

WEST WOYS

**JUNE
2026**

VOLUME 30, ISSUE 6

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ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, INC.
646 Rotonda Circle | Phone: 941-697-6788



Rotonda West Celebrated the 250th Anniversary of the USA

By: Karen Harvey

*A*nd oh what a celebration it was! The morning of May 23rd dawned crisp and clear, albeit a little hot.

The day started out at the newly renovated island with a dedication of the Statue of Liberty and a bench dedicated to Don Mahon. The American Legion posted the colors, Pastor Garry Clark gave the invocation and Stephen R. Deutsch gave the keynote address. The unveiling of the Statue of Liberty was breathtaking as she now stands watch over all of Rotonda residents.

America's birthday celebration continued at the Community Center where there was food provided by Mad Dogs, Harry the Clown, Music by Eric Stafanik, Face Painting by Vickie and friends, inflatables for the kids' enjoyment and a photo booth. The Pie contest won by Sue Killian was sponsored by the Rotonda West Women's Club.

About 300 people enjoyed the festival which ran until 2:30 p.m. with no rain in sight.

Happy Birthday America



Don Mahon was honored for originating West Ways for Rotonda West. His wife Virginia and daughter Cindy are pictured, along with Cindy's Husband Steve.



From left to right: President Andy Van Scyoc, Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch, Statue of Liberty donors Phyllis Stewart and Todd Talley, and Treasurer Sam Besase



Fellowship Church Pastor Garry Clark



*Commissioner
Stephen R. Deutsch*



*American Legion Honor Guard
and gun salute*







ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION *Board of Directors*



ANDY VAN SCYOC
President



KAREN HARVEY
Vice President



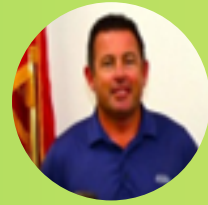
SAM BESASE
Treasurer



DEB ORCHARD
Secretary



GWEN GRACE
Director



DAVID KELLY
Director



PETER TRAVERSO
Director

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 12:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Sam Besase, Gwen Grace, Karen Harvey, Deb Orchard, Peter Traverso, Andy Van Scyoc (Chair), (Zoom) David Kelly

ABSENT:

Management: Derrick Hedges, RWA Manager

Members: Joe Harris, Annette Casteel, Paul Thiel, Karen Bever, Fred Bever, Tracy Stefanik, Jeff Nicholas, Ron Wagner, Butch Mulhollem, Barbara, Susan Bernier, Doug Yetton, Kathy Yetton, Roger Quick, Kathy Yetton, Roger Quick, Lisa Quick, Cheryl Rippe, Karen Davis, Steve Milbourne, Rita Milbourn, Brijitte Siplon, Viston Batey, Laurie Batey, Barbara Bonaventure, Mary Alice Memeniman, Jim Gartman, Kathy Gartman, Mary Johnson, Mark Robes, Linda Robes, Karen Hoover, Mike Montgomery, Beverly Montgomery, Donald Sibley, April Sibley, Larry Lopinski, Rita Lopenski, Fred Davis, William Brush, Scott Stauber, Dennis Desilets, Margaret Desilets, Bob Burke, Les Koch, James Bertling, Elyse Bertling, Michael, Charysh, Cheryl Rippe, Sue Reske, Craig Farlinger, Pat Farlinger, Jeff Lijewski, Elizabeth Lijewski, Allan Luoma, Ann Weaver, Roy Leath, Tyler Glenn, Dennis Leman, Les Goodman, John Delaney, Francis McDowell, Barry Patterson, Mary Patterson, Paul Slovinski, Phil Speziale, Michelle Wojtowicz, Maureen Laderer, James Maderitz, Jane Maderitz, Barb Peszko, Roy Komisar, Michael Knight, Cheryl Knight, Joann Beach, Tracey Nishimu, Lance Petti, Frank, Settecase, Deborah Settecase, Molly Clark, Thomas Hyatt, Michael Fusco, Karen Fusco, Pam Pierce, Andrea Fitch. (Zoom) Amanda Stuever, Julie Spalwski, and Ken Anselment. Kelsey Stewart, Bob Thompson, Denise Chuderwicz, Eugene Lerner, Ray Whiteman, Steve Gray, Anne Finer, Bettina Peluso, John McGonigle, Vickie Lowe, J. Goth.

The meeting was called to order by President Van Scyoc at 12:00 PM. The meeting was properly noticed, and a quorum was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was said.

- Director Traverso moved the Board to approve the BOD Meeting Minutes for the March 12, 2026, meeting, and with Director Harvey seconding the motion. Motion Unanimously Approved.

Minutes Continued--

MEMBERS' INPUT (Agenda Items)

1. **The Quarters** – Many members came out to speak about the proposed development that is scheduled to be built, known as the Quarters. Members thanked the Board of Directors for sending the letter to Charlotte County Commissioners about the oppositional concerns of infrastructure/density/architecture issues that will affect RWA members' way of life. It was again suggested by a member that there be a special assessment to raise money to buy up the vacant properties so that RWA has control over what is being built in Rotonda West. Many members are meeting with county officials to investigate what actions to take to stop this project from moving forward. Director Traverso was asked if the NCC had received plans and specifications. His reply was no, that they have not received anything at this time, and the project is still in zoning. Director Traverso was questioned: he would report to the board when the NCC receives information on this project. Director Traverso responded that he would report to the Board of Directors. A question was posed about how RWA would enforce the deed restrictions on new developments in the RWA area, for residential projects. President Van Scyoc stated that several weeks ago, when this started, he made an errant statement stating that this is supposedly under the RWA jurisdiction, but not our deed restriction. That was incorrect; they are subject to our deed restrictions; however, they are not subject to our new building specification. So RWA can't control what they build. Once they build it, they must comply with our deed restrictions.

President's Update: Andy Van Scyoc

President Van Scyoc announced he was moving the Audit to the front of the agenda. He stated he knew the Quarters would be an issue, and it was and will be sometime moving forward. He also offered any member a tour of the new addition after the meeting, if they would like.

Treasurer's Report:

Director Besase provided a written report attached to these minutes. As of March 31, 2026, RWA has 2.9 million in cash operations and reserves. Twenty-five percent of the year is done. Year-to-date expenses are under \$52,000.00. About 6% of properties are delinquent. The budget is in great financial shape, and reserves are already funded for the year.

