

THE GARDENZETTE



Rock Spring Garden Club
Arlington, Virginia
www.rockspringgardenclub.com

Rock Spring Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Atlantic Region, National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., District III, South Atlantic Region, Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., Piedmont District

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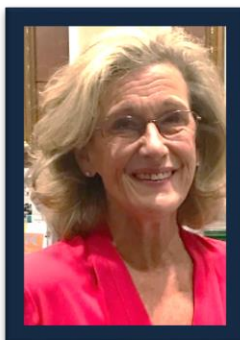


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President's Message



Being a club of gardeners, flower arrangers and plant lovers, I imagine each of you putting your artistic flair to home and yard this holiday season. For some, you will create amazing arrangements for your tabletops. For others, the decorating endeavor with plants and cuttings will be more nuanced. But, for all, I like imagining the love and spirit you bring this season to your families and friends.

So, with that in mind, I wish all of you a holiday season of warmth and human connection not afforded last year, and I have such gratitude for the giving of your talents and compassion to our club community and beyond.

Dianne

Next Board Meeting – January 6, 2022 at 10 am
Next General Meeting – January 20, 2022 at 10 am

Holiday Cheer

For the most part, many traditions return this holiday season, and with that, some of our favorite gardens are bringing back the sparkle and glow of the holiday light display. Bundle up and head out to take in the beauty of illuminated animated lights, expertly wrapped trees and holiday scenes.

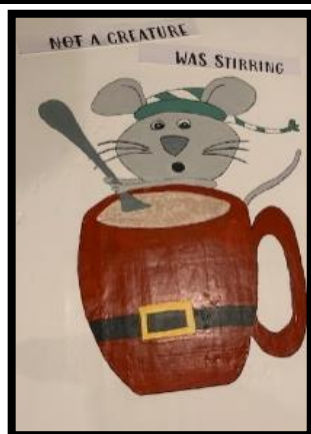
Garden of Lights at Brookside Gardens – Brookside Gardens has transformed into a magical winter wonderland for the 23rd year of Garden of Lights. Walk through the outdoor twinkling lights and glimmering displays that dot the paths and flowerbeds throughout the 50 acres in Wheaton, Maryland. More than one million dazzling and colorful LED lights are handwoven into original works depicting animals, flowers, and other natural elements. You will be dazzled by the computerized light display matching lights with music and fog bubbles.

Winter Walk of Lights at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens – The Winter Walk of Lights is more than a half-mile long, one-way route providing an enchanting and safe evening activity.

Mount Vernon by Candlelight – After a quick tour of the gardens at Mount Vernon, join the candlelight tour to learn about holiday traditions of 18th century Virginia, and to hear stories of Christmases past. The tour includes a walk through the lantern-lit historic area, stopping at the Slave Quarters, outbuildings, and inside Washington's Mansion, a meet and greet with Aladdin, the Christmas camel, on the 12-Acre Field, and learning about 18th century dining and hospitality in the Greenhouse.

Lantern Light Tour at Tudor Place – Alongside friends and family, explore the Historic House by candlelight to discover celebrations of winters past. Then, journey through the lantern-lit gardens on a guided-tour as you learn about the Peter family's Christmas traditions.

Fire, Ice, and Everything Nice at Longwood Gardens – This holiday season, wrap yourself up in the warmth—and the chill—of A Longwood Christmas. Set your spirits ablaze in the East Conservatory, where flickering flame lanterns, trees adorned in amber to fiery red hues, and a vision of warmth surround you. Filled with drama and fire-and-ice contrast, the Orangery features an array of poinsettias to a snowy grove of white birch trees. Find a “frozen” succulent fountain in the Silver Garden and stroll through the cool white tones of the Acacia Passage before finding yourself in the mesmerizing Exhibition Hall, transformed into a refreshingly whimsical alpine wonderland. The fun continues in the Music Room, dressed for a festive family fete. Outdoors, the fire and ice theme continues as a half-million lights dazzle and delight, from wintry hues along the Flower Garden Drive, to a luminaria display that sets the Large Lake aglow, to the 200-foot-long Meadow Tunnel featuring nearly 20,000 twinkling lights gently transitioning from warm fire to rainbow to galaxy effects. Cozy up to the three fire pits, feel like a kid again at the festive Garden Railway, and find surprises at every turn.



