

WESTWAYS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, INC.

Emailed to 5,995 Rotonda Residents

FEBRUARY 2025



E-NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION



Sara Weber

Rotonda West Community Outreach Nature Committee

BUTTERFLY GARDENING 101

By: Merrill Horswill

On January 15th, Sara Weber, Florida Friendly Landscaping Specialist, Charlotte County Extension, gave an informative presentation to the 78 people in attendance on how to attract butterflies to gardens by planting a variety of larval host plants for caterpillars and nectar plants for adult butterflies. She explained that the Florida Friendly Landscape principles save water, time, money, and protect the environment. She detailed the needs of each of the common butterflies found in our area and gave examples of good nectar plants that help them to thrive. Many resources for participants to take home were provided, and she discussed other information available from the University of Florida. For more information see: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/sfylifasufleu/pinellas/naturalresources/Butterfly-Gardening-With-Native-Florida-Plant.pdf>



Left: Following the presentation, Ann Weaver RW Butterfly Garden Coordinator, gave a tour of the Broadmoor Butterfly Garden.

Contact her if you would like to help in the garden:

ann.weaver815@gmail.com

VOLUME 29 ISSUE 2

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Butterfly Gardening 101

RWA Committee Meeting Times

RW Nature Articles

Trivia Night

Stroke Awareness

Shredding Hunger

Upcoming Events

Rotonda West Administrative
Office-Community Center
Broadmoor Park
646 Rotonda Circle
Rotonda West, FL 33947
Office Hours: 8 am-4pm M-F
Tel: (941) 697-6788

Website address:
www.rotondawest.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Butterfly Garden 101

03 Committee Meeting Times

04 Florida Scrub Jay

05 Wild Hogs

06 Trivia Night

07 Stroke Awareness

08 Burmese Python

09 Shredding Hunger

10 Fitness Classes

11 Calendar of Events

14 Mix & Mingle Events

16 Rotonda West has Talent

18 Walk Your Dog Day

20 QiGong

23 Spring Garage Sale

24 Neighborhood Watch

25 Woman's Club

28 Staff



RWA COMMITTEES AT WORK- MEETING SCHEDULE



ALL MEETINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON ZOOM

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	2ND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH	2 P.M.
ADMINISTRATIVE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE	"AS NEEDED" BASIS	TBA (not on zoom)
BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE	4TH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH (NEW)	9:30 A.M.
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE	2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	10:30 A.M.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE	1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH	9:30 A.M.
COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE	DATES VARY (CHECK CALENDAR)	2 P.M.
DEED RESTRICTION COMMITTEE	4TH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH	9 A.M.
ELCTION COMMITTEE	SPECIFIC TO ELECTION SCHEDULE	CHECK CALENDAR
RESIDENTIAL MODIFICATION COMMITTEE	2ND & 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	9 A.M.
RW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH	3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	10 A.M.

FLORIDA SCRUB JAY

Presented By the Community Outreach Committee

Article By: Merrill Horswill



Kalvin Bernard



Florida Scrub Jay

On January 7th, Calvin Bernard, Charlotte County Natural Resources Land Management Coordinator, presented information on the Florida Scrub Jay. The Scrub Jay is a federally threatened species and the only bird that is endemic to Florida.

The Florida Scrub Jay is a blue and gray bird about the size of a Blue Jay without black markings or a crest. Florida Scrub Jays live in family groups that consist of a breeding pair and young helpers. The Scrub Jay population has declined 90 % in the past century (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001). The current Florida Scrub Jay population is estimated at about 7,700 to 9,300 birds. The past year surveys for Charlotte County properties numbered 157 total individuals, with 61 juveniles fledged from their nest, and over 32 family groups. Prairie Creek Preserve has the most birds with 96 individuals and 16 family groups.

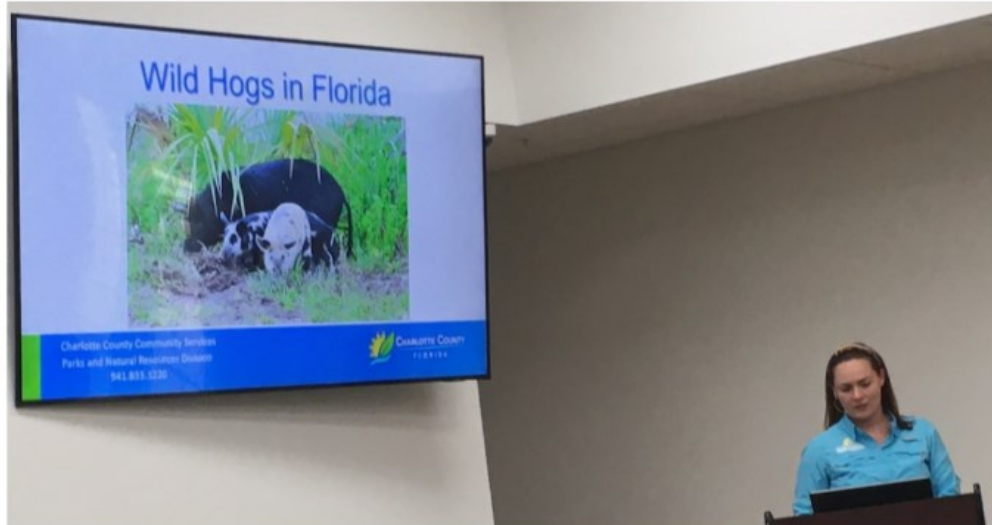
Scrub Jays inhabit some of the highest and driest areas of Florida: sand pine, oak scrub, and scrubby flatwoods, which are all prime development land. The threats to the Florida Scrub Jay are habitat destruction, fragmentation (process of breaking up large habitat into smaller isolated areas), and degradation from development and agriculture.

