

Huntley Headlines

Friends of Historic Huntley

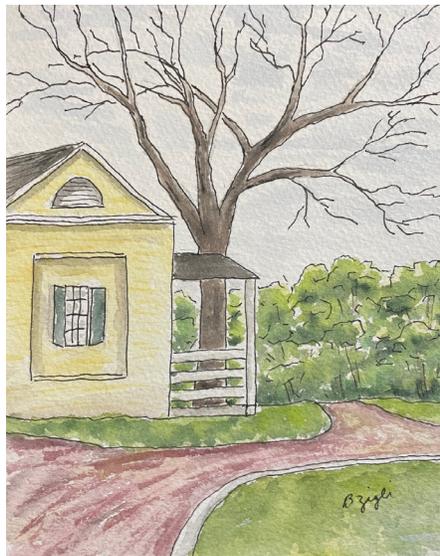
Spring 2026

Art & Architecture Day at Historic Huntley Saturday, April 11, free 1:00-3:00 p.m. activities 3:00-4:00 p.m. artist reception

FOHH's signature annual open-house event, **Art & Architecture Day** is back! **In honor of America's 250th anniversary, cake will be served!** Activities from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. include **observing artists at work "en plein air"** (painting outdoors), **free tours** of the site's federal-period structures in the context of a carefully designed landscape, **viewing art** related to Huntley, and browsing and purchasing history and other non-fiction titles from FOHH's **used book sale**.

At an **informal reception for the artists** from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., the works painted during the day will be available for public viewing and sale.

The event is free. The day is **co-sponsored by FOHH and the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), and offered in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects' Architecture Month**. For more information, call 703.768.2525. ❖



Watercolor by Barbara Zigli at Art & Architecture Day 2025. Photo by Barbara Zigli.

Huntley Now a Network to Freedom Site!

The **National Park Service's Network to Freedom** recognizes locations with a "history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight" having a "verifiable connection to the Underground Railroad." Three men enslaved by the Mason family at Historic Huntley are known to have escaped.

In the spring of 1837, on separate occasions, freedman Joseph Farrell provided forged papers for Huntley bondmen Sam Humphreys and Sandy, giving each an alias as a freedman. Farrell ran an Alexandria African

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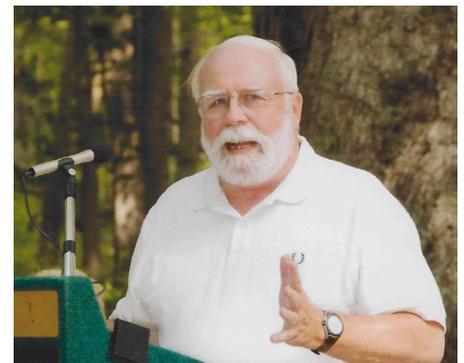
In Memoriam: Harry Glasgow

by Carolyn Gamble

Former FOHH Vice President and long-time Board and Advisory Council Member Harry Glasgow passed away on December 2, 2025. He was recognized in Fairfax and Prince William Counties as an environmental champion. A partial listing of his community leadership includes serving as president of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, as a Fairfax County Tree Commissioner, and as a board member of the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

His involvement with local history is less well known. Harry was one of those unusual types of people whose curiosity and passions include both nature and history. In 2009 he became an official advisor to FOHH. He served as a board member from 2013 to 2019,

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Harry Glasgow in front of Grandmother Oak at the Huntley Land Transfer and Champion Tree Celebration on May 16, 2007. Photo courtesy of FCPA.

President's Column

by Todi Carnes

Last year we observed the bicentennial of Historic Huntley and this year we mark the **semiquincentennial (250th) anniversary of the United States**. The Fairfax County History Commission will be commemorating our nation's anniversary with a **history conference, Revolutionary Ideas: Fairfax County's American Revolution** (see page 3). Although Historic Huntley was not yet built at the time America was birthed in 1776, it has certainly been around to experience the revolutionary ideas set in motion at that momentous time, specifically **ideas of freedom and equality**.

The rights to freedom and equality in America have played out through individual lives. As inanimate objects, the structures at Historic Huntley did not and do not experience these rights, but they certainly had a role in the lives of those who did. The linkage could be profoundly intimate. Eighty-five people referred to as "slaves for life" are listed on Huntley's 1859 deed-of-sale and were conveyed as property with the structures. Fortunately, six years after the Huntley deed was signed, the 85 people listed there were freed—released from the deed—as a result of the Civil War.

