

## Officers

President Elaine Bradbury  
Vice President Paul Dunn  
Secretary Anne Bellissimo  
Treasurer Anne Pierce  
Exec. Director Florence Turcotte  
Newsletter Editor Darien Andreu

## Lifetime Members

Elaine and David Bradbury  
Mary W. Bridgman  
Richard and Isabelle Brown  
Patricia Ann Davis  
David C. Drysdale  
Sandra R. Dunnavant  
Roy Hunt  
D. Clarke and William Jeter  
Grady Johnson  
Claire and Martin Koshar  
Shirley Lucas  
Ann McCutchan  
David Nolan  
Spence Perry  
Syd Perry  
David M. Peters  
Marsha and Michael Phelts  
Anne Pierce  
Victoria Register-Freeman  
James Stephens  
Angela Territo  
Shirley Thompson  
Lynn Weaver  
Peter and Leonor Zies

## Lifetime Honorary Trustees

J.T. "Jake" Glisson\*  
Clifford Lyons\*  
Philip S. May, Jr.\*  
Beatrice Humiston McNeill\*  
Kevin McCarthy  
Idella Parker\*  
Dessie Prescott\*  
Rodger Tarr  
\*deceased

## Trustees Emeriti

Patricia Nassif Acton  
Roy Hunt  
Claire Koshar  
David Nolan



## President's Letter

*The Yearling* opens with Jody watching the smoke rise from his cabin chimney. He knows the hearth fire is dying down and his mother is cleaning up from the noon meal. In the movies, the fires are always blazing. But in *The Yearling*, you understand immediately that Marjorie knew her subject. In real life, after a meal and clean up, the fire is allowed to die back but never allowed to go out. And the fire is always low. No one could work around a blazing fire, especially in the South. Plus, there were no fireplace screens in that time, so a huge fire was dangerous.

For over 50 years now, I have volunteered as an historical interpreter, both in Maine and Florida. My specialty and favorite is "Women In Everyday Life, 1700 to 1920." I go in authentic costume to lecture and demonstrate on many subjects including fireplace and wood stove cookery. Through the years, I have accumulated an impressive collection of household items to aid my talks in halls and historic homes. I am fascinated by how the average woman lived and worked. Life was hard, exhausting, and the work was never ending. Every woman was an unsung hero in my eyes.

In real life, you want the fire always burning, but low. Many times, you might have three small fires going, not just one. Your main goal is to create hot coals. All your major cooking is done on the fireplace hearth. You gather a pile of hot coals and make a circle of them on the hearth. All cast iron pots and spiders, called frying pans now, have three legs. Hearths are notoriously uneven so the three legs are more stable. I place the spider with meat on one circle of coals, a pot with sliced potatoes on a second, vegetables on a third. Vegetables were always cooked to a soft mush, as it was believed to be healthier. I can make as many burners on the hearth as I need. If I am doing biscuits or another quick bread, I use a Dutch oven. The lid has an inverted top so I can place coals on the top and bottom. This makes a mini hot oven. In the South, you made flat breads on an iron hoe that you placed on hot coals.

Hot water is always needed and available by hanging a pot on the fireplace crane. If I want it boiling, I lower it with a series of S hooks close to the fire. If I want a simmer, I hook it on the crane itself, way above the fire. You can do the same with a stew, soup, or boiled potatoes. Cast iron pots and spiders are very heavy so weight lifting is a daily activity. No gyms needed.

Up until the early 1800s, all bake ovens were in the very back of the open fireplace. The inside of the oven was beehive shaped and domed. They always had a wooden door that would eventually need replacement for obvious reasons. To bake, you built a fire in the bake oven the night before. You would

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

also set your bread to rise so it would be ready to bake. In the morning, you would scrape out the ashes and put in the food. The rule of thumb was if you wanted to bake for 4 hours, heat the oven for 8 hours. Bake 5 hours, heat the oven for 10 hours.

