Fall has arrived but you certainly would not know it from the day time temperatures lately. Perhaps that whisper of coolness I’m feeling in the wee hours of the morning will soon extend beyond sunrise. Yes, I am a “fall freak.” It’s my favorite time of year. A sweater with shorts is my typical fall uniform. Not much of a fashion statement, but the critters and plants don’t really mind. Another fall habit of mine is to tidy up my space. Closets and drawers get reorganized. Mattresses get aired out and rugs shampooed. The freezer is defrosted and restocked. Maybe all this cleaning and restocking is not so unusual. Maybe I’m closer to nature than I ever imagined. My behavior is not so unlike that of the eastern gray squirrel who is readying its nest and food stores. But I digress…

The onset of fall heralds our annual Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival. The Hill Country Master Naturalists are co-hosts in this event. If past history is an example, the day will be filled with enthusiastic buyers, visitors from out-of-town and kids of all ages. This year, in lieu of a lecture or single presentation, the education rooms will be set up with various Ask Me! tables. Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, NPSOT and RNC volunteers will be available for questions on topics ranging from tree care to rainwater harvesting. We will know soon enough if this new feature is a home run.

With cooler weather, the 2nd Saturday Spiffy Ups are back on the schedule and the 3rd Saturday Bird Walk & Talk in October will feature the various migratory species passing through our area.

The fall also means it is time to change the exhibit in the atrium. No spoiler here. You will have to read Susan Sander’s article later. One little hint: they can be seen in two’s or four’s, be fossilized, digital or carbon.

This fall RNC will see the start of the renovation to the Nature Lab. Thanks to the many donations received and grants from the ME Hart Foundation and The Community Foundation, we have enough capital to begin the process. Insulation and air conditioning upgrades, new doors and outside paint are all part of the plan. Storage and workspace are critical to the lab’s functionality, so we are researching the most economical and efficient way to reorganize the interior floor plan.

I believe I’ve come to the realization that I’m not the only one who takes advantage of the cooler temps and gets busy. Maybe we all are a little squirrely.

Until next time….

Becky
**Friday, September 30th**
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
RNC Members Fall Private Plant Sale

**Saturday, October 1st**
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Riverside Nature Center’s Native Plant Sale and Fall Festival.

**Thursday, October 6th**
5 – 6 p.m.
Walk with Shucks the corn snake. Come take a walk with our resident snake and Karen Millikan. Learn a lot of snake facts see what Shucks is up to. Free family fun.

**Tuesday, October 11th,**
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Brown Bag Lunch & Learn: “What’s in Your Yard? Where in the world did that come from?” What’s out in the “wild” is not always a native plant or animal. Christopher Columbus brought the first plants and animals from foreign homelands, and every wave of settlers brought along some more. RNC Naturalist, Susan Sander, will show how you can “see the world” in the Hill Country with the wide variety of species that came here sometimes on their own, some via a helping hand from humans, and those that have taken to striking out on their own. $8 RNC members - $10 non-members - Free with new membership.

**Wednesday, October 12th**
5-6 p.m.
RNC celebrates National Fossil Day. The Hill Country is rich in fossils dating back to the Cretaceous Period when this part of Texas was being formed under the rise and fall of the Inland Sea. The Smilodon once hunted in our area where Columbian mammoths also roamed! RNC is having a “bring your favorite fossil” to the Nature Center – and see what others can be found. [http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/](http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/)

**Saturday, October 15th**
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Bird Walks & Talks - Start your Saturday birding with Paul & Deloris Sellin. They will take you along the Guadalupe to find the current migrating birds in our area. Meet at the RNC entrance. All ages welcome. Free Family Fun.

**Saturday & Sunday October 15–16th**
Kerrville Chalk Festival at Peterson Plaza. Riverside Nature Center is a proud sponsor of this annual event.

**Monday, October 31st**
5 – 7 p.m.
Fright Night at Kerrville Schreiner Park - Look for us at the family Fright Night event on Halloween!

**Thursday, November 10th**
5:30 – 7 p.m. Save the Date: Conversations with Conservationist Series resumes.

**Second Saturday Spiffy Up is postponed until November 12**
In Memoriam - Dr. G. Shannon Smith

This is not the news you want to see in your inbox. But sadly it came, so unexpected, and a great sadness spread out among the Riverside family.

Susan Sander

From Bob Brackman: The San Antonio Botanical Garden is sad to report that Dr. G. Shannon Smith (1943 – 2016) died suddenly from a heart attack Wednesday evening September 14th – on his birthday.