The freeing of those once enslaved by the original owners of Huntley, the Mason family, no doubt reflects the most dramatic impact of revolutionary ideas on people whose lives were entwined with Huntley. The women of Huntley represent another population substantially impacted. Their experience illustrates the continued effects of the American Revolution's ideas of freedom and equality in the 20th century.

Marguerite Amlong, for example, was probably the first mistress of Huntley who enjoyed the right to vote, which was granted to women in 1920 by Constitutional amendment. Revolutionary ideas of equality

officially sanctioned Marguerite's participation in the public sphere. Working with the Fairfax County History Commission, Marguerite initiated an appreciation for Huntley's structures that led to Huntley being recognized by both state and national authorities as having architectural and historical significance. She set her domestic space, the structures of Huntley, on a course that led it to its preservation and public accessibility as the Historic Huntley we know and love today.

Frequently debated, the ideas volleyed forth 250 years ago during the American Revolution have their own history. They are as worthy of preservation and interpretation as the physical battlefields, historic structures, and material artifacts of the war. So we commemorate America's 250th anniversary at Historic Huntley! ❖

Harry Glasgow

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then returned to the Advisory Council until being awarded emeritus status in 2025.

I first met Harry in 1990 when he started volunteering at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP). He initially focused on trees. He created and conducted a popular winter tree identification program. Harry simply loved trees.

Harry was very concerned about the health of three very large trees on the northern border of HMP and understood them in historical terms. Harry and FOHH Past President Barbara Ballentine called these giants "witness" trees, planted in a line between farm fields in the 19th century. Harry and Barbara raised money to care for the witness trees in 2004. At this time, the witness trees stood on a thin strip of property owned by the Board of Supervisors. Harry would not rest until that property was officially transferred to HMP. The transfer finally took place in 2007 at a wonderful outdoor

celebration in front of the largest tree, Grandmother Oak. FOHH is grateful for Harry's persistence in caring for these historic trees and for ensuring the land they occupy will forever be preserved as a part of HMP.

Harry not only appreciated trees as history, but saw the history contained within their midst. He recognized that HMP was a site not only of natural resources, but of cultural resources also deserving of preservation and interpretation. These cultural resources include artifacts from the site's various uses by the federal government prior to its acquisition by Fairfax County. Harry created a program on past federal government uses of HMP, a version of which continues to be offered today.

Harry was gregarious, energetic, and a go-getter who was generous in sharing his time with others. He put those traits to use in generating support for the cultural and natural resources at Huntley as well as in Fairfax County's park system as a whole. In FOHH's early days, Harry would sometimes fill in as a puppeteer for "A Day in the Life of the Mason Family," the puppet show FOHH presented at semi-annual open houses. Whenever he did, the show elicited much laughter from audience members and puppeteers alike. And, in typical Harry style, he liberally embellished the script!

Harry was a towering Friend among all FCPA Friends. We at FOHH are honored to have counted him as a personal friend as well. Farewell to our good friend Harry! ❖

Network to Freedom

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American school. At the time, Alexandria was part of the District of Columbia, which had a free black community and an abolitionist movement supported by whites repulsed by the presence of slavery in the capital. There are other cases in which persons like Farrell—affiliated with District of Columbia African American schools—were accused of falsifying freedom papers. While Farrell had no identified co-conspirators, the local environment supports the likelihood of a supportive network.

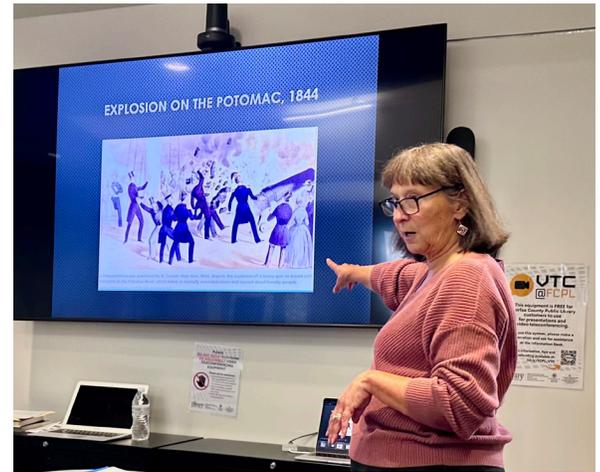
About a month after receiving his forged papers, Sandy was apprehended in Hagerstown, Maryland. Sam Humphreys also was captured, apparently within three months of receiving his fictitious alias. For his part in their escapes, Farrell was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Almost ten years earlier a man named Bob also escaped enslavement at Huntley. The runaway notice advertising a reward for his return, published in the August 5, 1828, *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, described him as “about 6 feet high, stout made, very black, and about 45 years of age; has a stammering in his speech; has right leg sore.”