All the baking was done for the week on one day as preparation and delivery was so time consuming. Items that needed longer baking times, like beans, went way in the back. Meat and fruit pies went in next. Bread was placed in the front as it baked the fastest. You placed and removed items with a long wooden peel. In the early 1800s, the fireplace opening was much reduced and the bake oven was moved to the side. As steel became more plentiful and cheaper, a metal door with hinges replaced the wooden one.

The pies were unlike the flaky soft crusts of today. The crusts were more a preservative for the fillings inside and extremely hard and chewy. Everything tastes better when baked in a bake oven. I have no idea why, but I think it must be the melding of flavors and smells.

Your clothing, being wool, linen, or cotton, was naturally flame resistant, unlike the clothing fabrics of today.

This is not my usual nature tale as you can see. I love women's history. And the opening lines in *The Yearling* and Marjorie's other writings bring warm memories of hearth and home to all of us.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Bradbury

## **Vice-President Paul Dunn Sends This Agricultural Update: "Still an Enchanted Land?"**

By Sarah Henry, WUFT, December 18, 2023



The trees that drew Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to Cross Creek – citrus – are now imperiled at her former home.

In Rawlings' orange grove, Park Ranger Geoff Gates battles another year of citrus greening disease. When Gates started working at Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Park about seven years ago, he immediately recognized the signs of the disease on the property.

"We thought we saw serious symptoms of greening," he said. "But nobody wanted to admit to that because it's so devastating."

Citrus greening, also known as huanglongbing or HLB, primarily spreads through a disease-infected bug called a citrus psyllid.

"When that insect bites into a leaf, it injects the bacteria into the tree and that's it," Gates said. "The tree is going to die."

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

Psyllids thrive in temperatures between 65 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit, according to Michael Rogers, an entomology professor and the director of the University of Florida's IFAS Citrus Research & Education Center in Central Florida's Lake Alfred.

"Once we get above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, psyllids tend not to live as long and lay fewer eggs," Rogers said.

So Florida's rising temperatures may tamp down the greening bug. But the heat also puts a strain on the grove.

"This last year was very hot and unusually dry. We didn't get our usual rains," Gates said. "There's nothing worse for these trees than that: heat and dryness."

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Park caretakers tried different solutions for quelling the spread of greening. UF/IFAS scientists suggested a three-part strategy: fertilizer, compost and water. Volunteers and employees wheelbarrowed in four inches of compost for each tree in the grove from a 14-foot-tall pile on the property.

Compost, Gates said, helps stimulate the root system and gives the trees nutrients they need to stay healthy.

The trees got the compost treatment three years ago, and they are still sprayed with fertilizer weekly. It's costly and labor intensive. And none of it has been enough to recover Rawlings' grove.

"Some of our very best trees are gone this last year," Gates said. "This year was the worst year I've ever seen for greening here."

The park's orange groves hold the memory of what Rawlings called the "real Florida." For visitors, the park is a look into pre-developed Florida: wild, secluded and teeming with life.

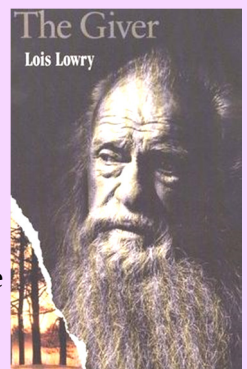
"It's a very important part of our story here, our history," Gates said. "For a lot of guests, that magic moment is when they pick an orange for the first time."

For now, the park's staff and volunteers carry on, keeping that memory, and the remaining healthy citrus trees alive.

## Flashbacks: Books That Change Lives

In a 2017 article that appears on the Children's Book Council (CBC) website, beloved young adult novelist, Lois Lowry, author of *The Giver*, paid tribute to her writing inheritance, saying "I have often described *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings as the book that changed my understanding of literature, that moved me from whimsical children's tales to realistic and lyrical fiction."

In a 2020 interview in the *Pittsburgh City Paper*, Lowry said she "was eight when she picked up Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling*. It was the first book for adults she read, and one that still impacts her 75 years later. Stories, according to Lowry, 'are a way of rehearsing one's life,' and *The Yearling* was the foundation of that philosophy.