Two of the best places to see Florida Scrub Jays in Charlotte County are Tippecanoe Environmental Park and Prairie Creek Preserve. In 2014, Charlotte County developed a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to help insure long term survival of the species.

Learn about these beautiful birds and what is being done to protect them at:

<https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/file/409/charlotte-county-hcp-final.pdf>

This program was presented by the Nature component of the
RWA Community Outreach Committee



Wild Hogs

by Merrill Horswill

Community Outreach Nature Committee January 8, 2025 2pm

Kaitlin Causey, Charlotte County Environmental Lands Specialist, presented an overview of wild hogs in Florida, most likely introduced by Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto as early as 1539. Wild hogs occur in all 67 counties with estimated number at 500,000.

Wild hogs can reach weights of more than 150 pounds and measure 5 to 6 feet long. They are found in a wide variety of habitats and usually travel in small family groups or alone. They eat a variety of plants and animals and feed by rooting with their broad snouts, which may disturb the soil and ground cover vegetation.

Wild hogs can be a problem for both public and private lands. Charlotte County has a contract with USDA to trap wild hogs on their properties, usually trapping 500 per year. Homeowners and HOAs would need to hire a private trapper. Wild hogs may be trapped and hunted year-round with landowner permission. Wild hogs may be trapped using live traps and trapped animals may not be released on public lands and may only be released on private property with landowner permission. Persons wishing to transport or hold live wild hogs must first obtain applicable permits from the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)**. A basic license is all that is required for shooting on public property, there are hog bag limitations in some Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), and hunting is only permitted during specific seasons of the year.

Kaitlin and her colleagues answered many questions about dealing with these animals from the audience of over 40 people. For more information, see: <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/public-safety/animal-control/local-wildlife.html>



Rotonda West
Association

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE

PRESENTS:

Trivia Night

LITERATURE &
SCIENCE

TOYS & GAMES

HISTORY & ANIMALS

MUSIC
TV & MOVIES

Play as a team or
individually

SPORTS AND MORE!

FREE!

Presented by Tim's Trivia
TimsTrivia@yahoo.com
Timothy Dowd, originally
from Michigan. I have been
a college professor for
almost 30 years with
degrees in English,
philosophy, sociology,
psychology, history and
humanities. I have been
doing TRIVIA for almost 20
years; also music bingo,
scavenger hunts, hosting
various events as well as
DJ-ing dances of all kinds.
Recently have been named
the number one TRIVIA in
Southwest Florida!

3rd WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

Doors open @ 6:00 pm

Starts @ 6:30 pm

RWA Community Center

646 Rotonda Circle

Welcome RWA property owners, residents, renters and their guests.

Questions: Contact the Community Outreach Committee: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

Please do not contact the RWA Admin Office, you will be referred to the above email.

Bring your own drinks with lids & snacks. No pets.

TRIVIA

By Deb Orchard

Trivia with Tim is the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Play begins at 6:30. In January we had 12 teams and 80 players participate. We also have a prize to the winning team. Our winning team this month was Smartie Pants: Julie Maccarato, Joann Simmons, Margaret Packer, Milce Packer, Larry Maccarato, John Simmons, Ron Michael and Sue Michael. (see photo)

Tim has a different theme for us each month. January was DOGS. All the answers and musical bonuses had something to do with dogs. I'll give you some examples: Do you know the 3 number 1 songs by Three Dog Night? (Joy to the World, Mama Told Me and Black and White). Which is the most popular dog breed according to American Kennel Club? (French Bulldog). Who sang Black Dog? (Led Zepelin). It's much fun to figure out how Tim works the theme into the questions and answers.

Our next night of trivia will be February 19. Form your team, or come join a group of players to form a new team. Bring your own drinks and snacks. Be prepared to join your neighbors and have some fun.

A Winning Team!

Trivia team,
"Smartie Pants"
using their brains and
having fun at Trivia Night





STROKE AWARENESS-EVERY SECOND COUNTS

Submitted by Rita Lopienski

Community Outreach Committee
Presentation

Thirty six people came out on a cold afternoon on January 22nd to about hear the presentation of “Stroke Awareness-Every Second Counts”. Julie Beatty, Director of Communications, began with an update on HCA FL Englewood Hospital. Ms. Beatty spoke on topics such as the new technology (3 robots used for surgeries), the five 2024 Healthgrades Specialty Excellence awards that the hospital has received, and the need for organ donors in Florida. She also addressed the new HCA FL Wellen Park Emergency Center which is opening in March, 2025, which will help to take some of the pressure of patient overload off of Englewood Hospital’s Emergency Room.

Guest speaker Jill Worles, RN, Clinical Coordinator for Stroke & Sepsis spoke next. She stated that someone in the US has a stroke every 40 seconds making stroke a leading cause of death in the US. Nearly 800,000 people in the US have a stroke every year. It is important to understand that stroke is a medical emergency and time is critical because blood flow to the brain is reduced and brain cells die at a high rate. In fact, 1.9 million brain cells die every minute a stroke goes untreated. The acronym F.A.S.T. can help to remember the signs of stroke:

F Facial drooping

A Arm drooping

S Speech problems

T Time is critical. Call 911 immediately

At the hospital doctors will determine what type of stroke the patient has had by using CT scans, MRI, ultrasound, lab work, and talking with the patient.

Types of Stroke: Ischemic, Hemorrhagic, & TIA.

There are new less invasive procedures and treatments available now.

