

NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Happy New Year! –

As a new year begins, many of us have an opportunity to start with a clean slate and make new goals and resolutions. One of my goals for the New Year with regard to the Rawlings Society is to increase our visibility and diversify our membership. In order to kick-start this process, we are launching a series of events here in the North Central Florida area to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Yearling*. The first printing was issued on April 1, 1938, and the novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in April of 1939. We are proclaiming “The Year of *The Yearling*: Celebrating a Literary Classic,” and we will offer a number of events open to the public to help us celebrate the trajectory of the novel from “publication to Pulitzer.” I am happy to announce that the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society is one of the co-sponsors of these programs, along with UF’s George A. Smathers Libraries, Friends of the MKR Farm, and the Matheson Museum in Gainesville.

The list of events includes an outdoor screening of MGM’s 1946 movie based on *The Yearling*, a 5K “Yearling Run and Scamper” at the MKR Elementary School in Gainesville, a day-long symposium at UF entitled: “The World of *The Yearling*,” which chronicles life in 1870s Florida, a “Baxter’s Rations” event at the MKR Historic State Park, where we will explore the foodways of the Florida Crackers, and a dozen or so other public events at which members of the Society and others will share their particular areas of expertise, such as children’s literature, gardening and plants, history, and pet care. There will indeed be something for everyone. We are also hoping to host Claude Jarman, Jr., the actor who portrayed Jody in the film.

Please contact me or Anne Pierce with your ideas, or if you’d like to organize an event in your area. Here is the logo designed for these events:



Announcements

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on **Saturday, January 26th** at the Yearling Restaurant, 14531 East County Road 325, Hawthorne, Florida 32640. The number is 352-466-3999. The meeting will begin promptly at 11am.

April 26-27, 2013—26th
Annual MKR Conference,
Florida Inn, Amelia Island



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President's Letter (cont'd from page 1)

Many thanks to the MKR Society Trustees, who voted to co-sponsor these events. I hope that the Year of *The Yearling* will generate more interest in our Society and help widen and diversify our base of support.

**The 26th Annual MKR Society Conference
Amelia Island, April 26-27, 2013**

It's not too late to send in a presentation proposal for the 26th Annual Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Conference, which will take place on Amelia Island, April 26—27, 2013. Please send the proposals to Anna Lillios at Anna@ucf.edu

The conference hotel is the Hampton Inn, 2549 Sadler Road, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034. Phone: (904) 321-1111 or (800) 426-7866. Hotel web site: www.ameliaislandhamptoninn.com Rates are \$119 (be sure to mention that you are a member of the Rawlings group). Rates are \$10 less on expedia.com. The hotel is nearly booked for the weekend; more hotels can be found on expedia.com

Conference sessions will be held at the nearby Florida House Inn, 22 South Third Street, Amelia Island, FL 32034. Phone: (904) 491-3322 or (800) 258-3301. Web site: www.floridahouseinn.com The Florida Inn has a limited number of guest rooms, which are also available, beginning at \$126 on Thursday and \$135 on Friday.

There will be a Friday afternoon excursion, followed by cocktails and a banquet dinner. A schedule will be available in the next newsletter.

For more information about Amelia Island, please go to www.ameliaisland.com

MKR Conference Speaker: Janisse Ray



The banquet speaker at the next annual conference is writer, naturalist, and activist Janisse Ray, who is the author of five books of literary nonfiction and a collection of nature poetry. She received an MFA from the University of Montana and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Unity College in Maine in 2007. She is on the faculty of Chatham University's low-residency MFA program and is a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow.

Janisse Ray grew up in a junkyard along U.S. Highway 1, hidden from Florida-bound travelers by the hedge at the edge of the road and by hulks of old cars, stacks of blown-out tires, and primeval jumbles of rusted metal. Her first book, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, tells how a childhood spent in rural isolation—living in the country but not even knowing how to swim—grew into a passion to save the almost vanished longleaf pine ecosystem that existed before the region was ever called the South. The book was a *New York Times Notable Book* in 2000 and won the Southern Book Critics Circle Award in 2000.

Another novel, *Drifting into Darien: A Personal and Natural History of the Altamaha River* is reminiscent of Rawlings's trip on the St Johns. Ray's novel tells the story of what happens on a week-long trip down the river one spring, a trip she had dreamed of taking since she was a girl. However, just before she makes the voyage, a strange and disturbing piece of mail arrives. The river journey becomes a way to accept a world that contains both good and evil. The journey, like the river itself, is transformation.

Ray has also published a book of poetry, *A House of Branches* and contributes to *Audubon*, *Orion*, and other magazines, as well as a commentator for NPR's *Living on Earth*. An environmental activist, she has campaigned on behalf of the Altamaha River and the Moody Swamp. Her latest book, *The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food*, is a voyage to the country of seed-saving. It is driven by stories, from individuals and groups who are waging a lush and quiet revolution in thousands of gardens across America, a battle to preserve our traditional cornucopia of food.

For more information, visit her web site at <http://janisseray.weebly.com/>

MKR Scholarship Award

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society is sponsoring a writing contest for currently enrolled graduate and undergraduate students. Prizes include \$1,000 for graduate students and \$500 for undergraduate students. Students are expected to write 1500—3000 words—either a critical essay or a piece of creative work—on a subject related to the works, career, or legacy of Rawlings. They are expected to present their work at the Rawlings conference on Amelia Island at the Florida House Inn, April 27, 2013.

SUBMIT WORK TO DR. ANNA LILLIOS: Anna@ucf.edu
DEADLINE MARCH 1, 2013

Grand Wish Foundation

Idella Parker was recently featured along with her sister Eliza in the promotional materials for her niece's non-profit organization, the Grand Wish Foundation, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jobi Tyson founded Grand Wish in order to fulfill the dreams and wishes of senior citizens. To learn more, visit the foundation's website: <http://www.grandwishfoundation.org/>



Her sister Eliza, age 90, is pictured here braiding Idella Parker's hair. Idella is 98.

Society Newsletter

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