



NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

Greetings from the beautiful state of Maine. This will be a different letter. Perfect sunny days and cool evenings make delightful weather here. But we need some rain as the lovely weather is keeping us very dry. I live very close to nature and wild life here so will tell you some of my recent “happenings.”

I am looking out at my gardens of peonies, iris, lupine, late lilacs, azaleas, and the beginnings of roses and day lily season. So much color and scent looking down towards the pond. We have stone walls in three levels around the house. All the flowers and shrubs look so pretty framed by granite walls and seats. The apple and fruit trees have dropped their blossoms. Always looks as if we are in a snow storm when walking outside. So lovely! All the birds continue to make my favorite music.

We love watching the deer feed in the fields and heath. Yesterday, I saw a fawn feeding behind the stone wall by the house apple trees. After nursing the fawn, its mother wanted to take a rest. But the baby kept climbing back and forth over her. I had never seen this activity from a fawn before. So I spent part of my morning watching from the big bay window. The mother finally gave up on rest time. What an active fawn! My sympathy was with her.

In the fall, the deer enjoy the apples that have fallen from the trees. Although, there are always a few deer who move around the trees on hind legs grabbing directly from the tree. They are so tall and comical to watch when they do this.

The farm has several hundred acres with 8 miles of trails along the water in the woods. Every walk is an adventure as you never know what or who you may meet. The animals are as familiar with our movements as we are with theirs. Sometimes I just sit and wait to see what animals will come by. Maybe deer, moose, bear, coyote, fox, or the smaller animals will appear. You never know what you will see. That is the fun of it.

I have spent a lifetime chasing bears away from my bee hives. They move on grudgingly but most do move on. My favorite method is making myself as big as possible while waving a broom and yelling at them. I have never feared any animal or being alone in the woods except for one time.

I was walking on a trail and came around a corner to the cutest sight ever. A very small bear cub was doing summersaults just in front of me. A cold chill came over me as I thought, “Where is Mom?” I started backing up slowly and singing a lullaby. About 12 feet back, I saw the mother bear pop her head out by the baby. I just kept singing and backing while the mother stared at me. But I so wanted to stay and watch the adorable little guy. Caution, however, is always the best strategy with wild creatures.

Our first morning back in Maine, I asked my husband if he thought we still had moose around the farm. Right on cue, a moose walked by the window heading down to the pond. Well, that answered that question. One time, I met 4 moose at once in the woods. But that is a story for another day.

We have a blue heron nesting site at the back of our property. There are 29 nests with about 21 active this year. The air is full of herons flying back and forth overhead to bring food to the babies right now. Adults are so graceful! The young ones so unattractive at this stage. They build condo style nests (cont'd on page 2)

President's Letter (cont'd)

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way up in the pine trees over a wet area. One huge pine has four nests, one above the other. You can hear the young herons from quite a distance. So noisy!

Most blue herons used to nest by the ocean. But, many think as the eagle population built up, the herons moved inland for safety. So, we are lucky to have our own nesting site. We visit rarely and quietly with binoculars but no talking. It is quite a hike! Pretty much keep it a secret. The state of Maine wildlife folks also visit to monitor the population.

The beaver can change a trail overnight as an area becomes flooded, deep tree drag mark channels appear, and daylight intrudes on a formerly deeply shaded canopy. You can end up very wet trying to navigate through the suddenly deep water. They work very quickly to change the landscape.

Think I have exceeded my space limits. There will be more nature tales in the fall.

Sincerely,
Elaine Bradbury



One of Elaine Bradbury's "critter" watching areas in Maine – a back stone patio with pond, field, and apple trees to the right.

Trustees at Work

Desert Sage Candle Women's Retreat

Sally Baskin Hooker, trustee and niece of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Norton Baskin, donned her Cracker Woman costume and spoke with the Desert Sage Candle Women's Retreat at the Putnam Lodge in Cross City Florida. She spoke about *The Yearling* and the life of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. The women attending the retreat had all read *The Yearling* for a book discussion portion of their retreat.



April 28, 2018

Remarkable Kinship

Ashley Lear's new book on the relationship between Rawlings and Ellen Glasgow is now available from UP of Florida.

"A richly detailed account of a significant literary kinship—a respectful, empathetic tie that led Rawlings to undertake a biography of the life and career of Glasgow. A fascinating narrative."—Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, author of *Composing Selves: Southern Women and Autobiography*



