

WEST WAYS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, INC

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LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MANAGER'S REPORT Pg. 2
 WHAT'S HAPPENING? Pg. 3
 HONORING PETER TRAVERSO Pg. 4
 MEETING COVID-19 CHALLENGES Pgs. 5-6
 LOOKING FOR COMMUNICATORS Pg. 7
 MEET CURTIS JOHN OF MSBU Pg. 8

IGUANAS Pgs. 9-11
 CREATIVE CORNER / DAVID GESELL Pgs. 12-13
 WOMAN'S CLUB NEWS Pgs. 14-15
 SPOTLIGHT ON UKULELE CLUB..... Pgs. 16-17
 HOLIDAY HOME WINNERS Pg. 18
 CREATIVE CORNER INVITATION Pg. 19

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 Peter Traverso, Director

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 Karen Harvey, Writer
 Barry Kean, Writer
 Connie Smith, Writer
 Diane Shaw, Writer
 David Pulaski, Wayne Mengel, Photographers

MANAGER'S REPORT

Happy 2021! The Holiday Season has come to an end and we are starting a new year. I hope that the Rotonda West Association Community has had a safe, healthy, and enjoyable holiday season, and that the new year is starting off well. Although 2020 was a unique year, the Rotonda West Association had a productive year. At the Annual Meeting, it was wonderful hearing the many accomplishments of the different committees.



The Office Staff, along with the many volunteers, mailed out all of the assessment letters to its members. The Association is receiving an excellent return of assessment dues and the Office Staff is working steadily on processing the payments.

The Rotonda West Association is continuing with the Peppertree Eradication Program inside Broadmoor Park, and we are working closely with the Wildlife Committee and licensed natural area contractors. Mulch is continuing to be added around landscape beds, common areas, along with the Memorial Parks and the front entrance signs.

The Rotonda West Association Maintenance Staff is working diligently wrapping up their 6th and final mow for the season. Along with upcoming painting projects, the Maintenance Staff have tasks coming up such as maintaining the equipment and adding some additional landscaping around Broadmoor Park and the various Memorial Parks.



Thank you to all our hard-working volunteers and committee members that I've had the pleasure to work with throughout the year. It has been a real pleasure seeing many projects come to life. I'm excited about what 2021 will bring us and I look forward to a new year.

Sincerely,
Derrick Hedges



Office Staff

Derrick Hedges,
Manager

Claudette Romano,
Lead Administrator

Tammy Birdsong,
Administrator

Holly Carr,
Administrator
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Sue Halufska,
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Joe Harris,
Communications
Specialist

Mike Heincelman,
Compliance Officer

Maintenance Staff

Matt Rooney

Wayne Taylor

John Daveluy

Bill Simons

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Calendar of Events January 2021

1			RWA Offices Closed
6	9:00 10:30	a.m. a.m.	Activities Committee Communications Committee
8	1:00	p.m.	GFWC/RWWC Board Meeting
12	9:00	a.m.	Residential Modification Com.
14	8:30 2:00	a.m. p.m.	GFWC/RWWC General Meeting Board of Directors Meeting
19	9:30 2:00	a.m. p.m.	Wildlife Committee Budget & Finance Committee
20	1:00	p.m.	Wildlife Committee Presentation "Our Neighbor the Alligator"
21	9:00	a.m.	GFWC/RWWC Blood Drive
26	9:00	a.m.	Residential Modification Com.
27	10:00 1:00	a.m. p.m.	Aquatics/Canal Committee Deed Restrictions Committee

Community Center Activities

Mondays

Mahjong	9 a.m.
Mahjong	1 p.m.
Ukulele	2 p.m.

Tuesdays

Sew N Sews/Knit and Chat	9 a.m.
Hand and Foot	12:30 p.m.

Fridays

Creative Crafters	9 a.m.
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RWA BOARD RECOGNIZES PETER TRAVERSO FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE

At the December 3, 2020 Rotonda West Association Annual Meeting, the RWA surprised long-serving Director Peter Traverso for his remarkable record of service to our community. The following are the remarks of Board President Patricia Aho to honor Director Traverso:



On June 8, 1999, twenty-two years ago, you joined the Board of Directors, not necessarily by choice, but by fate. Yet you embraced our community by serving on every conceivable committee we have had, whether it be Elections, RMC, Deed Restrictions, or Properties. You adopted Rotonda West, not as a community where you slept at night, but a community in which you knew you could make a difference.