Holiday Card Lane in Del Ray

This event began last year, and it seems that it will be a recurring holiday occurrence that will be expanding throughout the entirety of the neighborhood of Del Ray in Alexandria. During Thanksgiving weekend, my daughter created the 4'x6' greeting card on the left for display in front of their bungalow to join the many other enlarged greeting cards that will be on display for everyone to enjoy throughout the season. Be sure to check out this fun holiday event if you can

(<https://thezebra.org/2021/12/04/welcome-back-to-holiday-card-lane/>). – Jane Robinson

Committee Reports

Horticulture

Trees and Shrubs for Fall Color

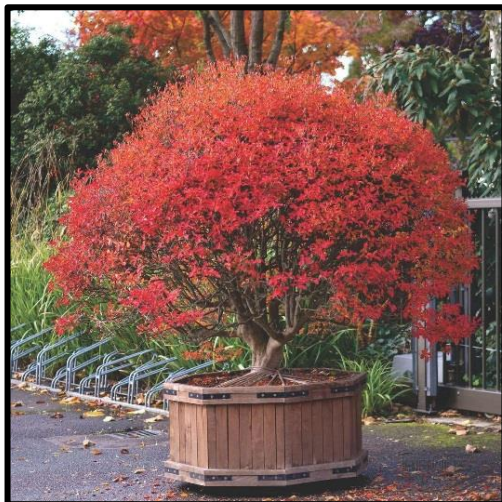
By Christine Wegman

I am writing this article just after Thanksgiving, and as you read this, most of the fall color will be a thing of the past. Fall leaf color can be fleeting and depends heavily on the weather. It must be cool and dry for the best color, ironically, just the time when most of us pray for rain to get our plants well soaked and prepared for the winter. Over the years, I have come to appreciate some of the real stars in the fall leaf color department that never disappoint. Below are four plants that, from personal experience, are among the most reliable to produce a few weeks of good color almost regardless of the weather. I have not included two of my favorite trees, dogwoods and crepe myrtles, because, although they do produce lovely fall color, a rainy autumn can really knock them out.

Fothergilla – This native shrub is one of my favorite plants. It is easy to grow, deer resistant, and looks good all through the growing season. *Fothergilla* has pretty little bottle-brush shaped flowers in early spring which bloom before the leaves come out, but I think that its foliage is its best quality. During the spring and summer, *fothergilla* foliage has a bluish cast, not unlike some hosta. It has an attractive, graceful habit and comes in two sizes: *F. major* grows to about 8 feet high by 7 feet wide, and *F. gardenii* grows about half that size. *F. 'Mt. Airy'* is a hybrid that has really good blue foliage and grows to about 5 feet. I would grow *fothergilla* just for its blue foliage, but in the fall the leaves turn beautiful shades of yellow, orange and red, which last for about three to four weeks.



Enkianthus – Although not as well-known as it deserves, this is a great pick for small gardens. Beautiful sprays of little bell-shaped flowers appear on this plant in late spring. White enkianthus (*E. perulatus*) has white flowers, while red vein enkianthus (*E. campanulatus*) has deep red flowers. In the fall, this plant shows its best by turning a glowing shade of red that can last as long as a month. Rarely damaged by deer, *enkianthus* is very slow-growing and should not need pruning, which can ruin its naturally graceful habit. The literature states that it will grow about 5 feet high and wide in a 10-year time span, although I have a white enkianthus that is about ten-years-old and is only half that size. It has shallow roots and can be grown in a large container. It is a good substitute for the burning bush plant (*Euonymus alatus*), which gets too large for most small gardens, can be invasive, and really does not have much appeal during most of the growing season.



