RIVENDELL
Your Community Resource

The Woodlands Word

November 2026

A Word From Your Board

by Terry Siemsen, Director- Vice President, CERT

Rivendell Ponds and Preserves – a great community asset!

Rivendell has hundreds of acres of ponds and preserves which make our community unique to many other developments. These great assets come with commitments to the County to protect these resources – and we have a Ponds and Preserves Committee to help manage these areas along with our newly added 'pond stewards' for most every pond in our community. Our group is charged with keeping these resources in prime condition – as well as enhancing them where opportunities exist.

If your home backs onto a pond or preserve – or you admire these resources as you walk, bike or drive thru Rivendell – you probably notice efforts by individuals and our primary contractor Beautiful Ponds.

Our water areas are primarily for stormwater retention but also minimize the runoff of herbicides, fertilizer and pesticides to downstream waterbodies with the low mow zone buffers. These ponds offer habitat for a number of species of wildlife and plants. Our preserves get less management because they are "preserves". That's a bit of a misnomer as these wooded areas are classified as some 'conservation' and some 'preserve'. Actions that can be done in conservation tracts include some periodic fire mitigation to reduce the forest understory so any fires that may occur are able to be localized and extinguished easily. These areas are open for residents to hike and enjoy the wildlife and flora. Preservation areas, however, are more restricted as the vegetation is not to be disturbed and left as nature would have if there was no Rivendell. We are not allowed to actively manage these lands nor are any residents allowed to do any actions to alter these properties.

Which brings me to this month's article. Rivendell is required by Sarasota County to ensure preservation areas are not touched, altered or in any way modified. No homeowner can "add onto" their backyard by assuming they can encroach on the preserves. Homeowners cannot add ornamental plantings or clear areas and extend grass areas. Homeowners cannot use preserves as 'dumping grounds' for yard waste – we have weekly contract curbside pickup for that purpose. I understand County regulations are coming regarding lighting that shines into preserves, but we will deal with that when it occurs.

Here's the problem. If a homeowner encroaches on a preserve, it's incumbent on the Homeowners Association to "fix" it. That means removing plants, structures or other items at a cost to our biannual assessment. It costs every single one of us to not only



A reminder that our preserves are just that - preserves!

"fix" these areas upfront but also continue to pay to have these areas maintained until the replacement natural plants can sustain themselves. We also happen to have the County requesting a third party to monitor the success of these areas – more money from all our pockets which could be used to better our community.

(Continued on page 2)

(A Word From your Board continued)

It's not unusual for a person causing an intrusion to say, "the people who lived here before me did it". We have no mechanism to assess the current adjacent landowner, so the cost is spread over the entire community.

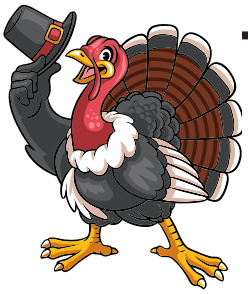
We have about fifteen active intrusions that are monitored, tended to and are at various levels of compliance. This is at a cost of not hundreds of dollars annually but thousands of dollars.

As the Board liaison to the Ponds and Preserves Committee and an active member of that committee, I ask for your cooperation. If one of these intrusions are next to your property, expect workers to occasionally weed and sometimes replant according to requirements of Sarasota County. If you see an intrusion becoming overgrown with weeds and vines, call a member of the Committee or Casey Management so we can determine what's amiss and get maintenance as needed. During droughts, the new plants need water so please help us if a worker needs a bucket or two or three of water from your hose. If you see a new intrusion, report it to Casey and they will keep your name anonymous but the sooner an intrusion is treated, the easier it is to get the area back into compliance.

Our lands are a gift and should be treated as such. Our preserves, conservation and open lands are for everyone's benefit. Let's spend our Rivendell dollars where they enhance our community and not repair avoidable problems.







Social Committee Activities for November 2026

Offered WEEKLY: Ladies Walk 'n Talk. Meet at the Rivendell Pool. Contact Lesley Glick at Lesleymg8@gmail.com or (973) 219-5839 for more information and if you'd like to be added to the Facebook Walk 'n Talk. Walks are currently on Thursday mornings at 9:00 am, but times will change depending on the season.

