

Support the
James Jones Chair
for WWII Studies!

• page 11

Inside this issue:

In Memory of **2**
Carl Becker,
Former JJLS
Board Member

Restoration of **3**
Jones Desk was a
'Miracle'

Excerpt from **5**
"Blue Moon" by
Margarite Landry

Overview of **7**
James Jones's
Trilogy, by
J. Michael Lennon

"The Valentine" **10**
Essay Contest
Winners An-
nounced

Madison, Indiana Remembers *Some Came Running* at its Bicentennial



Frank Sinatra and Shirley MacLaine on location in Madison, Indiana in the film *Some Came Running* (1958).

Downtown Madison to-day. Madison "acted" as Parkman, Illinois, the fictional setting for Jones's 1958 novel.



Nestled in a deep valley along the Ohio River in southern Indiana is the beautiful and historic town of Madison. A great deal of the town's 19th century Federal and Greek Revival architecture has been preserved. In 2006, the majority of Madison's downtown area, 133 blocks, was designated one of the largest National Historic Landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places.

When visiting Madison, it is easy to understand why Vincente Minnelli and his production staff chose the charming town as the

setting for filming the fictional town of Parkman, Illinois in *Some Came Running* in 1958. Most all of the backdrops used are still there and are easily recognized.

Starting on Saturday, June 6, Madison is scheduling a 200-hour Bicentennial Celebration through June 14 and members of the James Jones Literary Society have been invited to join the fun.

The Bicentennial Steering Committee has rented the Ohio Theatre for the week and there will be free showings of films that debuted there (*Some Came Running* and *Madi-*

The James Jones Journal is published periodically to keep members and interested parties apprised of activities, projects and upcoming events of the Society; to promote public interest and academic research in the works of James Jones; and to celebrate his memory and legacy.

Submissions of essays, features, anecdotes, photographs, etc., pertaining to the author James Jones may be sent to the editor for consideration. Every attempt will be made to return material, if requested, upon submission. Material may be edited for length, clarity and accuracy. Send submissions to:

Thomas J Wood
Brookens Library, Room 144
One University Plaza,
MS BRK 140
University of Illinois at Springfield
Springfield IL 62703-5407

Email: twood1@uis.edu

Writers' guidelines are available upon request and online at the James Jones Literary Society web page at: <http://www.jamesjonesliterarysociety.org/>

Information on the James Jones First Novel Fellowship: <http://www.willkes.edu/pages/1159.asp>

Some Came Running in Madison (continued)

son). Also, the Irene Dunn Club will be in town to celebrate and to show her films throughout the week. Irene Dunn was born in Madison.

The filming of *Some Came Running* there is often listed as one of the top 10 historical events to happen in the city. Also tentatively scheduled is an activity called "Some Came Walking" which is a tour of the downtown film locations. Turner Classic Movies produced a documentary in honor of the 50th anniversary of the filming of *Some Came Running* in Madison.

The Founders Day Parade is scheduled for 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 6. There will be activities all week. For example, on Sunday, June 7 the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra will perform on the lawn of the Lanier Mansion. That evening there will be a Roaring 20's Gala along the River Drive.

Madison is about 2.5 hours from Indianapolis, one hour from Louisville and 90 minutes from the Cincinnati airport.

For complete details, visit the web site: www.madisonbicentennial.com.

In Memory of Carl Becker, former JJLS Board Member

Carl Becker, professor emeritus of history and one of the original members of Wright State's history department, died October 13, 2008 at age 84.

Carl Becker was a charter member of the JJLS, and served on the Board of Directors of the Society for over ten years. He was crucial in organizing the JJLS-sponsored trip to Hawaii in 1995, assisted in the establishment of a bronze plaque honoring Jones at Makapuu Point on Oahu, and was a speaker at three of the symposia of the Society.

Becker joined the faculty as an instructor in 1964 when Wright State was the Dayton Campus of Ohio State and Miami Universities. For 30 years he taught courses on Ohio history, the American Civil War, local history, and World War II. Becker chaired the department for three years and was instrumental in organizing Wright State's master's program in public history. In the 1990s, he became the first director of the Wright State University Press.

Although they never met before coming to Wright State, both Becker and Robert Thobaben, professor emeritus of political science, were survivors of five Pacific military



campaigns during World War II. They co-authored their memoirs, *Common Warfare*, in 1992, and told of their firsthand experiences in a course they designed on America's war with Japan. Becker was the author, co-author and co-editor of eight additional books.

