

Julie's Weekly Rotary E-Newsletter – Mini-Spoke, January 20, 2026

Rotarian Adam Botana's Father, Omar, Passed Away at 71: Omar Botana passed away on Jan. 10, 2026. The Botana Family will receive friends on Friday, Jan. 23, from 2 – 5 p.m. in the auditorium at St. Leo The Great Catholic Church, 28300 Beaumont Road. Services will be held at 4:30 p.m.

Upcoming Programs:

- **Jan. 22: January Speaker Chair Gary Price** will introduce Jacob Winge, Senior Director of Business Development & Strategy at TLC Marketing & Creative Services to present a history of 250 years in Southwest Florida. See link below for recent article about our speaker in the Business Observer.
- **Upcoming: Jan. 29:** Caily Martin, Director of Operations, will provide an update about the Bonita Springs Assistance Office.
- **February Programs:** Speaker chair **Jim Fitzpatrick** lined up these speakers:
 - Feb. 5 - Leah Mason, PhD, Executive Director of Literacy Council Gulf Coast
 - Feb. 12 - Paulette Walters, Community Cats of Bonita Springs
 - Feb. 19 - Steven C. Hennigan, C.M., A.C.E., Executive Director & CEO, Lee County Port Authority
 - Feb. 26 - David Shanks, Retired CEO, Penguin Group (Publishing), Farmer, and Viticulturist

Jan. 22 Speaker Jacob Winge Media: *Business Observer*, Jan. 5, 2026, "Naples Marketing Director Cloaks Himself in History":

<https://www.businessobserverfl.com/news/2026/jan/03/naples-marketing-director-history/>

Board Votes to Make Rotarians George M. Cohan III and Don Manley Honorary Members

At its meeting on Jan. 12, the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs voted to make George M. Cohan III and Don Manley Honorary Members. Honorary Membership is offered to members who have distinguished themselves by meritorious serve in support of Rotary ideals.

George has been a Rotarian for 42 years, served as a sergeant-at-arms for 33 years, founded of the Reverse Raffle fundraiser (now called Rotary Raffle with a Twist), introduced the EZ-Cash fundraiser and played a lead acting role in "It's a Wonderful Life" Club play & fundraiser. George also hosted a Christmas party for a few years, where he auctioned off wrapped gifts where no one knew what was inside. Long-time Rotarians shared that it was a great fundraiser and a lot of fun.

Don has also been a Rotarian for 42, with 27 of those years as a member of the Findlay, Ohio Rotary Club. Don was featured in many articles when he was photographed in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma pulling a boat in the Bonita Springs streets, helping rescue people and their belongings after significant flooding. He also

was a key leader for annual Christmas Tree sale (from building, rebuilding tree racks and Poinsettias display, etc.) was active with the Wheelchair Foundation and was a big proponent of Gift of Life, hosting at least one child from another country who came to Florida for life-saving heart surgery.

First Thursday Social Calendar:

February: Date to be announced. Ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony with Seminole Tribe members of the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs Chickee at the Wonder Gardens. Hosts: Rotarians Neil Anderson, CEO of the Wonder Gardens, and Wendy Arsenault, President of the Wonder Gardens Board of Directors.

March 5: Location: To be announced. **Host:** Ruth Condit

April 2: Location: Good Days Adolescent Development Center, 17640 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite 309, Ft. Myers, FL 33908. **Host:** Lisa Rozanski.

May 7: Location: Vichino's, 25987 S. Tamiami Trl, Bonita Springs. **Host:** Bob Lombardo

June 4: Seeking location and host. If you've never hosted before, here is your chance!

Fundraisers – We Need Support From Every Club Member

Poinsettia Sales: After the bell on Thursday, Dave Shellenbarger is hosting a 15-minute meeting to review 2025 sales, options for assuring better quality next year, and other ways of doing the sale based on related board decisions.

Everblades Hockey Game: Invite friends to join you for the next game, **Wednesday, February 11**, with the Everblades vs. Maine. Game starts at 7:30 pm. **Buy Your**

Tickets Now: Use this link to buy tickets to the Rotary/Blades fundraiser games.

Do you drive a Lexus? If you own a Lexus and are one of the first 50 Lexus owners to show, you can park free!

[Florida Everblades - Powered by Spinzo](#)

Only \$35/ticket for premium seats. Some games offer special beer & hot dog prices.