- Monday, November 2nd, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Thursday, November 5th, from 1 to 4 pm. Bridge Club. To join, contact Barb Loe at (651) 398-2256.
- Monday, November 9th, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Monday, November 9th, at 7:00 pm. Rivendell Book Group. To join, contact Lesley Glick at (973) 219-5839 or lesleymg8@gmail.com or Adele Kellman at (908) 464-7003 or adele.kellman@gmail.com.
- Wednesday, November 11th, at 12:30 pm. Ladies Luncheon at Brine Seafood and Raw Bar. To attend, contact Helen McClure at Mcclurenash@gmail.com.
- Monday, November 16th, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).
- Thursday, November 19th, from 1 to 4 pm. Bridge Club. To join, contact Barb Loe at (651) 398-2256.
- Monday, November 23rd, from 2 to 4 pm. Mah Jongg. To attend, contact Maria Ilioff at (607) 427-4192 (texts only).

Nextdoor

Join 665 of your fellow Rivendell Residents on the NEXTDOOR social network www.nextdoor.com

Are you seeking a service provider recommendation?
Do you have an item to sell?
Do you have any questions about Rivendell or other topics residents can help with?

Nextdoor is the world's largest social network for the neighborhood. Nextdoor enables truly local conversations that empower neighbors to build stronger and safer communities.

Best of Venice 2025



Best of Venice

Blair Post, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA

Board Certified Hearing Instrument Sciences
American Conference of Audioprosthology

I It's that time of year: voting for the Best of Venice. Our local Gondolier Newspaper is holding its annual Best of Venice voting now. You can click the QR code to be directed to voting for all your favorites in our area.

As a small business owner this is one of the few ways, we are honored. Please take a moment to cast your vote.

And, I want to say thank you to everyone who has voted for over the years. Your support and continued encouragement resulted in us being awarded Best of Venice—multiple titles and multiple years as both winner and finalist—Reader's Choice multiple years, and Small Business of the Year. I appreciate all the support and everyone who took their time to vote for us.

I am proud to have consistently offered service that is recognized by you and honored to receive so many awards over the years that our wall of awards has expanded onto another wall. Thank you for entrusting me with your hearing, I am glad I earned your respect.

Almost twenty years ago, I opened my own office and chose to treat all my clients as if they are family. When I chose this profession, I was inspired by my mother MaryEllen. She was very social and offering her a solution for her life allowed her to live her best life.

Thank you in advance for voting for the businesses you adore and trust.





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Join Our New Rivendell Dinner Group!

Good food, good company, and a chance to enjoy an evening out with neighbors!

We are pleased to announce the formation of a new Rivendell Dinner Group, which will meet on the second Friday of each month, beginning in December. The idea is simple: enjoy a relaxed evening at a local restaurant while getting to know neighbors, renewing friendships, and discovering new places to dine.

Each month, a volunteer from the group will select a restaurant and make the necessary reservations. The group organizer will take care of communications, announcing the restaurant, date, and time, and collecting RSVPs. By sharing the responsibility for choosing restaurants, we'll have an opportunity to explore a variety of dining experiences.

Everyone is welcome! Whether you are single or a couple, a seasonal or year-round resident, we hope you'll join us. There is no obligation to attend every dinner—just come whenever your schedule and interest permit.

Deb Jones has stepped forward to organize the Dec. 11 gathering. Everyone will meet at 7:00 pm at Five to Nine restaurant at 1092 S Tamiami Trail. Please call, text or email Deb by December 7th if you plan on joining the group at (517) 515-4994 or debraljones@gmail.com.

If you would like to be included in the group and receive announcements about upcoming dinners, please contact Adele Kellman at adele.kellman@gmail.com or (908) 464-5096.

We look forward to sharing many enjoyable evenings of good food and friendly conversation!



A Fresh Start for Cottages Park

with Thanks to Carole Myles

Cottages Park, on the northeast corner of Meadow Sweet Circle, has a fresh new look! Thanks to the dedication of Cottages owner Carole Myles (575 MSC), who led the renovation from start to finish, this familiar neighborhood spot has been transformed into a welcoming place for all of Rivendell's residents and visitors to enjoy.

Previously, this park's central banyan tree suffered irreparable damage from hurricanes over recent years, and its extensive roots threatened adjoining homes. Rivendell HOA, which manages the park, made the difficult decision to remove it, leaving an opportunity to reimagine the space.

Appointed by Rivendell Board President Paul Zak to chair the park task force, Carole took the lead in bringing that vision to life. Throughout the summer, she worked closely with Brian Roberts of GreenTech Landscape Management to develop the design and coordinate its installation. She also coordinated the park's irrigation needs and secured the bench that offers a comfortable place to pause and enjoy the surroundings.