You have always approached issues with, as we say today, "the long view in mind". You look ahead at what changes will improve Rotonda and what will make our property values remain high, our grounds and lots look tidy, and what will bring value to our area.

In your twenty-two years with us, you have provided all of us with integrity, fairness, and leadership by example. We will probably never have another Director with your years of service to our community and for that Rotonda West thanks you as a grateful community bids you and your family years of Board and Committee meeting free days to enjoy.

It is with deepest appreciation we hereby honor you, in recognition for your many years of guidance, exceptional leadership, and unconditional commitment to our community.



Rotonda Residents

Meet COVID-19 Challenges Head-On

By: Connie Smith

Who remembers spring 2020 - the uncertainty of toilet paper shortages, cancellation of popular Rotonda West functions like the monthly Meet and Greet, Rotondo Bingo and a community center teeming with activity? A new coronavirus was threatening the world and not just the Florida spring break was cancelled! Rotonda West's Canadian semi-permanent residents and visitors were called home on March 16th. European residents and visitors are still awaiting the day they can return.

The reality of the coronavirus literally hit home on March 20th when to survive, restaurants reverted to carry-out and eight days later, all vacation rentals in the state were suspended. By April 1st, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ordered all Floridians to stay at home, something unnerved residents were doing anyway.



For Rotonda West, the term "Zoom meetings" became a staple of HOA officialdom, including meetings of the board of directors and all committees. The community center closed and the HOA business office adopted a policy of one resident (or couple) at a time entering the office. Masks were mandatory and visitors were asked to utilize the hand sanitizer at the office counter. Others with HOA business waited patiently outside on benches for their turn.

Food drives on April 19th, May 9th and December 5th were rousing successes for local food pantries with over 800 cars dropping off food or monetary donations that exceeded \$10,000. The contactless events allowed masked volunteers to unload cars while drivers stayed inside. Englewood Helping Hand and the St. David's Jubilee Center were beneficiaries of the drives. Rotondans also responded to calls for essentials, money and volunteers by Meals on Wheels throughout the crisis.

Despite the focus on COVID, the need for life-giving blood continued. The Rotonda West Woman's Club responded on July 23th with a blood drive, and will hold another blood drive again on January 21st, 2021.



The One Blood Big Red Bus will be at the Marina Parking lot in front of the Rotonda West Hills Country Club, 100 Rotonda Circle, on Thursday, January 21st, 2021, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm..

After a hiatus of nearly two months, the Rotonda West Neighborhood Watch volunteers returned to their patrols in late May with training becoming virtual. The COVID crisis also affected donations that the Neighborhood Watch needs to keep a lookout on behalf of residents, so residents were asked to consider joining the Watch or mail a donation to Neighborhood Watch, P.O. Box 692, Placida, FL 33946.

The Rotonda West Board of Directors election was not immune to the affects of COVID and Candidates Night became a virtual event with residents submitting questions in advance and candidates responding via Zoom meeting. Likewise, the Annual Meeting was conducted virtually with a minimal in-person audience and a much larger group of online viewers.

While the Community Center reopened for group activities on November 2nd, the reopening has been a cautious one with sanitizing ongoing throughout the day, visitors wearing masks as much as possible, and a 6-foot distance maintained.

By mid-December 2020, according to the Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard, there had been nearly 1.3 million COVID-19 cases in Florida and 21,000 deaths. Charlotte County was a comparatively safe location with 6,500 positive cases and 220 deaths. The number of positive COVID cases in the 33947 zip code was 286 (33947 included Rotonda West and Grove City). Residents had accepted that COVID was an ongoing threat but with approval of vaccines by the federal Food and Drug Administration, there was hope that by the end of 2021, the threat would be behind them.





