

# News from the Creek

Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.

Volume 7 Number 2

Website: [www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org](http://www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org)

Spring Quarterly 2003-04



## RENOVATING THE RAWLINGS FARM GROVE

by Daniel J. Cantliffe

It was 1928 when Marjorie and Charles Rawlings moved to Florida from Rochester, New York to become entrepreneurs in the citrus business. A lot of changes have taken place in the citrus industry over the ensuing years immediately after their arrival. The present grove at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park has no trees from the time she actively farmed the grove. Some of the pecan trees, however, are original. Ironically, Marjorie and Charles removed many of the pecan trees 2-3 years after owning the grove, as they felt they could make more money raising oranges rather than pecans. Today's grove area has shrunk to a small group of trees around the original farm site. Most of these trees were replanted over the years - many of them since the freezes of 1983 and 1985. The grove itself has long needed restoration which began, thanks heavily to Sheila Barnes' initiatives, over the last several months. We have identified trees that were in fact rootstock materials that were certainly inappropriate to retain for a showplace of what the grove should look like. The MKR Grove Committee and the MRK Park managers have discussed for the past three years ways to rejuvenate the grove so that we might better capture its original appearance when Marjorie and Charles first arrived. For that reason we have tried to retain all of the practices used by citrus growers of the 1920's and 1930's. This includes rather large tree spacing of 25'x25' and some of the varieties that might have been used during that period, including Pineapple and Parson Brown oranges.

(continued page 5)



*Mike Patrick, Jim Ferguson, Steve Oelrich, Dan Cantliffe*



*Alachua County's Sheriff Oelrich removes old stumps*

### *Inside this issue:*

Annual Meeting	2
New Clothes!	2
President's Letter	3
Membership Info	4
1940 Olds Update	5
MKR Society Mtg.	6
Park Wish List	6
Calendar of Events	6

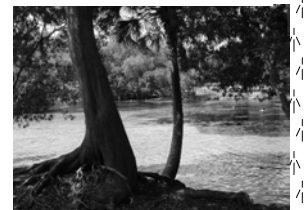
### Pictures from our Annual Scrub Trip March 27, 2004



*Lee and Lee Lee Townsend fishing at Hopkins Prairie*



*Visiting the boils at Silver Glen Springs*



*Ranger Sheila Barnes reading excerpts of the Yearling*

## Phil May, Jr., is Guest Speaker at 2004 Annual Meeting

by Murray Laurie

It was a day to celebrate perfect Spring weather in Cross Creek, to measure the past year's accomplishments, to reminisce with guest speaker Phil May, Jr., about Marjorie Rawlings, and to savor good food and the gathering of Friends. The 2004 Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc. was held on April 27 in the back yard of the Rawlings house, lending a comfortable, informal ambiance to the event, which was presided over by Vice President of the Board of Directors, Anne Pierce.

Following an introduction of the members of the board and guests, past president Donna Cottle read several selections from *Cross Creek*. Treasurer Phyllis Hansen gave her report, noting that the revenues in 2004 amounted to \$8,177 and expenses were \$5,587. She has invested \$11,000 of our funds in certificates of deposit. Park Manager Valerie Rivers modeled a new 1930s-style dress and apron, interpretive outfits worn daily by staff and volunteers and funded with a Destination Enhancement grant awarded to the Friends from tourist tax dollars collected in Alachua County.

Anne Pierce noted that the restoration of the 1940 Oldsmobile by Dave Barber is almost completed and thanked Phyllis Hansen for organizing this CSO-funded project. Other projects underway are a membership drive headed by Liz Pooley and an enhancement of our website facilitated by Phyllis Hansen. Dan Cantliffe reported on the excellent progress of the grove restoration project.



Park Manager Valerie Rivers described the expanded walking trail through the east section of the park and reported that the purchase of the property to the north of the Rawlings house has been finalized. She recognized several volunteers for their many hours of service to the park: Pat Chambers (40 hours), Nancy Dohn (100 hours), Mona James (250 hours), Gene Maugham, and Marjorie Krutoff (300 hours), Anne Pierce, Murray Laurie, and Phyllis Hansen (500 hours).

