

# 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 2609 N. High Cross Rd., Urbana, IL 61802 or [tales@soltec.net](mailto:tales@soltec.net) .

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The James Jones Literary Society  
<http://rking.vinu.edu/j.htm>

Online information about the James Jones First Novel Fellowship

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## 2000 Symposium Oct. 28 At University Of Illinois In Urbana

Details for the annual James Jones Literary Society Symposium to be held Oct. 28, 2000, at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign are in progress. The working theme of the symposium is "James Jones, his World War II novels and the University of Illinois Connection."

Long-time Illinois English professor and first president of the Society George Hendrick, who recently retired from the university and is continuing his own writing, is well known for his Jones scholarship. He recently learned that Southern Illinois Press has accepted the book, *The*

*Colony*, which he has co-authored with former Handy Writers Colony member Don Sackrider and Jones' Robinson friend Helen Howe.

Hendrick's earlier work on Jones included a collection of letters called, *To Reach Eternity: The Letters of James Jones*. One of the Society's founders, the George Hendrick Research Award was established in his honor. The last winner of the award was Steven Carter for the book, *James Jones: An American Literary Orientalist Master*, published by the University of Illinois Press, which is also re-issuing Willie Morris' *James Jones: A Friendship* in February 2000.

On display at the October symposium will be the original and unexpurgated manuscript of *From Here To Eternity* and the original manuscript of *The Pistol*, both in the UI Library Rare Book collection, and other papers given to the library by Gloria Jones. The documentary, *James Jones: From Reveille to Taps*, co-produced by Society board member J. Michael Lennon when he was a faculty member of what is now the University of Illinois at Springfield, will be shown in conjunction with the exhibit.

For some entertainment, we hope to arrange for some World War II-era music performed by a few WWII veterans who know the music and can speak about its role at that time in history with which Jones and much of his writing are so closely associated. These veterans are the founders of a Dixieland jazz band formed in the late 1960s called Medicare 7, 8 or 9 that played on the Illinois campus during the tension-filled times of student demonstrations and protests against the Vietnam War.

The rest is still a work-in-progress.

Holding a symposium in Paris, France, has not been ruled out, and something could still be worked out for the Hawaii-type trip of a few years ago as past president and board member Judy Everson suggested on Long Island last summer. American University President Michael Simpson has indicated the university is interesting in hosting a Jones symposium. We've received some interesting proposals for a program there, and two literature professors from the university have expressed interest. Several board members have indicated they would go to Paris, and it's likely that a number of other people from the States would attend.

The Society will be back in Robinson for the 2001 symposium because bylaws require a symposium there at least once every three years. It's also the 80th anniversary of Jones' birth, the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor and the 50th anniversary of the release of *From Here To Eternity*.

Sounds like an interesting day already. I hope we'll also be able to celebrate the issuance of a James Jones commemorative stamp in Robinson at that time, too.

Please make plans to attend the next James Jones Literary Society Symposium Oct. 28 on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus and pass along any suggestions for the program content.

**-- Ray Elliott, President**

## 1999 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS SERIES -- Joseph Heller

*Editor's Note: When Joseph Heller finished his comments at the James Jones Literary Society Symposium at the Southampton Campus of Long Island University last June, he said, "All right, I'll see you here next year." But, sadly, the **Catch 22** author died Dec. 12. Because it's "all over" for him, Heller's remarks at the 1999 symposium are the first in the series of the distinguished speakers' edited comments to be published:*

In talking about James Jones, I remember the remark of Irwin Shaw. They were very close friends for decades, lived in Paris together. I think Shaw induced Jim to break his leg skiing. But this (remark) had to do with toward the end, and the novel was *Whistle*. Jones had asked Irwin to read it to check the accuracy of events in the military in World War II, I believe, in Europe.

Irwin was talking to me and he said, "You know how Jim is. I told him this episode could not possibly happen the way he did it, in the military. And Jim said to me, hard-headed, "It could happen because I want it to happen."

It is also known that Jim liked his own language, and occasionally he committed an error in grammar, an imperfection, and he would not pay attention to the language. It was the way he thought and the way he talked and the way-it was supposed to be his personal expression.

I was a latecomer to the circle of friends of Jones and Gloria and Kaylie, although our paths did cross a number of times without either one of us realizing it until we'd been out here (Long Island) again and became fairly good friends.