- AGE- (65 & OLDER)
- GENETICS- FAMILY HISTORY
- RACE- HIGHER RISK-BLACK & HISPANIC
- GENDER- HIGHER RISK-WOMEN
- PREVIOUS STROKE, TIA, HEART ATTACK

- CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL
- NO SMOKING; LOW ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION
- CONTROL WEIGHT; HEALTHY DIET
- KEEP DIABETES CONTROLLED
- CAROTID ARTERY CHECK-UP

FREE LOCAL STROKE SUPPORT GROUPS. ONE AT FAWCETT HOSPITAL IN PORT CHARLOTTE,
AND AT ENGLEWOOD HOSPITAL. CALL 941-624-8084 FOR INFORMATION



A TALK ON BURMESE PYTHONS

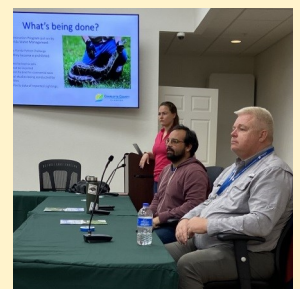
By: Nadine Clough



On January 23, the Nature Group from the Community Outreach Committee presented a slide show and talk about Burmese Pythons. Fifty residents and renters braved the chilly temperatures to attend this informational talk.

Presenters Jason Thompson, Senior Land Management Specialist; Calvin Bernard, Natural Areas Coordinator; and Kaitlyn Causey, Land Management Specialist; all from Charlotte County gave the audience interesting facts about the Burmese Pythons as well as personal anecdotes about dealing with this intimidating species.

Burmese Pythons are mainly found in the Florida Everglades, as that environment enables them to thrive and reproduce. These reptiles are not native to Florida, but found their way into the Everglades because they escaped from breeders, or because private owners released them when the “pet” got too large. Jason Thompson explained that these snakes are bred and sold because there is money to be made from selling them. These pythons are invasive and are having a negative effect on the ecosystem in the Everglades.

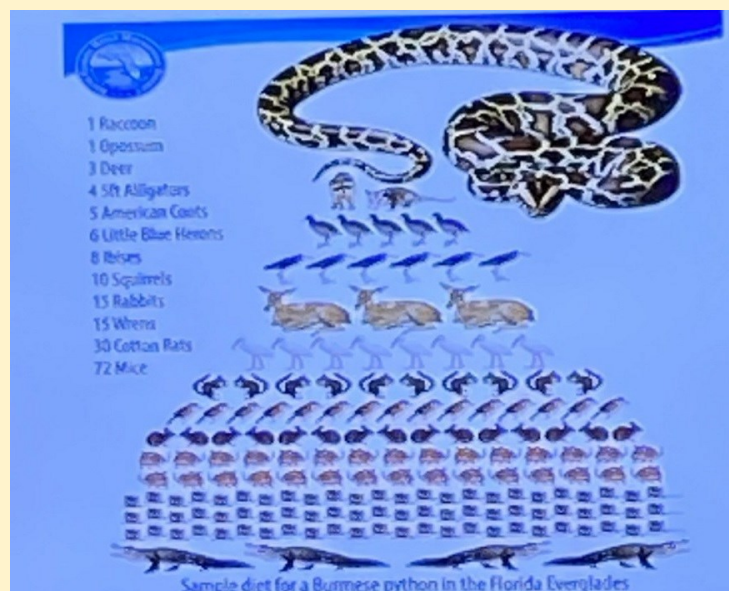


Python Presenters:

Left to right:
Kaitlyn Causey,
Calvin Bernard, and
in foreground, Jason
Thompson

Right:

Slide from presentation showing a sample diet for a Burmese Python in the Florida Everglades in order to grow to 13 feet long in 5-7 yrs.



Carnivore Diet:

1- Raccoon
1-Opossum
3-Deer
4- 5' Alligators
6-Little Blue Heron
5-American Coots
8-Ibises
10-Squirrels
15-Rabbits
15-Rodents
30-Cotton Rats
72-Mice

If you see a Burmese Python,
keep your distance and report
it to:

JasonThompson@Charlotte
CountyFL.gov



SHREDDING HUNGER



A SHARE & SHRED DAY
Sponsored by RW Association
Community Outreach Committee

Article and Pictures by: Nadine Clough



**Above: Food Pantry representatives helping out
along with RW volunteers.**

On Left: Organizer Gwen Grace



Rotonda residents came out on a cool January morning to help the local food pantries and to shred last year's paperwork. Englewood Helping Hand, St. David's Jubilee Center, and St. Francis Assisi Church Outreach participated and happily accepted both food and money donations to help fight hunger in our area. This year set a record at 210 cars coming through the line between 9 am and noon. Last year saw 145 cars go through.

Thank you to Gwen Grace who organized the event. Also, many thanks to the volunteers who helped out, to the food pantries, and to the "Shred-It" truck and operator.



**Share & Shred Day
Volunteers**



**Shredding volunteers and the
truck that was full at the end.**





2 FITNESS CLASSES-A HUGE SUCCESS!

RWA Community Outreach Committee Health & Wellness Initiative Fitness Update

By: Rita Lopienski

The two fitness classes currently offered are proving to be a huge success. Last June, Monday Tai Chi classes began, and are still going strong, with 33 attendees at the recent class. Beginning in February, classes will be every Monday at 10 am, except the 4th Monday (the 24th this February).



Tai Chi Class

Last month, Classic Pilates Mat classes began every Friday at 9 am, with an average attendance of 40! Please note there will not be a class on 2/21. instructor Dr. Francine Finucan is excellent! Please remember that she is not paid by RWA, so a donation tip jar is available for weekly classes.