Donna Cottle introduced the new officers of the Board of Directors elected at the last board meeting. Incoming board officers are as follows: President--Phyllis Hansen, Vice President--Dan Cantliffe, Treasurer--Anne Pierce, and

Secretary--Murray Laurie.

Phyllis Hansen introduced our guest speaker, Phil May, Jr. Mr. May is the founder and first president of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society and a great supporter of the Society and the Friends. His father was Mrs. Rawlings's lawyer from 1935 until the time of her death in 1953. As a youngster, Mr. May recalls visiting Mrs. Rawlings with his father after a five-hour auto trip from Jacksonville on rough dirt roads and her surprise gift of a wild bunny rabbit one Easter. Mr. May's delightful and informal reminiscences and stories about Marjorie Rawlings provided many insights into her life from one who knew her well and who has continued to show his appreciation for her literary works.

The Annual Meeting ended, as always, with a delicious picnic luncheon prepared by the Cross Creek Homemakers.



## Stylish New Aprons Are a Hit with Visitors

by Murray Laurie

"Where do you get those adorable aprons? Can I buy one?" New aprons and dresses, overalls and work shirts worn by our staff and volunteer tour guides are definitely noticed by visitors to the Rawlings house. Particularly appealing are the charming, 1930s-style aprons recently added to our interpretive wardrobes.

Thanks to a Destination Enhancement grant funded by tourism tax dollars and administered by the City of Gainesville Department of Cultural Affairs, the Friends CSO was able to completely outfit the Rawlings guides with period clothing. There is no doubt that our visitors notice and approve of these efforts to add to their experience, as almost every tour group includes repeat visitors who are introducing their friends and family to the Cross Creek home of Marjorie Rawlings.

Since we work hard in the gardens and the grove, as well as keeping up the appearance of the house, our old clothes were getting pretty shabby. These new outfits, particularly the house dresses and aprons made by seamstress Susie White, reflect what the typical Cross Creek man or woman during the time that Miz' Rawlings lived here would have worn day in and day out as they went about their daily chores.



## Letter from 2004-2005 CSO President Phyllis Hansen

It was suggested that I write a little note apropos my election as Pres. I'm not sure what is expected for a moment like this, but I know I'm thrilled to be here. I'm having a great time working on things and trying to pull stuff together. Let me tell you what's been going on.

*1. The 1940 Olds Preservation.* Dave Barber has done a tremendous job on the old girl. She looks ready to ride anywhere Marjorie wants to go. Well maybe she better not try, there's no engine. She does look super. We're tentatively giving her the starring role in our Fall 'Under the Stars' event. We had originally set the occasion for October 22. We think Saturday October 23 from about 5:00 till 8:00 with some music and food and wine, of course, will be better. There will be invitations and I think Steve Oelrich is planning to round up some old cars and their proud owners. Mark your calendars folks!

*2. End of Year Luncheon and Business Meeting* Phil May was our speaker. He had a lot of interesting things to tell us about Marjorie and Norton, some things about the trial, (his Dad was Marjorie's lawyer) and reminiscences about the house and her parties. We really enjoyed his visit.

*3. Grove Restoration.* You remember Dan's work on the original layout of Marjorie's Orange Grove, when she was trying to make a living out of it? We hemmed and hawed over that for ages. The main sticking point was the requirement for a deep well. Dan revamped his plans, compromised a bit and voila. He has a new plan. The work started with Sheila mapping out the trees due for removal. Then Steve Oelrich offered his weekend warriors for help in getting the old trees out and cut up. What's more, Jim Ferguson, Mike Patrick and Lee Townsend cut and chipped wood till the mess was gone. Dan Colvin came over from the UF IFAS Horticulture unit on campus and dug up the stumps, then Rob Ferron came over with his tractor and leveled the stump holes. There were lots of phone calls between some of us and Lt. Ann Swilley at the county jail who coordinates the weekend warriors and it all worked out very well. Next step; planting orange trees. New trees have arrived and, despite the drought we are experiencing, I'm sure it will go well.