Becker earned his bachelor's degree at Otterbein College, master's at the University of Wisconsin and doctorate at the University of Cincinnati, each in history. A native of the Miami Valley, he is survived by his wife, Marilou, his son and two daughters.

To honor the memory of Carl Becker, please consider a gift to Wright State's History Endowed Scholarship fund. Donors should make a check payable to the Wright State University Foundation with "in memory of Carl Becker" in the memo. Please send contributions to:

Department of History
Attn: Becker Scholarship
370 Millett Hall
Wright State University
3640 Col. Glenn Highway
Dayton, OH 45435.

For further information, please contact the department at (937) 775-3110.

Restoration of Jones Desk was a 'Miracle'

Norman Boyd and son teamed up to turn "kindling" back into a piece of history.

By Tom Compton

From *Robinson Daily News*, Robinson, Illinois

February 16, 2009

The authenticity of a desk that once belonged to novelist James Jones on display at the Crawford County Historical Society Museum has been questioned by those who knew Jones. But new evidence about the desk and its restoration may prove that it did once belong to the writer.

"Jones never had anything that nice," is what the late Tinks Howe told his wife, Helen, after seeing the newly restored desk on display at the museum.

The Howes were friends of Jones and had visited him while he was writing his masterpiece, "From Here to Eternity."

"I thought it was an old table with boards on it," said Helen Howe, recalling the desk Jones used.

Those familiar with Jones's history know that after World War II he lived with Harry and Lowney Turner Handy at their home at 202 W. Mulberry in Robinson. Lowney Handy encouraged the young Jones and provided a room for him to write in.

A picture taken in 1946 shows Jones sitting at a desk in the Handy home. What can be seen shows a medium-sized wooden desk with a two-layer top of rough-looking, grainy wood, and a paneled front. The desk also appears to be shorter than normal. It was reported that Jones had cut off the legs of the desk to make it easier to type on. It is not known where the desk originally came from, but it was probably a surplus desk from the Ohio Oil Co, refinery offices, where Harry Handy was the plant manager at the time.

After 1950 Jones moved out of the Handy house to Marshall, where was joined by other budding writers at the newly formed Handy Writers Colony. At the colony, Jones lived in a house trailer and did not have room for the large desk. It is believed that the desk was stored in a garage until it was discovered in the early 1970s and given to the Crawford County Historical Society for its new museum.

What was left of the desk was taken to the new museum, then located on the campus of Lincoln Trail College, and was placed under the

care of the late Harry "Hap" Fleming.

Fleming, knowing his nephew by marriage, Norman Boyd, did woodworking as a hobby, asked him if he could rebuild the desk.

"It looked like kindling to me," said Norman Boyd, recalling how the desk looked when he first saw it sitting in the corner of the museum.

After several years in storage the legs of the desk

were water-stained and the top was warped beyond repair. Fleming delivered the desk to Boyd's farm near Annapolis in cardboard boxes and several pieces. Norman's son, Chris, was just a boy at the time, but remembers helping to carry the desk parts to the shed.

