

The James Jones Literary Society Newsletter

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The James Jones Society newsletter is published quarterly 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., that pertain to author James Jones may be sent to the co-editors for publication 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 R.R. 2, Box 401, Urbana, IL 61802 or tales@soltec.net .

Writers guidelines available upon request and online.
The James Jones Literary Society
<http://rking.vinu.edu/j.htm>

Online information about the James Jones First Novel Fellowship
<http://wilkes.edu/~english/jones.html>

Literary Friends Highlight A Memorable Symposium

Some of America's greatest living authors came together to recall, to analyze and to praise James Jones when the Society held its 1999 symposium on Long Island, N.Y., the last weekend in June.

With extraordinary warmth and humor, writers Budd Schulberg, Joseph Heller, Betty Comden, Norman Mailer, William Styron and Peter Matthiessen described their friendships with Jones, recounting his maturing years when they knew him-after World War II; after his struggle to write the definitive novel, *From Here to Eternity*; and after his experiment with a writers' colony in Marshall, Ill.

His literary friends knew him during his New York City, Paris and Long Island years.

The James Jones Literary Society chose to hold its ninth annual symposium outside of Illinois for the first time. It was shifted to the Southampton Campus of Long Island University, where Jones' daughter, Kaylie, teaches writing, in order to take advantage of the proximity of many of the distinguished authors who had been friends of Jones.

By holding the event in the East, the Society was able to guarantee the participation of the several aging authors who would have been unlikely to agree to travel to the Midwest.

In addition, the home Jones and his wife, Gloria, shared in nearby Sagaponack (which Jones had fondly dubbed "Chauteau Spud," in recognition of Long Island's traditional farm crop, the potato), is still occupied by Jones' widow and was made available to Society members and many others who attended the symposium as the site of meetings and parties.

Each of the featured speakers at the symposium delivered his or her remarks, then took questions from the audience of nearly 200 during the day's program. Among them, they covered the highlights of Jones' literary and personal life from about 1951 until his death in 1977.

First of his contemporary authors to meet Jones was Norman Mailer, who won Pulitzer Prizes for *The Armies of the Night* in 1969, and for *The Executioner's Song* in 1980.

Mailer had beaten Jones with his blockbuster war novel (after serving as a rifleman in the South Pacific during World War II) with the publication of *The Naked and the Dead* in 1948. Mailer was lionized for that novel-but he was demoralized when Jones' *From Here To Eternity* came out in 1951.

"I really suffered when I read it-because it was so good," Mailer recalled. "I loved it and I hated it."

Although envious of Jones, feeling that perhaps the latter had bested him with his war novel, Mailer still was anxious to meet him. He recalled that first meeting in New York, in the company of another writer.

"Jones had the wisdom of a serious redneck," Mailer said. "We were pale by comparison. But we all got drunk together-and that evened us out. Jim and I really liked each other. I half loved him as a buddy."

The Mailer-Jones relationship was to wax and wane through the years as the writers' sensitive egos came into play, but a love-hate relationship persisted as exemplified, perhaps, in an autographed copy of one of his novels Jones gave to Mailer, in which he wrote: "To Norman-my dearest enemy, my most feared friend."

Later in the 1950s, Mailer visited the Handy Writers' Colony in Marshall, calling it "an extraordinary time." He likened Jones to "the pirate captain of a renegade ship" in his role as co-

director of the colony and said that the experience gave Jones a greater sympathy toward military officers and the jobs they are required to do than he had previously had.

Budd Schulberg, perhaps best known for his early novel *What Makes Sammy Run?* and his screenplay for the Academy Award-winning film *On The Waterfront*, played a pivotal role in Jones' life: He introduced Jones to the woman who would become his wife and life's companion.

Schulberg and Jones met at a party in New York City in 1957 when Jones had just finished six years of writing *Some Came Running*. Schulberg found Jones to be "a hick from the sticks," but took a liking to him, and the two found they had much to talk about. Jones seemed to have nowhere to go, so he stuck to Schulberg and wound up sleeping in the living room of Schulberg's apartment three nights running.

Finally, Schulberg asked what the problem was.

