

This nomination is for the following award: **Friends, Foundations and Board Outstanding Member Award**

First Name **Jody**

Last Name **Lazar**

Library Affiliation (if applicable) **Winter Park Public Library**

Title (if applicable) **Community Librarian**

Street Address **460 E. New England Ave.**

City, State, ZIP **Winter Park, FL 32789**

Telephone Number **4076233300**

E-mail Address [jlazar@wppl.org](mailto:jlazar@wppl.org)

Are you nominating an individual or a group/organization for this award? **Individual**

First Name **Polly**

Last Name **Seymour**

Library Affiliation (if applicable) **Winter Park Public Library**

Title (if applicable) **Friend**

Street Address **1804 Summerfield Road**

City, State, ZIP **Winter Park, FL 32792**

Telephone Number **4076441180**

E-mail Address [seymourtandp@gmail.com](mailto:seymourtandp@gmail.com)

Year(s) the nominee's activities took place **1978-present**

Will you be submitting any supporting documentation? **Yes**

If you would like us to review web pages in consideration of this application (including videos or other supporting materials that are stored online), please enter the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) below.

**Essay Shortly after Polly moved to Winter Park with her husband, as he assumed the role of President of Rollins College in 1978, she began volunteering for the Friends of the Winter Park Public Library. That fall, a Library board member set up a card table in front of the building to sell used books and raise money for the Library in advance of its move to a new building down the road. Polly staffed the table that afternoon and raised \$55. From that point she was hooked as both a bookseller and devoted Friend of the Library. After that initial sale, Polly began planning for and managing book sales to support the Library she loved. For the next seventeen years, Polly collected, sorted, priced, stored and organized tremendously successful, semi-annual book sales and donated nearly \$250,000 to the library. She used her ingenuity to assist with some of the logistics, for example, getting the Rollins fraternity men to lift and move books from storage areas back to the Library for the sales. Her involvement in the Library was not solely in the book sales, however. Polly became an active member in the Friends organization and was a member on the Library Board of Trustees. Polly also served as President of the Board of Trustees in 1987. In the early 1990s, Polly worked tirelessly during the Library's capital campaign which raised money to expand the building. From the planning stages to**

the final ribbon cutting where she spoke, Polly was instrumental in helping the Library offer more space for computers, expand the collections, add meeting rooms and more. In 1995, when the third floor was added on to the current Library building, then director, Bob Melanson, worked with Polly and the Friends organization to create a space inside the Library to have a year-round book shop. Polly championed the idea and the New Leaf Bookstore opened its doors in October 1995. It raised \$50,000 in its first year of operation, more than twice the amount raised annually by the previous book sales. During the first several years, Polly spent every weekday, and some weekends too, working in the New Leaf to establish the policies and operations that carry through to this day. The New Leaf was designed and is still operated to be open seven days a week and be staffed completely by volunteers. There are over 35 dedicated volunteers who flourish under Polly's warm leadership style. Polly is remarkably charitable and always publicly recognizes the contributions of other volunteers. Through both her Friends of the Library newsletter and her New Leaf volunteer's newsletter she always singles out a volunteer and warmly describes their significant acts and personal interests. In addition to leading the bookstore from inception to success, Polly managed membership in the Friends of the Winter Park Library. Each year she would write letters to all three hundred Friends supporters asking for renewal contributions. These letters outlined what the donor's money was supporting and offered a 10% discount card for New Leaf purchases. Most contributors were long-standing Friends and learned of the Library's updates from Polly's newsletters. An unexpected bonus for the community has been the opportunity to donate items for the good of the Library. Winter Park is quite a literate community and has been very generous in giving books, movies and music to the New Leaf for sale. Donors are personally thanked by one of the gracious volunteers and know that their contributions are valued. The library's image has been enhanced by the personal touches that Polly has established as the New Leaf business model and the care she has given in cultivating faithful volunteers and Friends. All the way through the 20th anniversary of the store in 2015, Polly could often be found in the bookstore workroom, sorting books and identifying unique and special items. On several occasions collectible books have been donated and Polly has auctioned them off for a premium. Items other than books are often donated to the bookstore; Many years ago a donation of floral prints came in and was auctioned for over \$7,500. The revenue from the New Leaf Bookstore is vitally important to the operations of the Library. Annually, the store gives over \$50,000 to the Library which funds summer programs, technology enhancements, collection additions and more. Early on, Polly set \$1,000 per week as a goal for bookstore sales and she has met that goal year after year. Amazingly, in 2011 the total from all the used book sales that Polly had run topped \$1,000,000. The true proof of a project's success is whether it can be sustained beyond the term of its original, passionate leader. It is our good fortune that Polly has left a long legacy of devoted volunteers to care for the New Leaf store in her retirement. The volunteers carry on with Polly's best practices and new leadership is emerging to keep the shop operating with a business mind and a gracious heart. Polly has left a lasting gift of service and leadership that we will cherish always. She is a true best Friend and this is why we chose to nominate her for the FLA Boards, Foundations and Friends award in 2017.

