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# NEWSLETTER

## President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

What a quiet but busy summer! I am certain all of you have had the same experience. Summer theatre and all similar activities were canceled. But we were busy doing numerous home projects. So wonderful to get all those projects done that had been put off for years. My home and gardens have never looked so lovely and updated.

We only had children and grandchildren at the lake. No other visitors were able to come because of the two-week Maine quarantine restrictions. I missed the friends but not the work. It is very easy to socially distance in rural Maine. So, family time was wonderful.

Maine is pretty much still locked down. No dining in. I think they can do 25% with numerous restrictions starting this week. Thankfully, our lobsterman was still in business. So, we have been able to enjoy our weekly steamer/corn/lobster feasts.

Maine is a tourist state like Florida, and my heart breaks for all the business folks. They only have about 10 weeks at the most to earn income. Sadly, I know many will not be able to recover.

But enough doom and gloom. Everyone, focus on the good and enjoy these quiet times. I am enjoying this pause to focus on all my favorite things. The scary pandemic has given me valuable time. Time to read more books both print and Kindle. Time for more daily walks and watching nature. Time to just relax on the porch or in the gardens. Time to write a real letter.

And I have had more fun exchanging letters with our favorite MKR member, Shirley Thompson, "Daisy." What a funny lady! She calls this the "DAMPANIC". Her humor would lighten any one's day. I am looking forward to having her relate her pandemic stories to you all when we return to our meetings and conference.

Now onto my nature ramblings! The deer herd is busy visiting the apple orchard early morning and evenings. They love the apples. It is always such fun to watch them and their varied personalities. Some deer just run and charge to be first. Others venture out very cautiously in a meandering route. A few take a more leisurely stroll, feeding as they go. There is always one in the crowd that will circle the tree on hind legs to reach fresh apples. No drops for this agile one. But the rest just keep circling the trees, feeding as the apples drop.

We have three fawns this year. It is such fun to watch them playing with each other. They charge, or play tag, or scatter the wild turkeys. This is our first year without twins. They must all be new mothers. (Update: Two sets of twins just came running out chasing each other!)

(cont'd on page 2)

## President's Letter (cont'd)

**President**  
**Elaine Bradbury**

**Vice President**  
**Darien Andreu**

**Secretary**  
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**Treasurer**  
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**Exec. Director**  
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**Elaine and David Bradbury**  
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**David C. Drysdale**  
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**Grady Johnson**  
**Claire and Martin Koshar**  
**Shirley Lucas**  
**Spence Perry**  
**Syd Perry**  
**Marsha and Michael Phelts**  
**Anne Pierce**  
**Dana Preu\***  
**Victoria Register-Freeman**  
**Angela Territo**  
**Shirley Thompson**  
**Lynn Weaver**  
**Peter and Leonor Zies**

### ***Lifetime Honorary Trustees***

**J.T. "Jake" Glisson\***  
**Philip S. May, Jr.\***  
**Kevin McCarthy**  
**Idella Parker\***  
**Rodger Tarr**  
**\*deceased**

### ***Trustees Emeriti***

**Patricia Nassif Acton**  
**Roy Hunt**  
**Claire Koshar**  
**David Nolan**

We also have some visitors that are not as enjoyable. The coyotes come late at night to share the feast. They are not quiet. The young ones yip, and the adults yowl and howl. I hate being awakened every night by this din outside my bedroom window. Their favorite snacking time is between 2 and 3 am. The bear, moose, fox, and racoons are also frequent visitors to the orchard. They are quiet as they enjoy the bounty, unlike the noisy coyotes.

We are busy closing things down in preparation for our return to Florida, where I stay for the winter and spring. David returns to Maine during the winter. He enjoys all the winter sports with our sons and grandchildren. No cold for me, though. Brrr!

Hopefully, we can soon return to normal and resume our regular pre-pandemic lives. I am so looking forward to the time when we can be together again. I look forward to seeing you all at our next conference!

Sincerely,  
Elaine Bradbury



*Deer in an apple orchard from Backroad Journal blog*

Chinsegut Hill historic site reopens! The Manor House at the **Chinsegut Hill Retreat and Museum** in Brooksville, Florida, has reopened for tours. During the 1920s, the house played host to Thomas Edison, Helen Keller, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and many others.