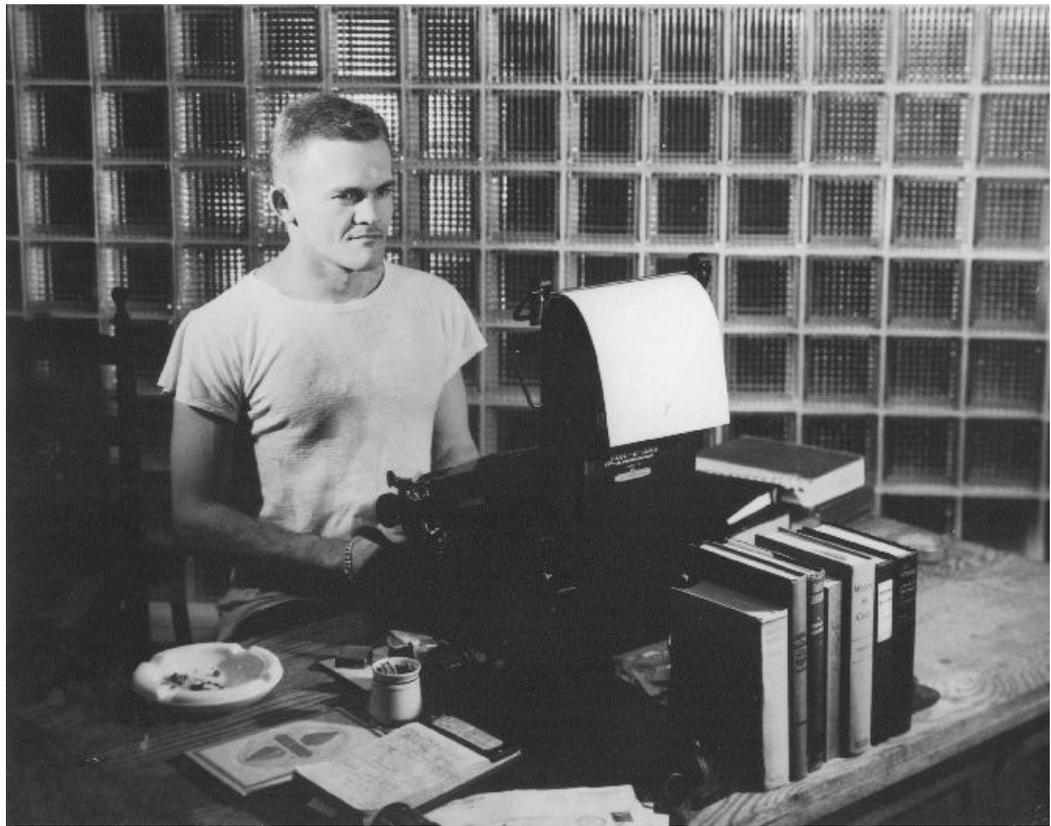
"I helped carry the three cardboard boxes and assorted sticks of wood into Dad's shop. As we looked at the assorted pieces I had no idea how any of the desk could ever be restored to anything that would be useful," Chris said. "Even though I was young, I could recognize drawer front panels and the drawer side pieces. There were a lot of warped, twisted, and badly weathered wide boards that would have been part of the desktop."

The elder Boyd slowly began the reconstruction. The badly weathered wide boards turned out to be old poplar that had been nailed to the desk top. As Boyd pried away the warped boards he discov-



Norman Boyd, 85, looks over the desk he restored more than 35 years ago. The desk once belonged to James Jones and is believed to have been the one at which he wrote *From Here to Eternity*. (Tom Compton photo)

Restoration of Jones Desk a 'Miracle' (continued)



James Jones at his desk in the home of Harry and Lowney Handy in Robinson, Illinois, ca. 1946. At that time he was working on his first unpublished novel, "They Shall Inherit the Laughter," but also on the early stages of his famous blockbuster, *From Here to Eternity*.

—Photo courtesy of Handy Colony Collection, Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield.

ered the original finished oak top beneath. After filling in the nail holes where the other boards had been attached and fastening a piece of three-quarter inch pressboard underneath with screws, he was able to salvage the old top. Boyd said he also had to make some new drawer pieces. After months of gluing, sanding and refinishing, the battered old desk looked as good as or better than new.

"Dad sanded and finished the desk and then called Uncle Hap," Chris recalled. "When Uncle Hap picked up the desk he was nearly speechless. It was nothing short of a miracle in Hap's eyes that the desk was restored to such fine condition."

The desk now rests in the new historical society museum in the former Schmidt Clinic

building on South Cross Street, with copies of Jones's books and a replica of the typewriter he used to write them.

Boyd never received credit for his restoration work, and was not compensated because at the time he had not been formally asked to make the repair. Though son Chris believes Uncle Hap did give him a little something for his trouble.

The Jones desk and other pieces of Crawford County history can be seen at the museum between 9 and 11 a.m. weekdays or 2-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

© 2009

**Robinson Daily News
Used with permission.**

Excerpt from

Blue Moon

By Margarite Landry

Winner of the 2009 James Jones First Novel Fellowship

An abandoned child, Brian, becomes part of a foster family, with Melissa (his foster mother) and her son, Nick. Brian's social worker is Tom. In this excerpt, they go on an outing. Melissa is telling the story. Brian's biological mother is Irene.
—the author

In May, Brian's friend Jarelle graduated from the vocational school, and we went to the ceremony. Jarelle and fourteen other kids were in long black robes, with mortarboards. They marched across the stage of the gym, and shook hands with the head of the school, and got their diplomas. Jarelle was the tallest. Tom went with us, that day, partly for support, he said. Because he was trying to find Jarelle a job in a garage, where he could fix cars and build up a track record. The head of the school, "the voke," said these graduates had special gifts, and he listed each boy, one by one. When he got to Jarelle, he called him Lawrence. "Who's Lawrence?" Nick said.