Manager's Report: Manager Hedges

Mr. Hedges provided a written report attached to these minutes. He let everyone know that RWA had a new hire, Faela, who would be the new receptionist/administrator.

Deed Restrictions Violations: Kelsey Stewart, Administrator

Ms. Stewart stated that there are violations listed in the Board Packet for approval. A motion to levy fines on members for violations listed numbers 1 through 56. If confirmed by the Compliance Committee, these fines shall be automatically imposed.

- Director Harvey made a motion to approve the Deed Restriction Violations, and Director Orchard 2nd the Motion. Motion Unanimously Approved.

Minutes Continued--

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration/Personnel – President Van Scyoc (Chair) No Report.

Budget & Finance Report: No Report.

Buildings & Grounds – Director Besase (Chair)

Director Besase provided a written report attached to these minutes. Director Besase mentioned that in a previous meeting and the Building and Grounds meeting, it was suggested that a one-time assessment to be conducted to generate funds to purchase the land on Parade Circle for tracts 1 through 9. There is supposed to be a soft poll sent by email. Historically, about 5% of RWA residents do not pay, so the rest of the RWA property owners would have to make up the difference. He reminded everyone that the dedication to the Statue of Liberty will take place on May 23, 2026. The dedication will be at Liberty Island from 10:00 am to 10:30 am, and a celebration will follow at the community center from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm.

Charter Taskforce Committee – Karen Harvey

Director Harvey stated that all the Charters have been reviewed, and a workshop with the Board of Directors will be scheduled soon. A new format has been designed for those Charters, and it has already been applied to two of the Charters for the committees to see if it works, and it does; it looks great. After the workshop, the resolution will be signed, and we will be off and running with all new charters for the committees.

Community Outreach – Gwen Grace (Chair)

Director Grace provided a written report attached to these minutes.

- Director Grace motioned to accept Diane Sweeny to the Community Outreach Committee, and Director Harvey seconded the motion. Motion Unanimously Approved.

Compliance – Barb Peszko (Chair)

Ms. Peszko provided a written report attached to these minutes.

Residential Modifications Committee – Barb Peszko (Chair)

Ms. Peszko provided a written report attached to these minutes.

Deed Restrictions

No Report.

Election Report

No Report.

Minutes Continued--

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board of Directors re-addressed 139 Mariner Lane, Appeal held over from last month, due to review the Residential Modification Committee Zoom meeting. Motion was made to sustain the decision of the committee: Board Roll Call Vote: Sam Besase, yes; Gwen Grace, no; Director Harvey, yes; Director Orchard, yes; David Kelly – no vote lost connection; Peter Traverso, yes; President Van Scyoc, yes. Final Vote 5-1 Board voted to uphold the Residential Modification decision; the denial is sustained.

- Director Orchard made a motion to uphold the denial decision made by the Res Mod committee, and Director Besase seconded the motion regarding changes at 139 Mariner Lane.

NEW BUSINESS & COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Audit Report** - Director Besase stated that every year, RWA has an independent outside auditing firm conducts an independent audit on the books from the previous year, which has been the case for the last 25 years. The auditor is available online for any questions regarding the audit.

- Director Besase motioned to accept the annual audit report, and Director Harvey seconded the motion. Motion Unanimously Approved.

2. **Sign Guideline** – Director Orchard noted that she and President Van Scyoc were part of the Sign Guideline committee, along with several of the staff members, the ones who deal with all the signs that we see in and around the neighborhood, and some of the updates that need to be done. A few things were added to the sign guideline. One of them is that you will be able to purchase signs for the RWA office that you may attach to your house, to an approved fence, or to your mailbox or dwelling. These will be the only signs that RWA will permit for these items. We want to get away from the signs stuck in the yard that could be blown around. There is also a temporary category for celebration signs and banners. That addresses "happy birthday" or "Happy anniversary"! Congratulations to our graduates. The caveat for a reasonable time, members are only allowed to have three signs each. The office personnel would like you to register at the office to help track the three-sign-per-property limit.

- Director Orchard motioned to accept the updated sign guidelines, and Director Harvey 2nd the motion. Motion Unanimously Approved.

MEMBERS' INPUT (Non-Agenda Items)

86 Pine Valley Court – Elyse and James Bertling 26

Pine Valley Court – Viston & Lori Batey

Ms. Bertling and Ms. Batey expressed their difficulty with one of the neighbors at 88 and 90 Pine Valley Court, who are James and Susan Reske. They claim they are being harassed by their landscapers, trespassing on their property and dumping landscaping debris there. They also claim that a camera is pointed at their house from the vacant lot, spying on them. James and Susan Reske expressed that they were only protecting their property by using cameras. All members had their chance to speak, and President Van Scyoc expressed that he and Manager Hedges would like to meet with all parties involved to resolve the neighbor-to-neighbor dispute.

RESPONSE TO MEMBER'S INPUT

DIRECTOR INPUT

Director Harvey stated that she loves the changes to the violations letter. The violation letter is all sinking together, and the math is all done for us. I want to thank whoever did this. I like the way it looks, and capturing the red-circled violation items and the number on the pictures helps to decipher the violation.



RWA COMMITTEES MEETING SCHEDULE

***ALL MEETINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON ZOOM
(LINK PROVIDED IN CONSTANT CONTACT)***

COMMITTEE	DAY	TIME
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	2ND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH	12:00 P.M.
BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE	TBD	TBD
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE	2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	10:30 A.M.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE	1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH	10:00 A.M.
COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE	DATES VARY (CHECK CALENDAR)	2:00 P.M.
ELECTION COMMITTEE	SPECIFIC TO ELECTION SCHEDULE	TBD
RESIDENTIAL MODIFICATION COMMITTEE	2ND & 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	9:00 A.M.
RW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH	3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH	10:00 A.M.

Now Available!

\$7 each



No Trespassing
No Soliciting



Dog on Premises



24 hr Surveillance

The official RWA approved signs for residents to place on their property are now available for purchase in the RWA Office.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN?



Rotonda West offers a vibrant community life with a variety of events and activities to engage residents and visitors alike. Whether you're interested in attending social gatherings, participating in club meetings, or enjoying recreational activities, the Community Center serves as a hub for all things happening around town.



