

A WEBSITE HISTORY OF THE
PONTE VEDRA FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

2001

After eight years of planning, the \$2,000,000 project of enlarging the Ponte Vedra Library was ready to begin. In 2001, the PVB-FOL, under the leadership of President Cathie Portrie, contributed \$330,000 to the project, most of which made possible the addition of a 200 seat FOL Community Room. In 1999, the PGA Tour pledged \$10,000 a year for ten years to support the building and equipping of the PGA Multi-Media Room, to house teleconferencing equipment. The FOL advanced the balance of \$70,000 and purchased the necessary equipment.

By April, 2001, the architects and the contractor were on site, but their work during 2001 did not interfere with the regular activities of the Library. However, by December, 2001, the outside work was done, and the Library had to close so the inside modifications could be made. The Library Staff and FOL Volunteers moved books and equipment to the Palm Valley Community Center or to storage. The Center checked out books, the Winston YMCA provided space for the Children's activities and the Neptune Beach Library was available, free of charge, to Ponte Vedra Patrons.

The contractors, River City Contractors, declared bankruptcy. Because the project was bonded, St Johns County completed the job under the supervision of Mike Rubin.

2002

On January 23rd, 2002, Carolee Bertisch was installed as President of the FOL. Former Ambassador, the Honorable Marylin McAfee was the speaker. Before the building opened, Carolee initiated the First Strategic Planning meeting, Formulating our Future, for the FOL Board of Directors, on March 14 and 15, with Lawrence Webster as consultant. One year and three year plans were adopted and implemented. They included a Speakers' Bureau, a year-round Bookstore, Volunteer and Volunteen Corps, an Advocacy Committee, a Finance Committee, Library Support, a Website, Archives and a Friends Festival.

During June and early summer, library staff and volunteers, led by Branch Manager Betty Frederick, moved books and equipment back into the building. The official county opening was on August 11, 2002. The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch library was increased in size from 11,700 sq. ft. to 24,800 sq. ft., more than 100%. It was the first public library in NE Florida to have a dual wireless internet zone.

On September 22, 2002, a Grand Reopening Celebration of the new library was held as a Friends Festival, chaired by Marthat Stachitas and Luisa Kuhn, which included an opening ceremony under a tent with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts raising the flag, the Nease Student Band playing, Carolee Bertisch and Mary Jane Little, Library Director, spoke. Former FOL President Jack Morgan wrote a history of the FOL for the occasion.

On December 15, 2002, thanks to the efforts of Guy Di Carlo, Seymour's Bookstore was officially opened in the FOL office. The name, Seymour Books, was chosen in a contest of 350 entries from elementary school students in Ponte Vedra. The Manager was Mims Cushing, with a roster of volunteers staffing it every day.

2003

At the January, 2003, Annual Dinner Meeting of the FOL, Carolee Bertisch was installed for a second term as President, and Dr. Michael Gannon, Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Florida, was the speaker.

The Annual Book Sale at Our Lady Star of the Sea was a great success. Seymour's also had a two-day sale of paperbacks for the beach, for trips, and for summer reading. While this income paid for much to enhance the Library, possibly the most important was the revision and reformatting of the Friend's bi-monthly publication CHECK THIS OUT. The magazine contained a complete listing of all FOL and Library activities, and was sent to every member of the FOL.

The Teen Advisory Board was established, to encourage teen library activities.

Adventures in Art, a new monthly series focused on the arts, developed by Carolee Bertisch and Jan Bialka, began in collaboration with FOCUS Cummer.

The event of the year was the community read, PONTE VEDRA READS CROSS CREEK, chaired by Susan Drain and Neva Nelson. In addition to an opening night on October 8, 2003, featuring Deborah Gianoulis, there were four weekly discussion groups and two demonstrations of Cross Creek Cookery. The FOL gave a total of 550 copies of the book to Ponte Vedra Patrons.

The FOL Community room was decorated with blinds and cornices.

A Baldwin Baby Grand piano was purchased by the FOL

Dr. Gerson Yessin and Carolee Bertisch began a monthly Music Series, sponsored by the FOL, featuring musicians from the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and the UNF Music Department.

2004

In January, 2004, the Annual Dinner Meeting of the Ponte Vedra Friends of the Library elected Gary Reichow President. Michael Kelly, Chief Operating Officer of the Jacksonville Super Bowl Host Committee, was the speaker.