Viburnum x burkwoodii 'Mohawk' – This large shrub (8-10 feet high and wide) is not usually grown for its foliage, but like all the plants I really love, it looks good all year round. Mohawk viburnum is a National Arboretum introduction, selected as a result of years of breeding to produce reliable garden-worthy plants. The star attraction of the Mohawk viburnum is the clusters of tiny, intensely fragrant, pink and white flowers in early spring before the leaves appear, much like the Korean spice viburnum, which is one of its parents. It forms a graceful deer-resistant plant through the rest of the seasons, and in autumn, it sports beautiful deep red foliage that lasts up to a month. I have one underplanted with pink hellebores, which often (but alas not always) bloom together.



Maples (*Acer sp.*) – These trees are readily associated in gardeners' minds with brilliant fall color, and there is no plant that can outdo a maple in this respect. Maples come in a great variety of species and heights. Some grow to 100 feet, and others like the diminutive Japanese maple, *A. palmatum* 'Akaji nishiki', do not reach more than about a foot. Maples are shallow rooted plants and the smaller varieties of Japanese maple can be grown in containers. There is a Japanese maple for every size garden, even a balcony. Although gardeners treasure these plants for their fall color, Japanese maples have beautiful graceful structure

that can be as beautiful in winter as in summer and are rarely bothered by deer. Although we typically think of maples as turning red in the fall, their foliage comes in a variety of yellows and oranges, as well as red. Most Japanese maples need some shade, but there are a few varieties that can tolerate full sun.

Liaison

You've watched floral designers work their magic, and now it's your turn! NCAGC is offering a Day of Design to all club members in District III on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at Christ Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia. Our top instructors will be Betty Ann Galway and the NCAGC Judge's Council. There will be two sessions, one in the morning and another in the afternoon and both sessions are geared to all skill levels. The morning is dedicated to creating a Traditional Design, and the afternoon will focus on designing a Creative Design. Each session is \$50 and includes container and flowers, in depth step-by-step instruction, gentle critique, information on NGC design styles and fundamentals, and lots of fun. You may sign up for the morning or afternoon session, or better yet, for both. Signups will be coming out soon, and if you want to be a part of this rare opportunity to learn more about design, let Thea McGinnis know via email and she will make sure to sign you up.

Presented by the NCAGC Judge's Council

Sessions at 9:30 am - 11:30 am and/or 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm

\$50 for each session

18 to 28 students per session

No refreshments, and masks and physical distancing required

Senior Outreach

Pumpkins Plus

By Mary Kudless

The members of the Senior Outreach Committee were very busy with two projects at Mary Marshall Assisted Living. In late October 2021, Sheila Moore arranged the transfer of some decorative grasses and black eyed susans relocated from her neighbor's garden. Her son drove these big plants over to the residence in his truck and they were transplanted in the smoking area of the building with the assistance of Omar, the maintenance man who does many projects to assist the residents.

The following week, we hosted an organizational and orientation meeting with some of our new members and the executive staff at Mary Marshall Assisted Living. We followed this with some hands-on removal of many of the annuals that had been planted in the early summer in the courtyard. Garden club members Mary Kudless and AnnMarie Fay also met with Katrina Holmes, Life Enrichment Coordinator, and Divina Alston, Executive Director, to discuss communications and contact plans during the period of Katrina's maternity leave. Katrina gave birth to a beautiful baby boy named Austin two days after our "pumpkin visit" on November 10, 2021.