Rotonda West Association is Seeking A Few Good Communicators

By: Connie Smith

The Rotonda West Association is seeking a number of residents with experience, ideas and enthusiasm to serve as volunteer committee members in areas, such as activities, aquatics, communications, deed restrictions, elections, or residential modifications.

Residents who are interested in serving on a committee may submit their interest by clicking this link (<https://files.constantcontact.com/461663e2801/4ba2bbbbe-e522-4207-a878-eb457071ebb3.pdf>). They may then send the form via email to Association Manager Derrick Hedges at Derrick@rotondawest.org or drop it off at the administrative office, 646 Rotonda Circle. Chairs of the committees will be sent the applications for their review. Applications received by January 4, 2021 may be considered at the January 14 board of directors meeting. A short summary of each committee's activities may be found on the RWA website – www.rotondawest.org.

Communications Committee - Karen Harvey, Chairperson

Enjoy writing? Maybe you're a whiz at social media or know something about website analytics? If you've an idea about websites or online newsletter promotion, then consider volunteering for the Rotonda West Communications Committee.

Actually, even the non-technical are invited to participate, according to Chairperson Karen Harvey. "We gather news of the community and present it on the website, or in our newsletter *West Ways*; we take information and present it in a good way. We are interested in ways to increase viewership on our website," she said. The committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. Masks and social distancing are observed and committee members may join via Zoom if needed. Committee membership is approved by the Rotonda West Board of Directors.

West Ways Newsletter - Nadine Clough, Editor

The *West Ways* Newsletter is overseen by the Communications Committee. Writers, photographers, and proof readers would be welcome additions to the staff. Editor Clough said she is looking for individuals who are interested in sharing Rotonda West events, activities, elections, and committee meeting reports with the many readers here in Rotonda, around the country, and even around the world.

West Ways applicants can email Nadine Clough at westways@rotondawest.org. Please include a sample of your writing or photographs.



MEET CURTIS JOHN YOUR NEWLY APPOINTED STREETS & DRAINAGE MSBU BOARD MEMBER

By: Diane Shaw



We all received our Charlotte County tax bills recently and felt the sting of increases in our taxes and assessments for this year. We are lucky that the Charlotte County Streets and Drainage Municipal Service Benefits Unit (MSBU) did not actually raise the assessment. But did you ever wonder who decides how that MSBU money is spent? Well, five residents of Rotonda West serve on the MSBU board and make decisions to advise the County Commissioners regarding how your MSBU assessment dollars are spent. So, who are the people who represent your interests to the Commissioners? They are: Nick Kotzalas, Carol Delucca, Sam Besase, Deenie Burns and the newly appointed Curtis John. Mr. John was recently appointed by the County Commissioners to replace Thomas Sikes, who resigned. We are familiar with the members who are already serving on the board, but not with Mr. John, so I decided to find out more about him.

Mr. John prefers to be called Curt. When I met him, I found him to be a very easy going, affable guy who has a quick wit and a great sense of humor. He has an interesting background in both public service and private enterprise as well since he owned his own business. Curt grew up in Evansville, Indiana. He attended the University of Evansville and graduated in 1973 with a Bachelor of Science degree. His major was Finance and his minor was Political Science. In 1974 at the age of 24, he was asked to run for the office of County Auditor. He won the election and took on the responsibility for the multiple millions of dollars in the County budget. In 1978, he successfully won reelection to the County auditor's office again and held those responsibilities while attending the University of Indiana at Indianapolis Law school in the evenings. After graduating from Law school, he was asked by the City of Evansville to serve as assistant City Attorney and he did so. Two years later the Vanderburgh County Commissioners asked him to serve as county attorney so he served in that capacity with even greater responsibilities. In 1995, Curt ran for the Evansville City Council and served as City Councilman for four terms - 16 years.

In June of 2013, Curt and his wife Penny moved to our area, living first in Riverwood for five years before moving to Rotonda West in June of 2018. They like that Rotonda West is a deed restricted community and feel that it is not overly restricted. They chose this area because it is not crowded and has less traffic. He and Penny enjoy the beaches, especially Englewood and Boca Grande beaches. They also like the friendliness of the people, having made many friends at the Rotonda Elks, and Gulf Cove Moose Club. Penny likes the weather, the beaches and the wildlife, especially the birds. Curt is an avid fan of Indiana University's football and basketball teams. He is also a golf enthusiast and works part time at Heron Creek Golf Course at the bag drop.