## The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature Call for Papers

The editor of the JFL, Anna Lillios, would like to invite submissions of critical articles that focus not only on Rawlings but also on issues that fit within the broader contexts of Florida writing, regionalism, feminism, race, eco-criticism, literature of place, domesticity, and southern culture. Papers in these more general areas should in some way connect with Rawlings and/or contemporaries of Rawlings.

In addition, the Journal welcomes submissions of short fiction and poetry, especially those works, which reflect Rawlings's own deep affection for Florida and Florida life.

Please submit an electronic copy to the editor by the January 1st deadline. All manuscripts should be no more than twenty-five double-spaced pages in length.

Dr. Anna Lillios  
Department of English  
University of Central Florida  
P. O. Box 161346  
Orlando, FL 32816-1346  
Anna@ucf.edu

### Conference Update

Trustees of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society appreciate your patience as we continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and consider plans for our 2021 conference. We hope to have additional news on the conference forthcoming and will notify members once that information is available. In the meantime, we wish all our members good health and peaceful days!

**Silent Fundraiser** – Elaine Bradbury continues to collect items for our next Silent Auction Fundraiser. Any MKR books or memorabilia you are willing to donate will be appreciated. The auction also includes books, crafts, foods, or memorabilia with a Florida theme. If you have published a book, please consider contributing a signed copy to the auction. All contributions must be in good, like-new condition. Contact Elaine at loon44@icloud.com with questions or to donate.



## Remembering Dana Preu

July 9, 1932 – July 6, 2020



*photos courtesy of Adonica Geiger*

When Victor Nunez was casting “Gal Young’un,” based on a short story for which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings won an O. Henry prize in 1932, he told the *Tallahassee Democrat* that he took one look at Dana Preu and thought, “the film gods have found Mattie, and Mattie smokes a pipe.” There was no pipe in Marjorie’s story. Mattie smoked a pipe because Dana smoked a pipe.

And because Dana played Matt, Victor Nunez’s first feature film won the Silver Hugo Award at the Chicago Film Festival and was chosen by Entertainment Weekly as one of their 50 Greatest Independent Films of all time. At the Cannes Festival, the French thought Dana was a famous American actress—that’s how good she was. And when it screened at the London Film Festival, one reviewer noted with amazement that the lonely widow had been “stunningly played,” not by a Hollywood actress, but by an English professor.

That English professor could have gone on to be a famous actress, except that she knew her destiny was to spend her life teaching at Florida A & M University, one of Florida’s historically black colleges, and to move her ailing mother from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to Tallahassee so that she wouldn’t have to die in a nursing home. I could tell many stories about my friend Dana, but that is the essence of who she was.



She approached everything in life with a steady humor, never taking herself too seriously, but also realizing that she could do anything she set her mind to. When another movie role, "Something Wild," called for her character to play Bach's Minuet in G on the harpsichord. Dana bought a harpsichord and learned to play it. Yes, she was a great actress, but she was also a scholar, of both Rawlings and Zora Neale Hurston.

During one of my last visits with Dana, she shared two articles she had written about *Gal Young'un* after the film had been seen all over the world, from Europe to New Zealand to Mexico. One was for the Summer 1984 Southern Quarterly, "A Woman of the South: Mattie Syles of *Gal Young'un*."

Another was for the *Literature/Film Quarterly* in 1986. Those who knew Dana can imagine the twinkle in her eye when she wrote, "Victor says he chose me because I have the traditionally reserved Southern manner and inner qualities of Matt and because I have a photographic face. He usually doesn't add that I am tall, substantial, middle-aged, and grey haired, just as Rawlings describes Matt."

As a lifetime member of the Rawlings Society, Dana served on the board with her dear friend and colleague, Barbara Speisman. Barb described their own "Gal Young'un" moment in 1971, when Dana found her in the restroom at FAMU, nearly collapsed from exhaustion between classes. Recognizing Speisman as an old girlfriend of James Preu, the FSU professor who happened to be her husband, Dana approached her and said, "How are you today?"

Barb proceeded to tell her about all the dirty diapers and lost sleep from having a six-week-old baby, thus beginning a 49-year friendship that would include Dana portraying Rawlings herself in Speisman's two-act play, "A Tea with Zora and Marjorie."