Invite family, friends and neighbors. Go Blades and Go Rotary! Upcoming Games:

- Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m. vs. Savannah
- Friday, April 10, 7:30 p.m. South Carolina

Rotary Raffle With a Twist – Saturday, March 21, 2026, at St. Leo's Church: Sell your allotment of tickets and reach out to Mike Poff if you need more. Return tickets and payments to Jim Horein and let him know who will be attending the dinner. Also talk to Mike or Wendy Arsenault if you are able to assist in securing silent auction items, including gift certificates to restaurants, hotels, golf courses and retail stores. They are especially interested in "experiences," such as weekends or a week at your summer | second home, or catered dinners. Even helping to secure two or three items/experiences will make a big difference in the funds we are able to raise to support our community. Mike: 989.330.1524; Wendy: 239.287.4545.

Community Service/Outreach:

NEED VOLUNTEERS - Arts Bonita Art Festival on Feb. 7 and March 7: Seeking eight (8) Rotary Club members (and spouses) to join the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs

Team to staff the gate on Saturday, Feb. 7, and Saturday, March 7, for the Arts Bonita **Arts Festival**. The first experience went very well and many guests shared that they were Rotarians or knew and appreciated Rotary. Volunteers should wear their "Rotarians at Work" shirt. Please reach out to Angela Swanepoel (203.915.4275; aswanepoel@gmail.com) or Alyona Ushe (561.245.0180; ushe@artsbonita.org) to sign up.

DATE: Saturday, February 7 and Saturday, March 7

TIME: 9:30 am-12: 30 pm

ROLE: Gate Attendant and Greeter (together with your Rotary colleagues)

Club Service:

2026 Invocation, Greeter and Registration Desk: Please sign up to provide an invocation, serve as a greeter or staff the registration desk. See attached sign-up sheet and reach out to me with preferred roles and dates. Julie: 414.861.3077.

Upcoming Events:

Bonita Springs Downtown Business Alliance Meeting – Jan. 27: Alyona Ushe, Rotarian and Executive Director of Arts Bonita, is the featured speaker at the monthly meeting starting at 5:30 p.m. at Shangri-La Hotel & Restaurant. Our Club is a member of the group. Rotary Club members are invited to attend to support Alyona and to promote our Rotary Club.

Naples Rotary Club ALS Fundraiser in Memorial of Jane Goble – Feb. 7

The Rotary Club of Naples is presenting *Hearts for Jane: The Jane Goble Walk for ALS Research*, a district-wide initiative grounded in compassion, service, and community. Inspired by the life and legacy of Rotarian Jane Goble, this event unites Rotarians and residents throughout Southwest Florida to advance ALS research and support caregivers, transforming remembrance into purposeful action. As requested by the Naples Club, our Foundation has committed \$500 to the cause.

Event Details

The walk will be held at **Florida Gulf Coast University on Saturday, February 7, 2026.**

- **Registration opens:** 9:00 AM
- **1-mile walk begins:** 9:30 AM
- **Post event activities after the walk**

Let me (Julie) know if you would like to join the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs team to walk and support a good cause, in memory of Jane.

Gift of Life Gala – Feb. 7: You are invited to join your Rotary friends in support of Gift of Life, an incredible international program providing life-saving surgeries for babies with congenital heart defects. 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 in Venice. See attached flyer for

details. Bob Lombardo is arranging for a table for the Bonita Springs Club. Please let him know if you plan to attend.

District 6960 Rotary Leadership Institute – Feb. 21

All Rotarians – especially relatively new members – are invited to attend the Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) on **Saturday, February 21, 2026**, at Woodland Middle School in North Port (see attached flyer).

RLI offers in-depth knowledge of Rotary, along with valued leadership skills that will prove beneficial to you in your future professional or voluntary leadership roles. ***RLI isn't just for Rotarians interested in leadership within their Rotary Club; RLI is a fantastic tool for personal growth.*** It's also a great place to meet Rotarians from other clubs and share ideas. As an added bonus, a **District Grant Writing Master Class** is also being offered. No pre-requisite RLI course is required, so anyone can attend. The \$100 registration fee will be reimbursed once a member completes the session. *Register on DACdb today.*

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves. “Our projects bring together people of all races, religions, genders, ideologies and economic backgrounds, uniting us in a shared purpose to **do good in the world**. Let’s build a Rotary that **unites for good** and ensures a brighter future for all.”

Julie

Julie Pedretti, President, Rotary Club of Bonita Springs