"I'm lonely," Jones replied. "I'd like to meet a woman who looks like Marilyn Monroe, but who likes literature and authors and is smart and has a great sense of humor.

A tall order-but by chance, Schulberg knew someone he felt would fill the bill-Gloria Mosolino, a Marilyn Monroe stand-in on one of the films Schulberg had been working on. He called Mosolino and asked if she'd like to meet James Jones.

"Do you think I'll like him?" Mosolino asked. "

"I hope you're sitting down," Schulberg replied, "because I think you're going to marry him!" A few weeks later, Jones and Gloria were married, and on their honeymoon in Haiti they met the brilliant Betty Comden, lyricist for some of Broadway's greatest musicals-*On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*, *Bells Are Ringing* and *The Will Rogers Follies*, among many others, and writer of the screenplays for numerous film musicals such as *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Band Wagon*.

Comden and her husband, Steve Kyle, became friends of the Joneses for life, visiting them when they lived in Paris and in Jamaica, and seeing them frequently in New York.

Comden recalled an evening when the four attended a "comeback" performance of Comden's friend Judy Garland. But when Garland started to sing, she couldn't go through with it. Later, seated with the Jones-Kyle party, Garland was distraught.

"Jim was so upset," Comden said. "He went to the car and got a copy of (his novel) *The Pistol*, which he autographed and gave to Judy. He was so sympathetic; he couldn't stand to see her suffer and wanted to do something for her.

"Jim had a tough exterior, but all his friends knew that he was very sensitive and poetic inside."

William Styron's first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness*, was published the same year as Jones' first novel, *From Here to Eternity*, 1951. Although Jones' novel was a blockbuster success, and Styron's novel gained only modest fame, Styron wanted to know Jones, and that fall the two met.

"Writers of our generation developed a camaraderie," Styron pointed out.

"It was as if we were taking part in a shared destiny. We went on the party circuit together. There was a time when Jones, Mailer and I played 'The Three Musketeers,' as if we were the best three writers in America!"

(Styron was to go on to write such acclaimed novels as *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and *Sophie's Choice*.)

He saw Jones often in Paris during the '60s and '70s, and once went on a Civil War battlefield tour to Antietam (Pa.) with Jones, who was a student of that conflict. Styron was moved by how shaken Jones was at the battlefield visit.

Styron pointed out that Jones was deeply opposed to war and, for that reason, categorized author Ernest Hemingway as "a fraud and a poseur," and characterized Hemingway as "a war lover."

"Jones' view of war is always seen through the soldier's eye," Styron said. "He was one of the best anatomists of warfare."

Joseph Heller, author of *Catch-22*, *Something Happened*, *Good as Gold* and other novels, did not meet Jones until 1961. Ironically, they had much in common: Each had his first story published in the same issue of *Atlantic Monthly* in 1948, and they had been students at New York University at the same time, although they didn't know each other.

"It's a pity we didn't meet then-but if we had, we would not have gotten along," Heller said. "He was a principled person from the Midwest, and I was a shifty opportunist and a smart-ass Jew from Coney Island!"

Yet the publication of *From Here to Eternity* had a profound effect on Heller's career. He, too, had been intending to write a serious novel about his experiences in the U.S. Army Air Corps in Europe during World War II.

"But after reading *From Here To Eternity*," he said, "I realized that I didn't have the vocabulary, the knowledge, the patience, the talent or the intensity of interest to produce such a novel."

Instead, Heller changed his approach and wrote the satiric *Catch-22*, which was, in its way, equally devastating.

Jones was asked to write a quote about *Catch-22* for the jacket of the book when it was published in 1961, and it was after that when Heller and Jones met in Paris and became a part of the Jones' famous "salons." As he got to know Jones, Heller's impression was that "he had a great emotional ocean inside of him."

Author Peter Matthiessen (*At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, *Killing Mr. Watson*, *The Snow Leopard*), remembered that when it came out, "*Eternity* knocked us all cold. We didn't care about style or grammar. We were just so moved."

Matthiessen was impressed with Jones' ability to deal with dignity with critics who didn't like *Some Came Running* and who hounded Jones with questions about the book.

"Jim just refused to get mad," Matthiessen said. "He took them on one by one."