To stay updated on the latest events, simply scan the QR code provided to access the comprehensive calendar of events. This digital tool ensures you won't miss out on exciting opportunities to connect with others and make the most of your time in Rotonda West.

JUNE

6/1, 6/9, 6/15, 6/22, 6/29: Monday @ 10am: Pilates Mat

6/3: Wednesday @ 9am: World Bike Day (clock miles biked, send to West Ways)

6/12, 19: Friday @ 10am: Tai Chi (6/19 outdoors on patio)

6/5, 26: Friday @ 10am: Yin Yoga Mat

6/16: Tuesday @ 2pm: Fall Prevention 101: Simple Ways to Prevent Falls & Improve Balance by Diane Swinney

6/18: Thursday @ 6:30pm: Trivia Night with Tim

6/19: Friday, Office & Community Center Closed for Holiday

6/23: Tuesday @ 4:30pm: Food Truck Tuesday

All events are held in the RWA Community Center unless otherwise noted

TRIVIA

with Tim



Open to all RWA owners, residents and their guests



Play as an individual or form a team



3rd Thursday of each month



**Doors open at 6 pm
Play begins at 6:30 pm**



**RWA Community Center
646 Rotonda Circle**



You may bring
your drinks
(lidded cups)
and snacks



No Pets



Questions? email: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org



Presented by the RWA Community Outreach Committee



TRIVIA

with Tim

By: Rita Lopienski



Thursday, May 21st Trivia Night with Tim brought 35 participants. There was no particular theme this time, just random sets of 10 trivia questions at a time. Team "Circle Diamond" won, and candy bars were the prize, along with bragging rights and the group name on the trophy.

The next Trivia Night will be June 18 at 6:30pm.



Winning Circle Diamond team from left: Larry & Rita Lopienski, Brad & Ruthann Kort, Mary Cowett and Sam Besase, (with Tim in the middle back row).

STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Rotonda West's Real

★ STARS

ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS



**Become a Star in Rotonda West!
Find Your Perfect Role Inside!**

Which Committee Fits You?

BUDGET & FINANCE

Interim Chair: Colleen Koppenhaver

Oversees the Association's budget, financial planning, and reporting. Perfect for those who enjoy working with numbers, spreadsheets, and financial strategies.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

budgetandfinance@rotondawest.org.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Chair: Sam Besase

Cares for community properties, grounds, and facilities. Ideal for those who appreciate detailed landscaping, maintenance, or projects.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

buildingsandgrounds@rotondawest.org.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Chair: Gwen Grace

Plans community events like Christmas Parade, BINGO, Music in the Park, Food Trucks, Garage Sale, Talent Show, and more. Great for you if you enjoy organizing events, socializing, and uniting people.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

COMPLIANCE

Chair: Barb Peszko

Handles formal violation hearings and promotes fair enforcement processes. Ideal for those who value fairness, clear rules, and thoughtful decision-making.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

compliancecommittee@rotondawest.org

ELECTIONS

Chair: Position Open

Oversees Board elections and yearly voting processes. Ideal for you if you're organized, detail-oriented, and enjoy managing procedures.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

electioncommittee@rotondawest.org.

RESIDENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

Chair: Barb Peszko

Reviews and approves homeowner exterior modification applications. Ideal for those with an eye for design, standards, or plan reviews.

*If you are interested in volunteering please email

residentialmodifications@rotondawest.org.

Hurricane Season Is Here! Is Your Plan In Place?

By Connie Smith

Hurricane season started June 1; it's time to have your disaster plan in place and your disaster supplies are ready. You'll be able to let out a sigh of relief when hurricane season ends on November 1.

A full house, plus attendees via zoom, heard Brandon Watkins of Charlotte County's Office of Emergency Management and CERT team coordinator, say that Florida's definition of evacuation has changed since 2017 when Irma hit the state. At that time, when residents were told to leave, they were expected to leave the state. The result was it took 18 hours to reach the state line from south Florida and I-75 became a massive parking lot.

Today, Watkins said, emergency management officials realize, "you only need to go 10s of miles, not 100s of miles." In 1992, Florida "overhauled" its building codes and those changes made homes built in 1994 and after, able to withstand 175+ wind speeds and high impacts. An easily purchased wind mitigation study can determine any home's ability to withstand hurricane winds.

The simple rule is: "Hide from Wind, Run from Water", so it's the threat of storm surge that triggers evacuation notices to residents, first in red zones and if the threat increases, in orange and subsequent zones. Rotonda West is almost exclusively in the orange (B) zone. According to Charlotte County Emergency Management literature, storm surge is historically the leading cause of hurricane-related deaths in the United States. Higher ground (10s of miles) in Charlotte County may be found as close as Northport, Deep Creek or Babcock Ranch.

The start of hurricane season is also the perfect time to review your insurance coverage, to make sure it is sufficient to cover your home and supplemental areas, if needed. Watkins pointed to the catastrophic condition of Ft. Myers Beach residents who lost their homes after Hurricane Ian because they were under-insured and were unable to rebuild. He also cautioned residents from depending upon FEMA. "FEMA will not make you whole," he said. "\$33,000 is the maximum anyone may receive," and he suggested few would qualify for the maximum. "Safety and sanitary conditions are their focus," he said.

When evacuating, he said it is important to take with you, important documents, such as insurance papers, I.D.s, birth certificates, medical records, passports, cash and medicines. You may have friends or family on higher ground, where you can ride out the evacuation period, or you may go to a hotel outside the evacuation area. A local emergency shelter should be your last resort, as space is limited and there will be no hot food or cooking facilities. The good news is that all Charlotte County shelters will allow pets.

A special needs shelter will be available, but those individuals must preregister by calling 941-833-4000 or complete an online application. Availability is not guaranteed; only medical monitoring is provided; one caregiver must be brought with the patient.

Post-hurricane, residents should plan for one gallon of water per person per day for seven days and shelf-stable sustenance for seven days. They should have a flashlight with extra batteries or power bank and a weather radio with a hand crank. Sufficient medicines and other necessities should also be on hand.

