

# Check this Out

PONTE VEDRA BEACH FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY  
• • SPRINGTIME 2026 NEWSLETTER

## Message from Our New FOL President Mary Gebhart



## A Bright Year Ahead for Our Library



New leadership, record-breaking success,  
and exciting changes for our youngest readers



Dear Friends,

I am honored to begin my term as President of the Friends of the Library and grateful for the energy, generosity, and commitment that define this remarkable community. As we look ahead, it is clear that 2026 is shaping up to be an exciting and meaningful year for the Ponte Vedra Beach Library and the Friends of the Library.

Our 2026 membership campaign was a wonderful success, welcoming 401 members – including 366 renewed members and 35 new members. Thank you to everyone who joined or renewed during our three-month campaign (October-December 2025). Your support directly helps ensure that our talented library staff have the resources needed to serve our community

And a friendly reminder: memberships are welcomed and accepted year-round.

We are still celebrating an extraordinary milestone -- Seymour's Bookstore's record-breaking 2025 sales of more than \$103,000. This achievement truly reflects what we can accomplish together. Our heartfelt thanks go to:

- • Our generous community members who donate books daily
- • Loyal customers who shop regularly in the Bookstore and at special book sales
- • And of course, Paula Nardon and the more than 40 dedicated Seymour's Volunteers

Volunteers and Community helped Seymour's reach a first-ever \$100,000+ milestone!



(See the related article on page 5 to learn more)

## Children's Library Renovation Update

by Leslie Kleiman

We're officially on our way! With permits approved, architectural drawings finalized, and new flooring and furniture ordered, the Children's Library transformation is moving full steam ahead.

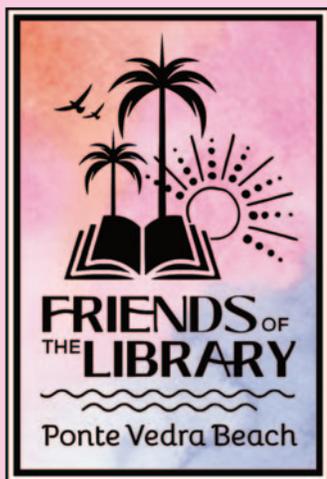


Behind the scenes, our librarians have done an extraordinary job packing up part of the Children's Library and thoughtfully relocating the rest to the FOL Community Room, where children's services will continue during construction. Extra applause for this incredible team—they worked tirelessly to ensure there's still ample space for children's programs, books, and discovery while the renovation is underway.

Construction is scheduled to begin March 1st and wrap up before the primary elections --fingers crossed! We're counting down the days and can't wait to welcome families back to a bright, reimagined Children's Library and a joyful grand opening celebration!

## Celebrating a BIG YEAR at Seymour's!

President's Message continued on page 2



## 2026 FOL Board of Directors

**Mary Gebhart**  
President, Membership

**John Mencke**  
Treasurer

**Estes Carns**  
Secretary

**Remington Chenore**  
Governance

**Leslie Kleiman**  
Children's Library  
Renovation

**Felicia Mashin**  
Publicity

**Paula Nardon**  
Manager,  
Seymour's Bookstore

**Linda Profaizer**  
Communications,  
Newsletter Editor

**Marianne Stein**  
Historian

**Sharon Van Hees**  
Art Wall

newsletter created by  
Laura Chenore

## Message from Our New FOL President continued from cover

As I write this, we are enthusiastically preparing for our February 28 members-only Annual Event, the [Golden Dreams Celebration](#). Inspired by Willy Wonka, the theme reflects the creativity and joy guiding our work on the Children's Library Renovation. Special thanks to FOL members **Laura Chenore** (for her beautiful creative designs and leadership), **Anne Eshelman**, **Shea Lox** and others for their commitment and hard work in bringing this magical evening to life. I look forward to celebrating with many of you at the event. Photos from the evening will be available on our website soon.



After months of thoughtful planning and design, construction on the Children's Library is beginning any day now, with the new space expected to open by late summer. We are excited to see this "Golden Dream" become a reality for our youngest readers and their families.

Finally, 2026 is a year of *focused volunteer growth* for FOL as we strengthen our ability to support the Library well into the future.



We are pleased to welcome **Remington Chenore** to the Board as our new Governance Chair. (See article on back page)



We are actively recruiting volunteers for a wide range of opportunities – from assembling mailings to serving on the FOL Board. Areas of need include volunteer coordination, event planning, technology (website, bulk mailings, social media), legal support, membership, and more.