"He got two name," Brian said. "He got his regular name, and his friend name, on account of he don't like anybody call him Lawrence."

We were sitting in metal folding chairs. The gym floor was worn but highly polished. The sun on the roof was making the room unbearably hot. The head of the school said Lawrence had a desirable skill that would allow him to succeed. It was up to him how he used it. Jarelle's mother and some other relatives were sitting in the rows ahead of us. She looked unhealthy, and I was afraid to talk to her, as if she'd think I'd done something wrong that night, so long ago, when Jarelle and Brian got picked up for breaking into my house.

So I pretended I didn't see her, until Jarelle said to Brian, Tom, Nick and me that we were invited to sit with them at the lunch in the cafeteria.

Jarelle had shifted his tassel to the other side of his mortarboard. He grinned so hard you'd have thought it would hurt his face. I

knew Tom was having a hard time getting him a job, because of his juvenile record. One solicitation by the boat basin, one speeding and disagreeing with the traffic officer, and one something I was never told about. Jarelle had thrown his hat up in the air with the rest of the grads. He hugged his mother. He hugged Tom, and Nick, and Brian. Brian said, "You did it, Jarelle. No shit."

"I am ready," Jarelle said. Looking at Tom, who was supposed to have news of a job.

"Things are moving along," Tom said.

Jarelle's mother wore a sweet perfume that reminded me of jasmine. We stood outside in the hot sun, and took pictures of each other. She said to me, "You didn't get Jarelle in trouble. I appreciate that."

She seemed clean to me. I took it as a good sign. She seemed proud of Jarelle, who had cut off his rasta dreds when he came to the school.

In the end, it was my own mechanic who hired Jarelle, to clean the station and change oil, to begin with. Until he proved himself. I was still worried about him, because he was tall and imposing, and he'd intimidate people. He'd be kicking around his mother's apartment. He was getting paid barely enough to live on. So I gave him a gift certificate for clothes. Not cash. Until the job started. But that graduation day, the music played on the sound system (no band for them). We walked him across the parking lot, with the sheds for the repair classes down the hill. The sun making Nick's face redden with heat. Jarelle said, "I don't got no more tests to take, and shit."

"Yeah, you will," Tom said. "You got to qualify as a mechanic."

"That ain't work, though. That shit fun."

The head of the school, excited by the crowd and his graduates, said, "You take care of yourself, Jarelle."

"I'm gonna get rich," Jarelle said. "I'm gonna have my own business."

Tom caught my eye. He was hot, too.

Landry: Blue Moon (continued)

Loosening his blue, blue necktie to free his neck. We were afraid for Jarelle, that hot afternoon. I saw it in Tom, and I can say that.

By the middle of June, Brian's mother, Irene, had been clean for a month. The day she left the rehab, Tom told me the DYFS had found her an apartment in Humboldt, near the train station. It was a triple-decker, half an hour from my house. By that time Tom and I had agreed not to bring up the three competency hearings we'd attended for Irene. Two in the shabby conference room at the hospital, where Irene threatened to get a lawyer if she couldn't keep Brian with her. One later meeting at the office of the Department of Children and Families in Springfield, which was an hour and a half from Humboldt. But it was where her last social worker mistakenly had filed the follow-up paperwork for Irene's previous stay in a rehab. Tom said it would be faster to go to Springfield than to wait for the information to come to us. And Irene was angry at that one, too, as we sat in the room with the chipped linoleum, her mouth painted with a slash of bright red.

"He's my fucking kid," she said. "I got rights. Under the law."

"Nobody's saying you don't," Tom said.

"Snow White here is a foster mother. Last time I looked, that ain't the same as a mother."

The social worker from the Springfield office made a face, and looked at her watch. She was bailing out somebody's mistake, and the time was after five o'clock.

"You got a problem with the mall incident," Tom said.

"I'm clean. My tests are clean."

Tom said to the social worker that he was going to recommend Brian go back with her. "The family stay together," was how he put it.

"What's the condition of the child?" the social worker said. "Brian." She looked at me.

"He's happy where he is—" I said.

"No he ain't," Irene interrupted. "He said he wants to live with me."

"Let me finish," I said. "He's wanting to move back with her."

"But you have the idea it's not good for him?"

She wanted me to thwart Irene. I said, "He's doing well in school, with me. He's stopped bedwetting."