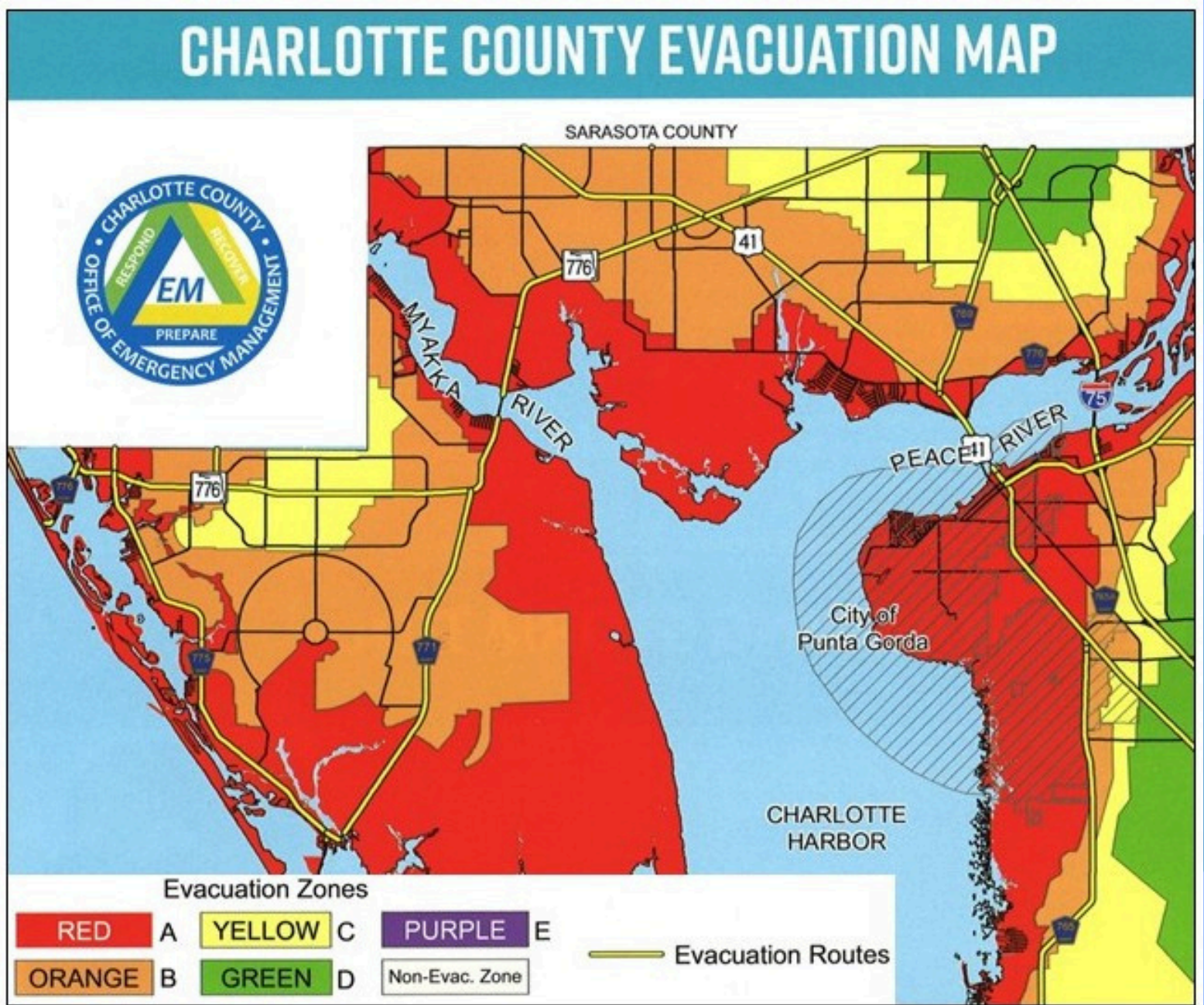
A copy of the [Charlotte County Disaster Guide](#) was made available to each attendee and is available online. Watkins urged everyone to study the guide (click on the link to access). Being able to secure your own household allows first responders to focus on critical lifesaving infrastructure recovery, he said.

Watkins also urged resident to become involved with CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), "that provides help until help arrives." Involvement includes a 3-day basic training. Call 941-833-400 or e-mail CERT@charlottecountyfl.gov to get on the wait list for the next class.



Brandon Watkins, specialist with Charlotte County Office of Emergency Management, shows Rotonda residents a county evacuation map.

HURRICANE EVACUATION MAP



Red areas in Charlotte County are the first to be declared evacuation zones in the event of predicted hurricane storm surge. Orange zones, which encompasses Rotonda West, is the second area to be evacuated.

Southwest Florida Drought Leaves Reservoir Half Empty

Written by: Emily Andersen

Credit to: Sam Besase

Suncoast Searchlight

May 18, 2026, 4:01 a.m. ET

- A drought has caused Southwest Florida's water reserves to drop to about an eight-month supply.
- Officials state the drinking water supply is secure despite the shortage and expect to refill reserves during the summer rainy season.
- An emergency order allows for continued water pumping from the low-flowing Peace River, which raises environmental concerns.



Standing on the wall of a reservoir the size of about four golf courses, it's easy to see the impact of [Southwest Florida's extreme water shortage](#).

Operated by the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, the reservoir is built to hold 6 billion gallons of water. It is now half empty, and the distance between the current waterline and the visible mark where the water normally sits is striking.

The lack of water has become dangerous for local ecosystems, but as far as drinkable water supply is concerned, officials say they're not panicking yet. Even if the drought continues through this year's rainy season, officials are confident they can refill the supply before the end of the summer.

"This summer, we'll probably fill up a little faster. Usually, during the rainy season, there's more water flowing than we even need to take, or can take, with the pumps we have out there," said Katie Gilmore, the director of operations for the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority. "So, this year, we'll definitely pull as much as we can, until we're full."

The Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority is also planning ahead for projected population growth, future droughts, and the extreme swings of climate change by expanding capacity to more than double the amount of above-ground water in reserve.

The authority is the primary water supplier for Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties. It's stationed near North Port along the Peace River, where each day, pumps pull millions of gallons of water from the river into a reservoir big enough to hold more than 9,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The water is treated and either sent out to the water supply authority's municipal customers or injected into an underground storage system called Aquifer Storage and Recovery, or ASR.