It is unknown whether Bob’s escape resulted in his permanent freedom or proved only temporary. The fact that the advertisement for reward ran in the paper for only two days, and that the recorded number of adult slaves at Huntley remained unchanged before and after Bob took flight, indicate that his freedom may have been short-lived. It is also unknown whether Bob had assistance in undertaking his escape. The presence of established free black communities in nearby Alexandria and Mount Vernon certainly provided a possible source of support.

Huntley’s selection for recognition as part of the Network to Freedom has been years in the making. Its detailed

Exploding Steamboats Presentation Blows Away Annual Meeting. *George Mason University Professor Cynthia Kierner addresses a packed house at FOHH’s annual meeting last October. Her presentation, Exploding Steamboats and the Popular Culture of Early Nineteenth-Century America, was transfixing and insightful. Thank you, Professor Kierner! Photo by Sheryl Sims.*



and extensively researched nomination was authored by FCPA’s Cheryl Repetti, a former Historic Huntley site interpreter. Given the difficulties inherent in proving associations originally intended to be secret, the challenge in making the case for them was a mighty one. We congratulate and are grateful to Cheryl for successfully taking it on.

We also thank all other involved FCPA staff for assisting with and supporting the nomination through the years of its development and approvals. These collective efforts have furthered the Network to Freedom’s mission, which is to help “advance the idea that all human beings embrace the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression.” Those were rights that Sam Humphreys, Sandy, and Bob did not enjoy and, unfortunately, we cannot correct that injustice. Their efforts to become free and the existence of people like Joseph Farrell, who were willing to risk all to assist escapees, are now something to remember and reflect on with Huntley’s addition to the Network to Freedom.

More information on the **National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom** can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/index.htm>. ❖

Revolutionary Ideas: Fairfax History Conference Saturday, April 18, free

In honor of America’s 250th anniversary, the **Fairfax County History Commission** will be hosting a **free history conference on Saturday, April 18**, at the Fairfax County Government Center: **Revolutionary Ideas: Fairfax County’s American Revolution**.

Morning activities will include a session by Professor Richard Bell, author of *The American Revolution and the Fate of the World*. George Mason University faculty will discuss life, politics, and slavery in Revolutionary-era Fairfax County. During the noon hour, local history groups will be on site with informational tables.

Afternoon breakout sessions will include activities for all ages. Kids can try out some elements of colonial living, meet county archaeologists, handle artifacts, and engage with middle- and high-school students who have created posters interpreting history. Adults can attend more history presentations.

The event is free, but registration is required. Complimentary refreshments and sandwiches will be provided. To register, go to https://fairfax.usdirect.com/FairfaxFCPAWeb/ACTIVITIES/Details.aspx?session_id=579879&back_url=fi9BQ1RJVKlUSUVTL1NIYXJjaC5hc3B4. ❖



Historic Huntley on February 8, 2026, 16 days after a winter storm had passed through. The walkway to the Tenant House has been shoveled, but not the brick trail leading up to the villa. The snow-ice boulders in the foreground are part of a snowplow pile created when the parking lot was partially cleared. Photo by Todi Carnes.

Historic Huntley’s First Fall Intern: Maya Hastings

FOHH extends thanks to HMP Manager Karen Sheffield and Visitor Services Manager Gina Sando for having secured Historic Huntley’s **first intern to have served outside the traditional summer intern season.** With substantial financial support from FOHH, they hired **Maya Hastings, an American University undergraduate.** Maya completed the internship in fall 2025. She was able to focus her efforts on historic research without the competing task of supporting summer camps.

During her internship, Maya researched foods grown by the enslaved for their own consumption. She completed a detailed proposal for a raised garden at the Tenant House, spotlighting what enslaved families who lived there may have planted. Having a Tenant House garden has been championed over the years by FOHH Members Susan Farmer, Cheryl Repetti, and Patty Young. Maya also

made strides in Huntley’s genealogy research, extending efforts to identify living descendants of people enslaved by the Masons.