"He's twelve," the worker said. "Right?"

But Irene forgot his birthday, I wanted to say. She was back to square one in the rehab, that week, because she'd gotten coke off an orderly. She didn't know it was Brian's birthday. I bought him a DVD of famous soccer matches. Soccer's Golden Moments. And I told him she'd asked me to get it, even though that was a lie. Because he couldn't get in to see her. She didn't remember it. "I don't think it's time," I said.

"Bullshit," Irene said.

"Calm down," the social worker said.

Drank her iced coffee, the cubes that rattled in the plastic cup.

Tom said, "There's a relapse. Truthfully. But I think she's going to stay clean, this time. Because she has hepatitis, and she's going to do some serious damage if she doesn't take care of herself." He met my eye. "Also, I recommend Brian returns to her, because he'll be very upset if he doesn't. Best interests."

How could he say that? There were going to be fifty junkies near her apartment every day. She was a dry addict. She had a job at the Salvation Army store in Humboldt, sorting clothes in bins from donations. She worked in the afternoons as community service, and lived on State aid for the disabled. How long would that last?

"I don't agree with the caseworker," I said. *I disagree with the blind caseworker.*

Irene's red mouth making her point around the table, in the dusk of July, with the air getting cool for the evening, even through the cracked casement window. She was sure she had the law behind her. The tie of mother and child was what the law wanted there. Because the men and women at the State House saw it that way. It matched a philosophy. Fit a dream. Maybe they were right. "I'm gonna do a good job," she said. "I'm suitable, right now. Tom. You said that." The social worker signed off, in the end. Said she'd send it along. **JJJ**

Irene's red mouth making her point around the table, in the dusk of July, with the air getting cool for the evening, even through the cracked casement window. She was sure she had the law behind her. The tie of mother and child was what the law wanted there.

Overview of James Jones's Trilogy on World War II and Soldiering

By J. Michael Lennon

One of the most brilliant intuitions in the long, brilliant editorial career of Maxwell Perkins, the legendary Scribner's editor of Hemingway, Wolfe and Fitzgerald, was to offer James Jones a \$500 advance for an unwritten novel on the pre-war U.S. Army, the pineapple army, set in Hawaii. By this time, February 1945, Jones had already pressed two versions of his first (still unpublished) first novel, "They Shall Inherit the Laughter," on Perkins, who had no intention of publishing it. It is easy to see why the novel was rejected—and why Perkins was attracted to Jones. "Laughter" is rambling and episodic in structure, self-indulgent and excessively bitter in tone, and patently derivative of Wolfe, Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and even Emerson and the American Transcendentalists. Toward the end, Jones even borrows Tom Joad's "I'll be there" speech from *The Grapes of Wrath* and applies it to the returning American soldier. Still, it contains some fine writing and is fascinating as a kind of preview of Jones's later career. It incorporates, moreover, early versions of some of the most memorable scenes from Jones's later work—for example, Lander's speech about "the soldier's responsibilities" to his Indiana hometown Elks Club in *Whistle*, "Mad" Welsh's desperate attempt to help the painfully wounded Tella in *The Thin Red Line*, and several of the major episodes in *Some Came Running*. In fact, "Laughter" is, to a large degree, an early less successful version of *Some Came Running*. The hero, Johnny Carter, is a prototype for Richard Mast in *The Pistol*, Dave Hirsch in *Some Came Running*, Geoffrey Fife in *The Thin Red Line*, and Marion Landers in *Whistle*.

What attracted Perkins to Jones was that he was clearly a writer in the Dreiserian tradition, one who could write novels of saturation about virgin tracts of reality of interest to the large and growing novel readership in the U.S. Jones was not someone who would write small, precious novels of the kind Truman Capote, Jane Bowles and Carson McCullers were turning out during this time. Jones was an American Balzac but instead of delineating all the levels of French society, Jones wanted to

reproduce in prose the pre-war American army. It was only one of the novels that Jones mentioned when replying to Perkins' second, gentle rejection of the "Laughter" manuscript. In the course of outlining the future novelistic work of a lifetime, he described "a real combat novel telling the complete truth" and another, a novel "on the peacetime army, something I don't remember having seen." This second idea rang a big bell for Perkins. Jones had never seen a novel on the peacetime army, because they didn't exist, not in any realistic form, and Perkins knew it. He also knew: 1) that the "old army" was long gone, swept away by mass enlistments, the draft and technology; 2) that 20 million GIs had nevertheless heard about the "old army" via the relentless comparisons of their drill sergeants. (Not a small audience, especially when you add spouses, children, parents and everyone else touched by World War II); and 3) that Jones was unique in the literary world: intelligent, sensitive, tough and well suited for heavy narrative labor, and, most important, he had been on active army duty for over two years when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Jones had actually seen the Japanese strafe Schofield Barracks when he was on guard duty on December 7, 1941. Perkins had a trifold hunch: he had the writer, the story and the demand. He died in June 1947 before his hunch paid off in full, but he did read the first 200 pages of *From Here to Eternity* and knew it was a winner.