To get an idea of how the drought is impacting the region's water supply, Suncoast Searchlight toured the authority's sprawling outdoor facility, which includes a pump station on the river, the main reservoir, and a collection of blue well pumps marking the ASR underground storage locations.

There is also a second 500-million-gallon reservoir and a blocked-off construction zone, where work has recently begun on what will be a 9-billion-gallon reservoir when finished in about three years.

Water reserves fall to about eight months' supply

Between the ASR and the two completed reservoirs, the facility usually has between a 12- and 13-month supply of water, based on its usual output of almost 1 billion gallons per month.

That has now dropped to about eight months' worth of water, according to data that [Gilmore presented to the facility's board of directors](#) on April 1.

"This really is a drought situation," Gilmore told Suncoast Searchlight. "There's less rainfall. One can assume, even without watching the weather and their predictions, that there's going to be less rainfall, so we needed to start preparing for that."

Southwest Florida is currently experiencing its worst water shortage in almost a decade, prompting the Southwest Florida Water Management District to implement [Phase 3 water restrictions](#) for the first time since 2017.

[Previous Suncoast Searchlight reporting](#) found that the restrictions are not being evenly enforced across Sarasota County and that lack of compliance could be detrimental to the local environment.

"History has shown us that voluntary water restrictions do not work," said Glenn Compton, the chairman of ManaSota-88, a local environmental nonprofit. "There needs to be more mandatory restrictions that are put in year-round, so that we don't end up in a situation where we're concerned about reduced water supply in a drought."

Without emergency rule changes put in place this year, the water supply situation could have become much worse. But Compton said changing the protocol for water collection could exacerbate the environmental impact of the drought.

In a typical year, the Southwest Florida Water Management District doesn't allow the water supply authority to pump water out of the Peace River if the river's flow is lower than 130 cubic feet per second.

The river has been below that limit since November — around the same time the water management district first declared that Southwest Florida was in a water shortage. Despite the lower flow, an emergency order issued in March allows the water supply authority to continue pumping a small amount of water from the river. It's not enough to erase the deficit.

Water system releasing more than triple what it pulls from the river

In March, the water supply authority pulled an average of 8.73 million gallons per day from the river, but it dispensed an average of more than three times that amount each day to the communities it serves.

The emergency order expires at the end of May, so the water authority will soon be relying only on its stored water — until expected summer rains bring an increase in river flow levels. If this year's rainfall follows the Peace River Basin's usual pattern, that likely won't happen until June or July.

"That's why it was built, to handle stuff like this," the authority's executive director, Richard Anderson, said. "We've been able to use a little bit of rain and the emergency order that we got to basically keep the reservoir level where it was at the end of March."

Anderson and Gilmore said the only anticipated long-term effect on water supply and operations will be an increased cost this summer as the staff and machinery at the plant work harder to refill, but those costs aren't likely to be passed on to customers.

"The power, the chemicals to treat the water, all costs money, so if we're running at a higher demand than normal, that'll be an additional cost on us," Gilmore said. "We have enough built into our budget to handle that, but that'll be our impact."

The environmental impact will likely last much longer. According to Compton, taking even a small amount of water from the already low river is dangerous for wildlife and local ecosystems. Lack of water can change which plants are able to thrive in certain areas, causing more competition for local native vegetation, and it can cause animals to change their concentration patterns in search of more water, impacting predator and prey dynamics.

"It's almost equivalent to taking a little bit of oxygen out of the system and expecting it to remain healthy," he said. "Having an emergency declaration where you can withdraw more water than what is permitted could have a devastating impact on the river's resources."

This story was produced by Suncoast Searchlight, a nonprofit newsroom of the Community News Collaborative serving Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto counties. Learn more at www.suncoastsearchlight.org.



Do you Love Decorating for Christmas ?

**Volunteers are needed
for indoor decorating of the
Community Center & Admin
Office**



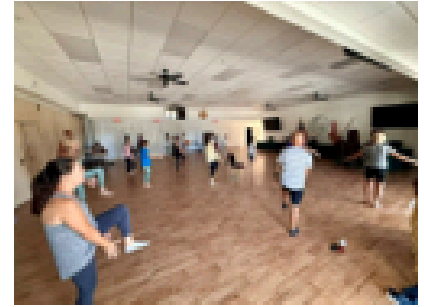
**Dates and times will be
posted in
West Ways & on
RWA Facebook pages.**

Health & Wellness

Community Outreach Committee Reaches Anniversaries with Health & Wellness Initiative Fitness Programs.

By Rita Lopienski

June reaches a milestone with the RWA COC Health & Wellness Initiative! It's exciting to see wonderful fitness classes offered on a year-round basis!



Tai Chi classes began as a brand-new program in June 2024. Pilates Mat Monday at 10 am classes began in January 2025. Yin Yoga Mat began in January 2026, which is for deeper stretching, and it alternates on Fridays at 10 am with Tai Chi.

All these classes are low-impact, stretching, balancing, and core-strengthening classes.

Classes are offered for RWA members, owners & renters, and everyone must sign a one-time fitness liability waiver that is kept on file. Instructor Dr. Francine Finucan is self-insured and certified. There is no charge for the participants, and RWA does not pay Francine. She has a tip jar, similar to how other instructors operate who work outside of fitness centers.



Come and give any of these unique classes a try! Tai Chi & Yin Yoga are not typically offered at gyms. The atmosphere is calming, caring, and adaptable to all levels of fitness, for men and women, and you will see improvements in your balance and flexibility!



 **Rotonda West Association**
Community Outreach Committee Health & Wellness Initiative 2026 Presents
Instructor Dr. Francine Finucan

Held at RWA Community Center - 646 Rotonda Circle
These classes are for RWA members, owners & renters. A one-time Fitness Waiver needs to be signed.

<p>PILATES All Mondays EXCEPT 4th Monday 10-11 am</p>  <p>Pilates helps with posture as it helps to engage the deep core muscles in 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.</p>	<p>TAI CHI Alternating Fridays 10-11 AM</p>  <p>Experience meditation in motion. Tai Chi promotes flexibility, strength, and relaxation, while reducing stress. All skill levels are welcome.</p>	<p>YIN YOGA Alternating Fridays 10-11 AM</p>  <p>Yin Yoga is a slow-paced, passive style of yoga focusing on long-held floor poses (3-10 minutes) to target deep connective tissues like ligaments, joints, and fascia, rather than muscles. PLEASE BRING A PILATES MAT.</p>
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Please do not contact the RWA office, they do not have information

Join the RWA Strong Health & Wellness Initiative!

