

News from the Creek

Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

Volume 20 Number 4

Visit our website at: www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org

Fall Quarterly 2017

President's Message

By Barbara Wingo



I will repeat (again) what I stated in my last column because it is worth repeating: I hope that you have been able to attend one or more of this year's events Celebrating 75 Years of *Cross Creek* and *Cross Creek Cookery*. If not (or if so), there are still more events yet to come.

First, let me mention that the presentation, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and St. Augustine," which was postponed due to Hurricane Irma has been rescheduled for February 1, 2018. As I noted in my last column, Marjorie bought her cottage in Crescent Beach in 1939, spending time in that locale in addition to Cross Creek. In 1942, she married Norton Baskin who owned and managed the Castle Warden Hotel in St. Augustine. These and the years that followed in St. Augustine and Crescent Beach were the years of writing *Cross Creek* and *Cross Creek Cookery*, the Zelma Cason lawsuit, World War II, and her friendship with Zora Neale Hurston.

The art exhibition, "Cross Creek Rising: The Consciousness of Land and Water," opened on September 29 at the Historic Thomas Center in Gainesville. It continues until January 6, 2018. Please see more about the exhibition on page 4 of this newsletter.

Another extraordinary opportunity will be the reprise of Jim Stephens' "Remembering Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Her Friends," at the Antioch Cemetery. Further information on this event as well as tickets is found at remembermkr.eventbrite.com and in this newsletter on page 5. And speaking of Jim Stephens, we will be presenting his informal play, "The Pound Party," at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Park, Tenant House, at 2 p.m. on December 2.

Other events coming up are "All about Pie" on November 4 and "Holiday Cookie Decorating," on December 16. Also not to be missed is Park Manager Valerie Rivers' presentation on "Marjorie Rawlings and World War II" at 12 noon at the park on November 11.

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Park, Inc. (and end-of-the-year party), will be held December 9 at 2:00 p.m. at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park. Please come and bring a new member or potential member! The business meeting will be short, but there will be ample time to celebrate the year highlighting *Cross Creek* and *Cross Creek Cookery*.

In that regard, let us all ask friends and acquaintances to participate in the good work of our citizens support organization - by joining and volunteering. The year's activities would not have been possible without the support of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. and our Friends volunteers. And look for a special members only event in 2018.

Again, hoping to see you at one or more of our coming events!

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By Rick Mulligan

People who love Marjorie Rawlings' memoirs, *Cross Creek*, often have a favorite character out of the many real-life people that populate the book. There are some 120 people named in the work so there are plenty of colorful and unforgettable characters she memorialized in her writing.

It is certainly arguable as to who was the most compelling character, but my unscientific survey drawn from hundreds of house tours over the past several years turns up the name Geechee most often. All of Rawlings' character portraits are extraordinarily vivid, set in sharp relief against "this enchanted land." She brought people so clearly to life that you don't need a picture to see them.



Illustration by Edward Shenton, *Cross Creek*, Chapter 10, "Geechee".

So what is it about Geechee, out of all of them, that makes people especially want to hear her story as they walk through the house? In my opinion it's Geechee's fierce strength both physically and of personality. Rawlings compares her to a giant cat capable of destruction if she allowed her to roam the house as her maid. Her descriptions of Geechee are raw and chilling. Against her fears and reservations Rawlings couldn't find a way to tell her no so she allowed her to become her maid.

The fears are unfounded as Geechee turns out to be the hardest working, most loyal and most devoted maid Rawlings ever had. There's more to the story as we know, but these two extreme portraits of the same person as painted by Rawlings make Geechee unique among all of her characters. The contrast could not be more profound. So much so that she is most mentioned and most asked for by our visitors, in my experience.

When the Geechee chapter ends, all we know is that she is gone from Rawlings' life and not under the best of circumstances. All one can do is speculate on what happened to her. In fact at that point that's all Rawlings could do as well. I'm sure she never expected to see or hear from her again. So I know I certainly would never hear about her. End of story.

Except it's not! Reading *The Private Marjorie: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Love Letters to Norton Baskin* in the final paragraph of a long letter to Baskin dated June 13, 1944, Rawlings starts by telling him about whom she met while walking the road the other day, "Beatrice!" (Beatrice was her given name; Geechee was her nickname, which she told Rawlings at their eventful first meeting.) She was down from Jacksonville where she was cooking in a restaurant. She was picking blueberries with a car full of friends. It was she who recognized Rawlings; they talked a while before the car moved on. Rawlings writes that she was heavier and that she had a new scar across her nose. She hadn't lost any of her menacing qualities. She did ask for a new copy of *Cross Creek* as her other copy was gone, and Rawlings was happy to oblige.