To repeat, *From Here to Eternity* is not a combat novel; it is an army novel, arguably the finest ever written by an American. It is, in fact, dedicated to the U.S. Army, and follows three major characters, Pvt. Prewitt, Mess/Sgt. Stark and First/Sgt. Warden through the miseries of the caste-ridden, authoritarian peacetime army up to the symbolic moment it undergoes transmogrification, becoming with the Japanese attack, a completely different creature.

"Authenticity" is the word used over and over in essays and reviews on the novel,

Jones was unique in the literary world: intelligent, sensitive, tough and well suited for heavy narrative labor



James Jones writing in his trailer, Tucson, Arizona, 1953.

—Photo courtesy of the Handy Colony Collection, Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield.

a tribute to Jones' massive documentation of the gear, tackle, drills, bugle calls, boredom, KP, masochism and male camaraderie—in short, all facets of barracks, bivouac and stockade life in the “old” army. Although it is 860 pages in length, it never flags. Its narrative drive is tremendous. Jones wrote it with the classic realist's confidence that the world can be understood and explained. Prewitt, who he described to Perkins as “a small man standing on the edge of the ocean shaking his fist,” is the novel's tragic hero/scapgoat, and one of the most memorable protagonists in modern American literature.

Exactly when the idea for a trilogy dealing with the before, during and after of World War II came to Jones is uncertain. His first idea for *Eternity* was to extend it through the New Georgia campaign to the return of the wounded to the U.S. in 1944

Lennon

and then to the war's aftermath in the late 1940s. But this was impractical for one volume and after *Eternity* was published in 1951 to huge popular and critical acclaim, he turned back to the “Laughter” manuscript and transformed it into *Some Came Running*, which appeared in 1958. It is his longest novel and, he claimed more than once, his best, a judgment that seems less and less personally partisan as time goes by. Set in a Midwestern town similar to Jones's hometown of Robinson, Illinois, it deals with the problems—financial, sexual, spiritual—of returning GIs and (as one critic said), “a continent of towns melting into shopping centers, a world of superhighways and jet flights, where men risk becoming slob.” But it is not often remembered that the 1247-page novel begins with a moving depiction of the Battle of the Bulge, and it ends with a tableau of freezing combat in Korea. Jones' prologue and epilogue were clues to his novelistic future.

Jones left the Midwest after completing *Running*, and he went back to the big war, writing first, a novella, *The Pistol*, set in wartime Hawaii. It was published in 1959. Jones's friend Irwin Shaw claimed that *The Pistol* should be the fourth novel in a quartet, but Jones did not agree. But given its wily insights into the nature of the “new” army, it is fair to call *The Pistol* a pendant to the trilogy. None of the characters in *The Pistol* are carried over from *Eternity*, but there are a few who are congruent with the earlier characters, especially First/Sgt. Wycoff, “a big man in his thirties” who might easily be confused with First/Sgt. Warden. Jones moved to Paris after he completed *The Pistol* and it was there that he began work on a combat novel set in the Pacific, one he ultimately titled *The Thin Red Line*.

But Jones now had a problem, one that he finessed in *The Pistol*. He explains it in a preface to the third novel in the trilogy, *Whistle*:

“One of the problems I came up against, with the trilogy as a whole, appeared as soon as I began *The Thin Red Line* in 1959. In the original conception, first as a single novel, and then as a trilogy, the major characters such as 1st/Sgt Warden, Pvt. Prewitt and Mess/Sgt Stark were meant to continue throughout the entire work.

