



NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

Energy and enthusiasm! Those are the words I use to describe the 31st Annual Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Conference. The many new members and first-time conference attendees lent a special excitement to this event. Their enthusiasm was contagious. I certainly enjoyed seeing things through their eyes. Everything seemed new again. We “old timers” had a wonderful time sharing our passion for anything MKR with the “newcomers”. It is always a joy to see our membership’s famous welcoming warmth and kindness.

Sadly, our conference started with a special tribute and moment of silence for Janice Arinson. We recently lost this beloved long-term member and treasurer. The Society will dedicate the next conference, March 29-30, 2019, in Tarpon Springs to Janice. This was the site she campaigned for most vigorously. Janice was a treasure and will be long remembered for her hard work and devotion to the society.

The 31st MKR Society conference was held in beautiful Mount Dora, Florida. The Lakeside Inn was founded in 1883 and is the oldest continuously operated hotel in Florida. What a lovely restful setting! The entire property gave a feeling of stepping back in time to a slower, more gentle culture.

Everyone was commenting on how wonderful it was to just park your vehicle once. And, never have to get into it again for the entire conference. Hence the relaxing and restful comments we all voiced over and over. For me personally, this was a first. I never once had to pack up all my auction items and displays to a closet or another room. Some conferences have meant three to four moves. One time, I moved three times in one day. So this was a joy from beginning to end. Our entire program, meals, and fundraising were all held in the same large room. Every staff member went out of their way to meet our every need. And always with a smile! A special thank you to Heather McPherson for all her hard work in making a perfect conference.

The eight regular sessions were extremely varied in information and format. From Dessie Smith’s River Lodge to The Poetics of Landscape, Cross Creek Citrus to Astronomy Imagery in South Moon Under, Mothering and Missed Connections to Ageless Spinsters and Literary Liberties, MKR and Zora Neale Hurston to Cosmic Consciousness and the Sojourner; all were entertaining. The sessions flowed beautifully with excellent timing thanks to Leslie Poole and Ashley Lear.

Everyone loves the younger School Writing Contest Winners. The 2018 winners were delightful and poised as they delivered their winning poetry. This is always a special treat. I always think what courage these young people express to read their works to such a large group. Seeing the pride from their parents and teachers is a favorite part also. These young people are our future.

Even the Premier Boat Tour was an easy transition. After the special rocking chair porch lunch, everyone walked down to the hotel pier. The two-hour boat tour took us through the pristine Dora Canal. This tour is “old south” at its most beautiful with towering 2000 year-old cypress trees hung with Spanish moss. The guides were knowledgeable, entertaining and real comics. They even stopped for numerous photos of wildlife and scenery. We saw Bald Eagles, herons, egrets, anhingas, [called Shags in Maine], numerous species of snakes, turtles, and alligators from small to large. Loved seeing the 4 baby turtles lined up in a row on a stump. Being so small though, I worry about their survival. The quiet and the bird songs were especially enchanting. (cont’d, page 2)

President's Letter (cont'd)

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Pam Davis

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Anne Pierce

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Leslie Poole

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Syd Perry
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The banquet and luncheon buffet were special with their delicious entrees and Speakers. Dana Ste. Claire spoke on the Cracker Culture and MKRs Peculiar Neighbors at the Banquet. It was highly entertaining and informative and enjoyed by all. Loved his "props." Barbara Wingo gave a lovely presentation on the furnishings and styles in MKRs three Florida homes. I enjoyed seeing the period home style magazines and their influence on fashions and furnishings in the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

I would like to leave you with some good news. The 2018 Silent Auction/Raffle netted the Society \$2508 this year. A big thank you to everyone who donated and those who purchased the items.

Sincerely,
Elaine Bradbury

Annual MKR Society Membership Prize

We are starting a campaign to double our current membership. To win, please have your name written on the bottom of the new members' registration forms or let Anne Pierce know the names of your referrals.

The winner who registers the most new members will receive FREE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION for 2019.

Here are some ideas to solicit members:

- **Encourage adult children to join**
- **Give a gift of a reduced price student membership to children, grandchildren, or other students you know**
- **Speak to neighbors and members of your community library or historical societies about joining**

Be creative! Claire Koshar and Elaine Bradbury recruited 12 new members by hosting an MKR Breakfast party with gifts and prizes one year. Help keep our society strong!



31st Annual MKR Conference Secondary School Awards in Poetry

The Struggle In The Scrub

Life in the scrub is hard;
almost everything wants to eat you.
Under the curtain of night
there are dancing shadows with
gleaming white fangs
that vanish suddenly with a hop and a
skip away.

With life in the scrub, not only are the
critters out to get you,
the weather is not always happy and
sunny.
People have to work like oxen to plow
the fields,
even in raging, stormy winds.
Drought and hot weather choke the
plants while
hurricanes drown and flood them out.

Life in the scrub means you are an
opportunistic person.
You unfortunately cannot afford to be
a picky eater.
If the crops don't produce,
you will have to hunt
to quiet your screaming stomachs.

Life in the scrub is a struggle.
It's like climbing a tree in a storm,
while apples fall on your head,
wind tugs at you from all sides, and
the rain slowly loosens your grip on
the swaying branches.
It is a constant battle for existence and
survival between,
the people and the creatures and
weather of Florida.