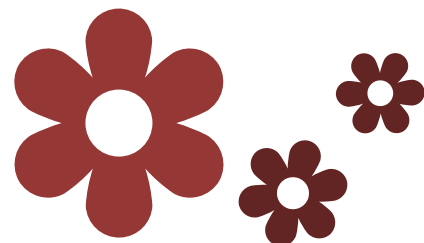
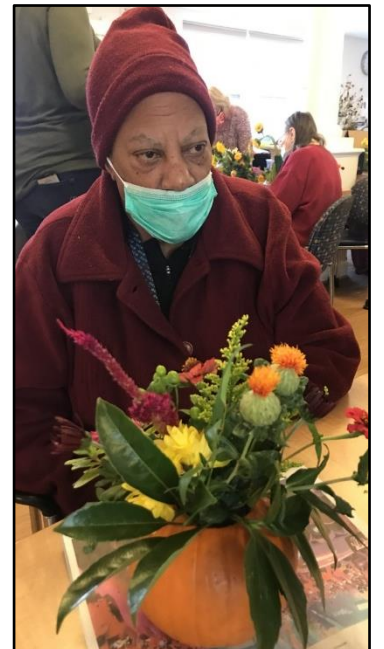


There was a great level of participation in our pumpkin floral design effort in November 2021. First, we gathered in AnnMarie's garage to prep a dozen sugar baby pumpkins. Several of our new members joined this effort, including Pat Getz, Ann Stevens Kelly, Jodie Goulden and Sharon Siems. Veterans included Sheila Moore and Renee Bayes alongside Mary and AnnMarie.

We had a ton of fun prepping the flowers and greens brought in by all of us. AnnMarie served us a beautiful lunch to "fortify" us for our next action step of meeting with the residents. The camaraderie of this experience was very meaningful to all of us, and we are glad to be taking baby steps in moving away from the isolation we have all faced with the pandemic.



The residents at Mary Marshall Assisted Living embraced the floral project. They selected their flowers and pumpkins, and got to work under the tutelage of our club members. Nine residents attended and their creative efforts can be seen in the pictures below. Many other residents gathered in the wings to observe what was happening, and we appreciate that we are becoming a "known quantity" and look forward to increasing the number of participants as we continue our visits in 2022.



Garden Therapy

It's All Gravy

By Susan Scotti



Our visit to the preschool class at Glebe Elementary School started off on a tough note as we initially had much difficulty presenting the program. The class of eleven children has recently moved to a new classroom, which unfortunately, has poor Wi-Fi reception. As a result, much of the time allotted to our program was spent with the teacher and classroom assistant in an attempt to overcome the technical difficulties. Nonetheless, we persisted and were able to meet the with students albeit in an abbreviated manner.

We were able to start the lesson with my reading of the picture book "The Middle of Fall" by Kevin Henkes and colorfully illustrated by Laura Dronzek. The book begins by skillfully illustrating the beauty of the fall season when the leaves are turning color, and "the air is chilly, the squirrels are frisky and the gardens are brown." It then cautions to remember the yellow, red and orange colors of autumn "because very soon the sky will be white and empty-ready to fill up with snow."

After the book, the children began the project of making pinecone turkeys by gluing the precut and assembled tail feathers, feet, head and neck onto small pinecones. The pictures show the turkeys "sitting" on their tail feathers because they were so wet with glue, but an overnight in the classroom had them ready for transport home the next day. Margi Melnick had prepared two songs to lead with her autoharp, however, due to the technical difficulties, there sadly was not enough time for the songs. It was a frustrating time for all and it seemed like the end of Garden Therapy for a while, but alas, the teacher spoke with the principal about our troubles and the next day we received an email with a link for an application to volunteer in person. We hope to be approved in time for a December 2021 program, and if not, it will certainly be a great way to begin the new year!



Budget Report

Beginning Balance:
Receipts:
Expenses:
Ending Balance:

Holiday Drive for Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residents Underway - Friday, December 3, 2021 to Wednesday, December 15, 2021

By Terry Holmes

Rock Spring Garden Club is excited to repeat its holiday generosity of last year and provide much needed personal items to the men and women who live at the Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence. As you may recall, the residents live on very fixed incomes, and after paying rent, they have less than \$80 per month for incidental needs. Items that are of need include socks and toiletries, such as shampoo plus conditioner in one bottle. Our goal for this drive is to collect at a minimum three (3) pairs of socks and one good sized bottle of the shampoo/conditioner product per resident.

