

**In this issue:**

Year in Review 2025	1-2
Holiday Party	3-7
Employee Awards	8
Around New Leaf	9-11
Cathy George Retirement	12-13
Employee Spotlight	14
Bite-Sized Books	15
Word Scramble	16
Where's your SSN?	17
Birthdays & Anniversaries	18
In Memoriam	19



## Year in Review 2025



New Leaf CEO Steve Jacobs with Payroll Manager Melissa Nunez (left) and Director of Financial Analytics & IT Michael Harris (right) at the annual New Leaf Board-Staff dinner.

The annual New Leaf Board of Directors — Staff dinner was held at Fraser’s Restaurant, where the company took the opportunity to gather and reflect on the year that was 2025. CEO Steve Jacobs led the company in remembering the year’s highlights, including the implementation of the New Leaf Housing Initiative, a program that now houses six New Leaf employees who have experienced homelessness or housing crises in the past.

Additionally, Steve recognized employee award recipients in the past year, including Payroll Manager Melissa Nunez for Payroll Excellence and Director of Financial Analytics & IT Michael Harris for Exceptional Performance, and thanked the New Leaf Board for their service and dedication to the company: President Darin Hand, Vice President Evett Morgan-Mueller, Secretary London Cook, Treasurer Johnny Johnson, Past President Steve Talmadge, members Dallas Viall and Gerald Sodano, and new member George Hernandez.

# Year in Review 2025 (continued)

Select New Leaf highlights from 2025:

- Completed our Working on Whidbey video project, and launched our YouTube channel. ([Check out our WoW episode and our crew videos!](#))
- Purchased five new janitorial vehicles for our hard-working team.
- Renewed our Galley contract. The Galley also received a Five Star accreditation for another year. They are at a quarter-century of full stars.
- Oak Harbor Chamber Member of the Year: Steve Jacobs.
- Thousands of dollars in donations, scholarships, and employee awards given out.
- Over 120 volunteer hours logged.
- Achieved CIMS-GB certification with honors.
- Hosted state representative Clyde Shavers to meet with supported employee Timmy Aston at the Galley.
- The number 2874 for some reason?
- Attended the SourceAmerica X Force conference in Indianapolis.
- Completed a successful financial audit.
- Participated in almost every large Oak Harbor community event, from Holland Happening to the Whidbey Marathon. Steve was the Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Adam and Ileshia were the world's best hole hecklers at the Chamber Golf Tournament.



Above: Steve addresses the Board-Staff dinner. In addition to sharing highlights from the past year, Steve announced the retirement of Accounting Manager Cathy George

Below: Cathy addresses the group to say a few words following the announcement of her retirement.

# Holiday Party

Another fun company holiday party at Oak Bowl!



# Holiday Party

## Continued



# Holiday Party

Continued 6073



# Holiday Party

## Continued





# Admin-Supervisor Christmas Party



The admin-supervisor team enjoyed a Christmas party at Tossin' Axes with lots of fun games and presents. It was a great time and a fun break from the norm.



# Employee Awards

Congratulations to Gary Anglum of Commissary Shelf Stocking, Casiano Atienza of Commissary Custodial, Christine Westman of Day Janitorial, and Nate Dymond of Night Floor Care on winning employee awards! Their hard work and commitment to the job are commendable.



# Around New Leaf



Top left: Jacob and Gene of the hardworking grounds crew with a helping hand.

Top right: Our newest employee housing tenant, Skyleer of Night Jan!

Bottom left: Some of the New Leaf admin team attended the NASWI winter social.

Bottom right: Kassandra Kast of Day Janitorial received a coin from CDR Michael Melendez Building 2771 for always showing up and doing an awesome job keeping their spaces looking great.

# Around New Leaf



Top left: A Washington Army National Guard Sikorsky CH-77 Chinook from Joint Base Lewis-McChord airlifted a WWII-era PBY-5A Catalina amphibious bomber to a new display location. It took a couple of attempts. A large crowd of locals braved the cold to observe the aeronautical endeavor.

Top right: Some of the admin team wait patiently for the liftoff.

Bottom left: HR leader Michelle Leach speaks to the Safety Committee.