WORLD BIKE DAY RIDE

June 3rd

Rotonda Community Park Pavilion
100 Rotonda Blvd E

Check-in at 9am in the Pavilion for a group picture.
Unable to join us, bike when you can!

"Acknowledging the uniqueness, longevity, and versatility of the bicycle, which has been in use for two centuries, and that it is a simple, affordable, reliable, clean and environmentally fit sustainable means of transportation, fostering environmental stewardship and health."

— www.un.org

Community Outreach Committee presents ...



**BIKE AS A FAMILY, A CLUB, WITH FRIENDS OR ON YOUR OWN!
DO IT FOR HEALTH, FUN, OR A PURPOSE.**

- Two paved circular bike paths
- Helmet requirements
- Track miles and time
- Submit photo to communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

OTHER BIKE TRAILS

Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park
Cape Haze Pioneer Trail
Carmalita Park
Rotonda Community Park



Fall Prevention 101: Simple Ways to Prevent Falls & Improve Balance

Have you had a fall recently? Do you have a fear of falling? Is your balance or strength not what it used to be?

MANY FALLS CAN BE PREVENTED!

What to Expect

- Learn medical risk factors that raise your risk of a fall
- What personal risk factors can you change?
- Receive a checklist to lower risk factors in your home
- Learn & participate in balance and strength exercises

Awareness and a few simple changes can reduce your risk of a fall

Date: Tuesday, June 16

Time: 2 pm

- Location: Rotonda West Community Center, 646 Rotonda Circle
- Free! And can save you pain, suffering and money!

Presented by: Diane Swinney, M.Ed.

Health Educator, retired

Open to all Rotonda West members, renters and their guests
Questions: Contact Community Outreach committee
communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

Nature NEWS

Easy Lawns!

by Merrill Horswill, Florida Master Naturalist

A traditional “lawn” or turf grass can be difficult and costly to maintain, with costs going up for fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, gas for mowers, water and time. What if you could have a lawn that needs no or infrequent mowing and no chemicals? As a bonus the easy lawn uses less water, provides much needed biodiversity and attracts pollinators. Native and Florida Friendly plants provide beautiful alternatives to turf grass. You can start with part of your yard.

To see examples: Sunshine Powderpuff is growing around the pond beside the Community Center and Frogfruit is growing next to and behind the Community Center.

The biodiverse lawn takes just four easy steps:

1. Assess your existing lawn conditions: coverage, light, soil quality and drainage.
2. Remove the existing grass or weeds if needed. Cardboard with mulch cover works well.
3. Choose the right plants based on your conditions. See <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>
4. Plant your biodiverse lawn. Water as needed until established.

Some plants that make a beautiful easy lawn:

Sunshine Powderpuff (*Mimosa strigillosa*) native:

Creates a mat hundreds of square feet from an initial plant with small, globe-like, pink flowers, rarely gets six inches high. It has deep, complex roots compared to turf grasses which allows it to thrive even in drought and produces its own nitrogen, unlike grasses, which eliminates the need for fertilizer. It attracts pollinators such as butterflies and bumblebees, contributing to the biodiversity of your yard. It is a host plant for the Little sulphur butterfly.



Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*) native:

This evergreen perennial is low-growing creeping, often forming dense mat of green foliage that can grow in full sun to part shade. It is wind and salt tolerant. The distinct white and purple flowers are small but very showy, particularly when planted in mass. It is a good nectar source for bees and small butterflies such as hairstreaks, and is the larval host for the White peacock, Phaon crescent and Common buckeye butterflies.

Perennial peanut (*Arachis glabrata*) Florida Friendly:

Perennial peanut prefers heat, sun and sandy, well-drained soil. It produces rhizomes (underground stems) and roots that help it survive during dry periods and can fix nitrogen from the air in association with specialized bacteria and forms a dense mat that suppresses weeds. It is a host plant for the Barred sulfur butterfly.



For more information see: <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasotaco/2023/10/05/embracing-lawn-ornaments-a-starter-guide/>

FOOD TRUCK TUESDAYS



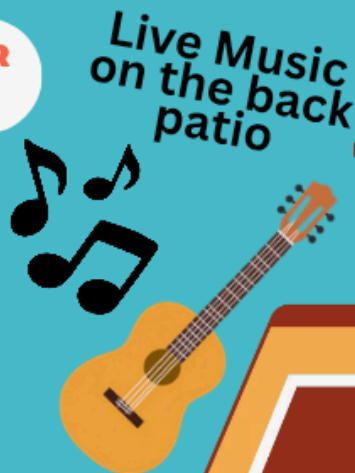
TUESDAY, JUNE 23
4:30 PM - 7:30 PM

FOOD TRUCK TUESDAY

ROTONDA WEST COMMUNITY CENTER
646 ROTONDA CIRCLE

Food Trucks

**Trucks
to be
announced
at a later
date.**



Please do not contact the RWA office. They do not have information. For questions email: communityoutreach@rotondawest.org

JOIN US AT THE RWA COMMUNITY CENTER ON THE 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AND INDULGE IN MOUTHWATERING FOOD TRUCKS—DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS DELICIOUS OPPORTUNITY!

GFWC Rotonda West Women's Club, Inc.

Gwen Grace (*Past President*)

June 2026



Our May 21st General Meeting was the end of President Gloria Rogoski's term and the installation of the new Club Officers for the 2026-2028 term by the District 12 Director Beverly Henderickson.

Pictured here are the new officers. (L-R) 1st VP Lois LaVasseur, 2nd VP Fran

Hamilton, Secretary Joann Hopkins, Corresponding Secretary Barbara Frey, President Linda Hall, Treasurer Terri Watson and Asst. Treasurer Collen Copenhagen.



On May 11th, our club was honored to give scholarships to six Lemon Bay High School students amounting to a total of \$10,000.

The club hosted the 1st Pie Baking Contest at the May 23rd Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the USA.

Our judges were Brian Arman, Derrick Hedges, John Stem and Kim Parks of the Englewood Chamber of Commerce.