At Mary Marshall Assisted Living, there are fifty-two residents in total, and of those, twenty are women and thirty-two are men. They are all in need of warm socks, trouser socks, walking socks and athletic socks, and the staff at the residence note that socks with grippers on the soles are particularly useful. Amazon, Walmart and Target carry a wide variety and many options of the aforementioned gripper type of sock, so be sure to check out their selection. The only socks NOT to purchase are anklet styles and the soft fuzzy socks that keep the feet warm but often do not have grippers on the soles which can create a risk of falls for the residents. We hope to receive at least 150 or more pairs of socks.



For the shampoos, the donations should preferably be the type that include the conditioner in the same bottle as the shampoo, and the bottles should be 20-ounces or larger in size. Our goal is to collect a total of 52 of these bottles so that each resident can receive one.

Donations can be brought to the home of Terry Holmes beginning on **Friday, December 3, 2021 to Wednesday, December 15, 2021.** There will be two bins on the front patio right near the front door: one for the shampoos/conditioners and one for the socks. The covered bins will be outside from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm awaiting your drop offs.

Please note that we would prefer that you not gift wrap your items as the Senior Outreach Committee will provide gift bags and gift wrap to the staff so that they can target the packages and items to each resident based on their knowledge of their needs and preferences. The donations will be delivered on the morning of Friday, December 17, 2021, so please be sure to get your items delivered by Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

Thank you so much for your enthusiastic support for the residents of Mary Marshall Assisted Living. Your donations last year lifted spirits at the height of the pandemic, and this year will again bring much happiness and holiday joy.

Floral Pumpkin Sale

By Julie Williams



We are so pleased with the participation and creations made by our club for the annual floral pumpkin sale and benefit that was held on November 22, 2021. Not only were the results creative, beautiful, and thoughtful, but we had fun doing it! Our club members went above and beyond in getting the word out through delivery of printed flyers, sending emails to all their neighbors, advertising within other clubs, or publishing the flyer on social networking sites, such as Nextdoor. Without the hard work of all the members in promoting the event to friends and neighbors, we never would have sold out within the first hour of the three hours allotted for the sale! This is what is referred to as a nice problem to have. We are in the midst of calculating how much was brought in

for the event, but we anticipate that it will be approximately \$3500. Well done, our talented friends! We, co-chairs Julie Williams and Sheila Moore, are so grateful!



Renee Bayes and her floral design.



Charlotte Benjamin and Sheila Moore with their beautiful creations.



Janice Haines helping set up.



Sweater buddies Sheila Moore and Joyce Fall

A Celebration of Winter and Favorite Things

By Kate Abrahams

On December 3, 2021, NCAGC District I held a small standard flower show titled "Winter Wonderland! Our Favorite Things!" at the home of one of its members. The horticulture entries included perennials, broadleaf and needled evergreens and container grown plants. The floral designs were Traditional Designs and Creative Designs, and table designs for one. Best wishes for a joyful holiday season!





Garden To Do This Month

By Maryam Zolecki

In December, the time spent outdoors in the garden begins to decrease owing to the diminishing sunlight hours and the onset of the cooler weather. There is still plenty to be done in and around the garden albeit in shorter bursts, and some focus can shift to indoor plant maintenance and garden related activities.