Our paths first crossed back in 1948. It had to do with his first significant published short story and mine. *The Atlantic Monthly*, in 1948 some time, published a story of mine called *Castle of Stone*, and they published a story of his called *The Temper of Steel*. I didn't know about him; he didn't know about me. *The Atlantic Monthly* at that time would publish two short stories in every issue called Atlantic Firsts. They were ostensibly first very short stories brought by young writers, and mine was chosen to be one. The first story his was. Every six months, *The Atlantic Monthly* awarded a prize-might have been as much as \$1,000 or \$1,200-to the Atlantic First story that they thought was best for that period. I didn't win it; he didn't win it. And I'd like to think that whatever author who did win it is unfamiliar to our faces and to everyone here.

Along about that same time, our paths crossed again. He spent the summer in New York City. He attended NYU-New York University. I was a student at the same time, and I studied there for three years. When we met out here and reminisced, he told me about that. He said he thought that it was the loneliest period of his life. He was in New York City, he knew nobody, he was not well-known.

It's New York City. And in case you don't know, it's a very tough city to live in, for men and for women. It's not easy to make friends-it's almost as difficult as making friends in East Hampton. If you don't have them to begin with, you're not going to make any. And I thought when we talked, it's a pity that we hadn't met then because I was very much at home in New York, and I possibly could have made the experience more joyful for him.

It is almost odd that we could have been in the same creative writing class there, because in my three years at NYU, I took a course in creative writing every semester. We could have been in the same class.

But in getting ready to prepare my remarks today, I realized had we met then, we would not have gotten along. He was a very principled model, I would say, an almost puritanical man from the Midwest and I was a shifty opportunist. I was a smart-ass Jew from Coney Island. And I think that was the difference in personality, and even though we became very friendly and talked frankly to each other, I was always aware of the difference in personality and character. In most ways, he had a much better character than I had. I'm being sincere when I say that. Even those two anecdotes I mentioned about with Irwin Shaw and his reluctance to change language would indicate he had a very strong sense of mission and a very strong sense of himself.

We next didn't meet, but I was next aware of James Jones in 1951 with the publication of *From Here To Eternity*. The success of that is almost incomprehensible to young people. I do not think it could happen again today in literature to an American author, to publish a book, get extremely good reviews, make a lot of money and almost overnight become a national, and then an international, celebrity and personality. It happened to Norman Mailer a few years before. It happened to James Jones. Overnight. People had no idea what he looked like, but everyone was aware of James Jones and the novel, *From Here To Eternity*.

About '50 or '51, I thought it was time for me to write a novel. I had a few short stories published, I was almost 30-years-old, and I had started writing a novel; and I had a feeling I had very little experience to draw on. So, if I got to write a novel, it should be about my world experience. Also I think, unlike James Jones, I could not see myself spending more than two years writing a novel. If I wrote a novel, I wanted to finish it quickly and have it published quickly.

So I had written 30, 40 or 50 pages of the novel and then I read *From Here to Eternity* and I said, "No chance of that." This is the true story. I did not have the vocabulary. I didn't have the patience. I didn't have the knowledge. I didn't have the talent. I didn't have the intensity or interest that any respectable novelist would have to have in order to go to work and I threw those pages away. I thought I threw them away, but recently I think somebody had them and gave them away to a library. I'd like to buy them back and destroy them.

There was nothing I could add to war literature that was not in *From Here To Eternity* and had not been produced before by Norman Mailer and a very excellent novel-and it's been forgotten now-by John Horne Burns, *The Gallery*, about the European war. If I am going to write it and have something to say and something to do, I had to have something that was distinctively my own. So whatever novel that was I put away. I read *From Here to Eternity*. I read it a second time as soon as I finished. The characters are outstanding. It is a monumental work.

Next time Jones and I got together-we still hadn't met, but we got together-was some time in late summer or early fall 1961. I finished the novel, *Catch 22*. It was going to be probably published that October. Unbeknownst to me-I couldn't have done it anyway-the publicity people at Simon & Schuster sent a copy of the galleys to Europe. And to their amazement a telegram came back

after a few weeks saying-it was signed by Art Buchwald, and he said, "I liked the book very much," in more extravagant words than that, "and so does James Jones and Irwin Shaw."

