



The Museum of Hounds & Hunting Expands to Middleburg

Written by Kaitlin Hill | Photos by Shannon Ayres

Originally founded on May 24, 1985, at Morven Park in Leesburg, the Museum of Hounds & Hunting North America is adding a second location in Middleburg's historic Duffey House located at 11 W. Washington Street. The exhibit will officially open on March 14, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

"What was so attractive to all of us is that we feel this is the heart of Hunt Country," shares Donna Rogers, a founding member of the museum who has worked with Nancy Bedford, the museum's board chairman, on the expansion.

For Rogers and Bedford, the preservation of foxhunting art and artifacts hits close to home. They are the wives of Dr. Joseph M. Rogers, MFH of the Loudoun and Fairfax Hunt, and Erskine L. Bedford, MFH of the Piedmont

Museum | Page 11

Left: A view of the Duffey House from above. Right: Donna Rogers and Nancy Bedford.



"We have things in storage that we didn't have room to exhibit in Morven Park. Now with this second location ... it's a great opportunity to get more of our exhibits out where people can see them." – Rogers



Museum | From page 10

Hunt, the founding fathers and trustees of the Westmoreland Davis Foundation. Named for the last private owner of the estate, WMDF opened Morven Park to the public in 1967 with a mission of preserving collected art and artifacts.

Of the decision to expand, Rogers shares, "We have things in storage that we didn't have room to exhibit in Morven Park. Now with this second location ... it's a great opportunity to get more of our exhibits out where people can see them."

A sneak peek of the space reveals carefully curated rooms of all things hounds and hunting with pieces from George Washington and installments that hit even closer to home, such as the opening exhibit of Jean Bowman's paintings and the display of Howard Allen's photography. Captivating foxhunting paintings are complemented by an impressive collection of bronzes, books, bits, and spurs. Bedford explains, "Everything is related to the hunt world. We will have pieces that horsemen will relate to and appreciate, but we will also introduce visitors to the history and art of the hunt world." She continues, "We also plan to enhance our exhibits to include art from sporting art collectors."

Conservation will be a focus, too. "Just like it's seen in Sam Savitt's paintings, we hope to include hunt scenes set in our lovely scenic Virginia countryside to reflect the beauty of land conservation," Bedford notes.

Visitors to the museum will even have the chance to take a piece of the exhibit home with them. "We will offer for sale some fine paintings and bronzes. In our museum gift shop, visitors will find a selection of prints, posters, books, cards, and

small gift items," explains Bedford.

Though, the ability to offer programs is perhaps what Bedford and Rogers are looking forward to most in the new space. "We think we can do more gathering here," Bedford says. She adds, "We are going to have refreshments, fireside chats, and other events inviting speakers to enlighten and entertain visitors with stories on distinct items in our

"We are so grateful to be here in Middleburg. The whole community has been so welcoming and working with the town has been just wonderful." – Rogers

collection."

So much more than a static display or solemn museum, "it is something that is active," Rogers emphasizes.

Part of the action is engagement. Bedford and Rogers, the only remaining members of the museum's original founders, are hoping to attract younger generations. "We're looking for people interested in the museum and who would like to be involved with us, that would like to be docents or serve on a committee," Bedford continues, "We are additionally looking to involve new members, younger members on the board to carry on the legacy into the future."

"We want it to be warm and wel-

Museum | Page 12

Top: The museum has no shortage of books on hunting. Bottom: "Ms. Cornelia Harri-man Gerry, Bronze" by Charles Carey Ramsey sits on a table in front of "Gentleman on Grey Horse" by John Frederick Herring Sr. (1795-1865), an oil painting donated by Grace Rosenberg.



Museum | From page 11

coming," Rogers says. Bedford adds, "On select days and times, a reading space in our library room will be available for members."

As the ribbon cutting approaches, Rogers shares, "We are so grateful to be here in Middleburg. The whole community has been so welcoming and working with the town has been just

wonderful. We are delighted for the museum to have this opportunity to expand our exposure to the world."

Bedford adds, "We wish to acknowledge and thank the many generous donors that enriched our museum collection."

Take one look around the space that both women have worked so diligently to set up, and there is no question that the new museum is a

must-visit for seasoned foxhunters, equestrians, and those completely new to the sport alike. Each room with its art and artifacts captures the spirit of foxhunting and the culture of Hunt Country that Rogers and Bedford have dedicated so many years to preserve. **ML**

For more information on the Museum of Hounds & Hunting North America, visit mhhna.org.

Left: The first floor has a little bit of everything, from hats and spurs to bronzes and prints. Right: A close-up of "Running Hounds" by Jean Bowman (1916-1996).