- * With pruning shears in hand, head outside and clip evergreens and berries to take indoors for wreath making. Also use the clippings for flower arrangements to decorate your winter festivities and to give to others as gifts.
- * To maintain a steady temperature, and to insulate your plants, continue laying down mulch in bare spots to protect from the cold (use collected leaves from your trees).
- * If snow should happen to fall this winter, go ahead and admire the all-white pristine landscape after a snowfall. Then head outside with a long-handled broom and gently brush the snow off tree branches, shrubs, and bushes. The added weight can bend and contort plants (but do keep the snow on the ground as it acts as an insulator).
- * Hang a bird feeder near a window, and help out our feathered friends stock up on seeds through the winter since worms and fruit are in short supply. Make sure to place the bird feeder in a spot that is sheltered from winds.
- * Inside, take care to have your potted plants near lots of sunlight, keep them away from drafts, registers and radiators, and let the soil dry only slightly between thorough watering.
- * Use tepid water for watering houseplants, and water your Christmas tree every day to keep it lasting as long, and as safe, as possible.

Winter Solstice

By Maryam Zolecki



The winter solstice occurring on December 21, 2021 will mark the longest night and the shortest day of the year for those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere.

With the arrival of the solstice, we can start looking forward to the days beginning to get longer, and in a sense, the rebirth of the sun. We'll continue to have late dawns and early sunsets and the low arc of the sun across the sky for some time yet, but the sun greets us just a little earlier and sets just a little later with each passing day.

The earliest people on Earth knew that the sun's path across the sky, the length of daylight, and that the location of the sunrise and sunset all shifted in a regular way throughout the year. They built monuments such as Stonehenge in England and at Machu Picchu in Peru to follow the sun's yearly progress. Early civilizations traced the primal concept of light and good against darkness and evil with the sun, and used the winter solstice as a celebration of light and goodness triumphing as the days grew longer and gave more light. It's no wonder that traditions, ceremonies, and celebrations this time of year keep the fires burning and the lights glowing to help the sun in its battle against darkness.

There is meaning in the winter solstice for gardeners too. The season is decorated with a wide variety of plants that are brought indoors to lift the spirit as the darkness set in early and cloaked the loveliness outside. Evergreen trees are brought indoors and decorated, and their branches, berries, and cones were used to make wreaths and garlands to adorn the house. Holly and mistletoe are of particular significance symbolizing protection and blessing during the long winter months.

The bounty of the harvest just a few months ago is also celebrated on the December solstice. For example, in the Iranian celebration of the winter feast that falls on the winter solstice, families gather around the hearth and enjoy the carefully saved grapes, honeydew melons, watermelons, pears, tangerines, apples and cucumbers along with eggplant stew and carrot brownies while bonfires were lit outside and children bathed with oranges. The preserved and canned fruits and vegetables and dried herbs remind us of brighter days to come.

Enjoy the winter holidays, and hope you get to celebrate this longest night of the year with family and friends.

November Meeting Recap

Local artist and instructor Jane Coonce showcased her skills and talent through "The Art of the Flower." Using oil as her medium, Jane created a beautiful painting in less than an hour. The opportunity to own her finished work was raffled to one lucky club member, and Thea McGinnis was the lucky recipient of the beautiful painting Jane created. Jane likened art to gardening since scale, balance, light, proportion, pattern, and texture are important in both. It was awe inspiring to watch Jane work.

The club welcomed returning member Sallie McHugh. Sallie is a previous member of RSGC and president of the club in 2009-2010.

As reported by the Show Committee, the Petite Design Interpretation floral designs submitted this month were one of the most impressive, and the horticulture specimens were a reminder of the beauty to be found in our mid-autumn gardens (see next page).



Jane transitions her painting from the "teenage" stage to the final product (counter clockwise from the bottom).



Left to right: Carolyn Barone, VP, Sallie McHugh, New Member



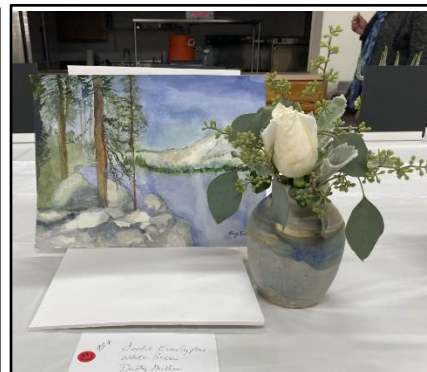


Photo Gallery

Thankful for the beauty of autumn, family, and friends...