Pilates Mat Class

Come and try these classes out, and you will see improvements in your flexibility, balance, strength, and well-being. Open to RWA members, owners & renters. A one-time Fitness Program Participation Waiver must be signed.

If any questions, please email: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org.

CALENDAR OF SPECIAL EVENTS

**F
E
B
R
U
A
R
Y**

2/3, 2/10, 2/17 Monday, 10-11 am: Tai Chi
 2/4 Tuesday, 2-4 pm: Gopher Tortoise Presentation
 2/5 Wednesday, 5 pm: Happy Hour at RW Community Park, Parade Circle
 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28 Friday, 9-10 am: Pilates Mat Fitness
 2/12 Wednesday, 2-4 pm: Tale of the Atala Butterfly & Coontie
 2/14 Friday, 11 am-1 pm: Rotonda West Talent Show Auditions
 2/15 Saturday, 11 am-2 pm: Rotonda West Talent Show Auditions
 2/16 Sunday, 1-4 pm: BINGO!
 2/18 Tuesday, 5:30-7:30 pm: Amphibians & Frogs Presentation
 2/19 Tuesday, 11:30 am: Rotonda West Luncheon at V
 2/19 Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 pm (doors open at 6 pm) Trivia Night With Tim
 2/20 Thursday, 3-4:30 pm: RWA Treasurer Quarterly Town Hall Meeting
 2/22 Saturday, All Day: Walk Your Dog Day (take photos & send to West Ways)
 2/25 Tuesday, 5-8 pm: Mix & Mingle Potluck Dinner
 2/26 Wednesday, 2-3:30 pm: Why Plant Native? Presentation
 2/27 Thursday, 9 am: QiGong Presentation, Mindfulness & Movement

**M
A
R
C
H**

3/1 Saturday, 1 pm: Rotonda West Has Talent Show
 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/31 @ 10 am: Tai Chi
 3/5 Wednesday, 2 pm: Bob Cat Presentation
 3/5 Wednesday, 5 pm: Mix & Mingle Happy Hour at Rotonda Community Park
 3/7, 3/14, 3/21, 3/28 Friday, 9 am: Pilates Mat
 3/12 Wednesday, 5:30 pm: History, Rotonda & The Vanderbilts
 3/16 Sunday, 1 pm: BINGO!
 3/16 Sunday, 5 pm: Volunteer Appreciation Banquet at The Hills
 3/19 Wednesday, 2 pm: History, Rotonda & The Superstars
 3/19 Wednesday, 6:30 pm: Trivia with Tim
 3/20 Thursday, 3 pm: "How Not to Age Via Nutrition" presentation
 3/25 Tuesday, 5 pm: Mix & Mingle Potluck
 3/26 Wednesday, 2 pm: "People for Trees" presentation
 3/27 Thursday, 6:30 pm: Music in the Park with Jonny Puma
 3/28 & 3/27 Friday & Saturday 9-5 pm: Spring Community Garage Sale
 3/30 Sunday 9-5 pm: RAIN DATE for Spring Community Garage Sale



Rotonda West
Association

Community
Outreach Nature
Committee Presents:

**Coming
in February**



Gopher Tortoise

February 4, 2025 2pm 646 Rotonda Circle
David Smth, Charlotte County Natural Resources Land Management Specialist

The gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) is a moderate-sized, terrestrial turtle, averaging 9–15 inches in length when fully grown. Gopher tortoises can live 40 to 60 years, males reach adulthood at 9-12 years, a female may take 10-21 years. The life of a gopher tortoise revolves around its burrow(s) where they spend up to 80% of their time. Burrows average 15 feet long and 6.5 feet deep. Gopher tortoises are herbivorous, feeding on low-growing plants like wiregrass, broadleaf grasses, gopher apple, and legumes. The primary threat to the gopher tortoise is habitat loss through habitat destruction, fragmentation, and degradation, particularly from urbanization and development. Residential land development occurs in the same high, dry habitats that the tortoise prefers. Gopher tortoises share their burrows with more than 350 other species, and are therefore referred to as a keystone species.

The gopher tortoise was listed as a Species of Special Concern in Florida in 1979 and reclassified as a State-designated Threatened species in 2007 when FWC created its first **Gopher Tortoise Management Plan**.

Handling and relocation of gopher tortoises is illegal unless conducted under a FWC permit, a relocation permit must be obtained before disturbing burrows and conducting construction activities, see **Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines**. You may move a gopher tortoise across a road in the same direction it was headed.

Learn more about our gopher tortoises neighbors!

Welcome are Rotonda West residents, renters and their guests. Please do not contact the RWA Admin Office. Questions? Contact Community Outreach Committee: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org



*Rotonda West
Association*

**Community
Outreach Committee
Presents**

TAI CHI

**FOR BEGINNERS AND THE EXPERIENCED
INSTRUCTION BY DR. FRANCINE FINUCAN**

**NEW: Every Monday at 10 am
EXCEPT: 4th Monday of the Month**



**JOIN US AT THE RWA
COMMUNITY CENTER
646 ROTONDA CIRCLE**

**QUESTIONS??? PLEASE CONTACT:
communityoutreach@rotondawest.org
Do Not contact the RWA Admin Office**

- **Wear comfortable clothes & shoes**
- **Bring water in covered container**
- **An RWA Fitness Liability Waiver must be filled out (only once)**
- **Tai Chi Fitness Class for RWA members & renters only**
- **No Pets**



Rotonda West
Association

Community Outreach Committee
Presents

MiXX & Mingle

UPCOMING

EVENTS



Join us for Happy Hour, the 1st
Wednesday of every month under the
pavilion at the Rotonda Community
Park, Rotonda Circle
(by the tennis courts)
February 5, 5 pm & March 5, 5 pm



