



FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK



FEBRUARY 2006

E-MAIL ADDRESS: info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

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

Note from the President

First of all, a big THANKS to Harry Glasgow, who has served as president of FOHMP for the past few years and a big CONGRATULATIONS to Harry Glasgow, who is now a board member of the Fairfax County Park Authority! It's always nice to have contacts in high places!

For those of you who are new to HMP: Hello! I'm Kathi McNeil, and have been associated with Huntley Meadows Park as both an employee and volunteer for the past 17 years. Needless to say, I love this place and the people who hang out here! I welcome new members, thank all of you who I've worked with in the past, and hope that you continue to come to the Park and participate in our programs and causes.

January is often a time to relax, reflect, and "come up with a plan". Keeping this in mind, why not take advantage of the many programs here at the park? A calendar of the upcoming activities begins on page 7. In addition, FOHMP and the Friends of Historic Huntley have recently "adopted" Lockheed Blvd. and Harrison Lane. Want to come and help us pick up trash (see page 6)? If you enjoy writing letters for causes, there are often issues in our park and

neighborhood that need to be addressed and supported. North Hill Forest is one of the issues you can support right now (see page 4). These are just a few of the ways you can become involved and support the park.

Check out what's happening in around Huntley Meadows Park as you read through this newsletter and then come take a walk. I hope the combination of the two will inspire you to become a volunteer, program participant and/or environmental activist!

Kathi McNeil

FOHMP Birds and Bagels

On Saturday, March 11, 8-10am, FOHMP will be sponsoring a "Birds and Bagels" program led by boardmember, Ben Jesup. We'll meet in the parking lot at the visitor center. This program is FREE to FOHMP members, but you must call 703 768-2525 and reserve a spot. Following the walk there will be a special booksigning event (see page 6)

Park Manager's Message

Wetland Management

The central wetland has displayed low water levels in the past two years due to sporadic activities of nature's most popular engineer, the beaver. The late summer drought of 2005 further reduced water level to a point where hydric soils contracted to form cracks throughout the parched landscape. One could literally walk across the wetland without soiling their sneakers. Had the beavers left for good?

During the summer drought, the beavers were still active in the vicinity of the boardwalk loop. However, their mobility became severely hampered with the near absence of water. They were regularly seen just "hanging out" in the saturated cat-

tail marsh, as if they were waiting for something to happen. Finally, something happened....the fall of 2005 brought some heavy rain and the wetland began to swell up again.

Beavers, superbly designed for swimming, regained their mobility with the increased supply of water in the wetland. They jumped into action by making repairs to the main beaver dam near the observation tower. They resurrected check dams downstream of the main dam for additional fortification. Concurrent with this activity was the reconstruction of a beaver lodge near the observation tower. The non-hibernating rodents appeared to recognize the approach of a cold winter.

As of January, 2006, the resident beavers are

carefully maintaining their engineering accomplishments and hundreds of waterfowl have been enjoying the benefits of a wetland recharged with water. Subsequently, visitors have rejoiced over the return of waterfowl in numbers and anxiously await a wet spring season teeming with wildlife.

Two years of low water level in the central wetland sparked many concerns from park patrons about the future of the wetland. The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park posted a visitor survey on the FOHMP web site to enable visitors an opportunity to express their thoughts on whether the

Park Authority should actively manage the water levels. This would involve reinforcement of the existing beaver levy and the installation of a water level control structure. Over 95% of the respondents voted YES for active management by the Park Authority.

A Wetland Management

Team consisting of Park Authority staff was assembled in mid 2005 to begin the process of developing a Wetland Management Plan for the park's central wetland. The Team is re-evaluating the 1993 Wetland Management Plan prepared by TAMS Consultants, Inc. and will be working with a qualified consultant to update the plan and address current issues. The new planning effort will address issues such as environmental effects of heavy siltation for two decades including possible removal, invasive plant control, potential draw-down techniques to achieve optimal diversity of flora/fauna, and more. Park staff has identified a funding source to begin this process.

There will be additional opportunities for



View from the Tower - October 2005

citizens to comment on the plan draft as it develops. I will keep everyone posted on its development in future newsletters. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at 703-768-2525.

Barnyard Run Stream Restoration

On November 9, 2005 the Park Authority Board approved a contract award for the Barnyard Run Stream Bank Stabilization in Huntley Meadows Park. The contract was awarded to Environmental Quality Resources, L.L.C. of Gaithersburg, Maryland in the amount of \$143,717.23. The project will focus on a 500 foot segment of Barnyard Run within Huntley Meadows Park just north of the central wetland. The contract includes breaching an existing berm in three locations to redistribute runoff to the wetland, constructing a stilling basin and step pools to reduce stream velocity and installing bioengineering material including native plants.