He also remembered Jones' dignity as he was dying. Even with great suffering, and a waiting room full of people to see him, Jones remained upbeat and conversational. Following Jones' memorial service and cremation, Matthiessen took charge of arranging for the burial of the ashes and for digging the grave in the Revolutionary War cemetery near the Jones home.

"I think that by the end he did find the 'meaning of life,'" Matthiessen said. "He had thought it through deeply. That's why his books are so strong."

**--Margot Nightingale
Secretary**

Symposium Guests Remember Their Friend, Jim Jones

Not surprisingly, the recent national symposium of the James Jones Literary Society at Southampton, N.Y., was kind of a "love-in" for the late author. Perhaps what was a surprise, though, to the nearly 200-person standing-room-only crowd at LIU-Southampton College's Angier Biddle Duke Hall was the magnitude of the assembled literary talent.

William Styron, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Budd Schulberg, Betty Comden and Peter Matthiessen gathered under one roof, without appearance fees, to pay tribute to the Robinson, Ill., native ... their good friend.

"Why not?" Mailer said. "After all, Styron, Jones and I once played 'The Three Musketeers'; we thought of ourselves as the three best writers in America-although each of us thought he was better than the other two."

Here are some words to remember from the day-long program:

* This from Styron, who won a Pulitzer Prize for *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and even greater fame for the novel and screenplay *Sophie's Choice*:

"I first 'discovered' Jones from reading *From Here To Eternity*. The book had an immense harrowing sadness. The characters were not the tentative effigies that had begun to populate post-war fiction, not real people. So, I had a desire to meet this man with the Beethoven brow, the lantern jaw, the stepped-upon nose, the skeptical eyes. He took complete pleasure in being (thought of as) a Midwestern hick. He saw fiction as a sacred mission. He was one of the best anatomists of warfare in our time.

"His second novel, *Some Came Running*, had virtues and flaws. You were overwhelmed by its pure energy but its failure to be economical showed an absence of discipline. However, his

bounce-back ... to write *The Thin Red Line* ... demonstrated what happens when a novelist summons strength from the deepest wellspring of his beliefs.

"There's no way the motion picture of *The Thin Red Line* resembles the book in a conventional manner. But it's amazing how it caught a great deal of the spirit of grimy, wretched soldiers in combat. (Director) Terry Malick had an uncanny ability to replicate the ineffable quality of fear and (that was necessary because) Jones insisted that without an adequate depiction of fear, you fail to render the war experience."

* This from Mailer, who won Pulitzers for *The Armies of the Night* and *The Executioner's Song* and whose first novel, about World War II, *The Naked and the Dead*, was published three years before Jones' *From Here To Eternity*:

"An author is drawn to a fellow competitor. (But) when I read *Eternity*, I suffered. It was too damned good. It was an extraordinary experience (to read) this big fist of a book ... powerful, with serious faults but still a major work. *Eternity*? I loved it and I hated it (because) it was better than *The Naked and the Dead*.

"Jim and I first met in 1952, in a cold-water flat on the Lower East Side (of New York City). His was the wisdom of a serious redneck. (After becoming close friends), we used to trade autographed books. He once inscribed for me: 'To Norman: My dearest enemy, my most feared friend.'

"At Jim's funeral, I remember (his widow) Gloria telling me that Jim had thought I was the most intelligent person he had ever known ... and the most evil. See! He had delivered a right hand to my chops from beyond the grave."

* This from Schulberg, the author of the well-remembered *What Makes Sammy Run?* and the writer of the screenplay of Oscar-winning *On the Waterfront*, an adaptation of his own novel:

"The toughest test for an author with a great first novel is to write a successful second one. After my success with *Sammy*, I branched out (to Hollywood) and had no real trouble earning a living. But I felt sorry for Jim. He probably could have capitalized on *Eternity* and been famous somewhere else, but he chose to go back for six years, out of sight, and peck away at something he believed in (his second novel, *Some Came Running*). He went back to the old loom, weaving, weaving and came up with a book twice as long as *Eternity*, the size of two Manhattan phone books.