Join us for lunch at the Rotonda V,
the 3rd Wednesday of every
month.
February 19, 1130 am
March 19, 1130 am



Join us for a community potluck
dinner, the 4th Tuesday of every
month at the RWA Community
Center.
February 25, 5 pm
March 25, 5 pm

*Please do not contact the RWA office,
they do not have information*

**COMING IN
FEBRUARY**

Rotonda West Community Outreach Nature Committee Presents:

Atalas and Coonties

February 12, 2025, 2pm

Forest Hecker Community Educator

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

Article and Photographs by Jim Peterfeso

The fate of Atala butterflies is bound tightly to the success of their host plant Coontie. Atalas were thought to be extinct in the United States from 1937 until 1959. The collapse of Atala colonies came from over harvesting of wild Coontie for the commercial production of Arrowroot, a thickening agent much like cornstarch. Although Coontie is armed with very serious toxins, Calusa and Seminole Indians perfected a technique to prepare Coontie roots for use in cooking and early Florida Settlers created a Florida Arrowroot industry which by the 1920s led to rampant unsustainable overharvesting of wild Coontie. Atala caterpillars only eat Coontie so as the Coontie was harvested into oblivion, the Atalas disappeared.

In 1959 a remote colony of Atalas was found in South Florida. Fortunately, Coontie had a resurgence in South Florida landscaping. Atalas were introduced in Southeast Florida from that sole colony and the butterfly has made a slow and steady comeback. Atalas live on native Coontie planted by people in yards, parks, preserves, botanical gardens, traffic medians and bordering parking lots. Since birds eat and disperse Coontie seeds from urban and suburban areas, it is possible that Coontie will expand back into wild environments.



Atalas are brightly colored, unlike other hairstreak butterflies with bright orange abdomens and red on the base of the hindwing. They have black wings with iridescent aquamarine-colored dots that are just beautiful. Atalas are colored that way to warn predators that they are toxic and will make a foul tasting and sickening meal.

Coontie is a native evergreen shrub that resembles a fern or a small palm, but is neither. It belongs to the ancient group of plants called Cycads. The oldest Cycad fossils date to 300 million years ago. They have changed little since the Jurassic Period.

Coontie is the only Cycad that is native to the United States.

Coontie plants are toxic. Every part of the plant contains cycasin, which is a deadly liver toxin if any part of the plant is consumed. By consuming Coontie leaves, Atala caterpillars and butterflies are toxic to predators.

The exploitative commercial harvest of Coontie nearly wiped it out, along with the Atala butterfly. Now that Coontie is used extensively in Florida landscaping, the Atala has come back from the brink of extinction in Florida.


Rotonda West Community Center 646 Rotonda Circle




Welcome are Rotonda West residents, renters and their guests. Please do not contact the RWA Admin Office. Questions: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

Community Outreach Committee Presents


ROTONDA WEST *has Talent 2025*




AUDITIONS will be held Friday and
Saturday, 2/14 & 2/15 from 11am-1pm
at the Community Center,
646 Rotonda Circle



A participant must be a RWA member, owner or
renter. All ages and all kinds of talent are encouraged:
Singer, instruments, ensembles (at least 1 in group
must be in RWA), comedy (G-rated), magic, juggle,
ventriloquism, dance, skits, poetry, etc. Singers must
bring their own accompaniment.




TALENT SHOW will be held on Saturday,
March 1 at 1pm at the Community Center




There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place.

The 2024 winners are invited to perform
during the judges deliberations



*Talent should call Rita at 630-956-8814 to
register. For questions call Rita Lopienski or
contact communityoutreach@rotondawest.org*



Please do not contact the RWA office, they do not have information

COMING IN FEBRUARY



Rotonda West Community Outreach Nature
Committee Presents:

Amphibians

February 18, 2025 2pm 646 Rotonda Circle
David Smith, Charlotte County Natural Resources Land
Management Specialist

by Merrill Horswill

Southern Leopard Frog, Native

Amphibians are cold-blooded, vertebrate animals with an aquatic phase (gill breathing) and a terrestrial phase (lung breathing). <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/discover-herps/florida-amphibians-reptiles/>

Florida is home to a diverse range of amphibians, including 30 species of frogs and toads. Florida's native amphibians diets include insects, spiders, and worms. Some species, such as the Southern Leopard Frog, also consume small fish and tadpoles. In addition to being predators, amphibians are also prey for many other animals, making them an important part of the food web in the state's ecosystems.

The diet and predation habits of Florida's native amphibians play an important role in the state's ecosystems. By consuming invertebrates and being a food source for other animals, they help maintain a delicate balance in the natural world.

Threats to Florida's native amphibians include: habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change. As Florida's human population grows, development is destroying the wetlands and other habitats that these amphibians depend on. Pollution of agricultural runoff and other chemicals, can also harm amphibian populations. Climate change can alter the timing of breeding cycles and migration patterns, which can have negative impacts on amphibian populations.

One invasive amphibian to watch for is the Cuban Tree Frog. For more information see: https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/cuban_treefrog_inFL.shtml



Welcome are Rotonda West residents, renters and their guests. Please do not contact the RWA Admin Office. Questions? Contact Community Outreach Committee: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

Cuban Tree Frog, Invasive



*Community Outreach
Committee*

**HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE
CELEBRATES NATIONAL
DOG WALKING DAY**



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND



Created in 2010, this special day reminds us that walking your dog is
an important part of being a responsible pet owner.

Plus, it's fun, good for your health & strengthens the bond between you and your dog.

