

The James Jones Literary Society Newsletter

Vol. 5, No. 1 Fall 1995
Ray Elliott and Vanessa Faurie, Editors

Here are the headlines of this newsletter. Click to go to the article.

[Year-Round Activities Keep Society Members On The Go](#)
[Fellowship Recipient Signs Book Contract](#)
[Society Thanks First-Novel Readers](#)
[College Pays Tribute To Jones With Month Of Events](#)
[Article Cites Jones' *Thin Red Line*](#)
[Hawaii Travellers Help Dedicate Plaque, Visit Schofield Barracks](#)
[Thank You, Life Members](#)
[Literature That Influenced Jones](#)
[Increase In Society Dues To Be Considered](#)
[Strategic Planning Summary](#)
[Retreat Outcomes](#)

Year-Round Activities Keep Society Members On The Go

Nineteen ninety-five has been a banner year for the Society, and the best is yet to come with festivities surrounding the annual symposium on Saturday, October 14, at Lincoln Trail College in Robinson, Illinois--Jones' birthplace. Let me exercise a presidential prerogative and recount with pride some of our recent accomplishments.

In February the Board took steps to prevent the possible demolition of Jones' boyhood home on Walnut Street and to support its future restoration. Thanks to the efforts of Helen Howe, vice president/secretary, and her son, Gordon, the Illinois Historical Society is interested in seeking National Historic Site designation for this building and for other properties associated with Jones' life.

In March 14 Society members made a memorable pilgrimage to Jones' Hawaii with co-hosts Carl Becker and Bob Thobaben. The highlight of their week-long tour was an impressive ceremony dedicating a bronze plaque in Jones' honor at historic Makapuu Point. Here Jones helped build bunkers in November 1941 and stood guard on December 7 following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Jon Shirota arranged for the

marker's installation, and Jones' daughter, Kaylie, accepted a banner commemorating the occasion. A video of this moving tribute will be shown at the fall symposium as the Society observes the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II.

In April the Board held a retreat devoted to developing the Society's first strategic plan. Jerry Bayne, Kevin Heisler, Mike Lennon and Don Sackrider planned the session, which proved ighly productive. Feedback from Society members viat he questionnaire carried in the last newsletter helped to determine our future priorities. A summary of the retreat's outcomes and recommendations is enclosed for your review prior to their consideration at the business meeting which opens the October symposium.

In May Mike Lennon announced that *The Frequency of Souls* by Mary Kay Zuravleff, winner of the 1994 First Novel Fellowship, will be published next spring by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. This reflects credit not only on Zuravleff, to whom we extend congratulations, but also on the work of the selection committee (Kaylie Jones, Patricia Heaman, Kevin Heisler, Mike Lennon and Don Sackrider).

In June I received the report of the selection committee for the Society's Creative Writing Scholarship at Lincoln Trail College: Diane Reed (chair), Carol Gray, Helen Howe and Maxine Zwermann. Jason Pargin has been named the first recipient of this annual award, which he will accept at the symposium.

Also in June I learned that a proposal by several Society members to present a program on Jones and the Handy Colony at the annual Illinois Historical Symposium in Springfield has been accepted. Jim Giles, Tom Wood, Greg Randle and Marlene Emmons will discuss aspects of Jones' life and work at the Colony on December 1.

It is July as I write this message, and arrangements for the symposium have been completed. The planning committee--consisting of officers Helen Howe and Juanita Martin, as well as past presidents George Hendrick and Mike Lennon--have organized an exciting program focusing on Jones' best-known book, *From Here to Eternity*, and the successful film adaptation that followed. George Garrett, author of *James Jones* (1984), will comment on the novel's genesis and reception, while Professor Tony Willians of the English department at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale will do the same for the film.

A final word of thanks--to newsletter editors Ray Elliott and Vanessa Faurie for their continued commitment to producing accurate, timely and lively copy.

