

The James Jones Literary Society Newsletter

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Manuscripts Pour In For Second Year Of Fellowship Award

Before announcing the name of the second winner of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship. I thought it might be of interest to provide a few numbers for context in this year's competition.

A total of 403 manuscripts (143 last year) arrived at the Wilkes University English Department bearing a postmark date of April 1 or earlier. About 170 of these came in one one day and strained the University's mail service a bit. Submissions were received from 40 states, Washington, D.C., Hong Kong and four foreign countries. Of the 403 submissions, 91 went on to a third reading, having received a "yes" by one or two of the first two readers. A total of 31 went on to the semi-final round, having received another "yes" vote. These semi-finalists were then narrowed to eight finalists, and a winner was selected July 28.

That winner is Mary Kay Zuravleff of Washington, D.C. Her novel-in-progress is titled *The Frequency of Souls*. An Oklahoma native, Zuravleff received a B.A. degree in English and mathematics in 1981 from Rice University, where she studied under Max Apple. She received an M.A. degree in creative writing in 1982 from Johns Hopkins, where she studied under John Barth. Zuravleff is married to Gary Zizka and has a 2-year-old son, Theo. For the past six years, she has been employed as an editor at the Smithsonian Institution. She has completed a first draft of her novel, pulled it

apart and intends to complete it within a year. She will spend time late this summer at Ragdale, a writer's colony in Lake Forest, Ill. Zuravleff will be at the Society's Oct. 8 conference to receive her \$2,000 award.

Let me end this column by thanking the readers from the faculty and staff of Wilkes University who read piles of manuscripts in May and June. They were Bonnie Bedford, Linda Falkenstein, Lisa David, Darin Fields, Stephen Hicks, Barbara King, Larry Kuhar, Alicia Lindgren, Karen Mason, Lee Terry and Tracy Youells. Bob and Patricia Heaman also read many manuscripts, as did Kaylie Jones, Kevin Heisler and Don Sackrider. Thanks also to English Department secretary Joyce Shaffer, who heroically kept track of every manuscript, my secretary Eleanor Cook and Donna Lennon--both of whom helped in countless ways. Thanks also to Juanita Martin and Helen Howe, who fielded many inquiries on the award process, and all the literary magazines and creative writing programs that publicized it.

A final note--last year I predicted there would be 250 submissions. I was way off. I'll predict that there will be 500 next year. See you Oct. 8.

--J. Michael Lennon, President

Plaque To Be Placed At Makapuu Point In Hawaii

Through the efforts of Jon Shirota and Carl Becker, the state of Hawaii has approved the installation of a memorial plaque at Makapuu Point honoring James Jones.

In November 1941, Jones and other members of his company from the 25th Infantry "Tropic Lightning" Division built bunkers and gun emplacements above Makapuu Point. Jones wrote about this experience in *The Pistol* (1959) and *Viet Journal* (1974).

The Society is arranging for a deligation to attend the dedication of the marker.

Trip To James Jones' Hawaii Planned

Thanks to the efforts of Carl Becker and Robert Thobaben, plans are quickly becoming finalized for a Society-sponsored excursion March 14-22, 1995, to James Jones' Oahu.

The proposed itinerary includes three days of visiting Jones sites such as Schofield Barracks and places that were featured prominently in *From Here to Eternity*; a one-day general tour as a group; and two "free" days on your own.

Approximate costs are as follows: round-trip air per person \$600-\$700; double-occupancy accommodations \$75 per night; surface transportation \$100.

Exact figures and more details about the itinerary will be available at the Oct. 8 conference.

Biography To Appear In Dictionary

Society board member Jim Giles and his wife, Wanda, a charter member, are co-editing five to six volumes of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. University of Vermont English professor and Society member Allen Shepherd will have a 10,000-word essay on James Jones in the first volume, which will be published this fall. Shepherd earlier wrote a definitive article on The Pistol. Jones Biographer George Garret is another post-World War II novelist who will appear in these volumes, profiled by the poet R.H.W. Dillard.