Jones Trilogy (continued)

Unfortunately, the dramatic structure—I might even say, the spiritual content—of the first book demanded that Prewitt be killed in the end of it.... It may seem like a silly problem now. It wasn't then.... I could not just resurrect him. And have him there again, in the flesh, wearing the same name.... I solved the problem by changing the names.... So in *The Thin Red Line*, 1st/Sgt Warden became 1st/Sgt Welsh, Pvt. Prewitt became Pvt. Witt, Mess/Sgt Stark became Mess/Sgt Storm. While remaining the same people as before. In *Whistle*, Welsh becomes Mart Winch, Witt becomes Bobby Prell, Storm becomes John Strange."

In the preface Jones also points out that unlike the three novels of John Dos Passos's trilogy, *USA*, the three novels of his trilogy stand alone as a fully realized works. Jones, in effect, had it both ways: he devised a scheme that permitted him to use the same characters, and continue the same master theme, but also permitted him to write three separate narratives, each of which has its own themes, structure and mood. So the careful and systematic depiction of the corrupt and brutal "old" army in *Eternity* is followed by the stark presentation of random and impersonal death in modern technological warfare in *The Thin Red Line*, which appeared in 1962. In the second novel of the trilogy Jones follows C-for-Charlie Company through an amphibious landing on an anonymous Pacific island that ends, after savage combat, with its capture by U.S. troops. Jones explore three recurring themes in the course of what may be the finest combat novel ever written by an American: the absurdity of anonymous death in combat, the ineffectuality and corruption of the officer class, and the brutalizing effects of warfare on the most decent of men. Of special interest is the episode in chapter three describing Bead's killing of a Japanese soldier in hand-to-hand combat, a scene based closely on an incident in Jones's own experience on Guadalcanal, one that haunted him for the rest of his life.

The unifying idea of the trilogy, the master theme, is "the evolution of the soldier." Jones first fully articulated this theme in his 1975 nonfiction work, *WWII*, which contains Jones's narrative and a moving collection of World War II graphic art, all by combat artists, and selected by the former art director of *Yank* magazine, Art Weithas. In simplest terms, the evolution consists of green soldiers becoming trained, hardened by combat and then turned into fearless automatons who know that they will die. A soldier's acceptance of the fact that he is lost, Jones says, changes everything: "Little things become significant. The next meal, the next bottle of booze, the next kiss, the next sunrise, the next full moon. The next bath...It has its excitements and compensations. One of them is that, since you have none yourself, you are relieved of any responsibility for a future. And everything tastes better." If a soldier survives, he must undergo the de-evolution of a soldier; in an ordeal just as painful as the numbing of combat, he begins to feel, begins to hope and begins to remember even as he tries to forget.

The de-evolution is manifested most powerfully in the final novel of the trilogy, *Whistle*, which was published posthumously in 1978. *Whistle* develops Jones's vision of the embittered American soldier returning home from combat overseas only to develop a new kind of alienation in a suddenly affluent and overwhelmingly "new America." The homefront had no place for the camaraderie that the returning wounded American soldiers had come to depend on for physical survival. The frenetic mood of the city of Memphis, renamed Luxor, the Peabody Hotel and the army hospital are depicted with ease of deeply imprinted memory—Jones knew these places well. Here the remnants of the old rifle company wait for news of the death or wounding of their comrades while drinking and fighting as much and as often as they can, fighting and drinking to forget and not to forget. The fight with the navy chiefs in the hotel bar is especially evocative of the fierce abandon of these late war years.

A disembodied narrator who speaks for all the members of the old company tells *Whistle's* first chapter in the first person plural. Jones's

Lennon: Jones Trilogy (continued)

instinct is unerring and the brilliantly evoked “we” perspective proves to be the perfect point of view for capturing the final decline and fall of Prell, Winch and Strange. In one sense, they are still Prewitt, Warden and Strange, but markedly different having evolved and de-evolved during the course of over 2600 pages and three novels written over 33 years. It ends with the suicide of Sgt Strange who slips over the rail of his troop transport en route to the fighting in western France, unable to face more combat. Strange’s suicide was virtually the last thing Jones dictated on his tape recorder in the hospital before he died in 1977.

“And then as he’s treading water with his woolen GI gloves, he can feel the cold beginning to swell his hands. And from this, in a sort of semihallucination, all of him begins to seem to swell and he gets bigger and bigger, until he can see the ship moving away or thinks he can. And then he goes on getting bigger and bigger and swelling and swelling until he’s bigger than the ocean, bigger than the planet, bigger than the solar system, bigger than the galaxy out in the universe.

And as he swells and grows this picture of a fully clothed soldier with his helmet, his boots, and his GI woolen gloves seems to be taking into himself all the pain and anguish and sorrow and misery that is the lot of all soldiers, taking it into himself and into the universe as well.