The Theme for the year was MORE PROGRAMS. The most important one was the inauguration of the Jack Morgan Volunteer Service Award, \$500, which was awarded to Julie Papparelli. Other programs for Teens were Book Talks, Teen Movies, Game Bash, Sunday Sundae, Volunteer Orientation, Teen Bingo, Teen Crafts, Just For Teens (summer reading), Baby Sitting, CPR, Dating Violence, and a Teen Halloween Party.

For Toddlers, in addition to the 15 Storytimes, there were Family Film Festivals, Major Author Steven Kellogg, and Seymour's Book Shop for Kids in early December with gift wrapping, refreshments, and Santa.

For Adults, there were 20th Century Art programs, Friends On the Go, Guy DiCarlo's Civil War program, a Gathering of Poets, and a Music Program every month. There were also plans for a Major Author event, and the first discussions of creating an outdoor reading area.

All this was in addition to FOL purchases of Equipment and supplies to enhance the services of the Library.

2005

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Friends of the Library was held on January 17, 2003. Mary Davis was elected President and St. Johns County Commissioner Bruce Maguire was the speaker.

The monthly Art and Music Programs took off in January and became so popular that the Library Manager was worried that some sort of control of attendance might be needed to comply with the Fire Codes! There were also four Storytelling for Adults Programs, four Speakers Programs, and a Reader's Theater. The Major Author was David Baldacci who spoke on "Researching and Writing the Great American Novel". This program was held at the Sawgrass Marriott.

The highlight for Teens was the awarding of the Jack Morgan Scholarship to Volunteen Lanny Benson at the Volunteer Luncheon.

For Children and Families there was a Family Festival attended by 375 people, the wonderful Halloween Party, and the Children's Major Author Event where Hugh and Frances Kaiser presented "Pelican Pete".

All these programs were in addition to the Library Staff / FOL supported regular Storytime, Volunteen, Computer, and Library Use Programs.

Among other things, Library Support completed the Library's collection of Pulitzer and Nobel Prize Winning Books, and purchased some Ethnic Cookbooks requested by the Teens.

The continuing concern of the Board throughout the year was the Library Courtyard. By December, it was ready for construction!

2006

The 2006 Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Library re-elected Mary Davis as President, and John Delaney, President of the University of North Florida, was the speaker.

With the new hours for the Library and Seymour's Bookstore and the programs substituted for the Toddlers Storytime in the summer months, CHECK THIS OUT was essential for the Patrons of the Library.

The Major Author event with Khalid Hosseini, author of “The Kite Runner” was held at the Lazzara Theater, and was attended by 785 Patrons. It had inspired many special events.

Guy DiCarlo won the Trustees and Friends of the Library Award for Outstanding Service or Achievement, State of Florida. The Award was presented at the Florida Library Association Convention, held in Lake Buena Vista on April 21, 2006.

Sadly, Jack Morgan, Founding Father of the Ponte Vedra Friends of the Library, died in April. The Morgan Family requested donations to the Friends of the Library. The Jack Morgan Scholarship of \$1,000 was presented to Volunteer Kelley Braden at the Volunteer Luncheon.

The Semi-Annual Book Sale was held in the FOL’s Community Room for the first time.

In October, the Library Courtyard was dedicated with County and Library Officials speaking. Patrons were eagerly scanning the pavers they had bought on which their favorite book titles had been engraved. The FOL paid \$70,138 for the Courtyard.

2007

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Ponte Vedra Friends of the Library was held at the newly renovated Marsh Landing Club House. Jan Bialka was installed as President, and Dan MacDonald, Food Editor of the Florida Times Union, spoke about “Cook Books”.

Since the FOL sponsored many author appearances, and one author requested refreshments, these events were organized into The Book Talk Café in April, 2007.

Work was ongoing to develop the Website and to make it more “user-friendly”.

The Silent Auction, showcasing books with special value, was started in August; the PGA Tour Room was used as a Better Books Room at the Semi-Annual Book Sale in September; and a 50 cent table of books was available at Seymour’s Bookstore.

Library Support was purchasing extra copies of popular books that had six or more Patrons on the waiting list.

The Major Author event featured Sue Monk Kidd, author of “The Secret Life of the Bees”, inspired many special events.

For Teens, the highlight of the year was July 21, the release date of “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows”. They celebrated with a Library Lock-in Party.

The Children celebrated the Chinese New Year of the Pig, and of course, had a non-scary Halloween Party.

All this was in addition to the on-going FOL and Library Staff programs and series listed in CHECK THIS OUT.