"It presented me with things I would encounter later in my own life," says Lowry, "and gave me a way of reacting to them in the safety and comfort of my own home."





## In Search of Marjorie

*Ann McCutchan, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' biographer, continues her look into Marjorie's roots, this time visiting her mother's childhood home in Michigan.*

### A Visit to the Traphagen Farmhouse

In April, 2022, I received an email from Terri and Mark Ridenour, who had purchased the old Traphagen farmhouse and some of its acreage near Holly, Michigan, about fifty miles northwest of Detroit. The once lovely and capacious farmhouse was a wreck, they told me. Hoarders had lived in it for years, in the company of many undisciplined cats, and the place, overgrown with trees, invited bulldozing. But the Ridenours saw it had good bones, and, they learned, it had once belonged to Abram and Fanny Traphagen, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's maternal grandparents. They wanted me to know about their "retirement project": bringing a formerly elegant farm home back to its proper, historic glory.



Traphagen farmhouse

The farmhouse, standing on what is now Kurtz Road, is where Marjorie's mother, Ida Traphagen Kinnan, grew up. Marjorie visited the farm several times over the course of her life. During a 1922 visit, she wrote to her husband Chuck Rawlings, describing the house and surrounding views:

"It's on a knoll, and overlooks little hills and valleys, woods, and a tiny lake. The whole front of the house, almost, is one big living room—with an alcove that widens it still further at one end. It has six big cheery windows, facing East and South, and the bright winter sun has been streaming in all morning through the snowy white dotted Swiss curtains . . ."

Over the course of eighteen months, the Ridenours kept me posted on their restoration project, sending photos and email updates. We spoke on the phone several times, and last spring, at the Rawlings Society conference, I made a presentation about this delightful couple and their labor of love. But this was not enough for me; I needed to see the farmhouse and meet Terri and Mark in person. So, in November, I flew up from Asheville to spend a day with them.



The original "T" on front door

Marjorie's description of the house and its position on the land still holds, even though more than half of the structure still requires significant TLC. The Ridenours had begun their interior work at the front of the house, which is as Marjorie described. It is a generous living area – now freshly painted, floors restored and sanded, and filled with Terri and Mark's furniture and personal items. Their two dogs enjoy relaxing in the alcove; Marjorie would have approved of that. A new HVAC system provides additional comfort. Outside, fresh white paint has been applied to the clapboards and decorative gingerbread. The original front door with its "T" initial gleams.

We walked every room, from the basement to the upper bedrooms, as Terri and Mark described what they had done, and what remains to be done. The kitchen, for example, needs gutting (they tore up the

*(Continued on page 5)*



# MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXVIII, Number 1 Winter 2024

(Continued from page 4)

old floor after I left). For the moment, they've improvised a kitchen nearby, with a small refrigerator, portable stovetop, and microwave. And although they've discarded tons of trash, they have more to get rid of – little closets here and there reveal “new” clothes hoarded in another era, price tags intact.



Anne and Mark up in man lift

The Ridenours have done most of the work on the farmhouse themselves (occasionally, they hire assistance). This fact stunned me at first, and then I saw how much heavy equipment they have on hand. These people know what they are doing. Outside, Mark took me up in their man lift to survey the surrounding acres. It was a bright, sunny day. Marjorie would have loved gazing around the property from that telescopic boom.

Marjorie would also have approved of the spectacular decorative greenery Terri, who once owned a nursery, brought from their previous home and replanted in the Traphagen yard. The grounds were neat and tidy; in spring, Terri said, the place will be surrounded by hibiscus blooms and elephant ears.

After a tour of the house and grounds, Terri and Mark drove me into Holly, and over to Fenton, where Ida Traphagen attended high school and met Arthur Kinnan, her future husband. We visited two cemeteries containing Traphagen family members, and in one, discovered a partially submerged double stone for Ida and Arthur, Marjorie's parents. At first glance, the granite announced Ida only, but when I peered at the stone's back, I found Arthur's name, sunk in the grass. It seems a restoration is called for.