Jane Robinson



George Ruppert



AnnMarie Fay



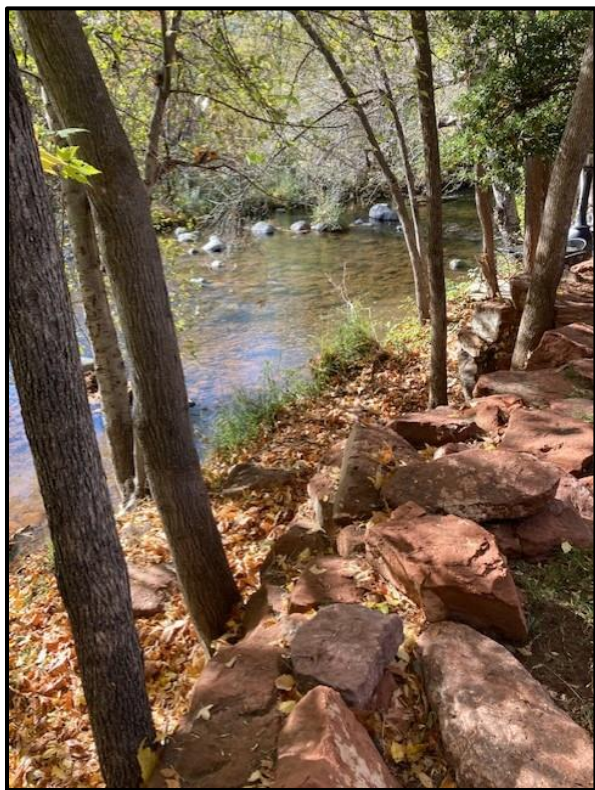
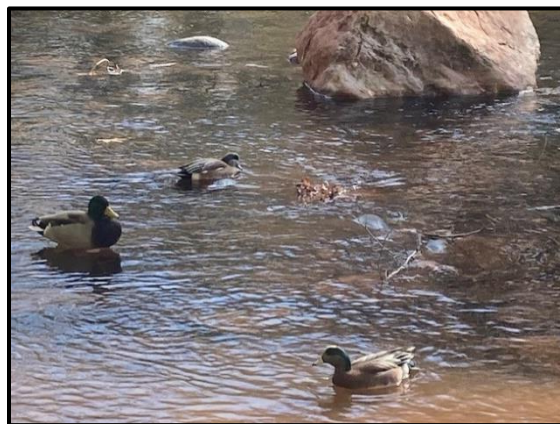
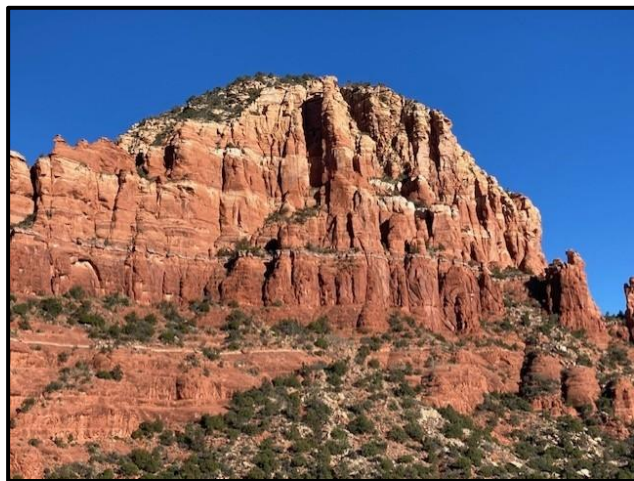
Toby Davis



Julie Williams

**Trip to
Sedona,
Arizona to
meet family
for
Thanksgiving.**

**~Kate
Abrahams**



**The colorful rock
formations are due
to layers of sand
and iron-rich soil.**