Well, publicity people being publicity people-and that I think is one of the things that contributes to depression and difficulty of successful writers is that their success is publicized so widely that everyone expects another work that is even better than the first- they contacted Jones and Irwin Shaw to see if they would write a statement which could be used in the lining of the book, and Jim Jones came back with a great statement which immediately caused them to redesign the jacket of *Catch 22* and put the part from James Jones on it. So if for no other reason, I would be eternally attached to and devoted to James Jones. My experience taught me a few things. My impression is that American novelists are generally very generous to each other. At least when a new novelist comes along with a first novel. ... .

About a year or two after that, we met for the first time. And that was in Paris, and it was coincidental. I was there doing something with a foreign publication. I ran into another novelist who was better-known than I at the time. His name was John Phillips. Probably you don't know the name now. He was the son of John Marquand, and he published a novel that was a best seller under the pseudonym of John Phillips because he wished to avoid comparison with his father. And John said to me, "What are you doing tonight?" I said, "Nothing. I am alone in this city. I don't know anybody, and I'd like to meet someone like Marilyn Monroe." (A joking reference to Budd Schulberg's anecdote earlier about Jones in New York City describing the woman he'd like to meet just before Budd introduced him to Gloria Mossolino) He said, "Well listen, I am going for drinks with James Jones and Gloria. Why don't you come along with us?" I said, "I haven't been invited." He said, "That doesn't matter with them." So he picked me up and, coincidentally, a man I went to college with, who was something like 40 years older than I. He was a man who was a well-known song writer, lyricist, made a lot of money, decided when he was 60 or so that he wanted a college education. His name was Mitchell Parish. He wrote the lyrics for "Stardust" and "Deep Purple" and many other things. Good money. He was a very fussy old man, too. Very much unlike me and unlike the crowd he found himself with that night.

So John Marquand Jr. took us over to the Jones' establishment, which was on the *Ile St-Louis* apparently. And I walked in and I was introduced and welcomed right away and expressed my gratitude to Jim ... and started drinking. I don't know who else came in. And not till six or seven o'clock the next morning did I find myself back at my hotel with the 60-year-old man, Mitchell Parish. It was a fantastic evening that I don't think I'll ever forget.

From (the Joneses)-I don't know how it happened-from there, I was in a cab going from one night club restaurant to another. In one of them, we met Hazel Scott, who was a very good friend of Budd (Schulberg). We met a woman who was a very famous French actress who was married to Yves Montand-Simone Signoret. She walked in, there were introductions. ... Everybody liked to talk. ... I'm drinking and Jim is drinking, and at one point a record came on-I think it was Billie Holiday, "God Bless the Child"-and Jim began to cry. I don't know why, but it was an indication of this great emotional ocean that was inside him. That calmed down. Then about six in the morning, I'm in a part of Paris, *Les Halles*. The truckers were bringing food in, and I was in a taxi with Gloria and Mitchell Parish. We get there, Jim is there with a few other people and it looks like a big fight is about to break out, which it was. Truckers were there with their hooks

and Jim-they were muttering to each other ominously. What had happened, he had come earlier with Hazel Scott, who was very beautiful and black, and the French-not knowing they spoke English-made uncomplimentary remarks about them. And Jim is not a person you would take on.

I remember something Norman Mailer had written-I forget where-but he said if he ever came to a fight in a barroom, the one he would like to have on his side would be James Jones. As this went on, I nudged James and reminded him that when it comes to a fight, I'm not going to be much help. And neither is Mitchell Parish. He laughed at that and then things calmed down, and we wound up at my hotel at seven in the morning. I decided I'm never going to their house again.

A year or two after that, we were in New York City and both on the same television program. It was an afternoon program, two other people there. He was very nervous. He said he hated doing that, which was probably true. He didn't know if he'd be able to speak or do what. I said, "I'll speak for you. I'm pretty good at talking." And I said, "Let's go have a few drinks, we got some time." So we went to a bar and we had a few drinks. We got on the program; nobody else could get a word in. And we're still virtual strangers to each other.

In 1974, I found myself down here in Bridgehampton for the summer. In 1981, I moved here permanently and have been here ever since. Shortly after that, the Joneses left Paris and came here. They rented a house in Sagaponack. Gloria, James, Kaylie and their son, Jamie. And as soon as they moved here, it was just like Paris. It seems to me every afternoon and every night they had an open house for anybody they knew. I don't think either one of them ever knew how many people would be sleeping over at their house. Somebody showed up and said, "Where can I sleep?" They said, "OK upstairs, downstairs or what." And their lunches and dinners and parties!