Summary Polly Seymour moved to Winter Park in 1978 and that fall she volunteered at the Friends of the Library's initial book sale. For the next 16 years, she planned and organized semi-annual book sales for the benefit of the Library. Additionally, in the 1980s Polly took on a leadership role as President of the Library Board of Trustees. In 1995, after the Library expanded, a Friends bookstore was created and for 22 years Polly has been at the helm of operations. Each year, the New Leaf

**Bookstore contributes over \$50,000 to the Library's annual budget. Polly's passion for the Library can be seen through her commitment to volunteerism and leadership. This Library has had no finer Friend.**

# New Leaf Book Store a Boon for Readers

Observer 2/8/96

By Carole Arthurs  
Observer staff

The New Leaf Book Store at the Winter Park Public Library contains thousands of used books ranging from best sellers to special volumes, says store manager Richard Conlee. "The community has been so generous that we still have books in storage," he added.

The small store is located in a small corner of the library. Outside the store, a book rack holds hardbound copies of best-selling novels.

Thousands of quality used books are available to patrons at very low prices all year long. Books are arranged by topic.

A smaller reading room, decorated much like a reading room in your own home, holds some 1,500 high quality books, best sellers, coffee table books, rare and collector's books and encyclopedias, all individually priced.

Both rooms are well lighted for pleasant browsing.

The New Leaf Bookstore is one of three used bookstores in Central Florida libraries, however, Polly Seymour, a Friends member and co-chairman of the book sales, believes the New Leaf Bookstore carries a much higher quality of books, "mainly because of the type of readers who frequent the Winter Park Library."

According to Conlee, it was Seymour's idea to have the reading room. She sorts the special books and prices them, all at an affordable cost. "This room is a real luxury, the envy of every book store," says Conlee.

There is also a special children's section and future plans call for a little children's nook with child-sized tables, chairs and toys. There is even a separate shelf for home schoolers.

Another room is the sorting and pricing room, which also houses the duplicates waiting to be stocked. Volunteers do all the work, including pricing, loading and unloading, and ar-



Volunteers at Winter Park Library's New Leaf Book Store - Pictured (l to r) Polly Seymour, Mary Fuller, Richard Conlee, and Clare Klein. Observer photo by Carole Arthurs.

ranging them on the shelves.

The main room accommodates some 6,000 hardback volumes priced \$1.50, approximately 800 paperbacks priced at 50 cents. Magazines sell for 15 cents and record albums are \$1.

The all-volunteer New Leaf Bookstore is operated by Friends of the Winter Park Library. Even the store manager is a volunteer. "The Orlando Library has a paid store manager," Conlee noted.

The store opened part time last fall but is now fully operational. "The committee did a lot of research and we found out a lot of what we *didn't* want to do," acknowledged Seymour. "We are still learning how to expand or contract because we have no control over what comes in." However, Seymour was quick to admit that right now they have an abundance of books. "We plan to have a 'sidewalk sale' on March 29 and 30 with lots of our overstocked books and paperbacks and several reference and business volumes."

The bookstore is open seven days a week, and utilizes over three dozen volunteers. Regular operating hours are Monday, 2-8 p.m., Tuesday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday noon to 6 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.

"We also will have special promotions," said Conlee.

Right now there is a paperback giveaway with purchase.

The bookstore attracts many regulars each week, those who are insatiable readers and look to books as their best friends. "When you love to read, you may be alone, but never lonely," noted Seymour.

The Winter Park Library is located at 460 E. New England Avenue in Winter Park.