Although her internship has ended, Maya has expressed an interest in returning to the site. Catch her if you can, because she is one busy lady! At present she is studying abroad in Greece, furthering an interest she has in Greek mythology and ancient thought.

Her main course of study at American University is political science, with a concentration in comparative politics and a minor in history through the University Honors Program. She co-hosts a show on the student-run radio station, is a member of the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honors Society and the historian for Tri-Alpha First Generation Student Honors Society, and was recently offered a position on the student body president’s cabinet. Go Maya!

And please come back to Historic Huntley when you can. We would appreciate your help in creating the raised garden that you researched so well and that FOHH members have so long desired. ❖

“Snowcrete” Comes to Huntley

From January 24 to 25, a winter storm in the Huntley area dropped four to five inches of snow, followed by a layer of icy sleet on top of that. The storm also thrust the area into a deep freeze for weeks. Daytime temperatures rarely rose out of the thirties, with ten out of 16 days below freezing. Nighttime temperatures measured in the teens for 12 out of 16 nights. Thankfully, most days were sunny. Given the cold temperatures, snowmelt was limited. Much of that refroze each night, leaving behind a mix of snow and ice labeled “snowcrete.”

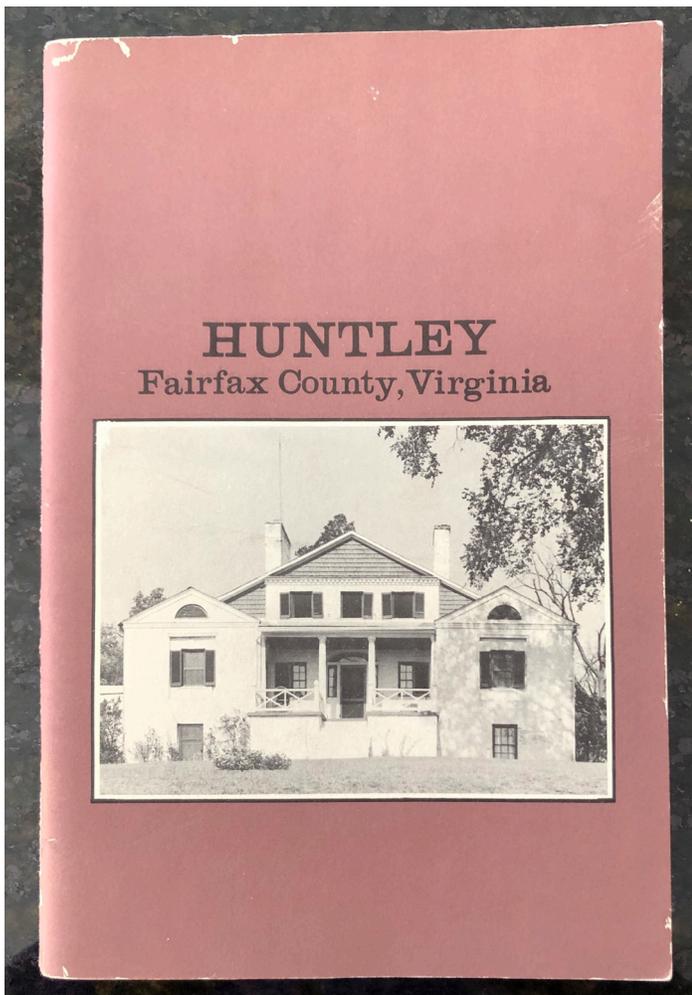
Plastic shovels were no match for this mixture, which could only be successfully removed with the aid of metal tools. While working to clear parking spaces and sidewalks, residents in the vicinity of Huntley were observed wielding pointy dirt shovels, pitchforks, garden hoes, steel ice choppers, and pickaxes.

Snowcrete was a first-time experience for many. One wonders if the same could be said for the structures comprising the villa compound at Historic Huntley. What interesting winter phenomena have they weathered in their time? ❖

Wetlands Awareness Day Huntley Meadows Park Sunday, May 3, 12:00-4:00 p.m. Rain or shine; all ages; free

FOHH will be staffing an information table. If you would like to help educate the public about Historic Huntley, send an email to info@HistoricHuntley.org.

Discover the beauty and importance of wetlands. Stroll the forested paths and immersive half-mile boardwalk trail to learn about the plants and animals that live in the park. Enjoy interactive displays and activities. Registration recommended. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows/wetlands-awareness/050326>. For more information, call 703.768.2525. ❖



Tony Wrenn's *Huntley* Available for Free Online!