Take a photo on 2/22/25, showing your dog and yourself enjoying a walk in the park,
on the street or sidewalk, or wherever you enjoy walking with your furry friend.

Submit the photo with the name of your dog and the people in the picture
taken on 2/22, and submit it to westways@rotondawest.org.



**YOUR PHOTOS WILL BE INCLUDED IN
THE MARCH ISSUE OF WEST WAYS.
LAST YEAR WE HAD MANY
WONDERFUL PICTURES SUBMITTED.**





COMING IN FEBRUARY

Rotonda West Community Outreach Nature Committee Presents:

Why Plant Native?

by Jayne Neville



Wednesday February 26, 2025 2pm

Speaker: Jayne Neville, Mangrove
Chapter of the Native Plant Society

Most of us are not originally from Florida, having moved from elsewhere. It's a rarity to meet a Florida native and it's also becoming a rarity to find Florida native plants in the landscape. Big box stores and local nurseries carry very few if any Florida native plants but instead plants that are native to other countries. Those same plants are in most landscapes, misleading new homeowners into thinking those plants belong in Florida, wasting time and money on plants that fail. For more information on native plants, see: <https://www.fnps.org/plants>

Native plants are much more than just esthetically pleasing. They are adapted to Florida's climate which includes a rainy season including standing water, winter dry season including fire, high humidity, salty air, storm surge, and hurricanes. Native plants help remove carbon from the air and require less water once they are established. Reducing lawns and replacing with native plants will reduce noise and pollution caused from lawn care chemicals and fertilizers, damaging our ecosystem and waterways. Native plants also play a very important role in providing shelter and essential food for wildlife by promoting biodiversity. Insects and pollinators rely on native plants for food and to lay eggs. Our insect and pollinator populations continue to decline at an alarming rate, due to pesticide applications and purchasing non-native plants. Birds and other wildlife rely on insects to eat and feed their young and use native plants for food and habitat. Find native plant nurseries: <https://www.fann.org/>

Free plants available to Rotonda West residents at meeting as supply lasts! Another great way to stock up on native plants: Florida Native Plant Society Plant Native Day, March 1, 9-12 Lemon Bay Park 570 Bay Park Blvd, Englewood

Rotonda West Community Center, 646 Rotonda Circle

Welcome are Rotonda West residents, renters and their guests. Please do not contact the RWA Admin Office. Questions: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

JOIN US FOR AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ANCIENT
WELLNESS PRACTICE OF



QiGong



CREATE YOUR NEW PATH TO WELLNESS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH @ 9 AM

At the RWA Community Center

All invited. Must be RWA resident, owner, or renter
to join the experiential portion.

A 1- time waiver must be signed.

Come as you are-no special dress or equipment needed

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO...

- Be strong yet flexible like a tree
- Flow like water
- Be grounded firmly on the earth
- Reach for the heavens
- Cultivate your own confidence, power and vitality
- Let go of worry and stress



Left: Instructor Donna Colleen Kester Phillips, PhD.

- Tier 2 (500 hour) Certified Advances Lee Holden QiGong Teacher
- Certified trauma-informed Yoga teacher
- Created & directs Center for Mindful Practice-Niagara University

Donna teaches QiGong, Mindfulness Meditation, and Wellness Walking through her QiWell Service which shares information and resources about the benefits of QiGong and other wellness practices.

PRESENTED BY THE HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE
RWA COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE

QUESTIONS? CONTACT: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

NEW FOR 2025

PILATES MAT CLASS

IN THE COMMUNITY CENTER



Rotonda West
Association

New Weekly Pilates Mat Class



Community Outreach Committee
Health & Wellness Initiative 2025
Presents



Instructor
Dr. Francine Finuco



February
Classes

All
Fridays
except
2/21
9-10 AM



Pilates Class

While Pilates is a full-body workout, there are targeted exercises for improving balance, posture and strengthening the back.

Pilates helps with posture as it helps to engage the deep core muscles in what was originally known as 'the powerhouse' – the abdominals, back and pelvic floor – which enables you to relax your shoulders and neck and alleviate pressure on your hips, legs and feet, in turn, improving your posture.

PLEASE BRING A PILATES MAT

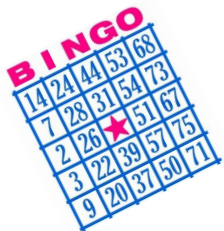
This class is for RWA members, owners & renters.
A one-time Fitness Waiver needs to be signed.



Please do not contact the RWA office,
they do not have information

COME AND JOIN US

EVERY FRIDAY AT 9 AM (EXCEPT 2/21)



Rotonda West
Association

Community Outreach Committee Presents



3rd Sunday of
Each Month

RWA Community Center
646 Rotonda Circle

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Doors open at 12:15 pm

Welcome property owners, residents, renters, and their guests.
Please invite your vacationing neighbors.

Snacks & water
available,
or bring your
own.
Covered
beverage
container please.

Questions?
communityoutreach@rotondawest.org
Please do not contact the
RWA Admin Office.
You will be referred to the above e-mail
No pets.

Play begins
promptly
at 1:00 pm

Must be 18 to
play.



BINGO- FULL HOUSE!