Shannon was a plantsman and lover of nature throughout his entire life. Growing up in Florida, the love of the environment came naturally. His passion and love of plants was endless. From big and small things, Shannon noticed and appreciated all.


He tirelessly shared this love of horticulture and botany with his cherished wife and best friend of 53 years Catherine, his two sons, Greg (wife Vicky) and Steve (wife Lauren), and his four grandchildren, Tyler, Jacob, Parker and Gavin, and each and every one of his colleagues and friends. Anyone who knew him appreciated his keen wit and passionate emails. He enjoyed looking at the sunset and birds each evening while enjoying a glass of wine.

Our world has lost a wonderful man who positively contributed wherever he was. His last work at the San Antonio Botanical Garden was his hand pollination of Manfreda longiflora – one of the CPC (Center of Plant Conservation) plants he was entrusted with protecting and sharing. It is comforting to know that after three years, the plants started to flower a month ago and started setting seed last week. He was beyond thrilled.

Susan Sander’s tribute on his contributions to RNC on next page.
Dr. Shannon Smith’s Contributions to the RNC  
By Susan Sander

I knew Dr. Shannon Smith by reputation through the Native Plant Society since he had been a friend of Carroll Abbott when NPSOT was just an idea. Back in 1998 I was on a road trip to visit botanical gardens and had emailed him to ask if I could meet him at MoBot (Missouri Botanical Center). He was a most gracious host and obviously loved sharing with another plant lover. When he asked what I wanted to see, I responded with “your oldest tree.” And off we went in a golf cart. He showed me how they did their signs, their pocket gardens and their interactive database.

When I heard he had retired to Hunt I was delighted, but even more so when he sought out RNC as a place to continue to share his love of native plants. Late in 2005 he became a Riverside Nature Center member. He soon was helping me organize a volunteer training for our garden tenders. Never once did he pontificate and say, “Well this is how it should be done,” although there were many times I wish we had made him “tsar of the garden.” He understood that even though RNC was quite small we still had a role to play in the botanical world-at-large. To that end he had new tree signs made through MoBot.

It was also logical that Shannon was an “unofficial” advisor to the Kerrville Chapter of NPSOT. So when he thought it would be a good idea to do a garden dedicated to Carroll Abbott (who, by the way, had a nursery across the river from RNC east of Lemos Street) – he took it upon himself to look through Carroll’s old newsletter to find out what plants he had been working on from our area. You will find some of the top choices in the recently dedicated Carroll Abbott garden berm.

Shannon also gave us a much more beautiful entrance to RNC – planting new beds from the River Trail to the path to the side gate. It was definitely a labor of love as he worked hard at it this summer – digging up plants from his place, digging in here. He put in “sweat equity” like any true plant lover.

So many of us relied on Shannon for his quiet counsel. He was my link to the last of the great plant men of Texas. For me he was guide, mentor and sounding board as I tried to envision how RNC’s garden will evolve over its next 25 years. We shared books and great ponders about plants. I was SMS to his SS as we emailed ideas back and forth. He had weathered all kinds of physical challenges (including a rattlesnake bite!), but working with plants seems to be what he lived for. I’m honored to have known him; and thankful for his contributions to native plants here and afar, and I know I’m not alone in that regard. He will be greatly missed.
This month you can't look at the grounds surrounding the front entrance of the RNC Visitor's Center without thinking about the wonderful volunteer who skillfully designed and did much of the planting of this new landscape. Most of us knew Shannon Smith and had much contact and assistance from him regarding native plants. He will be sorely missed at the nature center after his sudden and unexpected passing on Sept 14th, but we will remember him fondly as we look at some of the bloomers he brought to the RNC landscape.

The Carroll Abbott Garden is full of examples of bloomers this month that he knew to be favorites of Carroll, since he knew him personally. His son, Mark Abbott, remarked that he was so thankful that he was able to visit with one of his father's friends before Shannon died the day of the garden dedication this spring, and would scatter wildflower seeds along a roadway in his memory.

Look at some of the great bloomers in the CA Garden photographed by Marilyn Knight such as Ashy dogweed, Blackfoot daisy, Rock penstemon, Wooly ironweed, and Torrey's cragweed.

Shannon had asked Marilyn Knight to photograph the native plants in this garden as blooms appeared and she had begun that process. She also photographed Maximilian sunflower, which can be seen in the bed close to the water tank next to the walking path along the river. Take a look next time you visit the nature center and silently thank Shannon for his contributions to our beautiful RNC.