*4. The August 14 CSO Meeting.* The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Friends will be hosting the district event this year. Mickey Angell suggested we hold our luncheon at the Island Grove Fire House, which is an historic building in Island Grove. We'll ask the Fire Department to prepare our lunch. (We'll need volunteers to help with that.) I hope Bill Schlitzkus will BBQ for us. A trip to Marjorie's Grave after lunch will end our responsibilities. The CSO group can meet for their business end of it at the Fire House.

Important, but less stressful events have also taken place:

*5. Locating Old Tires.* We finally have enough old tires (that's been a search!) for the tenant house to plant a respectable number of lantanas (3). They look great in front and to the right of the porch.

*6. Treasurers or Accountants?* We're off and running on the new State requirements for recording and preparing our end of year financial records. Anne Pierce and Pete Angell attended a State study session at Santa Fe Junior College recently and Anne feels comfortable in her Treasurership. (I think)

*7. Special Events.* So far this is a glaring empty space. I can only hope that an enterprising and interested person will come forth with some productive thoughts about this important aspect of our usual calendar. We'd welcome any ideas or possible participants for these events

*8. Gainesville Tourism Grant.* Murray Laurie is still getting us funds through the Gainesville Tourism Grant. This has been the greatest financial support I think we've ever had. About \$7500.00 has already been donated for our sound system, Guest Books, Kate Barnes Graphics for the new Visitor Brochures, some barriers and gates to help guide guests through the house when there are too many people to lead through, and monies for new Costumes for the docents at the house. Believe me, our membership can't support \$7500.00 worth of improvements like that.

There are more plans in progress and there are some plans a-borning. I would really like it if any or all of you would get in touch by dropping a note to our mailing address( P.O. Box 337; Micanopy, FL 32667) , if there is something you want to do, to instigate, to correct, or talk about. I ask everybody who has the time or inclination, to join in the fun part of being a board member, i.e. 'constructive work'.

Love to you all. Phyl



*Incoming President Phyllis Hansen, Park Manager Valerie Rivers and Past President Donna Cottle*





(Grove Renovation....continued from page 1)

A group of volunteers, and a rather hard working group of inmates from the Alachua County Weekend Work Release program, began grove restorations in March, which has brought an improved appearance to what a productive grove from the 1930's era should look like . Initially, all of the trees were identified as to their worthiness to be retained, depending on the condition of the tree as well as whether it was a productive cultivar. Some 40 trees were then marked and removed to make way for new plantings this June. We have had a lot of help from the Plant Science Research and Education Unit and Dr. Danny Colvin in stump

removal; a process which is very important to offset future problems, especially with termites. The MKR Farm Board Grove Committee has ordered 40 replacement trees; 20 Pineapple Oranges (which were originally made from selections made from the Citra area back in the turn of the last century) as well as 20 Parson Brown trees. Since both cultivars are no longer used, it was difficult to locate these older varieties. However, we were very fortunate to have Dr. Jim Ferguson helping us with the Grove Restoration Committee. Jim located these trees in a nursery in central Florida. Our intention is to plant the trees some time next month to take advantage of good weather conditions and, hopefully, some rainfall. Due to our intentions to retain the same grove appearance as in the 1930s, we have not installed irrigation systems, nor do we presently have an active well for irrigating both the new trees and the old trees. Thus, in the spirit of how the Rawlings did in it the 1920's and 30's, we will more than likely be using water wagons to water-in the 40 new trees and to retain them in case we do not get adequate rainfall.



After replanting the new trees, the grove will take on a new appearance. Our future work also entails further cleaning the perimeter of the grove as well as the continued cleaning of vegetation around the trees that we are keeping in the grove, especially the palm, pecan and magnolia trees that were there at the time of the Rawlings. It is our hope that as visitors see this area in the future, they will get a better appreciation of what active citrus farming entailed, and as we get the new varieties producing, it will give people a better feeling for what citrus farming was in the 1930's and what citrus varieties tasted like in the 1930's.