Most of Mr. John's life has been dedicated to public service. His goals as an MSBU board member are budget oversight and monitoring of the progress of the three main MSBU projects: bridge maintenance and repair, road repaving and remediation of drainage issues. Looking over his qualifications, I would say he is definitely the right man for the job!

Iguanas

By:

Cari Hale

Chairperson of the Rotonda West Wildlife
Committee

The possibility of iguanas falling from our trees has gained national attention with our recent cold temperatures here in South West Florida. The Black Spiny-tailed, Mexican Spiny-tailed, and the Green Iguana are routinely seen in Rotonda West. They are non-native and classified as invasive.



Green Iguana

They are reptiles and are listed as high-risk invasives along with the python, and tegu (a different type of lizard). As of July 2020, there were 50 species of non-native reptiles in the state of Florida. The term “invasive” applies to wildlife that pose a threat to the environment, economy, or human health and safety.

There are two different opinions regarding non-native reptiles. Some people believe you should LEAVE THEM ALONE, and others believe you should ERADICATE THEM. Due to the destruction of personal property and threat to endangered species, it is recommended to eliminate them from our community.



Let's *look* at the facts about iguanas and how they affect us:

- There are only a few predators capable of killing an adult iguana. Iguanas live primarily in trees and are sheltered from predators such as alligators, owls, and hawks
- Iguanas can live up to ten years
- They weigh in excess of 15 pounds
- Iguanas grow to approximately 5 feet in length
- Most costly damage done by iguanas is to the infrastructure by the digging of burrows that erode sidewalks, foundations, sea walls, berms, and canal banks
- They can tunnel up to 80 feet
- Iguanas will take up residence in empty homes. They are considered “copious eliminators”, meaning they eliminate large amounts of urine and feces from the same opening at the same time causing extensive damage to homes and attics
- Iguanas can do both expensive and extensive damage to landscaping
- They carry salmonella on their skin, in saliva, and in their excrement
- They contaminate water sources and can cause quite a mess in your pool
- Iguanas can be dangerous to people and pets. They bite and may strike you with their powerful tails. If your skin is broken from a scratch, a nasty infection may occur. Pets that have interacted with them may contract botulism
- Because they are non-native and invasive, iguanas pose a huge threat to our ecosystem and the balance between all living things in Rotonda West

What can be done to eliminate and rebalance our ecosystem?
There are several options:

- “Humane harassment” is an option to remove iguanas from your environment. This can be done by spraying water on them, hanging CD’s or other shiny objects, and lastly creating noise that is not predictable like wind chimes
- Remember, spraying an alligator is illegal and you can be prosecuted!
- Hiring a trapper is the most expensive option but also most effective. Many trappers will also identify where the iguanas are gaining access to your attic or home and recommend methods to block entry.
- There is a live trap available from the RWA office that you can borrow. You must follow live trap guidelines as outlined by FWC. It is illegal to relocate iguanas after they have been trapped. They are protected by an “anti-cruelty” statute.
- It is essential that if you choose to trap you must take the live iguana to The Peace River Wildlife Center where it will be humanely euthanized. The Wildlife Center of South West Florida will also take live iguanas, or humanely dispatch it yourself.
- Acceptable methods are, shooting them in the brain stem with a pellet gun, stabbing them in the brain, or decapitating them. You could end up behind bars if you freeze them, drown them, or poison them! Please keep in mind the diseases that they carry if you decide to handle an iguana.