It was then that Jim and I became fairly good friends. We're approximately the same age. He would confide certain things to me. I would confide certain things to him, and we would go to cocktail parties together. Gradually he stopped coming and then he told me why. He had had some kind of heart trouble, evidently a heart attack and that became one of the reasons for moving back here. I think the drinking was something he was warned not to do. And he said, which I found to be true, "If you are not drinking, cocktail parties are impossible." And being with people who are drinking is impossible. The pace of conversation is different, the levels of hilarity are different. You'll smile at something, they were already laughing. I was still drinking, so I still enjoyed them.

I remember one conversation, and I liked it so well that I put it into my biography I published a year ago. He was telling me about his father and his mother was suffering heart troubles. It seemed to be something genetic in the family. Eventually, he had, I think, congestive heart failure, and his mother had it, too. And at a certain point, he said to me, "How are your parents?" And I said, "Mine have been dead awhile." Very grimly he said to me, "You're lucky." And very grimly I nodded and I said, "I know what you mean." And I think everybody here who has had that experience of watching a parent decline in health will know it's a very painful spot. And I did put that in to the book because again it showed a level of understanding between the two of us.

I have no idea how Jim felt politically, but my sense is he and I would disagree completely if we had ever had a talk about things. I think on the subject of race, we would coincide. I can't imagine he would be bigoted against black people, but other than that, I think he would be without sentiment and without sentimentality.

The last memory I have of my experience with James Jones was out here at Bridgehampton. It was a memorial service for James. He had died. He died of congestive heart failure. Irwin Shaw had come from Europe to be with him, with others. I remember one piece of conversation: Irwin walked in and Jim looked at him and said, "Irwin, you look worse than I do." He was in the hospital. And Irwin said, "Well, I've been drinking and you haven't."

And another thing-I was told this-dur-ing his last days in the hospital he started drinking because he knew, he knew he was to pass. He was going to pass anyway, he might as well do something he enjoyed doing very much. The memorial service was held in Bridgehampton, the big church there. It was a day as hot as this one is going to be. There were hundreds of people there, including myself and my first wife. It was the most touching memorial service I'd ever been to. I confess I have not been to many; I try to avoid them.

Willie Morris, another very close and old friend of Jim Jones, a Southerner, a gentleman, a very gentle gentleman came. He and Jim Jones, they would go off on trips visiting Civil War battlefields. He had arranged for the government to send the official bugler from Arlington Cemetery to come there and play taps at the service.

Irwin Shaw gave a speech, and of course in his speech, his voice was choked up so awful you know he was holding back sighs. And then what I remember most was William Styron, also a very, very close and long friend who came here. There was a period that I would read about when William Styron and James Jones and Norman Mailer were very close friends, and one of them said to another, "Isn't it wonderful that we're together? We're the three best young novelists in the country." And I would not disagree with that. Nobody else would disagree at that time.

But Styron was there, and I remember the way he began his speech. The first words, and this I will never forget because when I die I think it is what I want someone to say at my memorial service, I'd like to begin that way. It began this way, "Well, Jim, it's all over." And then he gave his speech about their relationship and about Jones' literary career and was extremely, extremely moving and very touching. I think you'll hear William Styron speak this afternoon; he is one of the most eloquent speakers I've ever heard in my lifetime. "Well, it's all over, Jim," has to do with Jim as a physical being. It's not all over for James Jones. The fact that we're here today. . .

James Jones is an established literary figure. He's a monumental figure, a novelist. I remember him best for *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line*-among the best war literature of Americans. Probably for this reason: I think it is one of the few war books written by somebody who was there, in the military and in combat. Most of our other war books are not. Stephen Crane was not in the Civil War. A host of others. Kurt Vonnegut was in combat for maybe five or six days and most of his war experience has to do with being a prisoner of war. My experience overseas was nine or 10 months in combat, coming and going before being replaced, and then I was back in the States and out of the Army before the war in Japan was even over.

I read no war literature like (Jones') until the literature of Vietnam, fiction and non-fiction, books written by people who were there and very gifted writers who were extraordinary, and it is unlike the fiction of World War I and unlike the fiction of World War II. Just to make *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line* made war literature unlike what we were used to.