There truly is something for everyone. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me directly at the email address below.

Thank you for being such an important part of the Friends of the Library community. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, ideas, or feedback. I look forward to the year ahead and all we will accomplish together.



Warm regards,

*Mary Gebhart*

president@folpvtbfl.org





# PVB Manager's Reflections . . . Kim Odom -- Manager



During this beautiful season of growth and transformation, we pause to celebrate libraries. Every April, **National Library Week** offers an opportunity to highlight the valuable role libraries -- and library professionals -- play in impacting lives and strengthening our communities.

This spring, we invite you to explore new and joyful experiences at your library. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:



## Catch up on the latest news and trends >>

-- Access over **5,000 popular magazine titles** for free with Libby.

-- Download daily editions of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal with your library card.



## Try a new "Thing" >>

Board games, bird-watching kits, ukuleles, and more make up our growing **Library of Things** collection. It's a great way to try out gadgets and activities for free before you buy.



## Extend your visit >>



Browse our monthly calendar of events and plan to linger a little longer during your next visit. Join a program, spend time at one of our craft or puzzle tables, bring a friend—or make a new one!

## Explore local history >>

Be sure to stop by our **Veterans Museum Digital Kiosk**, located in the front lobby. With just a touch of the screen, you can explore the stories of Veterans from St. Johns County and beyond. Veterans are also welcome to register and share their own service memories.



## Tell us about it >>



The best part of our job is connecting with our community. We'd love to hear what you're reading, what interests you, and how we can continue to improve your library experience. I invite you to schedule a chat with our leadership staff, submit a comment card during your visit, send us an email, or give us a call.



**Your voice truly matters to us.**



**LIBRARY CLOSINGS**

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Please note the following dates the library will be closed:

Good Friday  
April 3, 2026

Easter Sunday  
April 5, 2026

Staff Development Day  
May 6, 2026

Memorial Day  
May 25, 2026



## At A Glance . . . Library News



### Adult Services Event Highlights

#### Art & Music

The library continues to be a vibrant hub for lifelong learning by fostering creativity through a wide range of art- and music-focused programs. From ukulele instruction and music workshops to hands-on art classes, these offerings invite adults to explore self-expression, develop new skills, and uncover hidden talents. Visit [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org) to view the full schedule and learn more.

#### Borrow. Play. Explore. Return!

Why buy it when you can borrow it from the Library? The Library of Things offers a unique collection designed to support fun, learning, and everyday needs. From Book Club and Memory Master Kits, to games, puzzles to everyday household items ~~ all available with your Library Card. Check out a ukulele, a blood pressure kit, or a birding backpack complete with two pairs of binoculars.

Things can be checked out by resident and paid non-resident card holders who are at least 18 years old. Browse the full collection at <https://sjcpls.aspendiscovery.org>

#### Book Club Bags

Are you a member of a book club that struggles to get enough copies of a book for everyone? Do you have trouble coming up with discussion questions? The new **Book Club Bags** may be just the solution for your group.

Each bag includes **10-12** copies of the same title enabling everyone in your group to read the book at the same time and eliminating the need to wait for your "hold" to come in before your next book club meeting.

The bag also contains background information about the author, along with discussion questions that will facilitate conversation among your members.

Book Club Bags are available for checkout at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch and you can place a hold on additional titles. Bags can be checked out for **60 days**, which allows plenty of time to distribute books, meet for discussion, and return the materials to the Library.



#### ☀ Welcome to our New Assistant Circulation Supervisor ☀

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch is pleased to announce the promotion of **Sylvia Bauer** to Assistant Circulation Supervisor. Sylvia previously served as a Circulation Assistant and joined our team after working as a Reference Assistant with the St. Petersburg Library System.

An enthusiastic reader, her favorite genre changes daily ~~ today its mystery!



#### What is a Memory Café?



A welcoming, supportive social gathering for individuals experiencing cognitive challenges and their caregivers to enjoy time together in a relaxed, judgment-free environment. Friendship, fun, and understanding are at the heart of every meeting.