When Historic Huntley first came to the attention of historians and architectural experts in the late 1960's, the Fairfax County History Commission solicited a study of the property, which was undertaken by Tony P. Wrenn in collaboration with the Fairfax County Division of Planning. The resulting report, *Huntley—A Mason Family Country House*, was published in 1971. Although out of print, it is now available for free online as part of Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/40558>. ❖

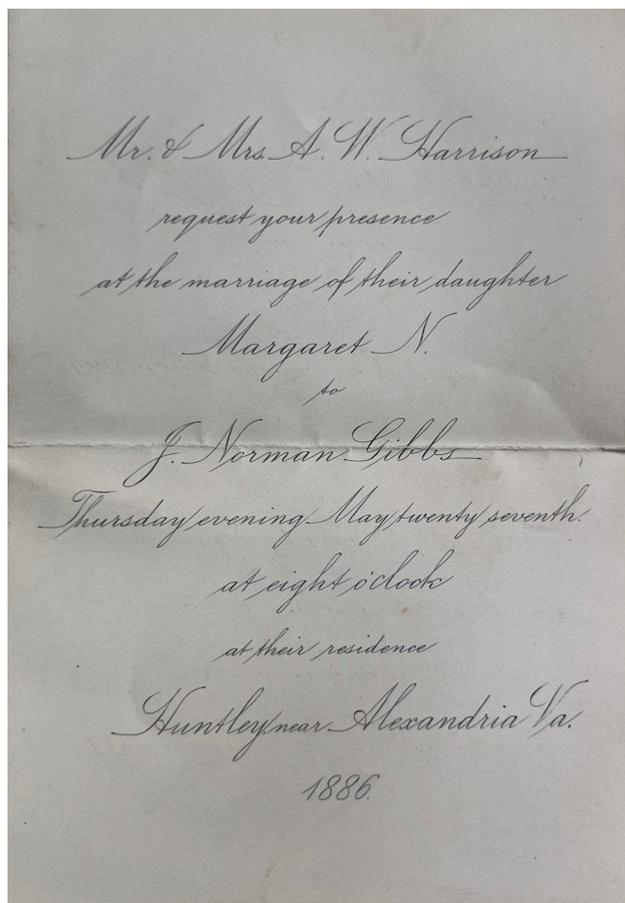
Tony Wrenn's *Huntley—A Mason Family Country House*, 1971.
Photo by Todi Carnes.

Harrison-Era Items Return to Huntley!

Thanks to the generosity of longtime FOHH Board Member and Advisory Council Member Susan Hellman, items related to a 19th-century resident of Huntley are returning to Huntley—or at least to the FCPA collections facility. The resident of note is **Margaret N. Harrison**.

Together with the **Pierson family**, Margaret's family purchased Huntley in the aftermath of the Civil War and owned it until 1946. Harrison Lane, the road running from South Kings Highway to Lockheed Boulevard and passing alongside Huntley, is named after Margaret's family.

In 1886, Margaret wed J. Norman Gibbs at Huntley. An original invitation to the event is one of the items being donated by Susan Hellman. The other two are books once owned by Margaret Harrison. They came into Susan's possession as a result of her relation to the **Gibbs family**. FOHH is grateful for these Harrison-era materials. Thank you, Susan! ❖



Original invitation to the 1886 wedding of Margaret N. Harrison and J. Norman Gibbs being donated to the FCPA by Susan Hellman. Photo courtesy of Susan Hellman.

Upcoming FCPA Programs at Historic Huntley

For more information and to register, call 703.222.4664 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes. Preregistration is required for many programs. A tip for finding **ALL programs** at Historic Huntley. Under Direct Search, click on Find Your Class. Enter the following: Search text: **Historic Huntley**; Category of activity: **All Categories**; Place: **Historic Huntley**; Month: **All Months**; Day of the week: **7 Selected**; Age range: **All Ages**

Twilight Hilltop Tour (Adults) • March 28, 6:45-7:45 p.m., Code: D3E.2HGT

Historic Huntley sits high upon a hill overlooking Hybla Valley and Huntley Meadows Park that is even more dramatic and stunning by the setting sun. Join us after hours for a special tour and see the house in a different light. Light refreshments served afterward. Dress appropriately for the weather. \$10