"That novel needed work and (when it was published) it took some hits from those critics who wait in caves to leap out at a second effort. But I admired Jim's literary character. He put down his feelings as honestly as he could. He used very few fancy similes or metaphors. His style was very effective. He didn't have the posture of (Ernest) Hemingway or the intellectuality of Mailer. But when it came to form and content, he could hold his own with (Gustave) Flaubert and (F. Scott) Fitzgerald.

"I have been asked if I thought anybody could write a better (war) book than *From Here To Eternity*. The answer is yes-Jones. I think *The Thin Red Line* could be the best war book ever written."

* This from Heller, best known for his novel *Catch-22*:

"The 1951 success of *From Here To Eternity* was almost incomprehensible. It happened for Mailer three years earlier, but it could not happen today in literature to an American author.

"If I had been a great success at age 30, it would have wrecked my life. And it was almost too much for Jim to handle back then.

"It took him quite a while after *Eternity* before he became an established, monumental literary figure. But he managed to do it because he had a strong sense of mission in life ... (and) a great emotional ocean inside him.

"I know that *Eternity* certainly changed my life. I was planning to write a book of that type. But after reading Jim's, I knew I didn't have the vocabulary, the knowledge, the patience, the talent or the intensity of interest to produce

such a novel. So I tried something different (the satirical *Catch-22*). * This from Comden, who, with collaborator Adolph Green, wrote such screen musicals as *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Band Wagon* and who produced the lyrics for such theatrical productions as *On the Town* and *Bells Are Ringing*:

"Jim had a beautiful, clear writing style, but I think it would have been even stronger if he had used fewer four-letter words. We used to argue about that, and I'd ask him: 'Just how many four-letter words can you use in a single sentence?'

"He thought I was prissy, I guess. I think I was the model for the prissy schoolteacher character in *Go to the Widowmaker*. But at least I wrote more songs than he did. He wrote the lyrics for only one: *Re-enlistment Blues*."

* This from Matthiessen, one of a few writers to be nominated for a National Book Award in both fiction and non-fiction, the man who handled many of the details of Jones' funeral and who arranged permission for the author's ashes to be buried in a Revolutionary War cemetery less than a half a mile from Jones' final home in Sagaponack, N.Y.:

"Jim was such a gallant man that in his last year, when he was dying (because of heart problems), he even went on a promotional book tour-and that, I'm sure, hastened his death. He was indomitable in his final days, trying to finish *Whistle* (the final book of the Jones war trilogy). He was writing up to the very end.

"Critics sometimes questioned Jones' grammar and style. But when you read *Eternity*, it knocks you cold. Who cares about his grammar and style? "I felt there was a metaphysical style to his

work in *Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line*. So I think he did what he set out to do: discover the meaning of life."

--Dave Nightingale

Society Shares 'Something Good'

"Grandma said when you come on something good," Little Tree says in *The Education of Little Tree*, Forrest Carter's touching novel about an orphaned Indian boy growing up in 1930s rural Appalachia, "first thing to do is share it with whoever you can find. That way the good speaks out to where no telling it will go. Which is right."

That's obviously the way the James Jones Literary Society looks at matters. Formed in 1991, largely through the efforts of longtime Lincoln Trail College staff and faculty members Juanita Martin and Helen Howe who believed in Jones' work and wanted to see the Handy Writer's Colony and the work done there remembered, long after Jones' death of congestive heart failure in 1977 at age 55, the Society held its first symposium at Lincoln Trail College in the author's hometown of Robinson, Ill., that year and has been spreading what its members think is "something good" around the world ever since. A Paris symposium in 2000 is being considered.

Numerous writers influenced by Jones, his friends and scholars studying his collected works have participated in the conferences in the past nine years. Vietnam War veterans and novelists Winston Groom (*In These Times* and *Forrest Gump*) and Larry Heinemann (*Close Quarters* and *Paco's Story*) have made the trip to Robinson. Longtime friend and writer Willie Morris came both to Robinson, where he and Jones had long talked about visiting, and to the University of Illinois at Springfield, which has hosted two conferences.

Novelist and daughter Kaylie Jones has attended and been a part of each symposium with the exception of one at the time of her own daughter's birth. Old friends and various scholars have rounded out the participants who discuss the man and his work at the symposia in Robinson and Springfield.