The gileses also taught an elderhostel this past summer on Jones, Illinois authors and the Robinson-Marshall community through the Northern Illinois University Division of Continuing Education.

Jones Reference Made In 1993 Novel From Balzic Series

*The following page of dialogue is from **Bottom Liner Blues** (Mysterious Press, 1993) by K.C. Constantine and includes a reference to James Jones. K.C. Constantine is a pseudonym for the author of the Mario Balzic novels, which are set in Pennsylvania where the author grew up in Pittsburgh, the son of a Russian immigrant father. Interestingly, he enlisted in the peacetime Marine Corps after dropping out of college. After his discharge, he completed college as an English major and graduated to the University of Iowa Writers Workshop.*

--Judith Everson, Sangamon State University, Springfield, IL (now The University of Illinois at Springfield)

"...I told him, hey, the army was good enough for James Jones, it was good enough for me, it's good enough for you."

"James Jones?"

"James Jones, yeah. You never heard of James Jones?"

"I know a lot of Joneses. In my line of work, after Smith, Jones is the name I hear the most."

"No, man, no. James Jones is the guy who wrote *From Here to Eternity*, you know? Among other things. You never read that book? Huh? Robert E. Lee Prewitt, Milt Warden, Karen Holmes, Fatso Judson, Maggio, Jack Malloy?"

Balzic shrugged. "What is it, fiction?"

"Yeah, of course it's fiction. It's damn near the only way left to tell the truth in America."

Balzic shrugged again. "I don't read much fiction. Not anymore."

"You didn't see the movie either? Huh? Montgomery Clift, Burt Lancaster, Deborah Kerr, Ernest Borgnine, Frank Sinatra--Jack Malloy wasn't in the movie, they didn't know what to do with him. But you didn't see that?"

"Yeah, maybe, I think. Long time ago. So, uh, what--you joined the army 'cause you read a book? You make your kid join the army for the same book?"

"No, nah, it wasn't like that. For poor people, the army's a fact of economic life, that's what you learn from James Jones. When I got outta high school, I mean it was the mines or nothin' for me, and I was goddamned if I was gonna spend my life gettin' black lung. I had to go in a mine one time, some goofy teacher thought it would be a good idea, you know, since most of the kids' relatives worked in the mine, she thought it would be great if we all went to see what it was like, you know? I mean, that's all we been hearing all our lives, what is's like in the goddamn mines, from our fathers, from our uncles, our cousins, this teacher thinks she's gonna show us somethin', right?"

The 4th Annual James Jones Conference

Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, Ill, Oct. 8, 1994

8:00 Registration
9:00 Welcome by J. Michael Lennon, President
9:15 Business Meeting: Reports from Secretary Helen Howe, Treasurer
Juanita Martin
9:45 Readings from *The Thin Red Line*, Kaylie Jones and J. Michael Lennon
10:15 Break
10:30 Panel: **The Thin Red Line**; Moderator: James R. Giles, Northern
Illinois University;
Judith Everson, Sangamon State University; George Hendrick,
University of Illinois;
Michael Mullen, Vincennes University.
11:45 Lunch, Cafeteria (on your own)
1:00 Book Signing, Lobby
1:30 Panel: **James Jones and Vietnam Novelists**; Moderator: Jerry Bayne,

Wabash Valley College; Winston Groom, author of *Better Times Than These*,
Forrest Gump, Larry Heinemann, author of *Close Quarters*, *Paco's Story*
2:45 Break
3:15 Readings from *The Thin Red Line*, James Jones recording
3:45 Presentation: James Jones First Novel Fellowship; Kaylie Jones and Don Sackrider;
Remarks from award recipient
4:00 Reception, Crawford County Historical Society
6:00 Cash bar, Elks Club
7:00 Dinner, Elks Club (advance reservation required)

EXTRA

There will be a tour of the home designed and built by James Jones when he was at the Handy Colony, Sunday, Oct. 9. Hosts are Bill and Beth Schultz. Details will be available at the Conference.