Bottom right: CDC leader Sherry Stark was ecstatic to win the raffle.

# Around New Leaf



Top: New Toro 3200 Groundsmasters! These 37.4 hp diesel engine mowers feature all-wheel drive, fully adjustable suspension seat and steering column, and adjustable height, tilt-up deck for excellent mowing versatility across hilly terrain. They'll replace older Toros and will keep our Grounds crew working efficiently.

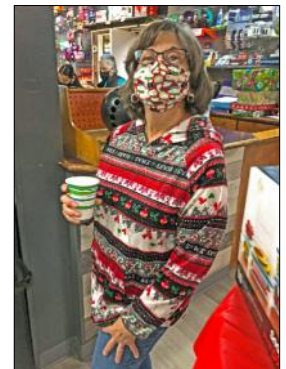
Bottom: Our corner of the world got hit with some pretty heavy pre-Christmas storms. Here Jacob Bevill of the Grounds crew tackles a downed tree outside the CPO club on Christmas Eve-Eve. Jacob and the crew estimated that the tree was 102 years old.

# Happy Retirement, Cathy!

Since 2017 Accounting Manager Cathy George has counted New Leaf's numbers and put them in the right spots. She's been a friend and coworker, a punctilious preparer of pecuniary papers, a master of accounts both payable and receivable.

But all good things must come to an end, and now she is retiring — at least from professional accounting work.

Here is a look back on Cathy's time at New Leaf.



# Happy Retirement, Cathy!



# Employee Spotlight

## Cathy George, Accounting Manager

### Where are you from?

Detroit, Michigan. I moved to the Pacific Northwest 36 years ago when my husband was stationed here. Before that we lived Iceland, Newfoundland, northern California, and Virginia Beach. I've been fortunate to live in so many beautiful places.

### How long have you been at New Leaf?

Nearly nine years. I've done lots of bookkeeping and accounting work in the past, so taking on this job at New Leaf was a good fit for me. I really enjoyed my work here. I had the opportunity to do financial research and to keep learning in my field. Staying busy and getting through accounting projects always gave me a sense of accomplishment.

### As your retirement approaches and you look back, what is something you learned about yourself while working at New Leaf?

New Leaf has been one of the best places I've ever worked. The work environment here is something I'm going to miss. At New Leaf I developed a stronger sense of resiliency. I got better at staying calm despite work pressures, and that came at least partly from the support and the friendship of my coworkers. I learned that I could rely on others without feeling that I let myself down.

### What are some of your favorite memories of New Leaf?

Some time ago I was out for a few months due to a serious illness, and when I returned I found my office filled with streamers and flamingoes. Each flamingo had a welcome-back message. Ever since then I bring the flamingoes back once a year to remember this gesture.



Another thing that I'll remember is this past Thanksgiving when the entire admin team had a Friendsgiving lunch together and shared our Thanksgiving traditions.

What I'll miss most about New Leaf is the people, the human connection. Working here truly has felt like being part of a family.

### What's next for you?

I like gardening and cooking, so definitely more of that. I also plan to spend more time volunteering. I've done a lot of volunteer work in the past for the Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Soroptimists, the Pigfest, and others, and I'm hoping to stay involved and contribute to New Leaf too.

### What's something surprising about you that people at New Leaf might not know?

I've gone ziplining! During a trip to Whistler I took the opportunity to go ziplining through the mountains. It was an adventure.

# Bite-Sized Books

## *Life Is an Attitude*

by Ron Heagy



Ron Heagy was an accomplished high school athlete whose life changed instantly at age seventeen when a diving accident left him paralyzed from the neck down. He was left with a literally broken link between his mind and body: he would never move below his shoulders again. Instead of surrendering to despair, Heagy chose a different interpretation of his circumstances. Over time, he learned to paint using a brush in his mouth, earned a master's degree in social work, and built a career as a counselor and motivational speaker.

In *Life Is an Attitude*, Heagy recounts this transformation — not as a sentimental story of inspiration, but as a deliberate process of mental reframing, discipline, gratitude, and contribution. His credibility comes from lived experience: he rebuilt a meaningful, productive life under extreme limitation and loss.

