



NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

I walked out into my backyard this morning, cup of coffee in hand, and gazed at my garden. As a northern transplant like Rawlings, gardening just is not the same as in my younger years. I spaded up the sod two years ago and found little but sand. Worms were few and far between. My first garden was a rather feeble attempt that was soon neglected as freshman comp essays began to pile up. My beets and radishes, along with my onions, were soon barely visible, buried under weeds that seemed to thrive better than my vegetables. The tomatoes and peppers fared a little better, and after a couple of dry spells, they faded into the soil. That first year wasn't exactly a success.

To help, I built a frame for composting yard and table scraps. I also added grass clippings to the garden to help build the soil. Every time I would mow the yard, I would collect the clippings and spread them on the garden. Periodically, I would spade the compost and clippings into the soil, and while I did not notice anything at first, slowly I began to notice a few more earthworms. At the end of last summer, as I spaded up my tiny garden, I was joined by a curly tail lizard—as I turned over shovelfuls of dark earth, he would scurry over, snatch up an earthworm, then run away to enjoy his snack. The soil was now full of worms.

The second year came, and after I little research, I made a few changes. My beans did well, along with my collards, but cutworms took some of my tomatoes and all my cucumbers and squash. Last January, I transplanted some broccoli along with a couple more tomatoes that did well, even though they went in a little late. The broccoli gave me some delicious heads along with some greens that went well with the collards, but the tomatoes, Cherokee purple, came on just as the weather headed up and gave me only a few tomatoes.

When I picked those tomatoes and brought them inside, they didn't look like much. They were a little green on the top, which faded into a purplish red toward the bottom, and they really did not look as nice as the pretty red globes I could buy at Publix. But when I cut the first open and popped a slice in my mouth, the rich, sweet, complex flavor made me sigh with delightful memories of tomatoes from my childhood, tomatoes that tasted like tomatoes.

What would Rawlings and her Cross Creek neighbors think of our food today? Many of my students have no idea how to cook, other than open a can, empty into a bowl, and microwave. Last summer in Virginia, on a trip with some honors students, I noticed some raspberry canes next to the sidewalk, and stopped to pick a few. One of my students, noticing my smile as I popped a few berries into my mouth, asked what I was doing. I picked a couple more and handed them to him and some of the other students. They stared at me as if I were offering them poison. I assured them that they were safe, and they followed my lead and popped a couple in their mouths. They were amazed, one even exclaimed, "These are even better than Publix." Today, we live too far away from nature, the source of our food. [continued on page 4]

Announcements

- **Oct. 25: Trustees Meeting, Montverde, FL (details later)**
- **Aug. 2: MKR Birthday Party, MKR Farm, 11 am—1 pm.**
- **March 27-28, 2015: 28th Annual MKR Conference, Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL**

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**Next Year's Conference in Beautiful Lakeland,
March 27-28, 2015**



Florida Southern College (FSC) and Lakeland are excited to be hosting the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Annual Conference next March 27-28. Established in 1883 in Orlando as South Florida Institute, the college eventually moved to Lakeland and became FSC in 1935. FSC President Ludd Spivey soon commissioned famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design a new campus. Between 1938 and 1957, twelve of Wright's structures were finished, leaving FSC with the largest single-site collection of Wright structures in the world. In 2012, the National Park Service designated FSC a National Historic Landmark in recognition of the significance of the Wright architecture. In 2013, FSC completed its 13th Wright structure, a 1700-square foot Usonian house designed in 1939 as part of a faculty housing community.

Conference sessions will be held in the Hollis Room of the Buckner Building, originally designed as the college library by Wright and built between 1942-1946. Following lunch on Friday, participants can take a guided tour of the campus. The Friday night reception will be at the Terrace Hotel, about a mile from the campus, where rooms will be available for conference guests. Located in Lakeland's cozy downtown, the Terrace is in easy walking distance of restaurants and bars; visitors might also take an easy stroll around the Lake Mirror Promenade across the street from the hotel and explore the adjacent Hollis Gardens. Saturday afternoon, conference participants can enjoy a nature hike at the Circle B Bar Reserve, just south of town.