Colonial Life for Homeschool (6-12 years) • April 16, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Code: 925.S48O

Did you know that Huntley Meadows Park was once part of George Mason's holdings? Discover this forgotten Founding Father as you make your own candle, design your own stencil to mark crops, write with a quill pen, and decide the future of the Virginia colony. \$16

Mason Tea (Adults) • May 7, 1:00-2:30 p.m., Code: 87A.Q97U

Enjoy an afternoon tea circa 1830 much as Betsey Mason would have, with the gleam of polished silver and proper tea etiquette. Sample a menu of tasty treats appropriate to the period in an historic setting as you brush up on your tea history. Tour of Historic Huntley included. \$35

Ice Cream at Historic Huntley (All Ages) • May 9, 2:00-3:00 p.m., Code:633.VIJI; May 30, 2:00-3:00 p.m., Code: 633.WMTK

Make and enjoy hand-cranked ice cream as Huntley's Harris family may have done. Discover how the histories of ice cream and Huntley follow a similar path from elite luxury to family fare. Tour of Historic Huntley included. \$10

Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge (11-17 years) • May 27, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Code: FE0.XT31

This program satisfies most of the requirements to earn the badge. Scouts must complete all prework before the start of class. Pre-work and program details available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/scouts. Scouts unable to complete all requirements may receive partial credit from their merit badge counselor. \$48

Great Inventions Camp (8-14 years) • Weekdays, July 27-31, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Code: 79B.3YSF

Enjoy hands-on exploration of some of the great inventions and concepts in history including communications, flight, the printing press, compasses, and simple machines. Conduct experiments and problem-solving challenges throughout the week, finishing with a delicious experiment in thermodynamics by making (and eating) ice cream. \$379 ❖

Tour Historic Huntley: Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., April 18 through the end of October

Discover a view for all time during a tour of Historic Huntley, with its vistas, voices, and stories, many reflecting the American quest for freedom. The tour includes the unfurnished late federal-style circa 1825 villa, farm outbuildings, stories from the Huntley community, and an unparalleled view of Hybla Valley. A Fairfax County Park Authority site, the property is on the National Register of Historic Places, the National Park Service's Network to Freedom, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites.

The villa is a short walk up a steep hill. An ADA-compliant cart is available on request; please contact us in advance. The grounds are open from dawn to dusk from April through the end of October.

For tours, advanced registration is recommended. Purchase tickets at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley/hours-tour.

\$10, adults; \$8, seniors, youth, students; free for children up to 4. Check in at the lower house adjacent to the parking lot at 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306. For more information or to schedule a private tour by appointment, call 703.768.2525. ❖

Huntley-Related Web Sites

www.historichuntley.org

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley/

www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

Join Friends of Historic Huntley today!

Support Historic Huntley by joining this group of history- and historic preservation-minded people. Members receive the newsletter, an invitation to a members-only event, and a 10% discount on FOHH merchandise. FOHH is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. With your volunteer efforts and financial support, we can make a difference!

Name _____ Tel _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Huntley Headlines and event notifications are emailed to members.

Current and past issues of the newsletter and event information can be found at www.historichuntley.org.

- \$15 Individual \$20 Family \$10 Student/Senior
 \$150 Lifetime Membership Additional donation _____
 New Member **Renewing Member** **Total enclosed** _____

I'm interested in volunteering in the following area(s):

HH (work with staff at HMP): Docent Greeter Special Events

FOHH: Fundraising Program Planning Public Relations Research

Send completed form with check payable to *Friends of Historic Huntley* to:

FOHH, P.O. Box 7241, Alexandria, VA 22307-0241

Questions? info@HistoricHuntley.org

Huntley Headlines is produced by Friends of Historic Huntley, a local citizens group formed to preserve Historic Huntley and related cultural resources through advocacy and education.

Board of Directors: Todi Carnes, President • Robbie McNeil, Vice President • Carolyn Gamble, Secretary • Jere Gibber, Treasurer • Erica Hershler, Publicity • Charlotte Brown • Peter Christensen • Patty Young • Todi Carnes, HMHOA Representative

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Contact changes:

Please send your email or mailing address changes to info@HistoricHuntley.org or **FOHH, P.O. Box 7241, Alexandria, VA 22307-0241**.

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P.O. Box 7241
Alexandria, VA 22307-0241

www.historichuntley.org
info@historichuntley.org • 703.768.6987