The project is intended to mitigate erosion of park soils, thereby reducing sedimentation in the central wetland. Construction should be completed sometime in Spring 2006.

New Exhibits

Park staff have been busy improving exhibit displays in the Visitor Center during the past few months. I received approval to spend remaining funds from the former Capital Improvement Program. Improvements included re-lamination of pylons in the main exhibit room, fabrication of twelve new discovery boxes near the information desk, and construction of a new backlit photo/audio visual kiosk and new brochure/map display near the entryway. The latter two exhibits provide increased visitor circulation in the rather diminutive entry way. Major exhibit fabrication was provided by SurroundArt, Inc. We hope you are as pleased with the results as we are.

Gary Roisum
Park Manager

Two Internships Available at Huntley Meadows This Summer

If you wish to gain practical experience in operating a nature center and in teaching children about the natural world, then the Naturalist Internship may interest you. Those who seek a career in wildlife management or environmental sciences may wish to apply for the park's Natural Resource Management Internship. Both internships begin June 5 and end August 18. Interns work 40 hours a week and receive a stipend of \$2500. To apply, please send a resume and letter of intent by March 3, 2006 to Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306, attention Carolyn Gamble (carolyn.gamble@fairfaxcounty.gov) for the Naturalist Internship and attention Dave Lawlor (dave.lawlor@fairfaxcounty.gov) for the Natural Resource Management Internship. Call the park at 703-768-2526 for more information.

Lee District Park Celebration

The Friends set up a table at the Lee District Park 25th Anniversary celebration on November 19th. After ceremonies marking this anniversary, patrons walked around the Rec Center and talked with the many organizations represented at their tables. Suzanne Lepple and Harry Glasgow staffed the Friends table where they discussed Huntley Meadows, the wildlife found there, and the programs available to the public. As always, children were particularly fascinated by samples of wildlife skins – those with fur and those with scales. We spoke to at least 50 people and think that we interested at least some of them enough to visit the Park. One family said they were interested enough to go to the park that afternoon, and another said that while they had lived in the area for many years they had never been to Huntley Meadows, but were intrigued enough to plan a trip soon. The power of a little scrap of fur? Perhaps.

Harry Glasgow

North Hill Forest Threatened by Development

The FOHMP Board is supporting this cause and will be sending a letter to both Dana Kauffman and Gerry Hyland. You can help also by writing letters or making telephone calls. Thanks!

The publicly-owned North Hill property, formerly the Woodley Nightingale Mobile Home Park, is 35 acres in size and located just North of Hybla Valley at the intersection of Richmond Highway (Route 1) and Lockheed Blvd. in the Mt. Vernon District of Fairfax County. The "North Hill" is unique because it represents one of the only opportunities to address open space and park needs for residents living along the heavily developed Route 1 corridor. By several estimates there are over 1000 trees of diameter greater than 6 inches on the site, with the overall tree canopy being dominated by mature hardwoods including oaks, hickory, beech, and many other species. This property has more than 125 specimen trees as identified by a county tree survey, and contains steep slopes and marine clay.

The current plan language states that the North Hill "is planned for public park for passive recreational use" and indicates that there "is an urgent need for community parkland" in this sector. Regrettably, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently authorized an "Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment" to reverse the public park designation for the North Hill. This action promotes a "mixed-use development" including residential and commercial activities, allowing the property to be up-zoned to 10 dwelling units per acre (350 residential units total) and an FAR of 1.5 for the entire site. This would irrevocably destroy the property.

Help us save this non-renewable resource. Please let Supervisors Gerry Hyland and Dana Kauffman know that the North Hill should be saved and land currently planned for park and open space uses in Fairfax County should not be touched by developers, for any reason whatsoever!!

Please communicate your opinion to save the North Hill forest to:

Supervisor Gerry Hyland, Mount Vernon Gov-

ernmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306 Fax: 703-780-1491 Email: mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov

AND

Supervisor Dana Kauffman, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria, VA 22310 Fax: 703-971-3032 e-mail: leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov

Woodley Tree Save is a non-profit all-volunteer conservation movement promoting the protection of the unique and valuable North Hill forest. All individuals may become regular members by expressing support for our objectives. If you would like more information or would like to help with our effort, please let us know!

Contact info: Email: woodleytreesave@rcn.com, Phone: 410-721-3670 (for Tim Berkoff) or 703-765-1406 (for Alfred Aitken)

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.