**94 PEOPLE CAME FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AT
THE JANUARY 19th BINGO!**

**COME BACK ON FEBRUARY 16TH
TO TRY YOUR LUCK!**



2ND ANNUAL SPRING RWA NEIGHBORHOOD



GARAGE SALE

**FRIDAY MARCH 28TH
SATURDAY MARCH 29TH**

RAINDATE: SUNDAY MARCH 30TH

9 AM-5 PM

**TO BUY AND TO SELL
MORE INFORMATION TO COME!!**

**INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTACTS
WILL SOON BE SENT VIA
CONSTANT CONTACT AND FACEBOOK.
A SIGN APPROVAL FORM WILL BE POSTED
ON THE RWA WEBSITE.**

**THIS WILL BE THE 4th COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE,
THE AVERAGE IS 115 RESIDENCES PARTICIPATING
WITH VERY SUCCESSFUL RESULTS!**

**DO NOT CONTACT ADMIN OFFICE.
QUESTIONS? CONTACT COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE AT:
communityoutreach@rotondawest.org**

RWA

SPRING

COMMUNITY

GARAGE

SALE

Friday 3/28 &

Saturday 3/29

9 am-5 pm

Rain date:

Sunday 3/30

Here's a great way to go through your extra "stuff" and make some money! RWA will have a Community Wide Garage Sale for RWA members and renters to participate in. You can do one or both days. A third day, Sunday, 3/30, is only added as a rain date.

A Garage Sale Participation Form is posted on the RWA website, and a hard copy is on the information rack at the RWA office. Flyers with instructions and contacts will be sent via Constant Contact and Facebook. The event will be promoted to the public with RWA signs and news releases.

Do not call the RWA office with questions. Please contact the Community Outreach Committee at: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org, or garagesale@rotondawest.org, or call [630-956-8814](tel:630-956-8814) for questions. Our last Community Garage Sale had 115 participants and was very well received.

Submitted by Rita Lopienski,

Community Outreach Committee Garage Sale Lead

ROTONDA WEST NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



Scan here for more information

Protecting Rotonda West since 1981

Neighborhood Watch is undoubtedly one of history's oldest and most well-known crime prevention programs. The aim of our group is to promote education for residents and have a safe and secure neighborhood. In general, when criminal activity is suspected, members are encouraged to report it to authorities, and not to intervene. Neighborhood Watch strives to promote awareness and efficiency when acting on suspicious activity. With such large investments and resources from the community, it is important to ask: *are community watch programs effective in reducing crime?*

The answer is **"YES"**. Charlotte County Sheriff's Department consistently states that *"Rotonda West is one of the safest places to live in the county."*

We welcome our newest members, Kenneth Grubbs and Rich Sinclair

Driving and Walking on Parade Circle:

Are you a safe walker and/or a safe driver? You probably answered "yes" to both those questions. *In reality, you may not be.* Could you be safer? Absolutely...

In 2022 there were 7,522 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes. On average, a pedestrian was killed every 70 minutes and injured every 8 minutes. Pedestrian deaths accounted for 18 percent of all traffic fatalities.

Florida statute requires vehicles to stop at all crosswalks when a pedestrian is in them

Parade Circle has crosswalks at all streets entering the circle; some are bus stops for the local schools.

During morning walks with our dogs around Parade Circle, I see cars fly right through the crosswalks while pedestrians are in them or attempting to step in them. I alone have been in that situation, and it is scary. For drivers, don't be distracted when driving; there are bright yellow crosswalks signs at every crosswalk to assist you in identifying where they are. For walkers, be careful when stepping into crosswalks, make sure the approaching car is slowing down before you try to cross.

****If you are walking in the darkness of the morning or evening hours here are a few suggestions to keep you safe; no matter where you walk in Rotonda.**

- Walk in the opposite direction of traffic, that way you can see a car coming at you and can step aside if they are close to the edge of the road. Let's face it our roads are narrow,
- bring a flashlight and sway it back and forth to alert drivers you are present,
- wear reflective clothing,
- pull your dogs close to you so they don't dart out into oncoming cars, and
- "my favorite suggestion" is to step off the road until the car(s) pass you.

Our next meeting is February on 18th at 10am at the RWA Community Center.

If you are looking to volunteer as a Patrol or be a Base Station, it just takes two hours a month; a small commitment to protecting our neighborhoods. Interested in joining our organization, please contact David Perry at 941-828-1584, go to our Facebook page @ Rotonda West Neighborhood Watch, or scan the QR code above.



GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club, Inc.

GWEN GRACE, PAST PRESIDENT



GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club has several blood drives each year partnering with One Blood. The big red bus parks at the Marina parking lot by the Hills Golf Club. The January drive produced 43 pints which could benefit 129 patients! Thank you to all who donated that day. You make a difference! Our next blood drive is scheduled for April 22nd.

The January general meeting's Art competition resulted in 11 blue ribbons and most of these will go to the GFWC District competition this month to compete against the blue-ribbon winners from clubs in Port Charlotte, Punta Gorda, Naples, LaBelle and Estero. The blue-ribbon winners from that competition can go on to the GFWC Florida competition in Orlando in April and compete against the winners from the entire state. Wish our talented artists "good luck"!

January we also welcomed six new members to the club. They are pictured with their sponsors/mentors along with the President, 1st VP and 2nd VP.



Our next General Meeting is Thursday, February 20th at RWA community center. The social time begins at 9:30 am and the business meeting starts promptly at 10:15 am. Please go to our website at www.gfwcrotondawest.org for information about upcoming events and who we are and what we do. You can also find us on Facebook at GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Group. All are invited to our general meeting.



26 Dec 2024
Contact: Charles Truthan
Public Affairs Officer
352-266-0460
ctruthan@gmail.com
<http://cgaux.org>

News Release

This next 3 Public Education classes are:

February 8th 2025, Paddler's Safety Guide! In person four (4) hour training with SUP Englewood Outfitters, CGAUX F' will be held at 1864 N. Pine Island Rd. Suite 10450 North Palm Beach Cape Haze FL 33946
Cost is \$25 per perso **CLASS HAS BEEN CANCELED** it on-water training.
Students are made aware of basic safety issues and needs for paddling safety.