—Keith Huneycutt

The Rawlings Society Goes to Gainesville

The 28th annual Rawlings conference took place in Gainesville March 25-27, marking the end of the Year of *The Yearling* events, which took place throughout the state of Florida. There were many conference highlights, including a wonderful talk by J.T. Glisson. It was our last chance to ask him to retell our favorite stories. He informed us that this was going to be his last talk to our group. Another highlight was Rodger Tarr and Brent Kinser's spirited defense of Rawlings's reputation—not that it needs defense to us—in their talk, "The Once and Future Rawlings." We were also delighted by noted local storyteller, Mimi Carr. Jim Stephens read from his new book, *Hamaca Happenings at Cross Creek*. Lovers of Cross Creek are grateful that, together with Kevin McCarthy, he has put together a book of the stories, which have entertained us for so many years. Banquet and luncheon speakers, Bill Belleville and Shelley Fraser Mickle, gave outstanding presentations, as did paper presenters Keith Huneycutt, Anne Pierce, Dan Cantliffe, Flo Turcotte, Sandra Parks, and Jan Godown Annino. Ellen Giallonardo continues to do an amazing job organizing the school writing contests. This year we met the students of Carolyn Harrell, at the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School in Gainesville, who read their award-winning poems and stories to us. Sara Green, a recent graduate of Western Carolina University and a student of Dr. Brent Kinser, won the college Rawlings Writing Award.

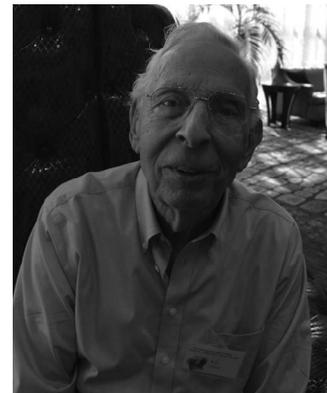
Our Friday afternoon excursion took place at historic Haile Plantation. Many of us were intrigued by its residents who wrote on the walls—not an aesthetic touch but a handprint passed down through history. Jim Stephens ended the conference with his interesting tour of Antioch Cemetery, the final resting place of Rawlings, Norton Baskin, and many members of her Cross Creek community.

Used to...but now

~Gentry Allen, 7th grade, P.K. Yonge School, Gainesville

I used to frolic with Flag
He could kick up sun rays
The cranes danced to the sound of my laughter.
Arching his neck and springing towards me
he splashes in the Glen
The Spaniards peeked in to watch us
At night I heard him rustling in his bed, watching over me
It was just me and the fawn
But I remember his eyes and what they looked like
when he saw me
Coming with the gun.
And now Flag lies silent
And April's returned

*College Writing Award Winner
Sara Green and her professor,
Brent Kinser*



J.T. Glisson gives another memorable talk



Tour of Haile Plantation



President's Letter *Cont'd*

Rawlings's work explores the relationship between the individual and nature. From the high winds in *Jacob's Ladder*, the fire in *South Moon Under*, the freeze in *Golden Apples* and *Cross Creek*, her work is filled with examples. Nature is not always kind, but the individual needs to experience nature and learn to live with her. What would Rawlings think of our huge corporate farms? What would she think of genetically modified seeds? What would she think of the long list of ingredients on the labels of most of the things that we buy? It is refreshing to open the pages of her work and read about her Cracker characters, living on and with the land around them. I wish that more people would emulate them today.



—*Steve Brahlek*

A Friendly Reminder:
Please renew your membership. Our year ends June 30. To find out whether you need to renew, check your mailing label.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
Society Newsletter
Published quarterly in March, June,
September, and December
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IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you!