GreenTech, the Cottages' landscaping vendor, completed the new plantings in September. A dwarf Poinciana tree now anchors the center of the park, surrounded by a variety of perennial and annual plants. While the plantings are small now, they will fill out over time, adding color and beauty to the landscape. Neighbors and walkers have already shared enthusiastic feedback.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Carole for the time, care, and persistence she devoted to every stage of this project. Her hands-on leadership brought a thoughtful, attractive, and budget-conscious improvement to the entire Rivendell community.

Take a stroll down to the park, enjoy the new surroundings, or sit a spell on the bench. And when you see Carole, please thank her for helping make Meadow Sweet Circle an even more beautiful place to call home.







Photos by Deb Holton-Smith

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(Solution on page 14)

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The Magical Awe Of A Sunset

By Nancy Dobias

Although there are a myriad reasons why people enjoy watching sunsets, I don't believe I have ever noticed pets or wildlife doing it. When we lived in Ohio, our dogs never went to the high part in the back yard to lay down and longingly gaze out into the heavens to reflect upon those great soup bones that were brought from the market that day. Nor did our cats join them for this period of quiet reflection as they smugly recalled all the award-winning kamikaze leaps that were taken down from the roof and onto an unsuspecting bird or dog below. (Of course Larry did foil many of those leaps upon the birds!)

Wildlife are no different either. In Florida nary an alligator can be seen gazing wistfully at the skies as they ponder the bounty of fish that unceremoniously landed in their jaws that day, nor can the ducks be seen quacking out their approval as the sun dips behind the endless lakes, ponds and rivers before them.

BUT how different people are....

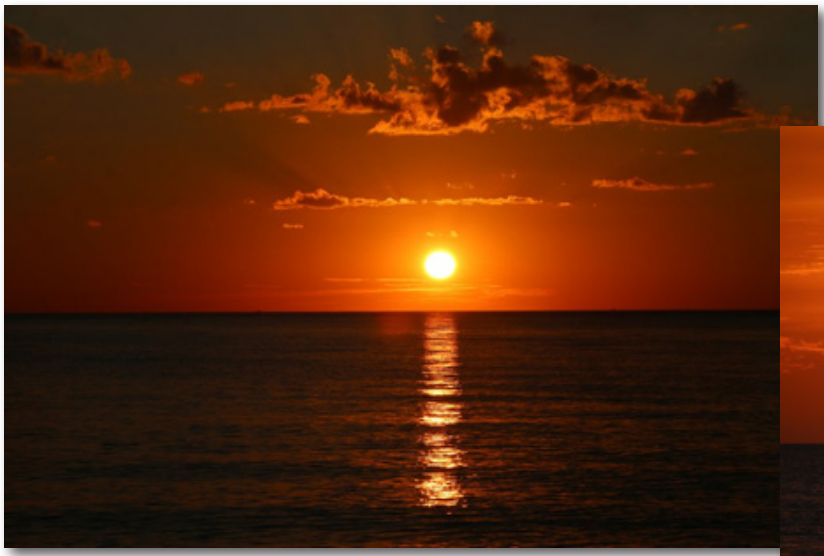
With the Gulf just a short drive away, the magnetic draw of the beach near sunset seems to be that siren that many can't resist. Lured to the coastline, they will stand or sit in awe at the upcoming show before them. Beauty, serenity, peace...the departing sun has many "gifts" that she willingly offers.



They may come with family or friends. They may come alone. Each though comes ready to fill their spirits with that certain "something" that only a sunset can provide....



Whether they search peace or happiness, or celebrate love and memories, the sun in its descent towards the horizon offers her moments willingly....



Her journey may remind us moments are not forever...



...that all moments need to be savored...



She also gently reminds us that when her journey has ended, there is still the memory of her quiet beauty...speaking to our hearts...



...to softly whisper, "there will always be a tomorrow...."



RIVENDELL

Meeting date - September 29, 2026

Time/Place: 4:30pm Conference Call 605-313-5721 code 655 3857

Members Present: Joe Casale, John Greco, John Barron, Tom Scheidemantel

Others Present:

Please see the Notes at the end of this schedule which contain important information, not just "boilerplate"