February 15th: Suddenly in Command! The 4-hour class will be held at Ingman Marine Showroom 15001 Gasparilla Rd, Placida, FL 33946 starting at 8:30 am and finishing at approximately 12:30 pm. The in-person class is limited in size. The course is taught by members who patrol and are very familiar with south Charlotte Harbor, Gasparilla Sound, Pine Island Sound, South Gulf Cove and Boca Grande areas. The course is designed for those not generally at the helm. It will help participants to be prepared with the basics of boating and boating safety in case of an emergency or a situation that places you in command of your boat. Regular Captain encouraged to attend so they can learn what the "Admiral" needs to learn and practice! Participants learn about: Boating vocabulary and operating principles; starting and stopping an engine; basic boat handling and how to get help; familiarization with your on-board equipment; descriptions of what causes boating mishaps and how to minimize them.

Cost for the class is:

- \$45 per person
- \$60 per couple sharing workbook
- \$15 per middle or high school student

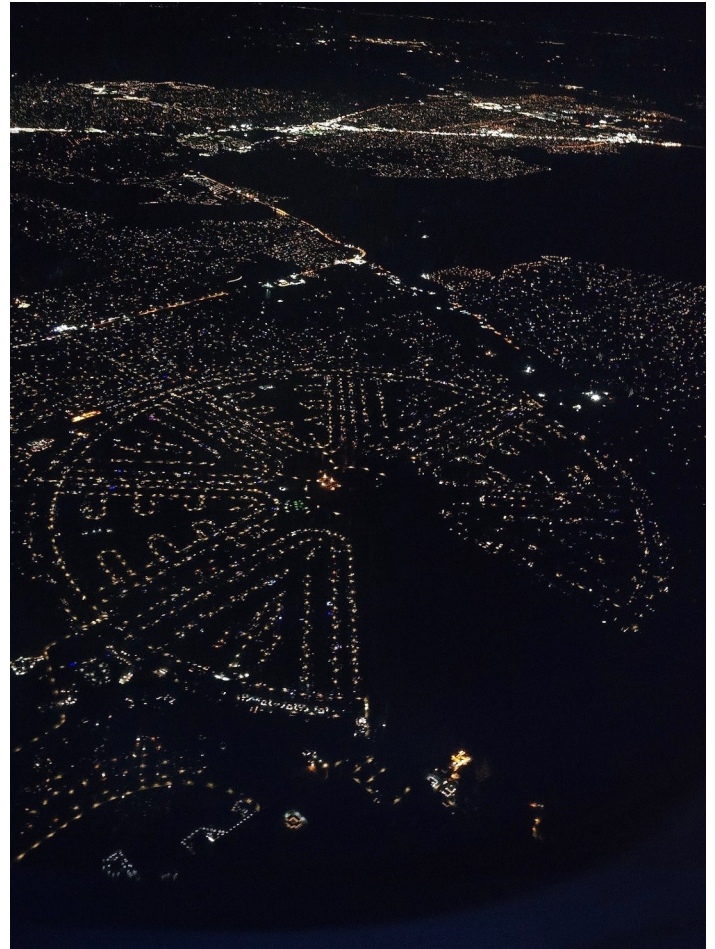
March 8, 2025: Boat America! In person eight (8) hour training at the HOA building here in South Gulf Cove. Starts at 8:00 am. Cost is \$60 per couple, \$45 per person, \$25 for students. Participants learn about the basics of Boating Safety. You also earn, upon successful completion of course and test, your State of Florida **Boating Safety Card**. This is *required for all those born on or after 1 January 1988*. Preregistration is required for all classes.

Call Anne Brengle, Flotilla Staff Officer Public Education, at 508-717-2613 to learn more, or email to abrengle@aol.com

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all mission areas. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For more information, please visit www.cgaux.org

###

PHOTOS TO ENJOY



ROTONDA WEST– BEAUTIFUL DAY OR NIGHT

Night time photo by: John Kallas

RW Board of Directors & Staff

Photo by: Dave Pulaski



Please note: Not all of the BOD or the Staff are pictured

OFFICE STAFF

Derrick Hedges
Manager

Tammy Birdsong
Administrator

Nancy Schwechel
Administrator and
Deed Restrictions

Jenny Bulle
Bookkeeper

Annette Casteel
Administrator and
Minutes Clerk

Sheryl Ann Nowicki
Administrator

Kelsey Stewart
Administrator

Denise Huffman
Minutes Clerk

Joe Harris
Communications Specialist

Jack Lanar
Compliance Officer

Travis Green
Aquatics

MAINTENANCE STAFF

Wayne Taylor

Dale Anderson

Craig Brown

Doug Smith

**THANK YOU TO OUR
WONDERFUL STAFF**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

Andy VanScyoc, President

David Kelly, 1st Vice President

Sam Besase, Treasurer

Karen Harvey, Secretary

Peter Traverso, Director

Deb Orchard, Director

Jerry Eldred, Director



WEST WAYS STAFF

Nadine Clough, Editor
westways@rotondawest.org

Connie Smith, Writer

Pattie Mihalik, Writer

Gwen Grace, GFWC Woman's Club

David Perry, RW Neighborhood Watch

Rita Lopienski, Contributor

Merrill Horswill, Contributor

Deb Orchard, Contributor

Maureen Laderer, Contributor

David Pulaski, Photographer

Nadine Clough, Layout & Design

Flyers by: Nadine Clough & Maureen Laderer