**THANK YOU  
THANK YOU  
THANK YOU**

**For making 1997 such a great year. If you would like to join a committee in 1998 please let us know.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Business:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_  
  
**Committee preference:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you know someone who should belong to the Winter Park Chamber? We will be happy to contact them to explain the benefits of membership.**

**Membership Prospects**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return to registration table.*



**Second Annual**

# **Chamber Awards Luncheon**



**Thaddeus and Polly Seymour  
1997 Outstanding Citizens of the Year**

sponsored by

# **Florida Power**

**Winter Park Civic Center  
February 3, 1998**











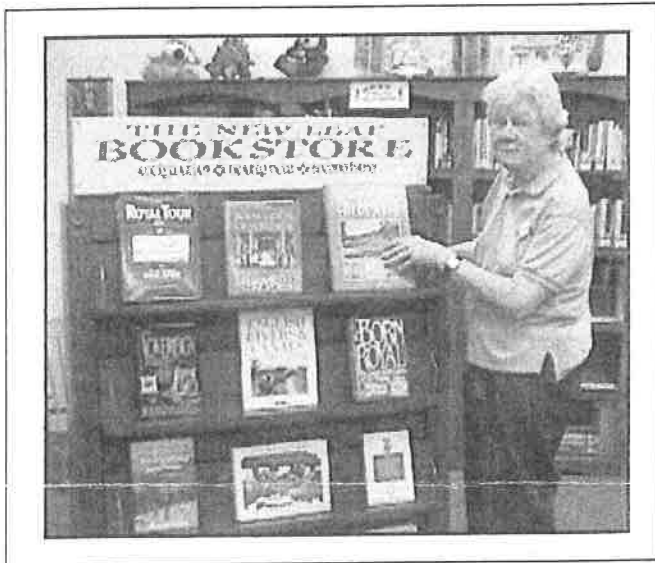
# Bookmarks *from the* Friends

Winter Park Public Library • 460 E. New England Avenue • Winter Park, FL 32789

Volume One, Number 1 • Spring, 2000

## NEW LEAF DOING WELL: A REPORT FOR OUR FRIENDS

The Friends of Winter Park Public Library opened The New Leaf Bookstore almost five years ago. The New Leaf, selling donated used books, records and magazines at very reasonable prices, is enjoying success as both a community resource and an income-producing asset to the Library. In case you haven't stopped by lately to visit the Library and the New Leaf, *Bookmarks* will keep you informed periodically about the Friends' service to the Winter Park Public Library and the local reading public.



Volunteer Mary Moody displays new acquisitions

Forty-one volunteers manage and staff the New Leaf, which is open for business seven days and 42 hours weekly. For fifteen years, the Friends sponsored semi-annual book sales, which were popular but very much dependent on an ample supply of sunshine, strong backs, and pre-sale storage space. When all three proved difficult to count on, and as the Library added a third floor, the New Leaf sprouted in the former technical services space on the main floor. Since its opening in October, 1995, the New Leaf has generated nearly \$200,000, averaging twice the amount raised by the old book sales. More than \$40,000 per year is being turned over to the Library to contribute to operating expenses and special programs.



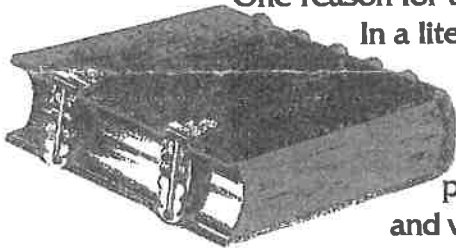
## COMPUTER-ASSISTED BOOK PRICING and SALES

The internet has recently come to the New Leaf, thanks to a grant to the Library from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation. Books of possible interest or value can now be researched on-line, by consulting other dealers' information. "Having a computer in the workroom is improving our knowledge and pricing decisions," says manager Bill Cline. "We work hard at making the entire operation as professional as possible, and knowing what we have is a big part of it." In line with a growing practice of other book dealers, several unusual items have also been sold through the internet.

Besides books of all ages and types, The New Leaf also carries magazines, records, videos and audio tapes, prints, posters, maps, and old postcards. Even a few children's toys, bookmarks, games, and puzzles turn up in the boxes of donations, and a new home can usually be found for all of them. What cannot be sold is selected for various recipients: many current magazines are taken to the Winter Park Hospital by faithful volunteer Pat Johnston; several teachers collect free *National Geographics* and other educational materials for classroom use; decorators purchase discarded books for display. Finally, weeded and unsaleable items are given to the Salvation Army, which in turn, makes good use of them.



## RARE AND FINE BOOKS



One reason for the New Leaf's success is the quality of books given by donors. In a literate community like Winter Park, which values its fine library, a good many beautiful books are regularly given to the store for recycling. All donated items are carefully reviewed; prices are kept reasonable, making good reading available for all patrons. The small size of the bookstore and frequent sorting and weeding keep the collection fresh. That, says volunteer manager Bill Cline, brings in regular customers as often as several times a week: "Our best books go out quickly, but which are the best is a matter of the very individual judgment of our customers!" Most books sell for \$1.50 for hardcovers and \$.50 for paperbacks, although a "specials" room where items are individually priced is very popular. Even very new books are generally priced at about 1/4 to 1/5 of retail. At the same time, rare books have brought up to \$500 and a particular 19th century 'find' yielded floral prints which in 1997 were sold individually for a total of over \$7,500.