First Place was Sue Killion, second was Diane Swinney and third was Kathryn Gallagher. Their recipes are here for all to try.



Original Blueberry Pear Pie by Sue Killion

Oven 425 for 15 min, reduce to 375 for 40 min or until pears are soft

2 pie crust, using 9" pie pan

3 cans of pears, about 3 lbs. rinsed and drained

2 cups blueberries, either frozen or fresh

Mix

3 tabs cornstarch

1/3-1/2 cup sugar

1/4 tea. Nutmeg

1/4 tea. ginger

1/4 tea salt

1/2-3/4 tea. Cinnamon



Add pears and blueberries, resting for about 15 min.
Pour into unbaked pie crust.
Squeeze 1/2 lemon over top.
Add 3 tea. Butter to mixture
Cover and bake.

Apple Crumb Pie by Diane Swinney

9" Pie Pan

Prepare and roll out pastry for 9" pie. Place pastry into pie pan.

Filling:

6 cups thinly sliced, peeled cooking apples (Granny Smith or another firm variety)

If desired, for taste, you may sprinkle apples with 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice.

In a large bowl stir together 3/4 Cup sugar, 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour, 1/2 Tsp ground cinnamon, dash ground nutmeg. Add apple slices and gently toss until coated. Transfer to the prepared pie shell.

Crumb Topping:

Stir together 1/2 Cup all-purpose flour and 1/2 cup packed brown sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut in 3 Tablespoons firm butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle Crumb Topping over filling.

Bake in 375 pre-heated oven for 60 to 75 minutes until the filling bubbles and the apples are tender when pierced. Cool completely before cutting and serving.

Maple Walnut Pecan Pie by Kathryn Gallagher

9" Pie Pan

1 single pie crust (unbaked)

1 cup Walnuts

1 cup Pecans

3 Tablespoons butter, melted

1/2 cup Real Maple Syrup

1 cup Brown Sugar

1 Tablespoon Orange Juice

2 Tablespoons All Purpose Flour

1 tsp Maple Extract

Large Pinch of Salt

3 large Eggs, lightly beaten

Gather all ingredients and preheat oven to 375 degrees

Toast combined nuts briefly in the oven just 'til fragrant...watch carefully as not to get too brown.

Spray pie dish with non-stick spray. Press pie dough carefully into pan and lightly prick the dough with tines of fork. Set aside.

In a large bowl, lightly beat the eggs, whisk in sugar, salt, flour, melted butter, maple syrup and extract. Add toasted nuts to combine all and pour into pie shell.

Carefully bake pie in preheated oven for approximately 50 to 60 minutes or until the filling is set.

Cool completely before cutting.

We will not be having our General Meeting until September which will take place on Thursday, September 17th at the RWA community center. Everyone is welcome to join us for a social gathering at 9:30 AM, followed by the business meeting at 10:00 AM.

For more information about our club's events and activities, please visit our website at www.gfwcrotondawest.org. You can also find it on Facebook under GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Group. All are welcome to attend our general meetings!



By:
Gwen Grace

GFWE RWWE APRIL BLOOD DRIVE



In April, we collected 27 pints of whole blood (from two Double Red Blood Cell Donors), with the potential to save 81 neighbors' lives!

**Our next OneBlood Drive will be on
Thursday, July 9th**



24 May 2026

Contact: Lillian GaNun
Public Affairs Officer
941-626-9632

Email: lildsotr7@embarqmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK was held May 16-22, 2026. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 99 had a very successful and rewarding program week, visiting many locations and distributing Safe Boating material to boaters at the various locations. Members were stationed at Gasparilla Marina, Placida Boat Ramp, the Lock in South Gulf Cove, and the Freedom Boat Club.

OPERATION DRY WATER weekend will take place July 3-5, 2026, and members from Flotilla 99, Cape Haze, will participate in this event again as they have in past years.

This is a national awareness and enforcement campaign focusing on reducing the number of alcohol-and drug-related incidents and fatalities and fostering a stronger, more visible deterrent to alcohol and drug use on the water. Law Enforcement Officers, during Operation Dry Water will be on heightened alert for violations of boating under the Influence (BUI) laws, promoting the safety of all boaters.

The three-day event will be taking place nationwide, coinciding with the Fourth of July weekend. Operating a boat while impaired is dangerous and can have fatal consequences for both the operator and the passengers. It is essential for both to remain sober to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience on the water.



Scan here for more information

As Father's Day approaches, the entire Board of Directors acknowledges all the wonderful Dads in our community and remembers those cherished Dads who are no longer with us.

We encourage all residents to stay informed by watching the recordings of our monthly meetings, which are available on our website and Facebook Page. These recordings contain valuable information about Neighborhood Watch activities, monthly updates, and important insights shared by Deputy Inferino from CCSO. Each month, Deputy Inferino provides updates on happenings within Rotonda West and Charlotte County.

Our community is currently experiencing significant construction and sales. With approximately 108 new homes being built, 215 existing homes for sale, and 301 lots for sale (just within our circle), **PLUS** 265 houses, and over 2,000 lots for sales within our zip code; this excludes most contractor and private sales.

This increased activity leads to heavier "lookie-loo" traffic, potential risks to unoccupied properties (particularly snowbird homes), and the vulnerability of construction equipment and materials being stolen from construction sites. Please be vigilant and remember, **there should be no overnight work on new construction sites.** If you observe any suspicious activity, please don't hesitate to **call the CCSO Non-emergency number at 941-639-2101.**

We Need You! Volunteering with Neighborhood Watch requires just two hours a month, whether as a Patrol member or a Base Operator volunteer. It's a small commitment with a significant impact on protecting our neighborhoods. If you are interested in joining our organization, please contact David Perry at 941-828-1584, visit our Facebook page @ Rotonda West Neighborhood Watch, or scan the QR code above.

Why do we patrol?

- **Basic Crime Prevention:** Our presence alone helps deter crime, and thanks to the continued efforts of our volunteers, we maintain one of the LOWEST crime rates in Charlotte County. We need your help to keep it that way.
- **Build a Stronger Community:** We foster connections among neighbors. In today's fast-paced world, Neighborhood Watch provides an opportunity to connect, discuss community improvements, and build stronger relationships.