Mexican Spiny Tailed Iguana

Here are some other interesting about the non-native, extremely invasive iguana of Rotonda West:

- A female can lay as many as 70 eggs annually
- They are excellent swimmers and can stay submerged up to 30 minutes
- They have excellent eyesight
- They have extremely sharp serrated teeth that are designed for shredding
- Their claws are extremely sharp and designed for climbing
- They can survive falls up to 50 feet because of their armor
- Male iguanas are territorial and demonstrate aggression by bobbing their heads and flapping their dewlaps (folds of skin just below the neck)
- They are considered a delicacy in many countries and there are folks in Florida who do consume them

Lastly, it is a violation of the deed restrictions of Rotonda West to have any reptile as a pet. Iguanas are interesting to watch and are actually quite beautiful, but they do not belong in our community. Unfortunately, they are a victim of man's lack of respect for the animal and for our environment. By releasing pets into our ecosystem, an unbalance has resulted that poses a threat to our environment, economy, and our health, as well as the health of our pets!

Please join the Rotonda West Wildlife Committee Facebook page where you can download a brochure on invasive species and the iguana. Brochures are also available in the office.



Trapping Iguanas



Black Spiny Tail Iguana



CREATIVE CORNER

The Photographs of David P. Gesell



This month's Creative Corner features some of the wonderful photos of Dave Gesell. Rotonda West offers so much natural beauty for us to enjoy. Whether you see wildlife from your lanai or walk nature trails in search of it, nature is waiting to be discovered.

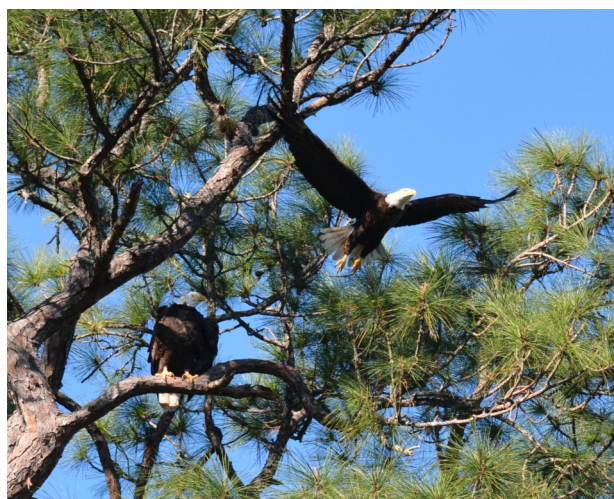
Dave enjoys wandering the wild areas in and around Rotonda West discovering birds, mammals, and lizards as he patiently seeks the perfect camera shot.

These owls were found and photographed by Dave on Boundary Blvd.

These photos were taken by Dave
at Cedar Point Environmental Park



Bald Eagles



Tri-Color Heron



Crab





GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club, Inc.
PROJECTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS
Donna Krabbe, Past-President



Wreaths Across America at Sarasota National Cemetery

December 19, 2020



Liz Moore, Kathy Esslinger,
and Kathryn Gallagher



Some of our members participated in laying wreaths at Veterans' headstones. These wreaths were purchased in memory of loved ones by our members. This event takes place every December at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club -
January 14, 2021 Meeting

The January meeting of the GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club will be held at the American Legion Post 113 on Thursday, January 14th. The meeting will feature the Annual Membership Art Competition. Arrival at the American Legion Post 113 will be between 10:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Lunch served at 12:30 p.m.

For lunch selection and reservations, please call Jane Tumanic (941-214-5981) no later than Friday, January 8th.

We invite you to join us as a guest! You might be interested in joining. For further information and to join, please visit <http://www.gfwcrotondawest.org>. or send an email to rwwcmembership@hotmail.com



RWWC Member Art Competition



Our club will have its annual Art Competition on January 14, 2021. This competition is for items created by our members completed by December 31, 2020. Our members are very talented in painting, sewing, crocheting, photography, jewelry making, etc. It's always exciting to see all the beautiful entries. Winners will then be entered in GFWC FL District and State Competitions.