I hope that you will join friends and fans of Jones in his hometown of Robinson, Illinois, for a day of interesting, informative activities designed to promote greater

appreciation of his literary contributions. I look forward to see you in Robinson on October 14!

--Judith Everson, President

Fellowship Recipient Signs Book Contract

Mary Kay Zuravleff, winner of the 1994 James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award, has signed a contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux of New York to publish *The Frequency of Souls* in the spring of 1996.

Zuravleff said publicity on winning the fellowship sparked interest from literary agent Rafe Sagalyn. A short time later, she was meeting with what is considered to be one of the best literary publishing houses in the country.

The award is presented annually by the Society to a writer for a novel-in-progress. The \$2,000 prize allowed Zuravleff to take a month off from her position as editor for the Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., to finish the work.

"With a 2-year-old son and a full-time job, it would have taken at least a year to finish the novel without the James Jones Fellowship," Zuravleff said. "To be able to take a month off was just incredible."

The Frequency of Souls was chosen for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship from more than 400 submitted manuscripts. Of those, 140 entries were read by at least two, and in many cases four, readers. The fellowship is intended to honor the spirit of unblinking honesty, determination and insight into modern culture exemplified by Jones.

"The fact that Mary Kay used the money she won to take a month off from work and finish the novel and the fact that she subsequently signed a contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux really endorses The James Jones Society and its First Novel Fellowship," said Society board member J. Michael Lennon, vice president of academic affairs at Wilkes University and one of the award judges.

The Washington Post concurred. Reporter David Streitfeld wrote of Zuravleff's writing success: "Literary prizes...are more crucial than ever for a writer's career. It's not the money that counts so much as the attention. Here's an example of the system working perfectly. ...It's possible this (her book contract) would have happened without the Jones Award, but it certainly wouldn't have been as quick and smooth."

Zuravleff is only the second recipient of his new, annual award. The third recipient will be announced at the Society's symposium October 14 in Robinson, Illinois.

Society Thanks First-Novel Readers

The James Jones Society would like to acknowledge and thank the readers for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award:

Henry Alcalay, Joe Battaglia, Bonnie Bedford, Alison Caro-Sussman, Darin Fields, Henry Flesh Jr., Patricia Heaman, Nancy Horowitz, Barbara King, Larry Kuhar, Alicia Lindgren, Karen Mason, Tim McLoughlin, Glenda Pleasants, Deborah Purcell, Liz Szabla, Lee Terry, Kathleen Warnock and Renette Zimmerly.

College Pays Tribute To Jones With Month Of Events

Plymouth State College in New Hampshire hosted a tribute to James Jones in April as part of the events surrounding the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The college's tribute to Jones consisted of a screening of *From Here To Eternity* and the acclaimed PBS documentary, *James Jones: Reveille to Taps*, coproduced by Society board member J. Michael Lennon, and a month-long exhibit of Jones literary memorabilia from the private collection of Warren Mason of the college's business department. All events were free and open to the public.

As part of the documentary presentation, Lennon discussed Jones' life in the Pacific Campaign, Europe and the United States, as well as the making of the film. *TV Guide* has called the documentary "one of those glories of public television--the impeccable literary biography."

Article Cites Jones' *Thin Red Line*

Society board member Bob Thobaben had an article published in the April 1995 issue of *Army* magazine called "Documenting the Army Experience," in which he cited Jones' *The Thin Red Line* and Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* as examples of literary contributions to the knowledge and understanding of warfare.

Thobaben recommended the books "if you would stand in the shoes of a common infantryman in World War I or World War II."

Hawaii Travellers Help Dedicate Plaque, Visit Schofield Barracks

A contingent of Society members traveled to Hawaii in mid-March to visit significant James Jones sights and to dedicate a plaque in his honor at Makapuu Point.

The first stop for the travellers was the Polynesian Cultural Center, followed by a visit the next day to Hickam Air Force Base where they were joined by guide Howard Okada, aide to Gen. Frederick Weyand. The group viewed the bullet-riddled flag that had flown on the base the day of the Japanese attack December 7, 1941.