Wetlands Program at HMP this Spring

P.J. Dunn and Kathi McNeil will be leading a 4 part series on wetlands in the park this spring. The dates are March 12, 26 and April 2, 23. Explore areas off-trail, do some water testing, learn about the animals who live in and use the wetlands, clean areas that are full of trash, and more! One class will be held in the evening. Please call the visitor center (703 768-2525) and talk to Melissa. She'll be able to fill you in on the details such as cost, times, and ages of participants.

Photography Contest

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park hosted a reception Sunday, November 6 for participants in their second Photography Contest, which hopefully will become an annual event. The photos were an excellent representation of life in the park with views from the boardwalk, meadows and wetlands and their respective trees, grasses, flowers and wildlife. The juror of the show, Curt S. Carnemark, a noted award winning photographer, was very impressed with the quality of the photographs.

First and second place were awarded to entries made by Brad Furman, third place went to Kay Rankin. Art Cole, Jim Diersing, Joshua M. Hoover and Eric Dale received honorable mentions. FOHMP was very pleased that several younger members entered photos as well as the SACC group from Hollin Meadows Elementary School. Thanks to Art Cole for orchestrating the SACC participation.

The show ran from Nov. 6 to January 11 in the auditorium of the HMP Visitor Center. Sales of photos brought in \$380.00 to FOHMP. The Friends and Staff of Huntley Meadows congratulate and thank all of the photographers who participated in this event.

Sarah Stromayer

Nature Workbooks

FOHMP is seeking photographs taken at Huntley Meadows to include in our nature workbooks. These workbooks were started last year to provide a resource to help visitors identify and appreciate what they observe in the park. Currently two workbooks are on display at the reception desk - One for birds and one for Not Birds.

The variety of images we can display depends on the generosity of those photographers willing to share some of their images with other visitors. Images are included in the workbooks primarily

on how clearly they illustrate park life and help in identification. Images are welcome from photographers at all levels of experience.

Among the images that we need are those of sparrows, warblers, finches, etc. (Or as some photographers refer to them - little brown birds) These birds will become prevalent in the park come spring and are generally difficult for non birders to distinguish.

All photos will be carefully reviewed for inclusion in the workbooks. Because we have to limit the images to only a few for each species, not all photos can be used. However, all photos donated will be saved for possible future use by FOHMP or the park staff. If you have any questions email me at newsletter@friendsofhuntley meadows.org

Ken Larsen



Photo by: Curtis Gibbens

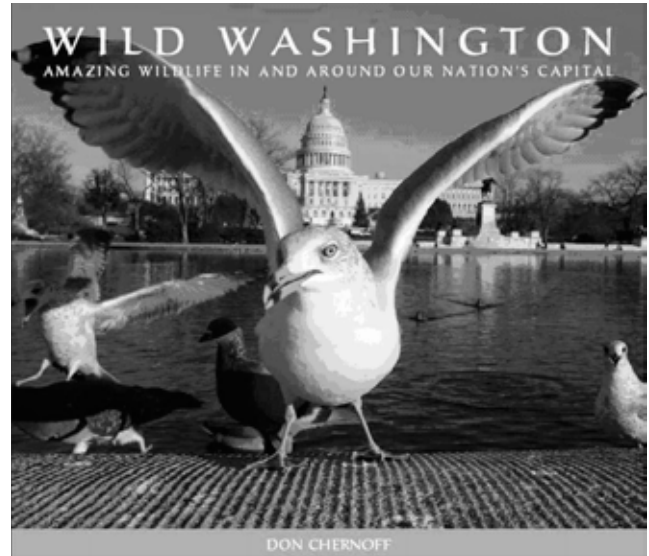
ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT BEGINS

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and Friends of Historic Huntley have joined together to ensure that the approaches to Huntley Meadows Park's main entrance will remain neat and tidy. You may have noticed that VDOT placed the official blue road adoption signs across from Hybla Valley Elementary School on Lockheed Boulevard and also at the entrance to Groveton Elementary School on Harrison Lane. Our commitment is to schedule four clean-up days each year.

A few energetic park staff and volunteers collected a dozen bags of trash on November 29. More volunteers are needed on Saturday, March 4 and Saturday, April 29 from 9-11 AM. The second Saturday will be a combined effort with Friends of Historic Huntley.

Please join us! It is fun, satisfying, and worthwhile exercise! Snacks will be provided. Call the Visitor Center at 703-768-2525 and indicate which day you will be able to help. This is a great way for students to fulfill their community service hours requirements, too, so please mention it to your friends and neighbors - young and old!

Suzanne Lepple



Meet Photographer and Author Don Chernoff at a Booksigning on March 11 at Huntley Meadows Visitor Center

Wild Washington: Amazing Wildlife in and Around Our Nation's Capital is a beautiful book of photographs taken by Don Chernoff. Don has exhibited his photographs at Huntley Meadows Park, and in this book he features our park with its very own chapter!