### **Attitude Is a Choice**

- Core Idea: While you cannot always control events, you can control your interpretation and response.
- Your mindset shapes your experience more than your conditions.
- Victim thinking drains energy; responsibility restores agency.
- Asking “Why me?” keeps you stuck; asking “What now?” moves you forward.
- Application: When facing a setback, deliberately reframe it: “Given this reality, what constructive response is available to me?”

### **Become Better, Not Bitter**

- Core Idea: Adversity creates a fork in the road — growth or resentment..
- Bitterness narrows your life; growth expands it.
- Resentment focuses on loss; resilience focuses on possibility.
- Emotional discipline requires conscious practice.
- Application: When resentment surfaces, pause and ask: “How can this experience develop strength or empathy in me?”

### **Discover Ability Within Limitation**

- Core Idea: New capacities often emerge when old ones disappear.
- Loss can redirect hidden talents and purpose.
- Constraints force creativity. Be open to it.
- Identity does not have to be defined by physical or situational limits.

- Application: List current constraints and identify one overlooked ability or opportunity within them. Then focus on what you *can* do.

### **Live with Gratitude and Perspective**

- Core Idea: Gratitude shifts attention from what is missing to what remains.
- Small daily blessings build resilience.
- Comparison can either discourage or inspire. Choose inspiration.
- Application: Practice daily gratitude — name specific positives, even in difficulty.

### **Contribute to Others**

- Core Idea: Meaning grows when life becomes outward-focused.
- Serving others transforms suffering into usefulness.
- Encouragement strengthens two people at once: both the receiver and the giver.
- Purpose anchors your attitude and provides
- Application: Identify one way your experience — even hardship — can help someone else.

### **Central Message**

*Life Is an Attitude* shows that fulfillment is not the product of favorable circumstances, but of intentional interpretation, disciplined perspective, and purposeful contribution. Attitude is not denial of hardship — it is the decision to respond constructively despite it.

**“What you look for is what you will see.”**

**- Ron Heagy**

# Word Scramble

Example: conea = ocean

1. nnitmaou

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2. tehikcn

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3. ptxeolrinoa

---

4. sptlae

---

5. wterni

---

6. sraetrue

---

7. rsnuttaera

---

8. meho

---

9. aednclra

---

10. hwcih

---

11. eppaar

---

12. rfevoer

---

13. ocmpheiorn

---

14. hgtkni

---

15. glear

---

16. rcseue

---

17. kdnrlaam

---

18. sdytuae

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# Where's your SSN?

Four randomly selected New Leaf employee Social Security Number (SSN) final-four numbers have been placed somewhere in this newsletter. If you find yours and notify the office before the next edition of the newsletter comes out, you win a \$25 gift card.

For example, if your SSN is 123-456-7890, look for "7890" hidden somewhere in the this edition of New Leaf News.



Look for your final four SSN hidden somewhere in this issue of New Leaf News! If you find it, call the office and tell us, and win a \$25 gift card!

It's like looking for this guy, but easier. And you can win a gift card!

## Details:

- ◆ Every single New Leaf employee's SSN, current as of this publication, is entered into the drawing.
- ◆ All numbers are entered into an AI tool which is instructed to select four of the entries at random.
- ◆ The four selected numbers are embedded in the newsletter in assorted ways. Look carefully!
- ◆ If you find your number, call the office and tell us you won. Your number will be verified, and once confirmed you'll be issued a \$25 gift card.
- ◆ The *Where's your SSN?* feature will be repeated in the next issue of the newsletter, with all current employee SSNs entered in the random drawing, EXCEPT: the SSN's of the four winners from the current issue will be removed from the drawing for the next issue. Those SSNs will be re-entered into the drawing for the next issue after that.

