

In 1972, after retiring from the government, Cecil came to Palm Beach County and has lived there ever since. She settled on a small piece of land and created a virtual oasis on it. She enjoyed everything from tropical fruit trees to orchids. Everything she planted thrived. In addition to her natural gardening ability, she joined the Rare Fruit Council and two orchid groups as well as the local Audubon Society chapter, where she served on the Conservation Committee for many years. Her attendance at public meetings on environmental issues was extremely valuable, as well as her letters to politicians, where she put her ideals into practice.

In addition to her expertise and affinity for growing things, her lifelong hobbies of birding and world travel took Cecil to places where she observed hundreds of species of birds as well as indigenous plants. Ask her about botanical gardens anywhere in the world – her observations remain vividly intact.

When a few folks in Palm Beach County felt the necessity to organize a native plant association, Cecil was quickly recruited by one of the organizers. It didn't take much urging for her to join and from that time onward, her dedication to promoting, growing, and loving Florida natives has never wavered. Her influence is felt whether in the political arena, her almost perfect attendance at meetings and field trips, sharing plants with friends, chapter members, and others; and last but not least, her wealth of botanical knowledge generously shared with everyone. If on a field trip, it is a good plan to stay as close to Cecil as possible, for the experience will enhance one's knowledge of Florida's flora and fauna. Her ability to raise plants from seed is surpassed only by her generosity in sharing the results with others – with individuals as well as groups such as the newly formed butterfly association.

Over ten years ago, Cecil moved to a condo retirement community, complete with mono-landscaping and rules about planting around one's dwelling. Before anyone knew what was happening, there was a bit of beach sunflower here, a little beautyberry there, and then neighbors were pointing out her landscaping. Soon she was known as an authority on plants and invited to serve as chairperson of the Landscape Committee. With diligence, she advised the condo manager on all the latest news learned at meetings of the Palm Beach Chapter, educated him about the evils of some of the exotics preferred by many residents, and helpfully advised with cultivation techniques.

Cecil strongly feels that the most important issue and the greatest challenge facing FNPS is "reaching people and educating them about why planting natives is important. They do not understand the damage done by many exotics."

Peggy & Don Lantz

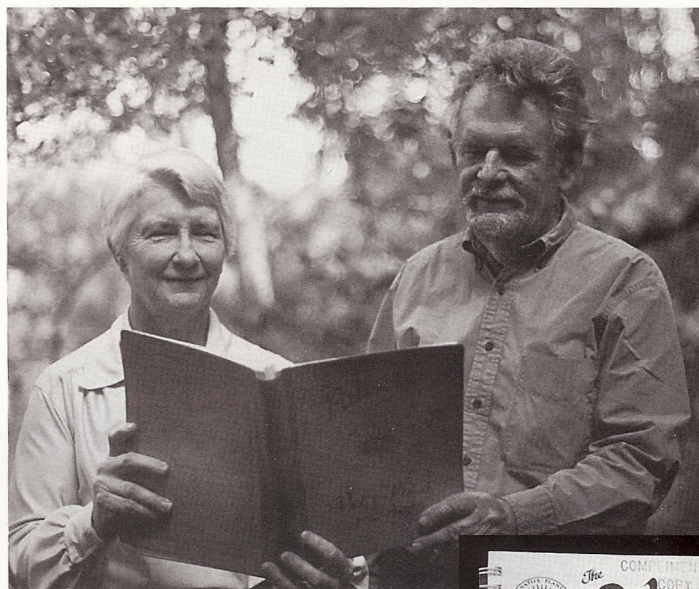
Founding Members of FNPS
Inaugural Editor of The Palmetto (Peggy)
For 15 years, the Voice of FNPS