It is remarkable to leave the magical world of *Cross Creek* and transition to reality through one of her personal letters written years later which was not originally intended for us to see.



Members of the Zeta Phi Beta sorority, of which Zora Neale Hurston was a member at Howard University, attend *A Tea with Zora And Marjorie*.

*Photos from
A Tea With Zora and Marjorie
July 21 and 22*



Actors Nancy Grote (Marjorie) and Rhodie Jackson (Zora) with author Barbara Speisman



*Photos from
Marjorie's Birthday Party
August 5*



Hawthorne Mayor Matt Surrency with Anne Pierce and Elaine Carson-Spencer



Catering by Northwest Seafood

CROSS CREEK RISING Exhibition at Historic Thomas Center Galleries

The exhibition entitled *Cross Creek Rising: the Consciousness of Land and Water* has opened at the Thomas Center Galleries in Gainesville. This expansive juried exhibition of painting, drawing, sculpture and photography will fill the Historic Thomas Center’s Main and Mezzanine Galleries from Friday, September 29 through Saturday, January 6, 2018. Chosen from almost 300 submitted pieces, the 90 works of art by 70 artists pay tribute to the wilderness, land and water that inspired the artistic voice of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.

Rawlings wrote in *Cross Creek*: “the consciousness of land and water must lie deeper in the core of us than any knowledge of our fellow beings. We were bred of earth before we were born of our mothers. Once born, we live without mother or father, or any kin, or any friends, or any human love. We cannot live without the earth or apart from it, and something is shriveled in a man’s heart when he turns away from it and concerns himself only with the affairs of man.”

The exhibition is part of the *Year of Cross Creek and Cross Creek Cookery* and is presented in conjunction with Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

The Thomas Center Galleries are located at 302 NE Sixth Avenue in Gainesville. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 am - 5 pm, and Saturday from 1-4 pm. The galleries are closed for observed holidays.

Images from the exhibition may be viewed online at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gainesville/albums/72157689336811755>.



Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of *Cross Creek* & *Cross Creek Cookery* - Upcoming Events

September 29 -January 6
Cross Creek Rising: The Consciousness of Land and Water
 Art Exhibition at Historic Thomas Center, Gainesville
 For more information, visit website: www.gvlculturalaffairs.org

October 21
Remembering Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Her Friends, Antioch Cemetery tour, 12 noon Tickets required, please visit remembermkr.eventbrite.com

November 4
All about Pie: Pecan Pie Contest and Demonstration
 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, 10am - 2pm

November 11
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and World War II,
 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, 12 noon

December 2
The Pound Party,
 a play written by Jim Stephens, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Park, Tenant House, 2pm

December 9
Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. Annual Meeting and Holiday Party, Celebrating the Year of *Cross Creek* and *Cross Creek Cookery* and Beyond, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, 2pm

December 16
Holiday Cookie Decorating,
 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, 10am - 2pm

February 1, 2018
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and St. Augustine,
 Lightner Museum, St. Augustine, 6 PM

For more information on these and other events, visit our website:
www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org
www.floridastateparks.org/marjoriekinnanrawlings
 or call 352-466-3672

Antioch Cemetery: Remembering Marjorie and her Friends

Join Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings expert Jim Stephens for a reprise of his very successful tour of Antioch Cemetery on Saturday, October 21. The Antioch Cemetery is the resting place of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Norton Baskin (her second husband) and many of the characters in Rawlings' *Cross Creek*. Jim is the author of the *Cross Creek Reader's Guide: An Illustrated Quick-Reference Guide to Cross Creek*. His goal in writing the *Guide* was to "further your love and enjoyment of this unique person and her marvelous contributions to Florida literature." The tour will further the same goal as it will provide a unique glimpse into the people of *Cross Creek*.

Following the tour of the cemetery, tour members will drive to the Island Grove Wine Company for a box lunch. A winery tour is included after lunch for those who wish to participate.

Only 30 tickets are available so please visit remembermkr.eventbrite.com to purchase your tickets as soon as possible. Transportation to the cemetery and to the Wine Company is **not** provided. Please see the map showing the location of the cemetery – *all tour members with their tickets are expected to meet at the cemetery at 12 noon on Saturday, October 21, 2017*. We look forward to seeing you then!