Keeping with Grandma's sage advice of sharing good things with whoever you can find, the Jones Society took the symposium out of the Midwest to Long Island University's Southampton College near Jones' last home in Sagaponack the last weekend in June and enlisted some of his old friends and contemporary writers to talk about his work and his friendship with them.

Some 200 people showed up to hear Budd Schulberg, Joseph Heller, Betty Comden, Norman Mailer, William Styron and Peter Matthiessen talk about their old friend on a hot, humid, sunny summer day when folks go to the beach rather than to literary symposia. That's tantamount to the competition of holding the conference in Robinson on the same weekend that Jones' old high school football team played in the state high school playoffs.

No doubt the Long Island beaches were as crowded as the bleachers had been, but Hamptons locals joined people from across the United States, Canada and Europe to hear the distinguished group of American authors talk off the cuff about things you don't often hear in scholarly

presentations. The Society's newsletter plans to publish versions of each author's comments in future issues and organizers will look into the possibility of offering videos of the symposium. In this issue, we're bringing you some first-hand reports and perspectives on the symposium.

Schulberg, the author of *What Makes Sammy Run?* and a score of other books and scripts, opened the symposium with a reminiscence of his early meeting of Jones at a party and being with him for the next few days. That ended when Schulberg had to go back to work and said Jones got up off the floor where he'd slept for the nights he stayed in his new-found friend's apartment and asked, "What are we going to do today?"

"What's wrong with you?" Schulberg said to Jones.

"I'm lonely," Jones was reported to have said. "I want someone to be with."

When he told Schulberg he wanted her to look like Marilyn Monroe and be interested in writing, Schulberg called Gloria Mosolino. She had been a stand-in for Monroe and had written a novel. In answer to Mosolino's query about whether she would like the man he said wanted to meet her, Schulberg replied, "I think you're going to marry him."

Two weeks later, his prophecy was fulfilled when the couple wired from the Caribbean that they were getting married.

"I feel proud of being one part in the stepping stones of Jim Jones' life," Schulberg said. "His writing didn't have the posture of Ernest Hemingway or the intellectualism of Norman Mailer; but his writing is the best American writing. It's aimed at everyone."

Schulberg went on to say that *The Thin Red Line* is the best war book ever written. Mailer, who had been the top war novelist since the publication of *The Naked and the Dead* in 1948, recognized Jones' talent immediately and knew what it meant when he read *From Here To Eternity*.

Noting that writers have egos and competitive spirits like athletes and probably wish they were athletes, Mailer chuckled nearly 50 years later when he told his reaction to Jones' first novel after being on top for three years.

"I suffered terribly," Mailer said about reading the novel. "His book went deeper into what it was like to be in the Army, what the Army was like, than mine."

That's what speaker after speaker said throughout the day as they shared insights about a Midwesterner they all had initial reactions to that changed over the years. Despite early impressions that Jones was "a hick," "a serious redneck," and "someone who didn't fit in," it was obvious from the casual and comfortable demeanor of the speakers and their familiarity with Jones that he *was* one of them and was respected for a body of work that has touched people for years and will touch people for years to come.

So whether it's Paris or Robinson or someplace else, some time next year members of the James Jones Literary Society will take the something good they believe is in the man and his work and spread it wherever they can. And Little Tree's Grandma is right: There's no telling where it can go.

--Ray Elliott, President

Fellowship Winner Shares Book News

Leslie Schwartz, 1997 James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award winner, has advised the Society that her novel *Jumping the Green* is due out in October 1999.

"It is a *Choice* Fiction selection," she said, which means the book gets "a shelf and a table" at all Borders bookstores.

She said her agent has also sold the rights to a German publisher and that a Hollywood agent is "hawking it about town." The first 50 pages of her second novel were well received by her agent, who hopes Schwartz can produce another 100 pages because she believes it is worthy of an early advance.

"I am so grateful to the James Jones Literary Society for jump-starting my career," Schwartz said.

Mike Lennon, past Society president, board member and one of the First Novel Fellowship Committee members, expressed the Society's pleasure about the good news.

"Nothing we do is more important than helping talented people like you," Lennon wrote Schwartz after receiving the news. "What a fine victory for you!"