Interview by Phyllis Gray

Peggy

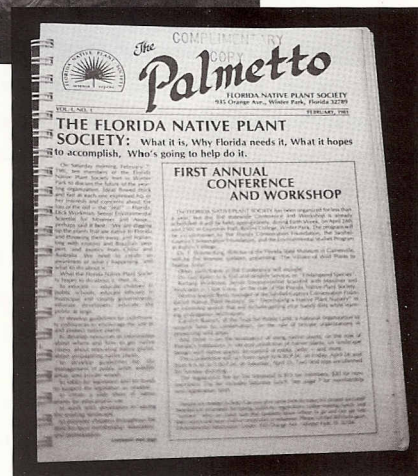
Peggy Lantz was born in Miami. She lived in Coconut Grove, in a little house built in the 1930s. When she was six years old, her family left Florida and moved to Massachusetts. She made a beeline back to the Sunshine State when she was old enough to leave

home and became a student at Rollins College, in Winter Park, where she earned a Bachelor of Music Education in 1955. She served as Director of Music in



Peggy & Don Lantz

**First issue of
The Palmetto,
February 1981.
Peggy's brother
lettered the
masthead which
appeared on the
inaugural eight-
page issue.**



churches from 1961 until 1989. Today, she is still involved with her church's music program, and occasionally serves in an interim capacity at Oakland Presbyterian Church, where she is also an Elder.

Peggy is a founding member of FNPS and served for years as a member of the Board of Directors. FNPS began as a state organization, and the chapter in Orlando was one of the earlier local chapters, along with Gainesville (Paynes Prairie), Naples, Melbourne (Conradina), Palm Beach, and Tampa Bay (Pinellas and Suncoast). Peggy's mother, Mildred Sias, was instrumental in starting the Tarflower chapter and was the first Secretary of the Central Florida chapter (later renamed Tarflower Chapter).

Peggy has been writing since she was a young child. In school and college, and later as a housewife, she sent items out to the Saturday Evening Post and other magazines, and eventually she was published in craft, music, and horse magazines.

Peggy wrote a series of articles on edible plants for the Florida Naturalist, which attracted the interest of Bill Partington [see interview in Spring Issue, Vol. 20, No. 1]. Bill called Peggy and asked her to write a native plant article for the newsletter being put together for the Florida Native Plant Society. After Peggy wrote the requested article about cabbage palms, she took the article to Bill Partington and quizzed him about when the proposed newsletter was coming out. He commented that they did not even have an editor yet. She replied: "Would you let me be the editor?"

So, two to three months later, the first issue of The Palmetto was published in February 1981. Peggy's brother, Fred Sias, lettered The Palmetto for the masthead, and this design was constant for the 15 years of Peggy's editorship. Volume 1, Number 1 of The Palmetto was eight pages: two 11x17 sheets folded in half. That first issue included articles by Daniel Austin; Ken Morrison, former editor of National Audubon's magazine and Director of Bok Tower Gardens at the time; Taylor Alexander, Professor Emeritus, University of Miami; and Peggy's article, "The Aeolian Harp Tree: Cabbage Palm." When deciding how many to print of the first issue, Peggy suggested a run of 2,000. They thought that was a lot, but when the time came to prepare the second issue, the first issue was realized to be a collector's item.

Peggy also edited *The Oasis*, the newsletter of the Orange Audubon Society, for a few years in the early 1980s. She then left that to become editor of *The Florida Naturalist*, the Florida Audubon Society's quarterly magazine, for more than six years. Editing both The Palmetto and *The Florida Naturalist* at the same time was a lot of work, but proved beneficial to both magazines by enlarging the network of contacts. Peggy was sometimes able to divert an article to the more appropriate publication, or call upon artists, photographers, and even authors for one publication to submit work to the other one. Most of the time, Peggy had enough articles on hand to fill the publication, but she occasionally wrote articles if needed to fill space.

One of her favorite moments as editor involved Paul Lyrene, associate professor at Gainesville in the Fruit Crops Department who wrote an article about blueberries and sent a note with it: "Don't make any changes without consulting me before you publish." So Peggy suggested a few minor revisions, and awaited his phone call for approval. Not only did he approve, when he submitted an article for the following issue, his instructions gave her permission to make changes – she didn't have to call. Other authors who trusted her, and submitted articles regularly, included a series by Eve A. Hannahs, "Butterflies;" Doris Rosebraugh, "Backyard Natives;" Lew Yarlett, "Grasses;" David Hall, "The Joy of Weeds;" and Dick Deuerling, "Edibles."