When Dana and Barb learned in 1991 that there was a new one-woman show of Rawlings touring the state, they were delighted. Many times, over the years, I looked out in the audience, and there they were on the front row. One of my most prized possessions is a "Gal Young'un" movie poster signed by the star of the show: "For Betty Jean – love to you and your Marjorie."

That generosity of spirit carried over to Dana's students. Sometimes she covered their tuition so that they could stay in school. It's impossible to gauge all the lives she touched. As Barb said, "With Dana, you just want to hit the replay button, and start the whole thing over again."

Betty Jean Steinshouer



*Dana Preu as Mattie in Gal Young 'Un*



*Dana Preu playing Bach on the harpsichord in "Something Wild"*

## TIME TO RENEW

*Please check the renewal date next to your name on the mailing label.  
Just complete and return this form with your payment.*

*(Please circle membership level)*

<b>Student</b>	<b>\$15</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Sustaining</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>Life</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Rawlings Society  
c/o Anne Pierce  
249 Herman Drive  
Hawthorne, FL 32640

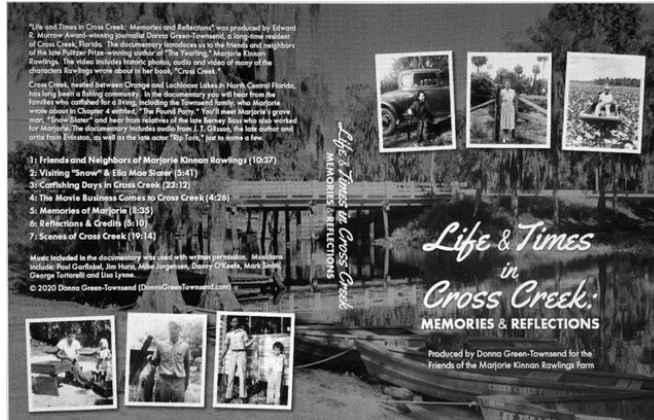


# Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

present

*Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections*

by Donna Green-Townsend



The one-hour special program, *Life and Times in Cross Creek: Memories and Reflections*, was produced by Donna Green-Townsend. The video premiered on the Friends of the MKR Farm website (<https://marjoriekinnanrawlings.org>) and Facebook page on August 8 for Marjorie's Birthday. The program features unique historic video, audio and photos of friends and neighbors of the late Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, including J. T. Glisson, “Snow” and Ella Mae Slater, Berney Bass and the late actor Rip Torn to name a few. Donna, who produced and created the film, is a board member of the Friends and a Murrow Award-winning journalist. She is a longtime Cross Creek resident.

DVDs of the video are available to purchase for \$15.00 plus \$4.00 for postage and handling. All proceeds will benefit projects on the Rawlings Farm. Please make your check payable to Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan and mail to PO Box 337, Micanopy, FL 32667-0337.

**Julia Winifred Moseley** died at age 101, the last of the Moseley line. Her work with historical preservation included the publication of her grandmother's letters, *Come to My Sunland: Letters of Julia Daniels Moseley from the Florida Frontier, 1882-1886*. Professor Michael Gannon of the University of Florida reviewed the manuscript when it was submitted in 1997 and wrote of his “growing surprise, page by page, at the stunning Florida legacy left in these letters by Julia from Illinois,” concluding his review, “So come, reader, into that distant world where a prototypical Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings reminds us yet again and again how much we Floridians have sadly lost: reverence for the land.”

From the *Tampa Bay Times* – September 6, 2020



*Moseley homestead*



## Annual MKR Society Membership Prize

We are continuing our membership 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. Anne can provide extra forms to you!

The winner who registers the most new members will receive FREE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION at our next conference.

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;
- Local groups such as historical societies, book clubs, garden clubs, or libraries are always looking for guest speakers. Our President tailors her talks around these groups to encourage membership. MKR presents so many areas for discussion such as literary, cooking, gardening, history, travel, and wildlife. Always offer some kind of incentive as a door prize, a MKR book, local honey, soap, plant for example. This is always a big draw.

*\*Note: MKR Society Membership Year is from July 1-June 30. Consult the mailing label for your renewal date.*

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

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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/>