The weekend of the James Jones Symposium at the University of Illinois-Springfield, where Schwartz received the award for *Jumping the Green*, is "one of my fondest memories," she said.

"I am still a faithful member of the Society and always will be. I will let you know the exact publication date and will always duly credit the Society for giving me this wonderful chance."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As a first year member of the James Jones Literary Society, I was thrilled last November to travel to Robinson, Ill., for my first symposium.

Traveling from New Jersey to Robinson took nearly the whole day, and I arrived late in the afternoon.

After checking into my hotel, I made it an immediate necessity to see the town of Robinson and walk its streets, see its homes and get a flavor for the town that gave this country one of its classic literary voices.

While walking around, I looked for a place to have my supper and settled on a "corner establishment" that looked like the kind of a place that had been around for more than 70 years and a place where James Jones might have frequented.

As I sat down and took in the place, I asked the woman behind the bar if the kitchen was open yet and if I could see a menu if it were. While I was looking around and generally eyeballing the place, she brought me a menu and a beer and asked, "You're new around here?"

I told her I was and that I was in town for a James Jones Symposium.

Well, I had said the magic words. She pointed out to me that this very establishment figured prominently in his book, *Some Came Running*, and that there used to be a hotel across the street where Jones sometimes stayed.

My sitting there, having a burger and beer, took on new meaning and I tried hard to imagine what that place looked like in the '40s and '50s.

To say I'm happy that the Society every few years goes back to Robinson, Ill., would be an understatement. Having gone there once, I know that I want to go back again and spend a little more time discovering the town.

As Al Santoli, a Vietnam writer once said, "By doing this I hope that you will see what we saw, hear what we heard, feel what we felt."

Going to Robinson is like that for me. You can almost reach out and touch the words.

**--Robert L. McMahon
Somerville, N.J.**

Minutes From 1999 Annual Business Meeting

The James Jones Literary Society met on June 26, 1999, in Duke Hall on the Southampton Campus of Long Island University, N.Y. President Ray Elliott called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Copies of the minutes of the Nov. 7, 1998, meeting had been distributed to participants, and Jerry Bayne moved that they be approved. Maxine Zwermann seconded the motion, which was passed by the membership.

The treasurer's report prepared by treasurer Juanita Martin, was read by Jerry Bayne in Martin's absence. The report stated a beginning cash balance of \$6,435.54 on Jan. 1, 1998; total receipts of \$14,348.43 during the year; and total disbursements of \$10,326.08, leaving a cash balance of \$10,457.89 on Dec. 31, 1998. The report at mid-year 1999 showed a beginning balance of \$10,457.89 on Jan. 1, 1999; receipts of \$18,840.37, and disbursements of \$18,285.79, for a cash total on June 17, 1999, of \$11,012.47. Jerry Bayne pointed out that \$7,000 of that total is

committed to investment. He moved that the treasurer's report be accepted. Dave Nightingale seconded. The motion carried.

Finance Committee chair Warren Mason reported that the Society's various investments are doing well, including \$50,000 placed in a two-year certificate of deposit in Crawford County State Bank a year ago; the Wilkes University Fellowships fund investment of \$106,000; and the \$21,000 in three Fidelity mutual funds, which have gained \$3,172 over the past year for a 15.5 percent return, bringing the total to \$24,172. Mason pointed out that the investments were planned to be cautious and recommended continuing caution and staying with the current plan at this time.

President Ray Elliott announced that the IRS tax exempt status was approved for the Society as of June 1, 1999. He noted that Society funds will be transferred into a Society bank account as ties to the Lincoln Trail Foundation are to be severed on June 30, 1999.

Elliott also pointed out that the practice of paying a \$750 stipend annually to both the Society's secretary and treasurer must be eliminated to accommodate the new tax exempt status. Jerry Bayne noted that the practice was begun as the board's way of showing appreciation for the heavy work load assumed by the two offices. Judy Everson moved that the stipend be eliminated; Dave Nightingale seconded. The motion passed.

Michael Lennon reported that 472 manuscripts have been submitted for competition in the 1999 First Novel Fellowship Award. Since the winner will not be selected until later in the year, Lennon announced that the Society board member who lives closest to the eventual winner will be charged with delivering the award check, arranging for photos and collecting biographical material on the winner.