Peggy derived great satisfaction from the covers and deciding what to select for each issue. Some illustrations were drawings she saw and liked; she then went about securing permission for publication. The first issue with color, in November 1981, featured red-ink

enhanced drawings on front and back covers. The first full-color cover, Summer 1985, featured "Swamps" poster art by Linda Duever. Several cover designs were from t-shirt artwork by members.

Peggy's favorite color cover story is about the Red Hibiscus cover, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer, 1989. The printer's first effort "didn't look as anticipated" because the photo was not quite sharp enough, so a redo was ordered. The second effort, a photograph by Sam Hopkins taken in Tosohatchee State Reserve, was gorgeous color, but printed upside-down! The third effort turned the photo over, and the final cover looked great. Another interesting cover resulted when a good photograph to accompany an elderberry article [Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring, 1989] was not available for the cover, and with the deadline approaching, Peggy took in a live branch and had the printer scan the blossoms and leaves!

As inaugural editor, Peggy is proud to have seen the growth of The Palmetto from a small four-page newsletter to triple the size, with the addition of color. Peggy retired from her position as editor of The Palmetto at the end of 1995. Her personal copies of The Palmetto are bound in a handsome, hand-tooled leather binding. She is a leather craftsman, as well as a musician and writer.

In addition to being editor of The Palmetto, at FNPS Conferences Peggy inaugurated the book signings, led one workshop on native plant books, gave a slide show, and presented an essay on her wild yard. She also served as Publications Chair from inception of the first conference and has been involved with editing and other tasks for all of the following books published by FNPS: *Wild Things*, *The Return of Native Plants*, by Georgia Tasker; "Bibliography," by Hank Whittier, botany professor with UCF; *Planning and Planting a Native Plant Yard*, by John Beriault; *Butterfly Gardening with Florida Native Plants*, by Craig Huegel; *Florida's Incredible Wild Edibles*, by Dick Deuerling and Peggy Lantz; *Florida Plants for Wildlife: a Selection Guide to Native Trees and Shrubs*, by Craig Huegel; and *Common Grasses of Florida and the Southeast*, by Lewis Yarlett.

Peggy has authored two other published books. *Young Naturalist Guide to Florida* comprises articles written by Peggy and Wendy Hale, from the papers for young children in the Florida Naturalist during the six years Peggy was editor. After retiring as editor, the articles were combined into a book and published by Pineapple Press. The second Pineapple Press book, *The Florida Water Story*, was requested by the publisher and was inspired by the Florida Aquarium.

In recognition of her contributions to FNPS, Peggy received Silver Palmetto Awards in 1988 in "Appreciation for Service" and in 1995, upon her retirement, as recognition for "Outstanding Contributions."

As Peggy related, "When I was given my first Silver Palmetto Award by FNPS, I announced that when I first started the Palmetto all I wanted to do was be an editor, but after several years of working on the magazine, I also became devoted to native plants.

Don

Don is a native Floridian who grew up in Orlando. He graduated in 1951 from the University of Florida as an Electrical Engineer, and worked for 30 years for UNIVAC as a software engineer.

From the late 1950s until 1971, he worked on satellite launches at Cape Canaveral (and some are still in space!). His work then took him and Peggy to Minnesota for eight years.

After their return to Florida, and after his retirement, Don began his term as Membership Chair for FNPS in 1988. At that time, Don inherited current lists of names of the 1100 memberships, one computer disk, and original membership applications. Don computerized all of this information and created a comprehensive database. He encouraged past members to rejoin or renew. The membership more than doubled (up to 2,600) while he served the organization as membership chair, from 1988 through 1995. His initial effort was recognized with a Silver Palmetto award presented in 1989 for membership. In 1990, Don compiled a 10-year history of FNPS, which was published in *The Palmetto*, and wrote again in 1995 with the 15-year history. Don "retired" again when Peggy retired as editor of *The Palmetto*.