## Happy Anniversary

Kincaid, Glenn	37 years	Miller, Ieshia	2 years
Rollins, Kenneth	16 years	Navarro, Andrew	2 years
Zook, Jessica	13 years	Willis, Robert	1 year
Boatman, Zachary	12 years	Coonc, Skyleer	1 year
Davis, Jacob	12 years	Hopf, Genevieve	1 year
Pulu, Gene	9 years	Reed, Timothy	1 year
Estep, Travis	5 years	Alvarez, Felix	1 year
Bowden, Brent	4 years	Diouf, Camille	1 year
Hancock, Katherine	4 years	Giugliano, Elijah	1 year
Gutierrez-Hernandez, Nancy	3 years	Yancey, Brandon	1 year
		Atienza, Casiano	1 year

## Happy Birthday

Boatman, Zachary	December 2	Coonc, Skyleer	January 11
Cascio Jr, Patrick	December 3	Jordan, Henry	January 11
Maure-Rojas, Melanie	December 8	Sane, James	January 18
Boquiren, Francisco	December 12	Harrell, Keith	January 20
Miller, Ieshia	December 13	Diouf, Camille	January 26
Ventre, Chrystal	December 13	Bowden, Brent	February 2
Gutierrez-Hernandez, Nancy	December 13	Cole, DeWitt	February 2
Campbell, Brodhi	December 20	McMillan, Jerome	February 6
Kincaid, Glenn	December 20	Glass, Keith	February 11
Johnson, Matthew	December 23	Yancey, Brandon	February 13
Boyd, Tyler	December 30	Cook, Casey	February 16
Jones, Ashley	January 6		

## Welcome New Employees

Jones, Ashley	Galley
Olson, Benjamin	Day Janitorial
Cook, Casey	Night Janitorial
Volz, Eric	Night Floor Care
Bohm, Raina	Shelf Stocking
Maure-Rojas, Melanie	Administration

## World Scramble Answer Key

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. mountain    | 10. which      |
| 2. kitchen     | 11. appear     |
| 3. exploration | 12. forever    |
| 4. staple      | 13. microphone |
| 5. winter      | 14. knight     |
| 6. treasure    | 15. glare      |
| 7. restaurant  | 16. rescue     |
| 8. home        | 17. landmark   |
| 9. calendar    | 18. Tuesday    |



# In Memoriam: Duane Newman

It is with heavy hearts that remember the recent passing of one of the New Leaf family, Duane Newman. Duane worked on the Night Janitorial crew. He was a coworker, a friend, and a tenant of New Leaf employee housing.

His passing effects us all and reminds us to hold close to what really matters in life.



Duane Darron Newman  
7/17/1960 - 01/09/2026



**Duane Darron Newman**  
**July 17, 1960 - January 9, 2026**



Duane Darron Newman was born on July 17, 1960, to Frank Vernon Newman Sr. and Clarice Marlene Newman at Scott & White Memorial hospital in Temple, TX. Duane was baptized at an early age at Kell Branch Methodist church by Rev. Rucker, he was an active member of the youth choir as well as the Boy scouts of America and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He started working at a young age through Manpower, up until he graduated from Belton High School in 1979, after graduation he attend college at TSTI majoring in business management.

Duane married Cheryl Cotton in Austin, TX, under this union two children were born, Ashley Newman & Davon Newman.

He was preceded in death by his father Frank Vernon Newman, sister Shery Lynn Newman, brother's Reginald Darron Newman Sr., Tyrone Vincent Newman, a nephew Jacque Lavon Greene and a niece Terri Lee Newman.

He is survived by his two children, Ashley & Davon, his mother Clarice Moore Grantt Fort Worth Tx; brother Frank Vernon Newman Jr. San Antonio Tx, sister's Rhonda Newman Fort Worth Tx, Laquisha Newman Suarez Troy Tx, Jarvis Lewis Troy Tx, Kimberly Lewis Waco Tx, a niece Shayla Greene Hurst Tx, a nephew William Greene Arlington Tx; and a host of relatives and friends.

Duane was an active member at Oak Harbor SDA church and most recently baptized 11/16/2019. Duane cherished his family and friends; he was active and helpful with the community. He had a passion for cooking and worked at various facilities. His most recent employment was at New Leaf in Oak Harbor, WA , he was considered a valued employee.

Duane Newman was a kind soul, who loved to laugh and enjoy life. He will forever be missed.

Family and friends are encouraged to share memories and condolences at [www.whidbeymemorial.com](http://www.whidbeymemorial.com).