On March 11 at 10:30 a.m., following the Friends of Huntley Meadows Birds and Bagels program, you can meet the author and purchase your own signed copy. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Friends of Huntley Meadows.

Upcoming Events - March 19 - May 27

Adult programs

Saturday February 11 - Winter Tree Trek

(16 yrs. & up), 1-3:30pm. Learn to use keys and other tools to identify winter trees from such clues as shapes, twigs and bark. Then explore the winter woods to practice your skills. Participants will receive a Tree Finder book. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations

Saturday February 25 - Winter Birds and Bagels

(Adults), 8-10am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Enjoy the winter season during this morning search for resident birds. Following the walk, warm up with hot chocolate and fresh bagels. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$5

Saturday March 4 - Evening Wildlife Walk

(Adults), 5:30-7pm. Explore the Hike/Bike Trail in hopes of discovering calling frogs and owls, migrating waterfowl and displaying American woodcock. Bring optics and a flashlight. Meet at the park's South King's Highway entrance. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

Sunday March 5 - Birding for Beginners

(Adults), 7-10am. Sharpen your bird identification skills while birding with a park naturalist. Program begins with a brief discussion in the Visitor Center. Reservations required. FREE

Saturday April 8 - Birding for Beginners – Optics and Field Guides

(Adults), 7-10am. 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. FREE

Friday April 21 - Café Cattail

7-9:30pm. 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 22 - Spring Birds and Breakfast

(Adults), 7:30-10:30am. 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. \$5

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).

Family programs

Saturday February 4 - Winter Chills and Thrills

(5-10 yrs.), 1-3pm. What a fun way to spend the day off from school. Drop in to play games, make crafts and explore self-guided activities. Discover how wildlife copes with winter. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by FOHMP. \$2/child

Sunday February 5 - Winter Chills and Thrills

(5-10 yrs.), 1-3pm. (SEE 2/4.) \$2/child

Saturday February 18 - Sherlock Bones

1-3pm. Skulls, skeletons and self-guided activities will be set up in the classroom to bring out the Sherlock in you. Children must be accompanied by an adult. FREE

Sunday February 19 - Sherlock Bones

1-3pm. (SEE 2/18) FREE

Saturday February 25 - Sherlock Bones

1-3pm. (SEE 2/18.) FREE

Sunday February 26 - Sherlock Bones

1-3pm. (SEE 2/18) FREE

Saturday, March 18 - Watershed Clean-up Day

(6 yrs. and up), 9-11:30am. Be part of the stream team! Individuals, students, families, scouts and other community groups can give the waterways in your community a clean bill of health by collecting tires, bed springs, bottles, cans and other debris. Wear boots, old clothes and bring gloves. Trash bags and appreciation provided. This is a great community project! FREE

Sunday March 19 - Leave it to Beaver

(6 yrs. and up), 5:15-6:30pm. Families 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

Saturday April 5 - Swamp Serenade

(5 yrs. and up), 7:15-8:45pm. Listen to singing frogs and toads as their courtship songs fill the wetland. A flashlight/family is recommended. Canceled if cold weather. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$5/family

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

Children's programs

Monday March 20 -Young Explorers – Owls

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm. Who, who are you? Through indoor and outdoor activities learn more about this nocturnal predator. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

Wednesday March 22 - Nature Detectives – Owls

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. Who, who are you? Through story, activity and a craft, learn more about this nocturnal predator. Reservations required. \$5

Thursday March 23 - Nature Detectives – Owls

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. (SEE 3/22.) Reservations required. \$5

Tuesday April 11-Thursday April 13 - Spring Break Camp – Wildlife Watchers

(6-8 yrs.), 9-11:30am. 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. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$60

Monday April 17 - Young Explorers – Snakes and Frogs

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm. Through a story and walk learn about these master jumpers, evening serenaders, and their slithery cousins. Reservations required. \$3

Wednesday April 19 - Nature Detectives – Snakes and Frogs

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. Find out about master jumpers, evening serenaders, and their slithery cousins. Through story, activity and craft learn more about these fascinating animals. Reservations required. \$5

Thursday April 20 - Nature Detectives – Snakes and Frogs

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am. (SEE 4/19.) Reservations required. \$5

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

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Board of Directors:

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



Web address:

<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>

Email addresses

info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

General Information:

membership@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Membership Info: Connie Carpender

treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Donations and dues: Sally Cureton

newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Newsletter Inquiries/submissions: Ken Larsen

staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Questions For Park Staff

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

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 .