After five hours of talking and touring, I reluctantly took leave of my new friends Terri and Mark. I will visit again, to see the finished kitchen, and Terri's spring garden.

*Ann McCutchan's The Life She Wished to Live: A Biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, author of The Yearling (W.W. Norton, 2021) is available in hardback and softcover.*



Terri and Mark in dining room



Fannie and Abram Traphagen gravestones



Ida and Arthur's stones—Arthur's name of flip side, submerged

**Retraction:** In the September 2023 issue of *The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Newsletter*, the article “Rawlings Country, Before Recorded Time,” (p.6) was written by JANET PESICKA WATSON and not by ANET PESICKA WATSON. The newsletter editor deeply regrets this copy and paste error.





# MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXVIII, Number 1 Winter 2024

---

## Register Now for the 2024 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference in Mount Dora, FL

ALL conference events are at the historic Lakeside Inn, 100 Alexander St. Mount Dora, FL 32757. If you would like to make a reservation at the Lakeside Inn, call their direct number at 352-383-4101, and ask for the special Rawlings Society Conference rate. DO NOT use one of the online reservation sites. These sites do not have special rates for our group.

The conference begins with materials pickup and coffee 8-9 AM on Friday, 5/3, with sessions until midday, a boat ride in the afternoon and banquet in the evening. On Saturday, 5/4, materials pickup and coffee begin at 8:30 AM followed by sessions and a luncheon speaker.

**Please note that your regular registration must be received by April 3. Registrations received April 4-April 22 are subject to a late fee. ALL registration after April 22 is on site.** These dates are necessary because of required reservation numbers for the breaks and meal events. If you have questions, email [pmdunn13@gmail.com](mailto:pmdunn13@gmail.com) or [apredwater@aol.com](mailto:apredwater@aol.com).

## In Memoriam:

The Rawlings Society sadly observes the passing of two Rawlings Society devotees:

**Candace Jane Boothe** died October 8, 2023. She was laid to rest in Bushnell National Cemetery, next to her late husband, William H. Boothe. Candace Boothe had cared for Dessie Smith Prescott in her last years. Dessie, a legend enshrined in the Florida Women's Hall of Fame, had taken the troubled, soon-to-be divorced Marjorie on a 10-day boat trip on the St. Johns River to hunt and fish. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings immortalized the journey in the "Hyacinth Drift" chapter of *Cross Creek*. Margaret Harris, long-time Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Trustee, sends this remembrance of her friend Candace Boothe:

*In a 2003 Sunday edition of the St. Pete Times (now the Tampa Bay Times), Jeff Klinkenberg, renowned Florida author and past speaker at our MKR Conference, featured Dessie's friend Candace Boothe of Wahoo Ranch. That next Saturday, my husband and I drove to Crystal River and met Candace. Candace and I talked for eight hours. We ended up over the years hosting luncheons at Wahoo Ranch that featured Dessie's famous baked ham, glazed with mustard and brown sugar. We attended Sunday School classes, garden clubs, homeowners associations, Florida Cowgirls clubs, Women's Clubs of Citrus County, state parks meetings, luncheons and Old Fashioned Christmas Open Houses. At one Sunday School Christmas luncheon, we had over 100 people. People were in the dining room and in front of the fireplace in the living room. Everyone enjoyed Candace talking about Dessie Smith Prescott.*

*Candace and her husband Bill were caretakers and lived at Wahoo Ranch starting in December 1983. After Bill died, Candace became a full-time caretaker for Dessie from 1984 until her death in 2002 at age 95. Candace inherited Wahoo Ranch from Dessie.*

*Candace and I did the dedication of the tenant house at Cross Creek. We also gave skits and talks about the life of Dessie at MKR Conferences. In 2019, Kevin McCarthy, a Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Lifetime Honorary Trustee, worked with Candace and me writing the book Dessie Smith Prescott.*

*Candace's daughter, Cindy Fay Cole at 352-308-9252 would be glad to talk to anyone about the life of Candace Boothe. I have Dessie's recipes, and Cindy and I hope to publish a cookbook someday.*