My most recent and tacit memory of James Jones will be today, on this occasion. I'm very happy to be here.

### **7th Annual First Novel Award Presented to Louise Wareham**

The James Jones Literary Society has awarded its \$3,000 First Novel Fellowship Award for 1999 to Louise Wareham, 34, of New York City. Wareham, who was born in New Zealand and moved to the United States at the age of 12, has completed her first novel, *Since You Ask*, over the past six years.

"It is a very powerful story," said Michael Lennon, a professor of English and vice president of academic affairs at Wilkes (Pa.) University and a member of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award Selection Committee.

Wareham's novel was chosen from among 472 entries in the 1999 competition. In 1993, the Society inaugurated the annual award to be given to an American author of a first novel in progress "to honor the spirit of unblinking honesty, determination and insight into modern cultures as exemplified by the late James Jones, author of *From Here to Eternity* and other prose narratives of distinction."

The newest Fellowship winner is a 1987 graduate of Columbia College in New York and also studied at Canada's Humber School for Writers. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry* magazine. She worked as a reporter since age 15 in New York City and New Zealand and was a senior editor and travel writer at *Yachting* magazine when she left journalism to work on her novel and her poetry writing. She is currently employed as a part-time assistant at Union Theological Seminary.

"It is an honor to receive an award in the name of James Jones," Wareham said. At least half of the winners of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship have found publishers for their novels, including 1994 winner Mary Kay Zuravleff, author of *The Frequency of Souls*; 1995 co-winner Rick Bass, author of *Where the Sea Used to Be*; 1996 winner Greg Herbek, author of *The Hindenburg Crashes Nightly*; and 1997 winner Leslie Schwartz, author of *Jumping the Green*.

Other members of the selection committee besides Lennon were Patricia Heamon of Wilkes University, author Kaylie Jones of New York City and her husband, Kevin Heisler. Kaylie Jones, the daughter of the author for whom the award is named, currently teaches fiction writing at the Long Island University Southampton College campus and has her own latest book, *Celeste Awakening*, coming out in April.

The James Jones Literary Society is based in Robinson, Ill., where Jones was born and raised.

-- Margot Nightingale, Secretary

### 1997 Jones First Novel Winner Called 'Impressive Newcomer'

Leslie Schwartz's *Jumping the Green* (Simon & Schuster, 1999) was a work-in-progress in 1997 when it received the James Jones Literary Society's award for the best first novel. Schwartz worked quickly to complete the novel which had begun as a short story.

"I actually think it's much easier to write a novel," she has said, "because, quite simply, you have more room to negotiate the plot and the characters."

About the origin of *Jumping the Green*, Schwartz remarks, "I am truly a product of the Seventies. I grew up in a rich suburb with drunks, wild abandon, the specter of adults snorting coke then taking a spin on the tennis courts in front of their fabulous homes. ... There was this weird mixture of pathos and horror growing up in suburbia during the Seventies. It was a generation balancing on the cusp of psychotherapy and political correctness. ... It was an era wedged between hope and cynicism. If I had to sum it up in one quick sentence, I would say I grew up in that envelope of time just *after* everything was good but *before* everything got bad. It was out of this strange schizophrenia that Louise (the central character in the novel) came to life."

In an interview Schwartz explains why Louise engages in an S/M relationship after the murder of her sister: "I simply liked the irony in the idea that Louise *thinks* the bondage sets her free. Although, for a brief time, the S&M does free her because whenever Zeke ties her up, she feels herself mentally and emotionally disappearing, in the long run it fails her. What works temporarily for Louise is that the physical pain annihilates the mental anguish of her grief. The drinking offers the same temporary balm because it has the effect of taking away what's happening in her emotional terrain. But as with any self-destructive behavior, the 'drug' wears off after awhile ... it stops working. So when Louise finally sets her installation on fire, she has, in one symbolic gesture, admitted that the bondage and the drinking can no longer keep her from pain. Only then can she begin to heal, the hope in this novel springs from the very idea that until we reach the point where we are almost breakable, we can not break free of the things that *truly* hold us in bondage."

*Kirkus Reviews* calls Schwartz "an extraordinarily impressive newcomer" and the work itself "an intriguingly subtle treatise on sex and death and the shadow companion of love."