This special program is offered in partnership with the St. Johns County Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) Task Force

and meets from  
1:30 ~ 3:30 pm on:  
Monday, March 23  
Monday, April 27  
Friday, May 29

Please RSVP to reserve your spot by calling 904-827-6950 or visiting [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org)





# BEHIND THE SHELVES



## The People Who Make Seymour's Special



The story of **Seymour's Volunteers** continues in this issue of *Behind the Shelves*. Each issue, we shine a light on the dedicated individuals who keep Seymour's Bookstore welcoming, organized, and full of discovery. This spring, we're featuring our **Wednesday volunteers**—a team whose behind-the-scenes efforts ensure that every visit to Seymour's feels just a little bit magical.

### Our WEDNESDAY Team

**Wednesdays** at Seymour's are powered by a devoted group of five volunteers. One shift is shared, with **Jeanne** volunteering on the first Wednesday of each month and **Brenda** covering the remaining three. They are joined each week by **Adrienne, Laura, and Gina** ~~ all of whom play an essential role in keeping the bookstore running smoothly.



Stop in and say hello to our Wednesday **VOLUNTEERS**

### MEET JEANNE KENNEDY

(noon until 2 pm shift)

Jeanne's journey to Seymour's also began through a personal connection ~~ this time, a neighbor who was already volunteering. She especially enjoys meeting the wide variety of people who pass through Seymour's doors and learning about their reading interests.

Jeanne is continually amazed by how much a volunteer-run bookstore contributes to the larger library. She credits **Paula** for expertly organizing the store and for creating the engaging promotions that keep Seymour's fresh, fun, and thriving.



Jeanne

### MEET BRENDA SANDVOSS

(12 pm to 2 pm 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesdays)

After retiring from a long career as a high school librarian (media specialist) and elementary and special education teacher, Brenda was ready for something new. After a year of retirement and redecorating, she discovered Seymour's and began volunteering.

Brenda enjoys meeting fellow book lovers, exploring the wide variety of titles, and spending time in her favorite section—trade paperback fiction. She loves the welcoming atmosphere at Seymour's, from seeing children's faces filled with wonder to chatting with friendly patrons.

In her free time, Brenda reads contemporary fiction and biographies. If she could put one book in everyone's hands, it would be **Hillbilly Elegy**. Volunteering has reinforced for her how important the library is to the community and how meaningful volunteer contributions can be.

Seymour's, she says, offers affordable reading material and a place to connect - and she jokes it would be perfect with coffee and a cat or two. Brenda enjoys volunteering so much she laughs that she'd almost pay to do it. "If you love books," she says, "you'll feel right at home at Seymour's."



Brenda





### MEET LAURA BURKE

Laura remembers the exact moment she knew Seymour's was meant to be part of her life. Years ago, while browsing the store, she was struck by a powerful feeling: "This is my niche --- a place I need and want to be."

Laura loves talking books with everyone and is known for asking the simple but irresistible question: "What have you read?" There's nothing she enjoys more than recommending a great book to someone who truly loves to read. Her favorite sections include **fiction, memoirs, biographies of fascinating people, and animal stories.**

One of Laura's greatest joys is helping someone finally find a book they've been searching for. She reads across genres, authors, and time periods, never limiting herself to just one type of story.

Volunteering at Seymour's has even made her a better book club facilitator. She's gained confidence in recommending great reads, developed a deeper knowledge of books -- and best of all, formed wonderful friendships.

If Laura could place one book into a child's hands, it would be Misty of Chincoteague by Marguerite Henry. For adults, she recommends The Ride of Her Life by Elizabeth Letts.

"I may be biased," Laura says, "but I believe we have the best library on the East Coast because of Seymour's -- just ask anyone!" She adds that volunteering at Seymour's isn't about staying busy; it's about having a genuine passion for books, reading, and serving.

(2pm until 4pm shift)



### MEET GINA BLISS

Gina first got involved with Seymour's **about 16 years ago**, shortly after retiring. Wanting something more meaningful than lunches with friends, she stopped by Seymour's to drop off a donation -- and simply asked how volunteers were hired. A week later, she was working in the store, and as Gina puts it, "the rest is history."

Over the years, Gina has found great joy in meeting customers, talking with people of all ages, and forming lasting friendships. She describes her time at Seymour's as both fun and fulfilling, noting that she learns something new every day from the wonderful community members who shop and donate--helping Seymour's support the library, which in turn supports the broader community.

To Gina, Seymour's has become almost like a **community center**, and she encourages anyone considering volunteering to take the leap. "You won't regret it," she says. "You'll gain so much from the experience."

