

Buddy Bass Remembers Cross Creek

Rawlings gave the Cracker families something unique. When their resources were inadequate, she pulled them through the tight places. She gave to them when they had nothing tangible to give in return though they did the best they could. If she needed fresh venison for her table, they provided it. . .

The greatest gift of the Cross Creek community to Rawlings, however, was intangible. It was the spirit of their acceptance of their circumstances in place and time. It was the story of a people whose daily life was a twin struggle, spent in fighting back the dense sub-tropical vegetation that threatened to capture their small one-room, tar-paper shacks where they held at bay from the only door into the home the intangible attacks from the impersonal presence known as starvation. . . .

It was the legacy of a people who had become too familiar with hopelessness and despair, but who continued to forge ahead in life with no thought of giving up. . . It was the joy of a people whose spirit rose above thin, ragged bodies and stomachs too often empty. It was the voice of a people giving song to a past worth remembering and a hope in a future worth anticipating. (published in *The MKR Journal of Florida Literature* 15)



Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings *Newsletter*

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NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

by Florence Turcotte

Dear Rawlings Society friends –

It's springtime here in North Central Florida, and I am reminded of the passage from *Cross Creek*

A very clever poet, Wallace Stevens, ended a poem with saying: "But there is no spring in Florida." He did not know Florida. . . . He could not differentiate among the shades of green, which at Cross Creek tell us when it is time to plant and when to fertilize and when to cultivate. He did not know when the red-bird begins to sing again, and when the cypress bursts from gray bareness into a dress of soft needles and the swamp maple puts out young passionate red leaves.

Cross Creek, 256.

All the leaves appear to be the perfect shade of green right now, as far as I can tell, and the young and passionate are everywhere

on our campus (!). With the advent of spring, the excitement surrounding our plans for the MKRS annual meeting builds. The time for our annual gathering is fast approaching and all of us are registering and making travel plans and reservations. The weather here should be absolutely perfect and I can't imagine a more congenial group of people to spend a spring weekend with than the MKR Society. April is Jody's time, when you can put down your hoe and "ramble" out in the Big Scrub, wiggle your toes in the water of one of our beautiful springs, or just curl up with a great Florida author and get lost in beauty.

Hope to see you very soon in beautiful Ocala!

Announcements

The Friends of the MKR Farm is sponsoring a scrub walk, led by Anne Pierce, March 10, at 9:30 am. Meet in the Silver Glen Springs parking lot. RSVP (352) 466-3672.

The next Trustees Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 12, at 6 pm, at the Holiday Inn, 3600 SW 38th Avenue, Ocala, FL.

The XXV Annual MKR Conference will be held at the Hilton Ocala, 3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474. Phone: (352) 854-1400

Memberships expired on June 30. Please send dues to Dr. Anna Lillios, Department of English, P.O. Box 161346, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816-1346.

Address label shows due date of your membership.



MKR Officers

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SOCIETY MOURNS PASSING OF ERNEST BASS

**Old Friends
 by David Nolan**

One of the strengths and pleasures of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society has always been its mixture of avid readers, teachers, librarians, writers and others who shared a fascination with the Rawlings legacy as expressed in her books, general writings, houses, geographic places, social and culinary enthusiasms, and the like.

Of all the varied groups for which the Society has been a magnet, I have most treasured Marjorie's friends and family members--who brought with them a first-hand knowledge that only they could provide, and which they generously shared with us.

When the Rawlings Society began back in the 1980s,

it was on the initiative of Philip May, Jr., who had first met Marjorie as a youngster when his father, an attorney with deep literary and historic interests, was her lawyer for everything from the Cross Creek trial to the preparation of her will (which perspicaciously provided scholarships for Black students at the University of Florida--at a time when the University adamantly refused to admit Black students).