On Wednesday of the trip, Okada led a tour of Schofield Barracks and Quad D, where Jones had lived while he was stationed in Hawaii. Interestingly, the group learned that filming of the area for the movie, *From Here To Eternity*, actually took place on Quad C, which is almost identical. The group also visited the Tropic Lightning Museum, which used to be the library. It houses some Jones memorabilia, including photographs and excerpts of *From Here To Eternity*. Society members also saw a 1941 issue of the company paper, *The Bark* (so-called because the company mascot is a wolfhound).

Lunch was served across the street at Kemoo Farms (Choy's in the book). The group met the original owner's son, Richard Rogby, who, in his position as representative for the 50th Anniversary of WWII Commemorative Committee, presented a special flag to Kaylie Jones for the Society.

Back at the base, 25th Infantry Division Chief of Staff Col. David Emling presented Kaylie with a lifetime membership into the 5th Battalion Chapter Association. Later, some of the group then retraced Prewitt's path up Kolekole Pass.

The next day's main event was the plaque dedication ceremony at Makapuu Point. The site was chosen because it is where Jones and other members of his company built bunkers and gun emplacements and stood guard in 1941. Society director Jon Shirota of California, was instrumental in securing the necessary permissions to place the marker at that location.

The Rev. Abraham Kahikina Akaka, brother of U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka, gave the invocation. The reverend had been to school in Illinois and so had another familiar connection to the group. Former Society president George Hendrick explained where the marker was placed, and Kaylie read from the last chapter of *Viet Journal*, called "Hawaiian Recall," and then thanked everyone for their efforts in making the memorial a reality.

The plaque reads as follows:

"In November, 1941, James Jones, author of the classic Army novel, *From Here to Eternity* (1951), and his company (Company F, 27th Regiment, 25th Division) built five pillboxes on the ridge in front of you. On December 7, 1941, Jones and his fellow soldiers occupied the pillboxes with machine guns and rifles to stop potential enemy forces from marching to Honolulu. The Makapuu Head pillboxes were immortalized in *The Pistol* (1959), one of Jones' other novels."

That same day, the group also saw the golf course where Prewitt was shot in the book, visited Hanauma Bay (where the famous movie love scene between Milton Warden (Burt Lancaster) and Karen Holmes (Deborah Kerr) was filmed, and enjoyed an evening luau at the Halokoa Hotel.

Other sites on the trip included the Arizona Memorial, what may have been Alma's house (as best as anyone could determine, anyway), Wu Fats in Honolulu (which is the same name in the book), the alley where Prewitt killed Fatso in the book, the Black Cat and the Log Cabin Bar and Grill.

"I had never been to Hawaii," Hendrick said of the trip. "It certainly gave me a much better idea of the novel. I understood the layout. We really had a wonderful time."

The other Society members who were on the trip included Scarlett Williamson, MaryJo Billingsly, Kevin Heisler, Willene Hendrick, Jon and Barbara Shirota, Claude and Barry Lane, Ed and Donna Reid, and organizers Carl and Marilou Becker and Bob and Janet Thobaben.

Thank You, Life Members

We appreciate your dedicated interest in The James Jones Society. You have made it possible to offer the James Jones Creative Writing Scholarship at Lincoln Trail College. You have made it possible to increase the James Jones First Novel Fellowship award. You have made it possible for board members to believe the goals for the future are a real possibility: reprinting Jones' works, cataloging the Jones archives at the University of Texas, teaching Jones at the high school and college level, and more. We want you to know how valuable you are to the Society. Please know that you are irreplaceable, and we thank you.