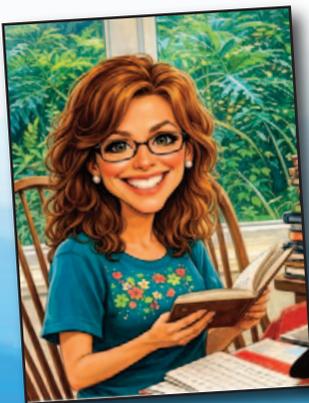
(4pm until 6pm shift)

### MEET ADRIENNE HIBBARD

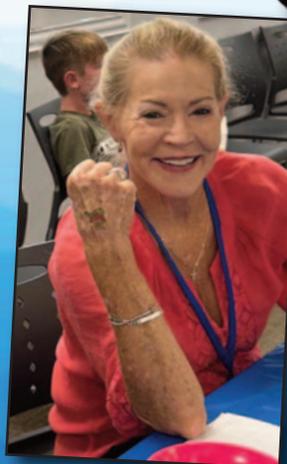
Adrienne was introduced to Seymour's by another volunteer--and it didn't take long for her to feel right at home. Now retired, she finds volunteering at Seymour's to be the perfect fit. Adrienne loves meeting customers, helping them find exactly what they're looking for -- or sometimes discovering a book they didn't even know they wanted!

Her favorite areas of the store are **non-fiction and the Children's section**, where she enjoys matching readers of all ages with books that spark curiosity and joy.

(10am until noon shift)



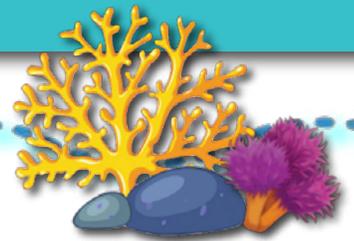
Adrienne



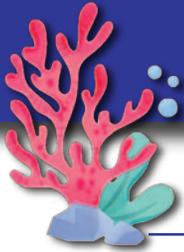
Laura



Gina



# March ~ May 2026 Schedule of Programs



## Adult Programming Recurring

**Tech Help with David** THU | Mar 5 & 19 | Apr 2 & 16 | May 14 & 28 | 10:30am-12:00pm

**Book Lovers Book Club** @ 11:00am \*

Mar 6 | *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

Apr 10 | *A Land Remembered* by Patrick Smith

May 1 | *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd

\***Book Club** will be held offsite March -May 2026 at: Christ Church, 400 San Juan Dr, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

**Color, Craft, & Connect** TUE | Mar 10 & 24 | Apr 14 & 28 | May 12 & 26 | 10:00am-12:30pm

**Crafters Corner** THU Mar 26 | THU Apr 23 | WED May 20 | 11:00 am or 2:00 pm | RSVP

**Women's Singing Circle** TUE | Mar 17 | Apr 21 | 3:30 pm | RSVP

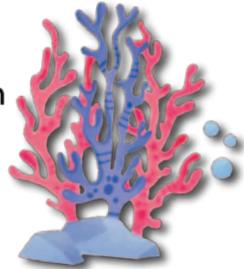
**Financial Wellness Seminars** WED | Mar 25 & Apr 22 | 11:00 am-12:00 pm | RSVP

**Talk & Walk Series: Learn a new topic from a different expert each month before going for a walk with them around scenic Bird Island Park behind the library.**

**Healthy Walking Habits** Wed, March 19 @ 1:00 pm | RSVP (Innovative Physical Therapy)

**Native Plants** Tue, April 7 @ 10:30 am | RSVP (Native Plant Consulting)

**Memory Café** Mon Mar 23, Mon Apr 27, Tue May 26 | 1:30 – 3:30 pm. | RSVP



## Adult Programming One-time classes

**Will it Waffle** Sat, Mar 7 @ 10:30 am | RSVP

**Stories & Screens: A Talk on Staying Close to Grandkids from Afar** Wed, Mar 11 @ 1:00 pm | RSVP

**Ukulele for Beginners** Tue, Mar 31 @ 3:30 pm | RSVP

**Plein Air Painting at the Beach** Wed, Apr 22 @ 2:00 PM | RSVP

**Learn the basics of Plein Air Painting from a professional instructor.**

Class will be held offsite at South Ponte Vedra Beach Park Pavilion:

2993 S Ponte Vedra Blvd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

**Art w/ Kasha** Sat, May 2 @ 10:00 am or 2:00 pm | RSVP

**Intro to Crochet** Tue, May 19 @ 2:00 – 4:00 pm | RSVP



## Summer Reading

**SUMMER READING KICK-OFF – CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250<sup>TH</sup> SAT | MAY 30 | 10:00 am**

# March ~~ May 2026 Schedule of Programs



## Storytimes



**OFFSITE Storytime at Brown Family YMCA (170 Landrum Ln, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082)**

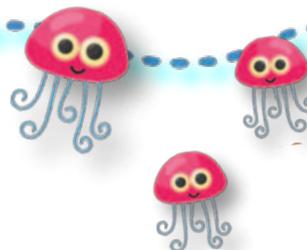
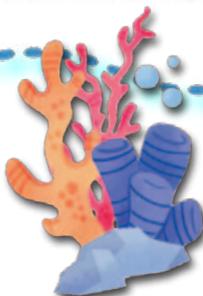
- **Babytime 0-12 mo.** | WED | 10:00 am | MAR 11 and 25, APR 8 and 22
- **Family 1-5 yrs.** | THURS | 9:30 am & 10:30 am | MAR 12 and 26, APR 9 and 23

**OFFSITE Storytime Nocatee Community Center (245 Nocatee Center Parkway, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081)**

- **Family 1-5 yrs.** | THURS | 9:30 am & 10:30 am | MAR 5 and 19, APR 16 and 30



## Youth Programming



**Music Makers WED | MAR 4 | 3:00 pm**

**KIDS STEM: The Muscular System WED | MAR 18 | 3:30 pm and SAT | MAR 21 | 3:00 pm**

**LEGO STEM Adventures (Gr 2-5 only) SAT | MAR 28 | 3:00 pm**

**Music Makers WED | APR 1 | 3:00 pm**

**KIDS STEM: The Immune System WED | APR 8 | 3:30 pm and SAT | APR 11 | 3:00 pm**

**KIDS LET'S MOVE Scavenger Hunt in the Park WED | APR 15 | 3:30 pm and SAT | APR 18 | 3:00 pm**



## Teen Programming



**Teen Advisory Board MON | MAR 9 | 5:00 pm**

**Teen Create Healthy Breakfast MON | MAR 23 | 5:30 pm**

**Teen Field Day Games MON | MAR 30 | 5:30 pm**

**Teen Baking in a Mug MON | APR 6 | 5:30 pm**

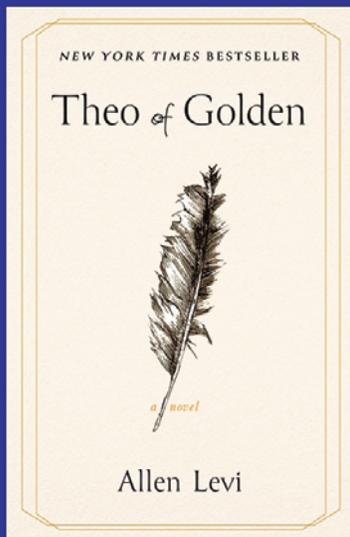
**Teen Advisory Board MON | APR 13 | 5:00 pm**

**Teen Switch Dance-Off MON | APR 13 | 6:00 pm**

**Teen Trivia Night MON | APR 20 | 5:30 pm**

**Teen Advisory Board MON | MAY 11 | 5:00 pm**

# FOL Member Book Review



This review was written by FOL member Maureen Cipriano. She is a prolific reader and checks out probably an average of five books a week from the Library. She says she reads the first 30 to 40 pages of a book to decide if it is one that she wants to read all the way through. **This book was definitely a keeper!**

## Theo of Golden

by Allen Levi

Theo of Golden is the kind of novel that unfolds gently and lingers long after the final page. Set in a small southern town, the story introduces Theo, a quiet stranger whose simple actions ripple outward, subtly affecting the people he encounters.

What makes this book so memorable is not just the storyline, but the way it celebrates small moments—kind gestures, unexpected connections, and the act of truly noticing others. Through Theo's interactions with the community, the novel reminds us how generosity and presence can quietly transform lives.

Warm, thoughtful, and deeply human, Theo of Golden is a story about kindness, creativity, and the connections that bind a community together. It's easy to see why this debut novel has been so well received. One of my favorite reads of all time and highly recommended.