One of the biggest changes Don has noticed is in the finances. During the first ten to twelve years, the organization operated on a financial shoestring and the financial impact had to be considered before every decision. Don and Peggy reminisced about a situation in the mid 1980s when the numbers were cut so short for a run of *The Palmetto* that when the printer spoiled too many copies, there weren't enough copies to send to all of the members! But the story turned around about 1990. Membership was up and the conferences were doing well. Along with the growth in membership came reduced costs, increased revenue from publications, a prospering Endowment Fund, and donors.

As to the future, "FNPS is going great guns," asserts Don. "They are doing a lot of things right."

Together

Don and Peggy came to their present West Orange County home in Woodsmere, on the shore of Lake Lucy, 20 years ago when they moved back to Florida from Minnesota. Peggy's grandparents lived on Lake Lucy from 1914. Her father grew up here and in 1935, her parents bought property on Lake Lucy, and this property has been in the family ever since. When her parents retired, they moved back to Lake Lucy, and when Don and Peggy escaped from Minnesota they also moved back to Lake Lucy.

Don and Peggy bought five acres in the woods, intending to build in the future, and moved into a nearby house until they were ready to build. Instead they remodeled, and have lived in their home ever since.

When they moved into their house, the land had a lawn. It is now a jungle, with sword fern, beautyberry, and cherry laurel growing amuck. "What I plant, dies; what comes up, thrives," is Peggy's observation.

Don and Peggy have always been members of the Tarflower Chapter, and are also members of the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Wekiva, and Friends of Lake Apopka. Peggy is now again editing *The Oasis* for Orange Audubon. Once an editor, always an editor!

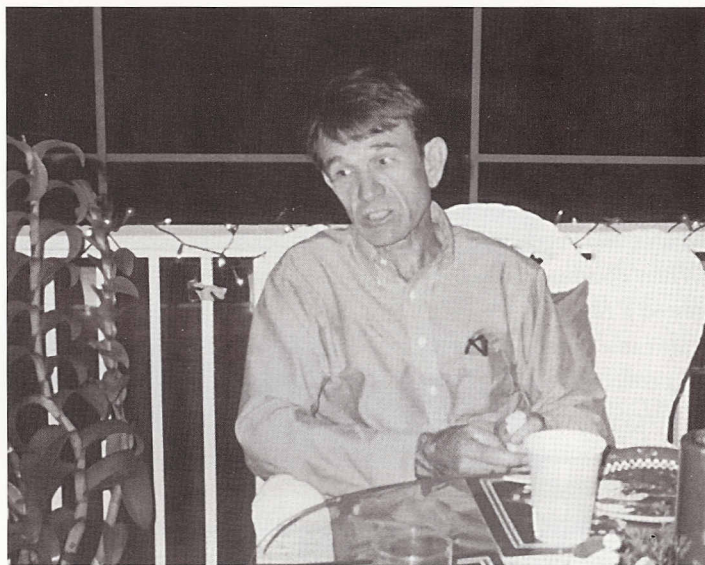
Don and Peggy also have four children and five grandchildren, scattered in Atlanta, Washington D.C., Oregon, and New Jersey – certainly their greatest accomplishment together.

Dick Workman

Past President of FNPS

Author of *Growing Native: Native Plants for Landscape Use in Coastal South Florida*

Interview by JoAnne Trebatoski



Dick Workman

Dick Workman is considered "Mr. Native Plant Society" to folks in Lee county. He is a founding member of the Florida Native Plant Society and the author of *Growing Native: Native plants for Landscape Use in Coastal South Florida*. He grew up on a farm in Waynesville, Ohio, where he developed an interest in natural systems. After studying zoology at Miami University in Ohio, the Air Force led him to the Mojave Desert and an interest in plants. He began an active role in environmental protection in 1969, and organized an event for the first Earth Day in 1970 on the campus of Victor Valley College in Victorville, California.

In 1973, Dick moved to Florida to assume the job of administrative director of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation. While there, he initiated the use of prescribed fire to manage interior marshes, the active control of exotic pest plants, and started the SCCF's Native Plant Nursery. He was active in the formation of the City of Sanibel and served as the chairman of the first vegetation committee that wrote Sanibel's first vegetation ordinance. He is a vocal proponent of the protection of native plant communities and has advised individuals and governments on the subject throughout Florida and the West Indies. He is currently president of