And then still in the hallucination he begins to shrink back to normal, and shrinks down through the other stages—the galaxy, the solar system, the planet, the ocean—back to Strange in the water. And then continues shrinking until he seems to be only the size of a seahorse, and then an amoeba, then finally an atom.

He did not know whether he would drown first or freeze.”

J. Michael Lennon is a former professor of English at the University of Illinois at Springfield, and Wilkes University in Pennsylvania. He is a charter member and past president of the James Jones Literary Society, and current president of the Norman Mailer Society. He is currently writing a biography of Mailer.

‘The Valentine’ Essay Contest Winners Announced

Winners of the annual James Jones Literary Society's "The Valentine" essay contest have been announced. The prize is awarded to essays written by senior English students from Marshall, Palestine and Robinson High Schools in James Jones's native Illinois.

The essays are based on Jones's short story "The Valentine," which was first published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1963 and was later included in *The Ice-Cream Headache and Other Stories*. The story features a young boy who presents a box of Valentine candy to a favorite girl in his class, and the humiliation and rejection he suffers as a result.

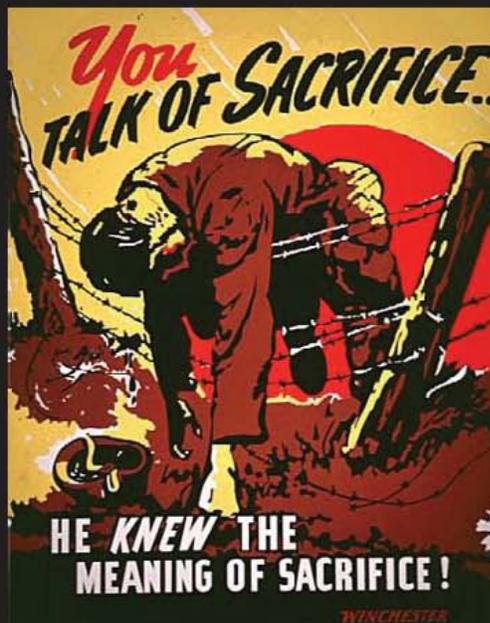
The first-place winner received an award of \$75, the second-place winners re-

ceived \$50, and the third-place winners received \$25 each.

FIRST: Landon Kunzelman
 SECOND: Joey Tirade-Grundvig and Kristi Pleasant
 THIRD: Rachel Groover, Amanda Mayo, Anika Finkbiner, Erin Murray, and Katherine Burbank
 Honorable Mention: Jon Frendo and Brandt Mitchell.

The contest is the creation of Helen Howe, who organizes and administers the annual event. A retired English teacher, Howe was a long-time friend of Jones and one of the founders of the JJLS.

Yes, I would like to support
the
James Jones
Chair
in WWII
Studies
 at Eastern Illinois University



Name(s) _____ Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (Office) _____ E-mail _____

If your spouse is an Eastern alumna/us, please provide us with his or her full name (and maiden name if applicable) so we may update our records

Three-year pledge:

please accept my monthly gift of \$27.77 for the next three years (for a total of \$1,000)

To authorize a onetime or recurring donation from your bank account, please go to www.eiu.edu/~develop/images/efform.pdf

Onetime gift:

please accept my gift of \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Check, made payable to: EIU Foundation Credit Card: Visa MasterCard Discover

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please send all correspondence and contributions to:
 Karla Evans, Executive Director
 EIU Office of Philanthropy
 600 Lincoln Avenue
 Charleston, IL 61920-3099



Join or renew

The James Jones Literary Society

Membership / Contribution Form

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

- \$15 Annual Individual \$25 Annual Couple
 \$50 Four-Year Individual \$250 Life Individual

- I / We wish to join or renew membership in the James Jones Literary Society and have enclosed the appropriate dues payment.
- I / We wish to support the activities of the James Jones Literary Society and would like to make a contribution. Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ .

(Please indicate how you would like your contribution to be used.)

- To support The James Jones First Novelist Fellowship Award honoring promising new fiction authors.
- To support The James Jones Literary Society General Fund.

Make checks payable to The James Jones Literary Society and mail to P.O. Box 68, Robinson, IL 62454. Contributions are tax-deductible. This form may be duplicated for additional memberships and/or gifts.

James Jones Literary Society
P.O. Box 68
Robinson, Illinois
62454

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE.
THEY WRITE NOVELS.