Literature That Influenced Jones

The following excerpt from *Attacks of Taste*, edited by Evelyn B. Byrne and Otto M. Penzler (Gotham Book Mart, New York, 1971), is by Jones and describes his favorite authors:

My serious reading only began at the age of eighteen, after graduation from high school and while I was an enlisted man in the regular army. This was occasioned by my reading of Thomas Wolfe, followed by Joyce, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner. From these I went into a thorough study of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century English novelists, such as Conrad, Arnold Bennet, Aldous Huxley, Galsworthy, etc. By this time I was nineteen, almost twenty, and a part-time student at the University of Hawaii. Of these I guess my favorite for quite a while was Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*, largely because it was such a marvelous portrait of an adolescent teenage American boy, and I would recommend it to all people; after that, just about everything of Conrad and Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. It was only later that I came to appreciate, more, Joyce and Faulkner. Today though I think my all-time favorite it still Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, because it is so miraculous at portraying what human beings are really like rather than what they pretend to be. And it is that which perhaps directs me more in my own work than any other single thing. --James Jones

Increase In Society Dues To Be Considered

A word to the wise. The membership committee would like to inform the membership that a new dues schedule will be considered at the October 1995 board meeting. If your membership will expire soon or if you are considering renewal, it may be economically wise to do so now. The proposed new dues schedule is as follows: Annual - \$15 individual, \$25 couple; 3-Year - \$50; Life - \$250.

We find this necessary to continue to meet our immediate goals, as well as our long-range plans. We believe we have the most dedicated membership possible and hope for this association to continue. We hope the new schedule will be accepted with enthusiasm by the membership should it pass the Board's consideration in the fall.

Strategic Planning Summary

Questionnaire Results

Highest-ranking general areas of Society activity were as follows: (1) to facilitate teaching and research on Jones; (2) to encourage aspiring writers; and (3) to preserve Jones' memory.

Top-ranked specific projects were as follows: (1) to sponsor and fund the First Novel Fellowship Award; (2) to host the annual symposium; (3) to publish out-of-print Jones works; (4) to sponsor and fund creative writing scholarships for college students; (5) to encourage cataloguing of the Jones archive at the University of Texas; and (6) to maintain and/or manage Jones' boyhood home in Robinson, Illinois.

To achieve these goals, more than 90 percent of the respondents support a dues increase.

Retreat Outcomes

Strengthening Society Finances and Fund-Raising

A committee evaluated our current dues structure. **Action Item:** (pending Board approval in October) individual dues should be raised to \$15 annually; annual dues for couples should be \$25; three-year membership should be \$50; and life membership should be \$250. Another committee will develop a long-term fund-raising strategy for the Society. When completed, their recommendations will be submitted to the Board and the membership.

Enhancing Organizational Home and Structure

A committee will analyze the pros and cons of seeking non-profit organizational status for the Society in the future. **Action Item:** (pending Board approval in October) The Society's vice president/secretary and treasurer each should receive an annual stipend of \$750, effective December 1995.

Refining Board Composition and Functions

Board members with offices and/or designated tasks will prepare descriptions of their positions and related duties. A general description of the expectations and responsibilities of all Board members is also being drafted. When completed, these will be submitted to the Board and the membership. **Action Item:** (pending Board approval in October) The current 20-member Board should be expanded by one, with staggered three-year terms for blocks of seven members each.

Meeting Communication Technology Needs

A committee will anticipate and address our future requirements in this area.

Encouraging Publications By and About Jones

Two committees have been created--one to supply the newsletter with relevant submissions, the other to pursue ways of reprinting out-of-print Jones material.

Promoting Research Via the Jones Archives

Action Item: (pending Board approval in October) The Society should send a letter to the University of Texas proposing a multi-year, jointly supported project for cataloging the Jones archive there.

Teaching Jones

A committee of educators will explore means of fostering broader study of Jones' writing in secondary and post-secondary settings.

Expanding Audiences for Future Symposia

Action Item: (pending Board approval in October) To broaden interest in Jones, the annual symposium should move to other sites associated with Jones, returning to Robinson periodically. The 1996 symposium should be held on October 12 at the University of Illinois at Springfield.