outdoor activities, nature crafts, and games. Limit 15 \$60

July 10-14 (M-F) 9am-noon. - Artists and Scientists

Children ages 9-12 can experience the natural wonders of Huntley Meadows Park from two perspectives. Our days will include journal writing, sketching, observation, data collecting, and detailed investigation of plants and animals in the Park. \$85

July 19-21 (W-F) 9:30am-noon. - Nature Day Camp

Children age 6-8, who have completed first grade, can participate in outdoor activities, nature crafts, and games to stimulate their interest in natural and cultural heritage.

Limit 15. \$60

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Board of Directors:

Kathi McNeil (President)

Sarah Stromayer (Vice President)

Glenn Curtis (Secretary)

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Ken Larsen (Newsletter Editor)

P.J. Dunn (Web Site Manager)

Connie Carpender (Membership)

Suzanne Lepple Harry Glasgow

Andy Higgs Marianne Mooney

Norma Hoffman Chuck Studholme

Ben Jesup

Web address:

Email addresses

General Information:

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Donations and dues: Sally Cureton

Newsletter Inquiries/submissions: Ken Larsen

Questions For Park Staff

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http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

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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 Informati	on			
Membership Informati Our new dues scho ♦ Senior \$5.00 ♦ Individual \$10.0	edule is as follows: Family Lifetime Membershi	\$15.00 p \$150.00		
I'd like to renew my	ke to join FRIENDS! membership. Enclosed is \$00 annuals se make checks payable to FOHMP.)	al dues for a		
Additional \$00	donation enclosed.			
I have some comments and/or suggestions:				
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Phoning Members For Lect	ures and Special Events Letter Writing	g Campaign As Needed		
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Telephone: (h)	(w)			
E-mail Address: —				
Please Mail To:	Friends of Huntley Meadows Park			
	c/o Huntley Meadows Park			
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	WEB SITE: (http://friendsofhuntleymeadov	vs.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 .