Many people today are in essence brought up on either frozen concentrate orange juice or bottled, slightly processed, not-from-concentrate juices that are prepackaged. When the Rawlings owned the farm, all the citrus was sent to fresh market, and thus none of it was processed. For that reason the quality was based on flavor of the product at the time of harvest. It should also be noted that the Rawlings Farm along the east shore of Orange Lake was in fact in an area that had largely moved out of citrus production in mid 1890's due to problems with back-to-back freezes. In future newsletter articles, I will start at the beginning of the episodes of what the farm looked like, what the grove was, some of the progressions of the grove from the 1920's to the 1950's, and, hopefully, provide some pictures to give all readers a better idea of what things looked like when Marjorie Rawlings was farming citrus.



### Incredible Makeover.....

by Phyllis Hansen

You remember the 1940 Olds\* preservation? Well it's finished. The carport is empty no more. Dave Berber has been working on this for some time. It



involved so much, cleaning the old paint and rust off, of course, and then priming and painting. You can appreciate that this takes a bit of time and lots of elbow and hand grease. Dave ordered the paint from the same folks who had supplied Oldsmobile with the paint that was used in the original factory application. It arrived with authentication on the can, dates, color etc clearly labeled on the front of the can. Then lo and behold the applied color was much more yellow than the paint currently on the car. We sat back and reasoned a bit. It was certainly the original color; it said so on the can. Then we realized, "Cream" meant the color of cream. The color of cream in 1940 (actually before that, because the paint had been used for a number of years) was almost yellow. There wasn't any homogenization of milk. The can label attested to its authenticity, so we said go ahead with it. It looks great.

Well you still can't drive it off. We couldn't afford a restoration, so what we have is a beautifully preserved 1940 Oldsmobile. Dave Barber has done an outstanding job on it. Marjorie would approve. (more about the Olds homecoming and celebrations next issue)

\*The 1940 Olds was donated to the Park by MKR Society Member Bob Mehl in the early 1990's.



Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc.  
P.O. Box 337  
Micanopy, FL 32667-0337

Website: [www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org](http://www.marjoriekinnanrawlings.org)

### *2004—Calendar of Events—2004*

<i>July 13</i>	Friends Executive Board Meeting
<i>July 20</i>	Friends Board Meeting
<i>August 7</i>	MKR Birthday Party
<i>August 14</i>	Host District CSO event
<i>August 19</i>	Deadline for submission of articles/notices for summer newsletter
<i>October 5</i>	Friends Executive Board Meeting
<i>October 12</i>	Friends Board Meeting
<i>October 23</i>	“Evening Under the Stars” Event
<i>November 11</i>	Deadline for submission of articles/notices for fall newsletter
<i>December 14</i>	Evening Christmas Party at MKRHSP
<i>December 18</i>	CSO Fruit Picking

### PARK WISH LIST

*Something Old....Something New....*

- Digital Camera
- Wheelbarrow
- 1930-40 tractor with mower
- Saws-All
- Weed Wacker with attachments

**Volunteers!!!!**

### The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Annual Meeting

by Anne Pierce

Over 100 people gathered April 15-17, 2004, for the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society Seventeenth Annual Meeting in Apalachicola, Florida. Earnest Bass kicked off the meeting on Thursday night by reading two unpublished short stories by Rawlings. One of them, “The Honey Comb”, was a powerful autobiographical piece, some parts of which are in *Blood of My Blood*. Other Rawlings-related papers during the meeting included “Maternal Themes in the Works of Marjorie Kinnan Rawling” (Karen Vander Ven), “Maxwell Perkins: The Right Man in the Right Place” (Robert Fulton), “MKR and the Juniper Club” (John Canetta), and “A Child at Marineland” (Sally Baskin Hooker). A group discussion of *Blood of My Blood* led by Rodger Tarr capped off the meeting. Friday afternoon field trips included visits to several museums, the Apalachicola River estuary by boat, and the Orman House. The local seafood was a treat.

Next year’s meeting will be in Crystal River and will include a special session about Dessie Smith with a fieldtrip to her home. For more information about the MKR Society see the following web site:

<http://web.english.ufl.edu/rawlings/page.htm>