No.	Address	Name	Description	Comments & Specific Conditions of Approval (See Notes below)	Approved as submitted (See General Conditions)	Approved with Specific Conditions	Denied (See Notes)
1	1092 Mallard Marsh Drive	Mitzi Bruck	Repaint entire home in close to the same colors including new hurricane ressitant front door which will have glass inserts.existing colors. Body - "Creamy" (SE 7012); Trim - "Latte" (SW6108; Front door - "Uber Rust" (SW 9100); Garage Door - "Creamy)" - (SW 7012).	Colors all go well together and with color of roof.	X		
2	1172 Mallard Marsh Drive	David Kreiseder	Replace entrty doors with Therma-Tru double doors. Each door to have a glass insert Pre-painted Indigo (similar to Benjamin Moore Blue Note) which goes well with existing house colors.	Concernied about loose glass in existing door.	X		
3	1026 Oak Preserve lane	Jonas Meyer	REmove queen palm infected with Ganoderma fungus, grind stump, and replace with Japanese Blueberry	Expedited due to contagious nature of disease	X		
4	1076 Mallard Marsh Drive	Atilla Stokker	Repaint Exterior: Body and garage door= Behr Almond Wisp[(PPUS-12); Trim and front door - Upltra White Pure (PPUS- 18-06)	Expedited due to contractor availability	X		
5	726 Shadow Bay Way	Antriece Muther	Remove chimnesy to facilitate leak repair. Replace tiles around the area with same as existing tile/		X		
6	686 Clear Creek Drive	Xizhen Qin and Fan Li	New roof. Eagle cement flat tile. Multi-color beige	Eagle Tile Maple Creek Blend of light brown, taupe, grey, tan.	X		
7	745 Placid Lake Drive	Michelle Roccia	Repaint house: Body - SW 7636 "Oragami White;" Trim - SW 7006 "Extra White;" Front Door and Garage Door - SW 6258 "Tricorn Black;"	Request was approved in August but resubmitted due to minor change in house body color to a ligheter shade of gray. Expedited approval requsted due to the delay from August approval	X		
8	1204 Mallard Marsh Dr	George Hellyer	Updating landscaping on the north side of the house and installing sections of aluminum fencing on the north and east of the house.	Fence installation close to the street must be installed 20 feet back from the front corner of the house.	X		

(Continued on Pg 11)

(ARC Meeting continued)

RIVENDELL

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Meeting date - September 29, 2026

Time/Place: 4:30pm Conference Call 605-313-5721 code 655 3857

Members Present: Joe Casale, John Greco, John Barron, Tom Scheidemantel

Others Present:

Please see the Notes at the end of this schedule which contain important information, not just "boilerplate"

No.	Address	Name	Description	Comments & Specific Conditions of Approval (See Notes below)	Approved as submitted (See General Conditions)	Approved with Specific Conditions	Denied (See Notes)
9	701 Crane Prairie Way	Henry Vuong	Instal pavers on driveway.	Driveway is in rear of house along alley. Footprint of driveway will not be altered.	X		
10	1211 Lost Creek Court	Sean Tobaygo	REplace dying plants screening the equipment on the side of the hosue and replace with Clusia plants/		X		
11	1108 Mallard Marsh Dr	Reid & Holly Harvey	Add annuals and perennitals to bed in front and side of home. Does not involve any plant removal. Relenish pine bark mlch		X		

Specific Conditions Applicable to Conditional Approvals only (as noted above)

1. If your project is marked "Approved with Specific Conditions", the specific conditions are described above.

2. If there is any ambiguity regarding the specific conditions of approval, it is your responsibility to seek clarification before starting work.

3. If you need further information in order to comply with them, please let the ARC know (ARCRivendell@gmail.com) and it will do its best to be helpful.

General Conditions (applicable to all approvals)

1. Please complete the project within one year from the date above and in accordance with the general and specific conditions that apply.

2. If you use contractors, they should be licensed and insured; you are responsible for damage caused to the property of others or to the common areas.

3. You are responsible for any permits required and that the work complies with local zoning and building regulations.

4. When pressure washing is part of the scope of work, please use non-chlorine cleaners.

5. When windows are being replaced, those in the front of your house must have "grids" (aka muttins or grills).

6. When trees and bushes are to be removed, the stumps must be ground down to a min of 3" below grade.

7. The roof color & material and/or paint colors you submitted (and the only ones the ARC approved) are noted in the Description above.

8. You have read the RCA's Standing Rules and ARC Guidelines and will make sure the work done conforms with them.

Denials

If the ARC denied your request, the reasons are set forth under Comments.