Benjamin Nelson, 2nd Place
Yalaha, Florida

The Magnolia Tree

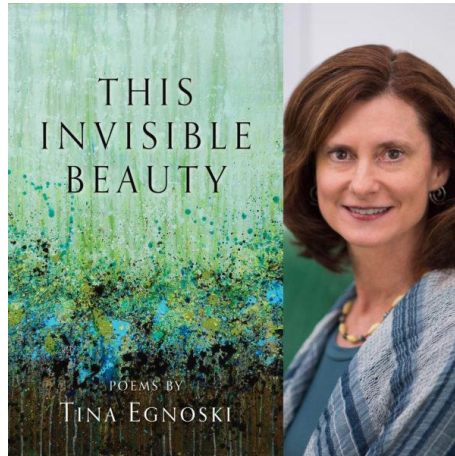
Leaves of forest green, soft, lacquer-shiny
Rough, walnut brown, knotty coat of bark
Bruises and scrapes show past trauma
A large stalk connects with others on the way up,
extending
Strong, sturdy, grows out and upward
On the petit strips of burnt sienna, buds of silk grow
Nut-sized florets of beauty appear inside and out
They blossom as time passes on and through
Finally, the petals of cream form a baggy goblet
They collect rainwater and obtain the bee's love
The sweet smell and the sight of the wondrous cup-like
structure capture one's eye and nose
The touch of silk draws one's hand nearer
The enchantment of the tree lives on for generations to
come

Claire Classon, 1st Place
Mt. Dora, Florida



NOTE: Laina Sweetney and Randy Noles, winners of the
MKR College Writing Contest and Edna Saffy Graduate
Award will be published in the next issue of the *MKR
Journal of Florida Literature*.

31st Annual MKR Conference
Lakeside Inn, Mt. Dora, Florida
April 20-21 – Highlight Reel



Tina Egnoski read poetry inspired by the life of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings from her newest collection *This Invisible Beauty*, available through Finishing Line Press



Boat Tour of Lake Dora



Friday Presentations: Ashley Lear, “Cosmic Consciousness and *The Sojourner*,” Kimberly Voss, “Ageless Spinsters, Angry Canaries, and Literary Liberties: How *Cross Creek* Changed Florida’s Privacy Laws,” Anne Bellissimo, “Anything but Black and White: A Closer Look at Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Zora Neale Hurston,” Margaret Harris, “Original Advertisement of Dessie Smith’s Withlacoochee River Lodge”



Saturday Presentations: Lisa Kerr Dunn, “Malaria, Mothering, and Missed Connections: The Banner Elk Letters;” Kevin Schindler, “South Moon Under: MKR’s Use of Astronomy Imagery;” Peggy MacDonald, “Cross Creek Citrus Before and After Rawlings”

Keynote Speakers

Dana Ste. Claire, author of *Cracker: The Cracker Culture in Florida History*

Barbara Wingo, “Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings at Home in Florida” – a look at MKR’s home furnishings and interior design choices

Anna Lillios was honored with this year’s Unsung Hero Award, bestowed by Kevin McCarthy

In Memory of Janice Arinson
May 28, 1928 – April 3, 2018
Beloved Treasurer and Trustee of the MKR Society



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days
on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

1 Chronicles 29:15



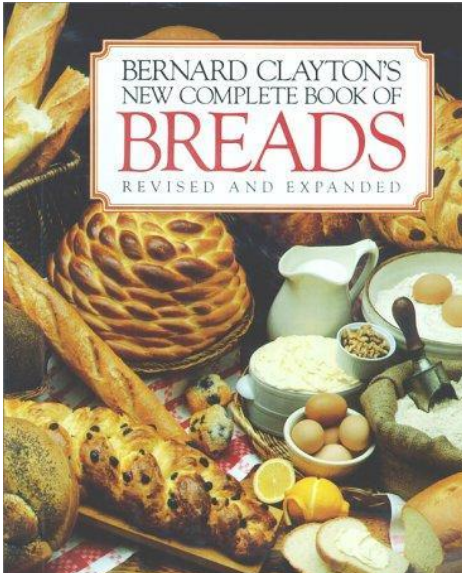
Idella Thompson Parker
Immortalized in the Writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings



Friends from the MKR Society gathered on February 10, 2018, with Parker's family to place a memorial marker.



In the News



Margaret Harris found *Cross Creek Cookery* referenced by Bernard Clayton in his 1987 *New Complete Book of Breads*. Clayton was inspired by Rawlings to include his own version of Mother's Biscuits, inspired by the biscuits his mother made for him. You can find the full recipe in his book, available from Simon and Schuster. ISBN: 978-0-684-81174-1

Tampa Bay Times referenced Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings on March 9, 2018, in an article titled, "Whoopers Get Travel Plans from Agency." The article describes a recent initiative to transplant some of Kissimmee's whooping crane population to Louisiana in an attempt to protect the endangered bird. According to staff writers Craig Pittman and Barbara Behrendt, "The last reported sighting in Florida [prior to a 1941 report on their dwindling numbers] was in Osceola County in 1936 – unless you count the 1938 novel *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, which mentions a cotillion of whooping cranes that leave the main character speechless with their elaborate mating dance.





Upcoming Events

August 11 – Friends of the MKR Farm will sponsor a Rawlings Birthday Celebration with a narrated walk around the farm. There will be singing, cake, and lemonade in the shade. See the Friends' website for time and details, TBA

Second weekend in October – Premier Event, day and time TBD, for a video being created by Sonya Doctorian through a Florida Humanities Council Grant. This video features interviews with individuals who lived in the Cross Creek area when Rawlings was there.



**Note: MKR Society Membership Year is from July-June. Consult the mailing label for your renewal date.*

To learn more about the society, visit our website, <http://rawlingssociety.org/>, or check out our Facebook page and Yahoo Group.

Rawlings Society
PO Box 117005
Gainesville, FL 32611-7005

**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! Renewal card at:
<http://rawlingssociety.org/>