Marjorie's widower, Norton Baskin, was still alive back then (he passed away in 1997 on the eve of his 96th birthday). I treasure all the stories, perfectly rendered, that he shared with me about his wife, their circle of friends, and the times they had. His spirit is continued by his niece, Sally Baskin Hooker, [see insert]

Conference Hotel

The conference hotel is the Hilton Ocala, located at exit on I-75. When you call to make your reservation, mention that you are part of the Rawlings group. You may still be able to obtain the conference rate of \$90, plus taxes.

**Hilton Ocala, 3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474.
 Phone: (352) 854-1400. Email: www.hiltonocala.com**

HOMework

Professor Rodger Tarr has assigned "The Pelican's Shadow" as the text he will explicate at the conference. He plans to call on everyone, so be prepared!

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society: The First 25 Years by Kevin McCarthy.

Cost: \$10/copy--with all proceeds going to the cost of printing. It will be 20,000 words in length with over 200 photographs. It will cover each year of the MKR Society, going back to its formation in 1987, with a description of each year's meeting, significant events in the group's development, and remarks by several of the officers.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference in Ocala

Thursday, April 12

6 pm Annual Trustees Dinner, Holiday Inn, Ocala
 10 pm Music jam--Hilton pool

Friday, April 13--Ocala Hilton Conference Center Hotel

8--9 am Registration and welcome

9:00--10:15 am Session 1

Flo Turcotte (University of Florida) (chair of session)

- Veronica Makowsky (University of Connecticut), "'Long Foreground': Rawlings's Pre-Florida Years"
- Steve Brahlek (Palm Beach State College), "Tormented Trio: Gender Roles in *Golden Apples*"
- Flo Turcotte (University of Florida), "Buffers, Borders, and Boundaries: Geographic Symbolism in Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's *South Moon Under*"
- Valerie Rivers (MKR State Park), "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's WWII Letters"
- Billy Townsend, "Marjorie's Mobs: *South Moon Under* and the Reality of Vigilante Violence in the Late 1920s."

10:30-11:30 Session 2

Kevin McCarthy (University of Florida, emeritus) (chair)

- Ashley Lear (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University), "'In Search of Truth, Not Sensation': Ellen Glasgow and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"
- Leslie Poole (Rollins College) and Carol Courtney Hadley (Altamonte Springs, FL): "Marjorie and Zelma: A Friendship Restored"
- Heather Lende (writer from Alaska), "An Alaskan Writer Learns About the Writing Life from Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"
- Kevin McCarthy (University of Florida, emeritus), "History of the MKR Society"

11:30--12:15 Session 3

- Florida Writing Today (panel discussion)--Susan Hubbard (University of Central Florida) and Rita Ciresi (University of South Florida), "Writing Florida: Tasting the Water, Telling the Air."

Lunch on your own or go on one of the following tours:

1:00 pm Silver River Boat Trip (sold out)
 1:00 pm Tour of Bridlewood Horse Farm (sack lunch provided; carpool)
 6:30 Cocktail hour and Banquet at the Ocala Hilton Hotel. Guest Speaker: Jeff Klinckenberg, *Tampa Bay Times*

Saturday, April 14--Ocala Hilton Hotel

8:30-9 am MKR Business Meeting

9--9:30 MKR Writing Contest Winners from Ocala schools (Ellen Giallonardo, chair)
 Scholarship awards (Teri Sopp)

9:30-10:15 Session 4

- Panel Discussion: The Future of Rawlings Studies--Brent Kinser (Western Carolina University), John Lowe (University of Georgia), Veronica Makowsky (University of Connecticut), and Rodger Tarr (Illinois State University, emeritus)

10:30--11:00 pm Session 5

- Rodger Tarr. Homework: "The Pelican's Shadow"

11:00-Noon Session 6

- Play: "CROSS ROADS: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings & Norton S. Baskin in Unguarded Moments" (staged by Deborah Dickey)

Luncheon. Appleton Museum of Art, Ocala. Guest speaker: Johnny Pohlars, "Mapping *The Yearling* Trail"

Sunday, April 15, 9:30 am--The Big Scrub Walk (contact Anna Pierce)