(Continued on Pg 12)

(ARC Meeting continued)

RIVENDELL

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Meeting date - September 29, 2026

Time/Place: 4:30pm Conference Call 605-313-5721 code 655 3857

Members Present: Joe Casale, John Greco, John Barron, Tom Scheidemantel

Others Present:

Please see the Notes at the end of this schedule which contain important information, not just "boilerplate"

No.	Address	Name	Description	Comments & Specific Conditions of Approval (See Notes below)	Approved as submitted (See General Conditions)	Approved with Specific Conditions	Denied (See Notes)

Reviews, Appeals, Mediation, Litigation

If your proposal has been denied or you are unwilling to comply with the General or Specific Conditions of Approval, you should not start work until the matter is resolved. You may ask the ARC to review its decision based on any new information you can make available. You may also ask that the Board of Governors to review the ARC's decision (which it may or may not do) and/or avail yourself of the opportunity to have an independent third party mediate the dispute. You may also take such other legal action as is provided in Florida Statute 720.311. If the Board agrees to review the ARC's decision, it will ask you to state in writing in what ways the ARC's decision is unreasonable.

Covenant & Rules Enforcement; Fines

1. The ARC does not set, impose or waive fines.

2. If you failed to seek or obtain ARC approval before starting work, or proceeded with the work without complying with the conditions of approval, the ARC must recommend a fine to the Board once the failure comes to its attention, even if your project is subsequently approved and the work brought into compliance. The Board makes all decisions related to fines, subject to review and approval by the independent Fines Committee. You will be notified and have an opportunity to challenge the fine at a hearing with the Fines Committee at least 14 days before the fine is imposed.

3. If the work undertaken would not have been approved by the ARC or approved only with specific conditions, you may incur additional fines and be required to either restore the property or take other remedial action at your own expense to comply with the conditions. Aggrieved neighbors also can seek to have the covenants enforced against you if the RCA fails to do so on their behalf.

4. Please consult Florida Statues 720.311 for the enforcement actions (and challenges to them) that are available.



Florida's Clever Jays: Meet Our Brainy, Social Neighbors

by Bob Frank, Ponds and Preserves Committee

Florida is home to two remarkable members of the corvid family of birds: the familiar blue jay and the rarer Florida scrub-jay. Both are intelligent and deeply social birds that challenge the idea that birds are dull-witted loners.

The Blue Jay: Loud, Bold, and Brilliant

The blue jay is easy to recognize, with a feathered crest, a black necklace across the chest, and flashes of white on bright blue wings. That blue is a trick of the light. The feathers contain no blue pigment. Their microscopic structure scatters light so we see blue, which is why a fallen feather looks brown.

Like all corvids (for example, crows), blue jays have impressive brains for their size. They are skilled mimics, often copying the calls of red-shouldered hawks, eagles and osprey, possibly to warn other birds or to scare rivals away from a feeder. In laboratory studies, blue jays have even shaped bits of paper into simple tools to reach food, a rare talent in the bird world.

They are also devoted family members. Blue jays form long-term pairs, and they band together to "mob" owls, hawks, and cats, calling loudly until the threat leaves. Their crest acts as a mood signal, rising when they are excited or alarmed and flattening when they are calm.

Blue jays also bury acorns by the thousands and can remember the many locations of their caches. However, their memories are not perfect so some are never retrieved, which helps spread oak trees across the landscape.

The Florida Scrub-Jay: Our One-of-a-Kind Bird

The Florida scrub-jay is the only bird species found nowhere else in the world but Florida. It lives in the low, sandy oak scrub habitat that once covered large parts of the peninsula. Much of that land has been lost to development, so the scrub-jay is now federally listed as threatened. Compared with its cousin, it is crestless, with a pale gray back and a blue head, wings, and tail. Since we have no scrub habitat in Rivendell, you would need to travel to nearby Oscar Scherer State Park to see a scrub jay.

What truly sets scrub-jays apart is their family life. They practice cooperative breeding, meaning young birds often stay home for a year or more to help raise the next brood. These "helpers" feed nestlings, defend the territory, and take turns as sentinels, perched high and watching for hawks and snakes while the family forages. Researchers have studied these family groups for decades because they show how cooperation can evolve.

Scrub-jays are also expert food hoarders. Each fall, a single bird may hide thousands of acorns in the sand, remembering most of the locations months later. They are famously curious and unafraid of people. Many a park visitor has had a scrub jay fly up and land on them during a hike in the Oscar Scherer scrub. Although they are friendly, please don't feed them. Handouts can make them dependent and put them at risk from cars and predators.

How You Can Help Our Jays?

Keep an eye out for both species and enjoy their antics from a respectful distance. Cats should stay indoors, native oaks are worth protecting, and the preserves and state parks where scrub-jays live deserve our support. A bird that plans, remembers, and works together with its family is a fine neighbor to have.