Together Saving Lives, GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club and Rotonda Golf One Blood Drive date is: Thursday, January 21, 2021, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm



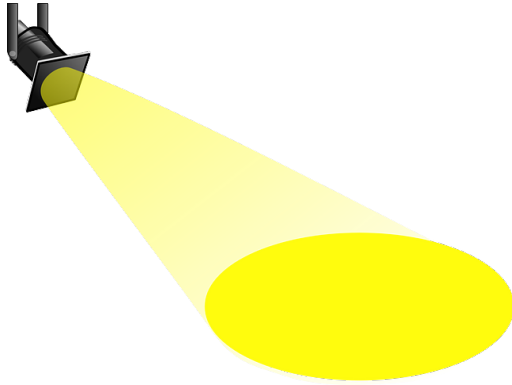
The GFWC RWWC is working to help alleviate the critical need for blood for patients during the COVID Pandemic. The One Blood Big Red Bus will be at the Marina Parking lot in front of the Rotonda West Hills Country Club, 100 Rotonda Circle, on Thursday, January 21, 2021, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm..

To schedule an appointment contact:
Ellen Lang, 917-579-7770
grammylang@gmail.com



**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO
HELPED STUFF HOA ENVELOPES!**





SPOTLIGHT ON: THE ROTONDA UKULELE BAND

**By: Nadine Clough
Pictures by: Dave Pulaski**

This month's issue begins a West Ways series of articles focusing on the many clubs and activities that are offered at the Community Center for Rotonda West Residents. These enjoyable clubs are always looking for new members, so make sure to follow this series to find the club that's right for you!

The Rotonda Ukulele Band was formed in October of 2017 by Doug Newport, who still guides and leads the group today. Membership includes people who are just learning to play the ukulele to people who are well-accomplished players. The relaxed atmosphere created by Doug, allows everyone to play and to learn at their own pace.

The upbeat music that is provided by Doug, keeps the class fun and highly motivating. Each week the group starts off by practicing recently added songs. Then each player chooses a favorite from the group's catalog of 150 songs for the group to play. You are never asked to play or sing alone. There are plenty of easy song choices in the song catalog. For example, three songs use 2 chords, twenty-seven songs use 3 chords, and thirty-six songs have 4 chords.

Playing and singing with the group quickly builds confidence. Soon you are playing for friends and family. The Rotonda Ukulele group has performed in the Rotonda Christmas Parade and has been asked to play for a local adult home.



Practicing on the side porch of the Community Center



The Rotonda Ukulele Band in Rotonda's Christmas Parade 2019

The group meets every Monday from 2 pm to 3:30 pm at the Community Center. Currently, the group is playing on the porch of the Center due to COVID restrictions. But hopefully soon, they will be back in the main meeting room. Feel free to stop by and sit in to listen to a session, or bring a ukulele and join in! If you would like more information contact Doug at: rubrotonda@gmail.com



Doug-
Leader of Group

Group size varies from week to week.
Here are the players that were there for picture day!



Mike



Steve



Debbie



Pam



Chuck



Nadine



Bonnie



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

By Diane Shaw

Photos by Dave Pulaski

This year a contest was held for “**THE BEST DECORATED HOLIDAY HOMES**” in Rotonda West. The idea was the brainchild of Lorah and Ken Steiner. Prizes were sponsored by the Steiners and by Michelle Eberley who is a real estate agent with Paradise Exclusive Realty. First place received \$200. and a \$50 Home Depot gift card. Second place received \$75. and a \$25 Home Depot gift card. Third place received \$50. and a \$10 Publix gift card.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS!



FIRST PLACE

Dale and Amy Vogel
80 Tournament Road

SECOND PLACE
Bill and Yvonne Nery
194 Sportsman Road



THIRD PLACE

Patti Cowin and Cari Hale
60 Mariner Lane



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Sign Up!

Dear Readers,

Thank you for spending part of your day reading the West Ways Newsletter.

We have some pretty wonderful people who work hard to bring this newsletter to you.

Please take a moment the next time you are visiting our web page to sign up for our newsletter and other updates.

Once you sign up, the items you checked will be automatically sent to your email.

The sign up sheet on the left is what to look for on the website. It's located at the bottom of the Home Page.

Thank you!



CREATIVE COMMUNITY CORNER

If you would like to have your poem, short story, or photograph published in our West Ways newsletter, send it to:

westways@rotondawest.org

Put "Creative Community Corner" in the subject field

Include your name and your Rotonda West section (Pinehurst, Broadmoor, etc.)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR UPCOMING ISSUES!

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