- **Ashy dogweed** - *Thymophylla tephroleuca*
- **Wooly ironweed** - *Vernonia lindheimeri*
- **Blackfoot daisy** - *Melampodium leucanthum*
- **Torrey's craglily** - *Echeandia flavescens* (Liliaceae)
- **Maximillian sunflower** - *Helianthus maximiliani*
- **Rock penstemon** - *Penstemon baccharifolius*
As always, a special pre-sale will be held the evening before, new hours 4:30pm - 6pm Friday September 30th at RNC for RNC and HCMN members only.

**Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival**
**Saturday – October 1, 2016**
**Speakers, Displays, Kid’s Activities & Free Family Fun - 9am-2pm**

Fall is almost here! Texas Master Naturalists – Hill Country Chapter & RNC are making plans for a fun day at Riverside Nature Center. **HOURS 9am-2pm**

**Native Tree & Plant Sale**

**Ask ME! 11am - 1pm**

Open Mini-Forum discussions in the classrooms
New this year! Do you have some questions you need answered? Stop in to ask our volunteers between 11am -1pm and learn more about the following; subjects;
- Compost
- Planting Trees Correctly
- Pruning
- Plan for Spring
- Winterize your garden
- Wildflower Wisdom
- Water Catchment
- What is this plant?

**Fun, Free Kid’s Activities 10am - 1pm**
Craft projects in the Nature Lab to take home, face painting & yard games!

**Nature Book Sale**

**Informative Exhibits & Displays**
- Ask the Plant Expert
- Riverside Nature Center Association
- Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
- Native Plant Society of Texas – Kerrville Chapter
- Hill Country Master Gardeners
- Glory Community Garden
- Monarch Watch
- Garden at the Ridge
- UGRA – Water Quality & Conservation

**Free Fun Kids Activities**
- Craft Projects in Nature Lab to take home, Face Painting & Yard Games! 10am - 1pm
- Paletas, Popcorn & Drinks Available

For Detailed Information: 830-257-4837
www.riversidenaturecenter.org
150 Francisco Lemos Street • Kerrville, Texas 78028

If you want to volunteer for this event please contact the office.
Need help with Christmas present ideas?
Come by the Gift Shop and stock up for your Holiday shopping, and support Riverside Nature Center at the same time. Open 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Long time supporter & retired Riverside Guide Fane Downs stopped in to see the fall butterflies.
Photos from the 2nd Annual Run for Riverside 5k.

Mister Clean Band

Tivy Cheerleaders
The Center for Fitness
H-E-B
Mister Clean Band
Hill Country Septic
The Yoga Space
Mamacita’s
San Saba Cap
Wild Birds Unlimited
Anytime Fitness
290 Wine Shuttle
Green Iron Gang, M/SGT Danielak
Peter Lewis & Associates
Kerrville Daily Times
Fat Ass Ranch & Winery
River Hills Health & Rehabilitation Center
Wilson & Sibert Chiropractic
and all the Volunteers
THANK YOU

Donors: August 24 - September 21
(Does not include renewals)

Barbara Yout
Marcie & Wes Dorman
June & Samuel Begeman
Sue Meek

Kevin Pillow - Wild Birds Unlimited
Barbara Lowenthal
Alan G. Dewers

Patricia & Gary Hatch
Patricia Harte
Julie Sentell

MEMBERS JOINING August 24 - September 21

Katherine Kappel
Anne Miller
Daniel & Mary Jean Moreno
Kenn & Cathie Heinemann

UTSA freshman, Brittany Saldaña (in white cap) from Pecos, takes a turn at showing a family the route the Guadalupe River takes to the Gulf of Mexico. Susan Sander, Sue Sommers and Morgan Williams represented RNC at Science in Nature Day held at Cibolo Nature Center on 9/17.

Covenant Academy

Judy Ferguson & Peggy Thompson showed Covenant Academy 4th Graders all about composting during their field trip...

And the 4th graders sent their “thank you.”
What is a Riverside Nature Center?
Located at the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Town Creek in the Hill Country town of Kerrville —2010 population, 22,347— Riverside Nature Center is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization, owned by its members and primarily operated by volunteers.

Our mission is to foster greater public awareness and appreciation of the Texas Hill Country’s natural resources through education, information, and by example. We provide quality educational experiences for the community’s children, adults and families; and we serve as a resource center for the community on native plants and nature related information.

RNC OFFICERS:
Peter Lewis - President
Rick Ertel - Past President
Barbara Oates - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Secretary
Kris Bobbitt - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS:
Tara Bushnoe
Valeska Danielak
Frank Dunlap
Wynn Kilgore
Malcolm Matthews
Liz Ross
Peggy Thompson

Support RNC
DONATE NOW!
http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/donate/general-donation-form/