Benefits of Neighborhood Watch: Over the years, Neighborhood Watch volunteers and their communities have experienced significant benefits, including: A reduction in crime. Better quality of life. Greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control. Building community pride and unity. Preparing for and assisting others in our community. Serving as the extra "eyes and ears" for law enforcement, thereby reducing their burden.

See you at our next meeting; June 17th @ 10am at the RWA Community Center

Protecting Rotonda West since 1981

David W Perry -President- 941-828-1584

www.rotondawestneighborhoodwatch.com



Sheriff Bill Prummell

7474 Utilities Road

Punta Gorda, FL 33982

(941) 639-2101

Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

Integrity, Professionalism, Trust

Training Announcement

"Citizen* Handgun Safety Course"

Must be a resident of Charlotte County

Dates & Times:	January 24, 2026	9am – 3:30pm
	February 21, 2026	9am – 3:30pm
	March 28, 2026	9am – 3:30pm
	April 11, 2026	9am – 3:30pm
	May 16, 2026	9am – 3:30pm
	June 20, 2026	9am – 3:30pm

Location: Charlotte County Sheriff's Office – Training Range
25520 Airport Road, Punta Gorda, FL 33982

Instructor(s): CCSO Firearms Instructors

- Program:**
- Class participants will be taught NRA's three rules for safe gun handling, primary causes of firearm accidents, firearm parts, how to properly unload and load a firearm, cleaning and maintenance, and safe storage of firearms in the home.
 - Class participants will be provided with an overview of the local requirements for owning and purchasing a firearm.
 - Class participants will be provided with an overview of Florida's Laws and Statutes governing the safe and recreational use of firearms, including self-defense.
 - Class participants will learn and practice the fundamentals of marksmanship to include stance, grip, breath control, sight alignment & picture, trigger control.
 - Class participants will have the opportunity to practice the fundamentals of marksmanship with live fire on our range.

Materials to Bring with you: Note Taking Materials; Firearm & Ammunition; Closed toe shoes (sneakers or boots are preferred) and long pants are required. We will supply hearing protection and eye protection if you do not have your own.

Class Size: 18

Registration: Application must be submitted to Jillian Reich (jreich@ccsofl.net) by no later than the Monday prior to the class beginning. Applicants will be contacted to confirm your registration after your background check has been completed.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY NEWS ITEMS – JUNE 2026

By Sam Besase

Here is the latest information from Charlotte County on the Rotonda Boulevard South Bridge Replacement:

“Staff is working with our consultant that helps us through FEMA processes on when we are able to start the bridge while making sure we get the FEMA funds that they have said we could obtain. Public Work’s staff is ready to put the project out to bid as soon as we get the go ahead from them and our fiscal team.”

“Once we are able to put it out, the bidding process typically takes around 4 months from the time it is sent to purchasing until it is approved by the board. The bids include a section for the contractor to add the timeframe of when they would be able to start the project. Staff and the contractor choose a start date based on this timeframe once it is approved by the board.”

- Joanne Vernon, P.E. County Engineer Charlotte County Public Works. Phone: 941-575-3661
Joanne.Vernon@charlottecountyfl.gov
- ESTIMATED: Oct 2026 Bid Award - Sep 2027 Completion
- Here is the latest information from Charlotte County on the Gasparilla Road Traffic Lights:
- “The traffic signals are currently in design. We expect the final plans and bid specs to be completed in August of 2026. The project will be bid this fall. I have included the link to the project status updates page for this project. It is updated every two weeks.” Gasparilla Road Intersections Signalization Charlotte County, FL
- Charlotte County Commissioners unanimously voted on Wednesday February 25, 2026, to begin the work to **REPLACE** the Rotonda Boulevard South Bridge due to damage from Hurricane Ian (3 years and 8 months ago!). The latest offer from FEMA is **\$769K**, well short of the latest estimate of \$2.7 million. The additional **\$2 million** funds shall come from the MSBU. Also, the Army Corps of Engineers **PERMIT** finally arrived.
- Information shall be updated monthly in this newsletter.
- **PAVING - Rotonda West PAVING began on MONDAY July 21, 2025.** \$17 million
- **PAVING (except for punch list items)** is completed for all sections in the RWA.
- MSBU PAVING – BY RWA SECTIONS: AJAX PAVING – VENICE OFFICE
- PUNCH LIST FOR ALL SECTIONS—SUCH AS REPLACE & WATER SOD/MANHOLE COVERS, DRIVEWAY ISSUES, ETC are ongoing. The paving project is not completed until all punch list issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the Charlotte County Project Manager.
- Charlotte County Paving Project Manager is **James Layport, and his phone number is: 941-628-8084**
- Remaining 4 bridges (110-111-112-123) are scheduled for **4Q 2026 & 1Q of 2027.**
- *US Government shutdown (43 days + 49 days) affected completion of these items!!!
- Charlotte County – Rotonda Water Reclamation Facility was honored by State officials.
- **Watering restrictions are in effect due to the severe drought conditions, check with CHARLOTTE COUNTY UTILITIES website for specific information.**
- **WATER 1 DAY A WEEK between Midnight and 4am based on your address!**

Respectfully, Sam Besase – Advisory Board Member–Rotonda West Streets & Drainage MSBU

Questions, please call me at 281-923-4041, I’ll try to get you an answer.

Next MSBU meeting is Thursday June 25, 2026, at 9:30am – San Casa

The other MSBU members are: Laura Ingrassia-Nicholas Kotzalas-Leo Van Orden-Derrick Hedges. Derrick Hedges was just appointed to this MSBU in late May 2026 by Charlotte County Commissioners.

OFFICE STAFF

Derrick Hedges
Manager

Annette Casteel
Assistant Manager

Tammy Birdsong
Administrator/ResMod

Jenny Bulle
Bookkeeper

Joe Harris
Communications Specialist

Denise Huffman
Administrator/Minutes Clerk

Sheryl Ann Nowicki
Administrator/Deed Restrictions

Kelsey Stewart
Administrator/Deed Restrictions

Amanda Stuever
Administrator/Event Coordinator

Faela Waldrop
Administrator

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Dale Anderson

Craig Brown

Travis Green - Aquatics

Marc Santos

Doug Smith

Wayne Taylor

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