Sue Struth

One of the satisfactions of working with books, according to frequent volunteer Sue Struth, is getting to know the stock enough to help patrons find particular items. She recently located a hard-to-find poetry book for a friend, who became, she said, "an instant convert" to the New Leaf. The bookstore also maintains a search file of customer requests which often yields results and grateful customers. "Just now, Jan Karon's books are on several people's want lists," notes long-time book sorter Eleanor Thorsen, who has volunteered with the Friends for seventeen years. "It's a constant treasure hunt," she adds, "but we are always happy to receive ANY and ALL books." Donations come from all over Central Florida.



Eleanor Thorsen

**When I get a little money, I buy books. And if any is left, I buy food and clothes.** ERASMUS 1456-1536

This bookmark is one of a series available without charge to patrons of the New Leaf Bookstore. Pick one up next time you stop by!



# Bookmarks from the Friends



Winter Park Public Library 460 E. New England Avenue Winter Park, FL 32789

Volume Twelve Number 1 • Winter/Spring, 2011

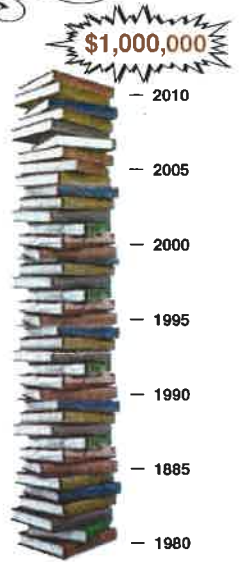
## One Million Dollars!

### Contributed By Friends Since 1978

Since the Friends of the Library started recycling books in 1978, sales have provided almost \$1,000,000 to support the operation and collections of the Winter Park Public Library. We try to imagine just how many books that represents, and how many volunteer hours!

According to Treasurer Larry Heint, we closed the books on 2010 with \$63,000 in sales, which brought the total receipts from book sales and the Bookstore since 1978 to \$993,347. That means that we will likely hit the \$1 million mark in early February. What a wonderful Valentine's Day gift for the Library and the Winter Park community! As we used to sing at parties (to the tune of *Happy Birthday*) "'Tis love brings us here."

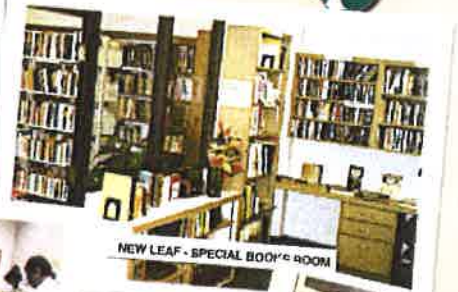
The story of this journey is filled with grateful memories of hundreds of volunteers who have collected, sorted, shelved, and sold books for the enjoyment and enrichment of Winter Park neighbors for over thirty years.



## 1978 to 2011



LARRY & LINDA HEINT



NEW LEAF - SPECIAL BOOK ROOM



MARCIA WRIGHT

POLLY SEYMOUR



ELEANOR THORSEN



BOOK SALE - COMMUNITY ROOM



BILL CLINE



GEORGE STEWART

It was in the fall of 1978 that Geneva Drinkwater, retired Rollins history professor and dedicated Library board member, set up a card table in front of the old building on Interlachen Avenue. The Library was getting ready to move to its handsome new brick building on New England, and it was necessary to lighten ship. She thought it might even earn some money for the Library and its Friends. Polly Seymour and Marcia Wright took it from there, and in one sunny afternoon they raised \$55. Over a period of seventeen years, twice-a-year book sales in the Community Room and parking lot raised a grand total of \$247,794. among the very first volunteers were George Stewart, who has served on the Friends board ever since, and Eleanor Thorsen, who sorted and selected the books for three decades.

In 1995, when the third floor was added to the Library building, Director Bob Melanson arranged for a bookstore to be located in the old Tech Services space on the first floor. Richard Conlee organized a planning committee and served as the Bookstore's first manager. He passed the torch to Bill Cline, who managed the New Leaf for nearly a decade. When Larry and Linda Heint moved to Winter Park, they brought financial and management skills which have helped lead the New Leaf to its current success. The New Leaf Bookstore is open seven days a week, staffed by nearly forty volunteers. Today the Bookstore continues to provide books for the Library and bargains for grateful customers; the Friends regularly raise over \$1,000 a week to support the collection and programs of the Winter Park Public Library.