Oscar Scherer scrub jay with an acorn



Blue Jay



SUDOKU
SOLUTION

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The Snowbirds Are Flying South

When October winds begin to blow
And leaves turn red and gold,
The snowbirds start to make their plans—
They're not about to freeze or fold.

The sweaters come from closets,
The boots are put away,
The bathing suits are packed again—
It's time to head away!

The car gets checked, the tires aired,
The oil is changed with care,
The GPS is programmed twice—
"Just in case it takes us there."

The house is locked, the mail is stopped,
The plants are left behind,
And someone checks the thermostat
For one more peace of mind.

There's just one final question
Before they hit the road:
"Did you pack the medications?"
"Yes."
"And the snacks?"
"Of course—we're snowbirds, dear.
We know the code!"

The coffee cup is in the holder,
The sunglasses are near,
And after one last look around,
They say, "See you next year!"

Down Interstate 95 they go,
With sunshine on their face,
Leaving Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maine—
For warmer southern space.

They stop for lunch and stretch their legs,
Then coffee, pie, and back on track.
They know the best rest stops by heart
And where to find a decent snack.

They have their favorite parking spots,
Convenient, close, and wide.
At this stage of life, dear friends,
A short walk is a point of pride.

And finally, one afternoon,
A sign comes into view:

WELCOME TO FLORIDA

The snowbirds cheer,
Because they know
Their winter has begun anew.

The palm trees sway above the road,
The sky is bright and blue.
The air is warm, the breeze is soft—
And suddenly they're through.

Their neighbors wave from driveways,
"Welcome back! We missed you!"

The community comes alive again
With golf carts on the street,
With shuffleboard and bingo games,
And neighbors they are glad to greet.

There are dances in the clubhouse,
Dinners under lights,
Cards on Tuesday afternoons
And karaoke nights.

Poolside conversations stretch for hours,
With stories tried and true—
"When we were young…" begins the tale,
And somehow there are twenty more to do.

Someone brings a casserole.
Someone teaches yoga too.
Someone waves from across the pool
And says, "I've been waiting for you!"

There are walks beside the water,
And sunsets painted gold,
Pelicans drifting past the shore
As if they too have grown old.

The snowbirds watch the dolphins
And laugh like children do,
Taking far too many pictures
Of the same magnificent view.

Back home, the snow is falling.
The driveway needs a plow.
But down in Florida, someone asks,

"Who's coming to the pool right now?"

And that's the secret snowbirds know:
Getting older doesn't mean
The adventures have to end.

You can still make a brand-new friend,
Still dance beneath the stars,
Still learn a game you've never played,
Still wander near and far.

You can still eat ice cream
On a warm December day,
And tell yourself quite seriously,
"It's Florida. It's okay."

A little sunshine.
A little laughter.
A comfortable place to stay.
Good friends around the dinner table.
And nowhere you must be today.

The months pass by so quickly.
January turns to March.
The flowers bloom, the evenings warm,
And summer starts its march.

Then one day, the snowbirds hear
A whisper from the north:

"It's time to pack your things again.
Your summer house is calling forth."

The suitcases come out again.
The Florida home gets closed.
The plants are watered one last time,
And everything is posed.

They say goodbye to neighbors,
To friends they've come to know.
They promise they'll be back again
When northern temperatures go low.

The final Florida sunset
Seems brighter than before.
They stand together quietly
Beside the open door.

They know they'll miss the palm trees.
They'll miss the ocean blue.
They'll miss the warm December nights
And friends they left behind too.

But they also know the secret
That snowbirds understand:
Home isn't just one place you live.
It's wherever you can stand—

So north they go in springtime,
And south they go in fall,
Following the sunshine
Like they've answered nature's call.

And every year, as autumn comes,
The same old thing occurs:

The snowbirds pack their suitcases—
And Florida waits for them.

For age is not a finish line.
It's simply another road.

And sometimes the best adventures
Begin when you're older,
wiser, and carrying a lighter load.

So here's to all the snowbirds
Who make that yearly flight—

Who chase the warmth of Florida
And leave the snow behind.

May your tires stay full,
May your coffee stay hot,
May your sunscreen be handy,
And your parking spot be close to the lot.

May your knees hold up for dancing,
May your hearts remain young,
May you laugh with old friends
And make memories with new ones.

May every sunset remind you
How precious life can be.

And when the northern winds start blowing,
May you smile and simply say:

"Pack the car, sweetheart.
Florida's calling.
We're going south today."