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

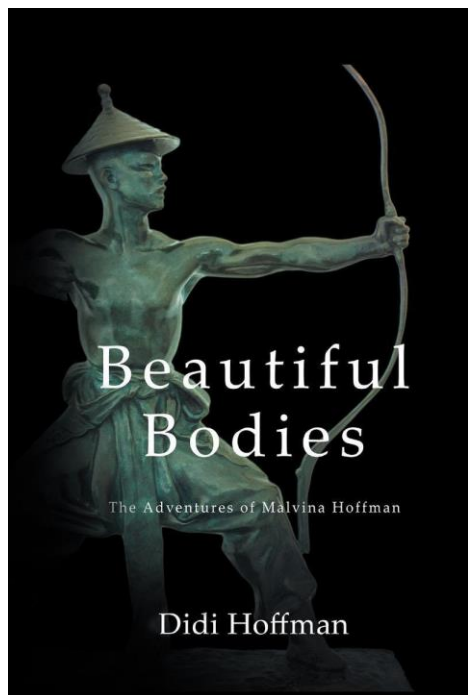
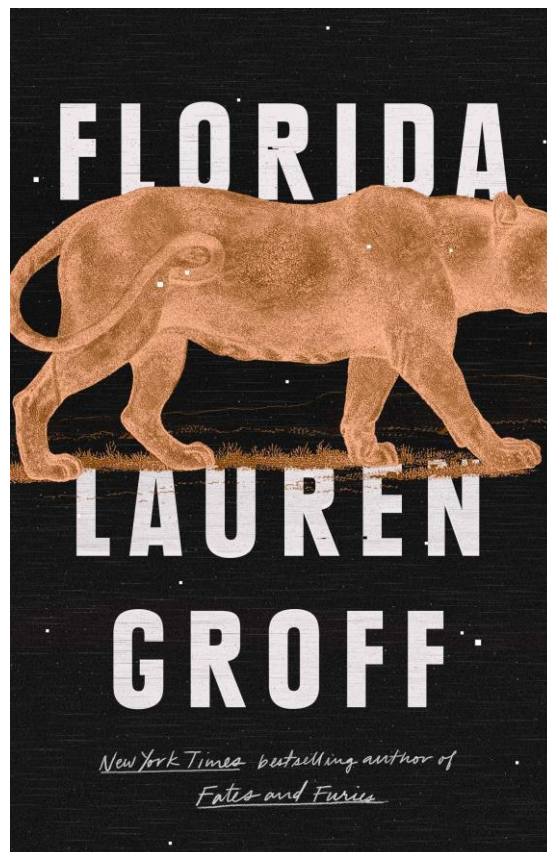
Be creative! Claire Koshar and Elaine Bradbury recruited 12 new members by hosting an MKR Breakfast party with gifts and prizes one year. Help keep our society strong!

In the News

In a recent interview with the *New York Times*, Lauren Groff, whose short story collection *Florida* was released this summer, recommends several of our favorite authors for readers wanting to learn more about Florida.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's "The Yearling" is one of the best books ever written about Florida; adults don't read it often nowadays because at some point it was miscategorized as a children's book. Marjory Stoneman Douglas's "The Everglades: River of Grass" is as urgent and lively a work of ecological reporting as any I've read, and it pairs beautifully with Cynthia Barnett's "Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S." And Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God" is a clear, hot blaze of a book. - Groff

You can read the full article here:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/24/books/review/lauren-groff-by-the-book.html>



Didi Hoffman's biography of Malvina Hoffman, American sculptor and writer, highlights visits between Hoffman and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, described as one of Hoffman's best friends.

Hoffman was the great aunt of biographer Didi Hoffman's husband Chip.

Letters by Rawlings referencing Malvina Hoffman may be found in the University of Florida Smathers Libraries in the Special and Area Studies Collections and in *Selected Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, edited by Bigelow and Monti.

CROSS CREEK HAPPENINGS

Excerpt from “Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ Vegetable Garden” by James M. Stephens
(1999)

In Cross Creek we find that Marjorie was not only a talented writer, but she was adept in many other fields. One in particular about which she writes at length was horticulture. It was her oranges that she knew most about, for her grove was what first attracted her away from Rochester, N.Y. to rural Florida; however, it was her vegetable garden and truck crops that filled most of the dishes on her table.

Her Summer Garden

Marjorie wrote of things slowing down around the Creek in the summer, and that went for her vegetable garden as well. MKR:”I went then, the porch well cleaned, wet and glistening in the fading light, to water my garden. There were a few carrots that I had hoped to bring through the heat, a few zinnias, half a dozen desperate collard plants, poor things but mine own.” By early August, in a good year, her garden rows could have included sweet potatoes, cassava, eggplant, pepper, cow-peas, peanuts, and okra. Of okra she wrote, “Okra is a Cinderella among vegetables. It lives a lowly life, stewed stickily with tomatoes, or loss of identity in a Creole gumbo.”

Other Plants and Crops

From the foregoing it seems difficult to fully comprehend that her vegetable garden represented merely a small fraction of the multitude of chores, projects, activities, hobbies, pleasures, enterprises, and just plain hard work that encompassed the daily and seasonal routine of this phenomenal and marvelously gifted woman. Her fields were planted and harvested for market, and included a range of crops from lettuce and cowpeas to peanuts and beans. Her yard and premises abounded with fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, grape vines, flowers, and ornamentals of all sorts. Her citrus groves are legendary. Her animal raising projects, whether for pet, product, or profit, are yet another story, as are her forays onto the lakes and into the woodlands for sport and culinary purposes.

And, yes. Oh, yes! Above all else, she was a writer- the creator of prose the likes of which we may never see again. Enjoy her works, but as you read, look not just at her garden of fables, but stoop to peer down the measured rows and into the foliage of her hyperbole; strip away the peel to reveal the core of her message; then perhaps you will be pleased with one tiny seed that germinates, and the wisdom of her vision, understanding, appreciation, and concern for Cross Creek and all that it symbolizes starts to grow within you. Marjorie planted her garden well; now the cultivation is in our hands!





Announcements

October 20 – Claire Koshar and Elaine Bradbury will be hosting our Board of Trustees meeting at Claire's home with an assortment of food from *Cross Creek Cookery*. The meeting begins at 11:30. Address: 15318 Vinola Place, Montverde, FL 34756. (Be sure to use *Vinola Place* in your GPS, as there are several Vinolas in the area.)

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