Note: Theo of Golden is one of the books featured in the Library's **Book Club Bag** program.

# So Far . . .

# The STORY

**A snapshot of how the Ponte Vedra Beach Friends and our Library grew**

**more to come.**

by Marianne Stein,  
FOL Board Member and Historian



Friends of the Library (FOL) Ponte Vedra Beach has a rich and evolving history rooted in community advocacy, volunteer leadership, and a shared belief in the power of libraries to bring people together. Since our beginnings in 1985, the Friends have played a key role in supporting the growth and vitality of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

Over the years, FOL has been deeply involved in many milestones ~~~ from supporting the library in its early locations to helping shape the development of our current building. Through fundraising, advocacy, and hands-on volunteerism, the Friends helped make possible the addition of the Community Room, the creation and ongoing success of Seymour's Bookstore, and most recently, the renovation of the Children's Library ~~~ an investment in future generations of readers.



We are currently organizing our historical files, photos, and stories to ensure these important moments are preserved. We look forward to sharing a more complete and detailed history later this year. Stay tuned as we celebrate the people, partnerships, and community spirit that continue to shape our library today. You may even find out how Seymour's got its name!



Note: If you have old news clippings, photographs, or personal stories about the Friends of the Library or the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library over the years, please consider sharing them with FOL Historian Marianne Stein at [bimmstein@comcast.net](mailto:bimmstein@comcast.net) Your memories are an important part of our story.

# 2026 Seymour's Lobby Book Sale Lineup

Mark your **CALENDAR**  
these are days worth circling!

Get ready, book lovers!

Seymour's is planning four more lobby book sales for 2026 – four great chances to browse, discover, and support your library, one book at a time.

Please keep in mind that while the Children's Area renovation is going on, it may affect the sales dates.

Here's the tentative 2026 schedule to keep handy-- sales start on Thursday & end on a Saturday:

- April 16-May 2**
- June 25-July 11**
- Sept 10-26**
- Nov 19-Dec 12**



Each sale brings fresh finds, hidden gems, and irresistible surprises -- so come often and see what's new on the tables. You never know what treasure will be waiting for you!



## ASK SEYMOUR, HE KNOWS . . .

**Q:** This issue, we asked Seymour to answer some of our most common questions about fiction at Seymour's Bookstore. What makes it onto the shelves? What goes into the \$1 sales? And what's the deal with hardcover vs. trade paperback?

**A:** First of all, a big thank you to our generous community for donating such wonderful, gently used fiction books. Your donations keep Seymour's shelves full and our prices affordable! Here's how it works:

- ~~ Fiction dated 2020 and later is sold in the bookstore.
- ~~ Fiction published from March 2025 forward is considered a *new arrival* and is priced at \$8 (hardcover) and \$4 (trade paperback).
- ~~ Fiction dated 2020 – March 2025 sells for \$2 each, any format.
- ~~ Anything published before 2020 heads to our always-popular \$1 book sales.

And yes, these are real bargains! For example, *Never Flinch* by Stephen King, currently in the store, often sells for \$10-\$14 used online, but at Seymour's it's just \$8 — and most of our books are in "like new" condition.

**Quick tip:** Hardcovers are sturdy with rigid covers and sewn bindings, while trade paperbacks are larger, higher-quality paperbacks at a lower price — a happy medium between hardcover and mass-market.

Many patrons buy the mass-market books (small paperbacks) to take to the beach and read, thus calling them "beach reads". Sold for \$1 each.

Have a question for Seymour about Seymour's Bookstore or the Library?

Send it to [newsletter@folpvbfl.org](mailto:newsletter@folpvbfl.org)

~~~ he loves to share  
what he knows!



### Have Books to Donate? (Or Even a Special Treasure)



Have a shelf you're ready to share? A mystery waiting for a new reader? We are always happy to accept your book donations -- every book has the chance to begin a new chapter at Seymour's!

If you have a large number of books to donate, please call Seymour's at 904-295-3202. If needed, we can provide boxes (when available) to help you pack up your books before dropping them off at Seymour's Bookstore.

Seymour's also loves to take puzzles as donations. Guy DiMarco, former FOL Board Member, and the other "Puzzlers" at Starling of Nocatee Independent Living donated over 40 puzzles to Seymour's.