*Candace Boothe, age 78, born October 28, 1944, entered eternal life on October 8, 2023. Candace was my best friend. Candace, we all miss you.*

## Martin Morris Koshar

On January 12, 2024, we lost Martin Koshar. The Koshar family has been long-time supporters of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society as well as the Farm at Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Park. "Marty" was the husband, father, and next-door neighbor of many Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society trustees: Claire, Jennifer Campbell, and Elaine and David Bradbury, respectively. He was instrumental in acquiring the funding from Martin-Marietta for the rebuilding of the Rawlings barn where guests begin their visits to Cross Creek. We are grateful for his many contributions over the decades, and mourn with his family and friends.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/orlandosentinel/name/martin-koshar-obituary?id=54090527>



# MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXVIII, Number 1 Winter 2024

## XXXV Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference

Mount Dora, FL, May 3, 4, 2024

*Registration received by April 3, Late Reg. by Apr 22*



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Badge Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Renew now if you wish: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society (July-June membership year)

Your due date can be found on the address label of your newsletter.

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

**All Inclusive Conference Fee** includes Sessions, breaks & ALL meals. See the complete menu for each meal function on the reverse side; indicate choices below.

### Please Circle the registration requested:

		by Apr 3	+\$40 late fee Apr 4-Apr 22
Members	All Conf	\$220	\$220 + \$40 = \$260
	5/3 Fri only	\$140	\$140 + \$40 = \$180
	5/4 Sat only	\$ 90	\$ 90 + \$40 = \$130

(Non-Member registration includes a one-year Society membership.)

Non-Members	All Conf	\$250	\$250 + \$40 = \$290
	5/3 Fri only	\$170	\$170 + \$40 = \$210
	5/4 Sat only	\$120	\$120 + \$40 = \$160

Registrants may request meals for non-registrants, see cost on reverse side; include the choices in the spaces below.

(cost of extra meals: Friday Box lunch: \$24. Friday Banquet \$63, Friday Luncheon \$36)

### **Meal Choices:** Put number next to choices for each meal that applies to your registration

5/3 Friday    Bag Lunch: Turkey \_\_\_\_ Ham \_\_\_\_ Veggie \_\_\_\_  
                    Banquet:    Steak \_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_ Veggie \_\_\_\_

5/4 Saturday Lunch:    Chicken \_\_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_\_ Veggie \_\_\_\_

5/3, Friday, 2:00 PM BOAT RIDE (limit 49)    \$35 X \_\_\_\_

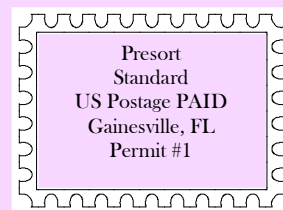
Trustees add \$50 for buffet meeting on Thur. 5/2, at the Lakeside Inn \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT (dues + conference fees)** \_\_\_\_\_

MKR Society, c/o Paul Dunn, 2111 Oak Bluff Court, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034



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!

### Membership and Conference Registration Prize

The Membership Year for the MKR Society is **July through June** corresponding with our programming, conference and publication cycle. ***Please take a good look at your mailing label to see if your renewal date has passed.*** If so, please consider renewing today using the membership form below or you can now renew on our website.

The person who signs up the most **new** members wins a FREE Registration for our next conference.

Here are some ideas to solicit members:

- Encourage friends and relatives to join;
  - Give a gift of a student membership (\$15) to children, grandchildren, or other students;
  - Speak to neighbors and those at your local library or historical society about joining.

### Membership Application for the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society

Name: _____	Student	\$15	Sponsor	\$100
	Individual	\$30	Patron	\$250
Address: _____	Family	\$40	Benefactor	\$500
	Sustaining	\$50	Life	\$1,000
City/State/Zip: _____	(Please circle membership level)			
E-mail address: _____	Mail to: Rawlings Society c/o Anne Pierce 249 Herman Drive Hawthorne, FL 32640			

To learn more about the Society and information on the annual conference, visit our website, **[www.rawlingssociety.org](http://www.rawlingssociety.org)**