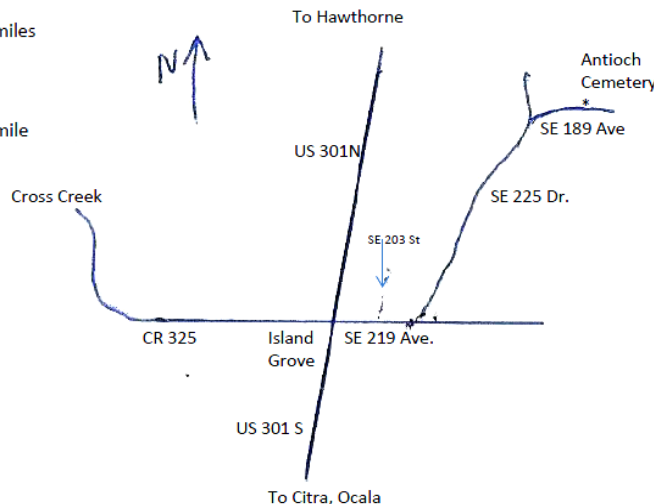


"Pall bearer" Jim Stephens at Antioch Cemetery Event, 2016

Antioch Cemetery, 23808 SE 189 Ave., Hawthorne, FL 32640

From Island Grove:

- Go **East** on SW 219 Ave. for .1 of a mile
- Continue straight on SE 219 Ave. for 1.4 miles
- Turn **left** on SE 225 Dr., a dirt road
- Continue for 1.8 miles (seems longer)
- Turn **right** onto SE 189 Ave.
- **Antioch Cemetery is on your left** .1 of a mile
- Park in the grass on the right of the road



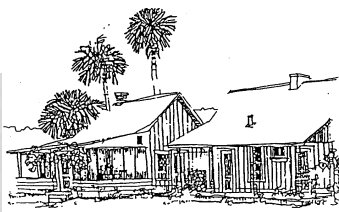
LIFETIME MEMBERS

- Ginny and Gunter Arndt
- Danny and Judy Baker
- Sheila Barnes
- Catherine Beazley
- Diane E. Beck
- Roger and Linda Blackburn
- Sybil Ann Brennan
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- Robert D. McReynolds
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- Alan Palmer
- Spence Perry
- John Henry & Margaret Anne Pierce
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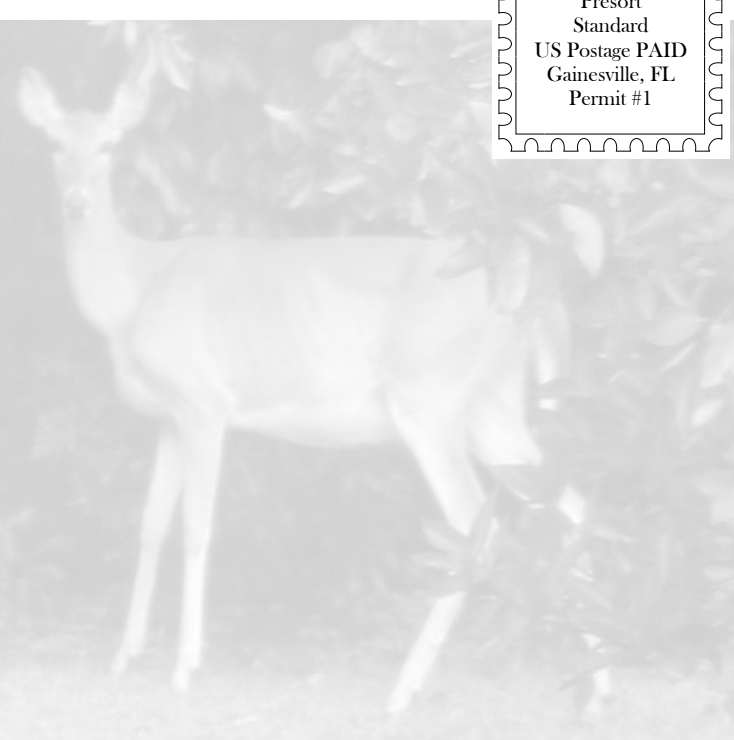
Be sure to visit us at www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org and www.floridastateparks.org/marjoriekinnanrawlings for updates and information



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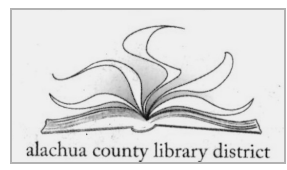
IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you!



Thank You! to our Year of Cross Creek Sponsors



Marion County Public Library District



<i>Membership Information</i>					
Effective July 1, 2014 new membership dues are as follows					
Type	1yr	3yr	5yr	10yr	Lifetime
Individual	\$25	\$70	\$105	\$200	\$ 450
Family	\$30	\$85	\$130	\$250	\$ 550
Educational	\$30	\$85	\$130	\$250	\$ 550
Corporate	\$55	\$155	\$255	\$500	\$1,000

Please circle type of membership and send with your check to:
Friends of MKRawlings Farm, Inc.
P.O. Box 337
Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

Membership in the Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

We invite you to join or renew your membership in the Citizen Support Organization (CSO) for the MKR Historic State Park. Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc., is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling 1-800-435-7352 (toll-free within Florida). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.

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