Warren Mason reported on progress in the effort to have the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee choose to issue a commemorative stamp bearing the likeness of James Jones. Mason said he had received indications that the most effective way to achieve the Society's ends is to mount an aggressive letter-writing campaign. He emphasized that personal letters are highly regarded by the Advisory Committee, while form letters are not. Mason said the address of the Advisory Committee would be passed out to all who request it and asked all members to draft their own letter of one page, maximum, encompassing a heartfelt plea in favor of the James Jones stamp. Member Mitchell Robin suggested conducting a referendum on the Society's Web page to determine the strength of the support behind the effort. Member Damon Rarey suggested that the War Orphans Network would be a powerful force behind the effort and said he would forward the group's address to Mason.

Judy Everson announced that there is no nominee this year for the George Hendrick Research Award, but suggested that a book on the Handy Writers Colony now at Southern Illinois University Press may be considered for the award in 2000. The book was written by George Hendrick, Helen Howe and Don Sackrider.

In the absence of Membership Committee chair Kathy Stillwell, secretary Margot Nightingale reported that the Society membership now numbers 278-40 more than at the time of the 1998

symposium last November. Four members have been dropped (three because of death). Two members-Kevin Heisler and Melvin Walthall-have become life members. The memberships of 48 have expired. Each will be sent an "overdue" notice with his or her next newsletter and, unless the dues are paid, all those who are more than six months in arrears will be dropped from the roster.

President Ray Elliott announced a committee of Claude-Marie Lane, Kevin Heisler, Kaylie Jones, Don Sackrider and Judy Everson to study the possibility of holding a Society symposium in Paris in 2000 or 2001. Since the Society bylaws state that the symposium must be held in Robinson, Ill., at least once every three years, a discussion was held on the possibility of suspending that bylaw in order to hold symposia in Paris, France, and Urbana, Ill., in the next two years.

Member Dave Nightingale spoke in opposition to the proposal, saying he feared that an easy move away from the mandate of the bylaws would mean a pulling away from the concept of holding regular symposia in the home-base of Robinson. "I believe that Paris is good for a Society trip, but not for the symposium," he said.

Michael Lennon disagreed. "If we get the chance to go to Paris and to the University of Illinois in the next two years, we should do so," he said.

"We would obviously go back to Robinson. The Society was founded there and has strong ties there. But we must have the leeway to take advantage of the opportunities that come along."

Judy Everson suggested considering the trip to Hawaii taken by a number of Society members in 1995 as a model, since the trip was open to any Society member, but it did not serve as the year's annual symposium. "It was of great educational and cultural value," Everson said. "The Paris trip could be considered in the same context."

Under the category of Old Business, President Elliott announced that the city of Robinson has approved the installation of signs at the city limits which will state the connection of James Jones with the town.

Dwight Connelly reported that a plaque will be installed in the Clark County Courthouse at Marshall, Ill., outlining the history of the Handy Writers Colony in that town.

President Elliott announced that the University of Illinois Press will re-issue the book *James Jones: A Friendship* by Willie Morris, with a forward written by Winston Groom.

Jerry Bayne, chair of the Nominating Committee, announced that Patricia Heaman has resigned from the Board of Directors. He moved that Tony Williams, associate professor of English at Southern Illinois University, be nominated to fill the opening on the board, and that board members whose terms are expiring-Judy Everson, Maxine Zwermann, Richard King, Warren Mason, Michael Mullen, Jerry Bayne and Margot Nightingale-be re-elected to the board for a three-year term expiring in 2002. Michael Lennon seconded the motion, which was approved. Bayne then announced the slate of officers for re-election: Ray Elliott, president; Don Sackrider,

vice president; Margot Nightingale, secretary; and presented himself for election to the post of treasurer, from which Juanita Martin is retiring. The motion to elect was seconded by Judy Everson and passed by the membership.

President Elliott named Dave Nightingale, Don Sackrider, Judy Everson and Jerry Bayne to the Strategic Planning Committee for the Society with a mandate to meet within the next two years.

Vanessa Faurie moved that the meeting be adjourned. Jerry Bayne seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 9: 45 a.m.

--Margot Nightingale
Secretary