The readers for the James Jones Literary Society's First Novel Fellowship Award each year go through hundreds of manuscripts looking for such impressive newcomers as Leslie Schwartz.

-- George Hendrick

### An Old Friend Reconnects

I was just banging around in MS Encarta encyclopedia for the first time and, lacking any predetermined destination, typed in "James Jones."

That was two hours ago!

Fifty years ago Jim and Lowney and their Spartan trailer were my next door neighbors in Leahy's Trailer court on Summer Avenue in Memphis, Tenn.

Jim had a crazy routine. He arose, made a pot of "hobo" coffee, sat down at the typewriter and stayed there until noon. Sometimes a chapter, occasionally only a few lines emerged.

Each week he made seven one-pound jars of beef stew, seven one-pound jars of Jell-o. Each day of the week he consumed one of each for his noon meal.

I was a G.I. student, in school until 1 p.m. After school we'd pool our resources and split a bottle of beer or go out to the golf course and practice yoga. At 4 o'clock we returned to the trailer park, mixed a large pitcher of martinis, made a large salad, and Jim would read the product of his day's efforts to Lowney and me while the martinis disappeared.

I took him to the airport for his trip to New York to pick up the check for the first eight chapters (of *From Here To Eternity*). When the book was published, the picture on the dust cover bore my credit line, as did the pictures in *Life*, *Time*, *Saturday Review* and *Editor and Publisher*. Although the name is actually spelled with two Ts, no editor was ever prone to accept that fact so the credits are in the name of Pat Meara.

By the time it hit the book stores, I was the staff photographer for the Santa Fe New Mexican. Jim and a gentleman from Scribner's drove out to Santa Fe, spent a few days with me and presented me with a copy of the presentation edition with the inscription, "Patt, Memories of Memphis, Shades of Santa Fe, Jim" on the fly leaf.

The last time I talked to him, he said, "You crazy son of a bitch, wherever you go, or I go, whatever I write, look for yourself. You'll be in there some place."

I retired from the Department of Communications Arts at the University of Wisconsin at the age of 42, moved to the Caribbean, worked for the St. Thomas Daily News for about six months, taught scuba for a year and a half on shore, obtained my captain's papers and ended 23 years in the islands as captain of the 63-foot schooner, *Victorius*. We took divers and others for one-week (or longer) charters through the Caribbean.

Jim became the renowned writer, I lived out his dreams.

At 76 and living in Florida, I heard that Gloria is still alive and living in the Miami area. Could this be true? I'm looking for nothing, just thought someone besides me, might find all of this a bit interesting.

**-- Captain Patt Meara, Florida**

*Editor's Note: Gloria Jones is indeed still alive, although she no longer lives in the Miami area. Captain Meara (Me-ray) later sent a photo of the trailer park sign that is shown here in his next*

*correspondence and relayed more interesting information about when he and James Jones knew each other. Some of that follows:*

"I first met Jim when I was returning from school one afternoon and saw my trailer being towed down Summer Avenue by a silver jeep. I cut them off and forced them into a Shell station, went over and asked the driver what the hell he thought he was doing.

"He said he was taking it to a safe parking place (yeah, right), that a water main had burst and the water was almost up to the floor of my trailer. I made him get out of his jeep, into mine, and drove back to the trailer park. Needless to say, it was true. I bought him a drink and from there a much-treasured friendship developed.

"During the time mentioned in this letter I had the photographic concession at the Plantation Inn in West Memphis, Ark. It was an all-night roadhouse, and Jim used to hang out there with me on weekends. I wish I still had the photo of him sitting at our table with a bandage on his forehead. It resulted from him impeding the trajectory of a thrown beer bottle when a free-for-all erupted on the other side of the room.

"Caroline and I were in Memphis this (past) October and were surprised to see that not only is Leahy's Trailer Park still there, so is the original sign from 50 years ago. Just for kicks, here's a shot of it-sans the bright paint and neon of 50 years ago."

## **Press Commemorates Morris Life And Work With New Releases**

The University Press of Mississippi in Jackson already publishes three books by James Jones' longtime friend (as well as the Society's), the late Willie Morris: *North Toward Home*; *After All, It's Only a Game*; and *The Courting of Marcus Dupree*. The press is also planning to issue a number of other titles commemorating the life and work of one of the state's favorite sons.

Titles soon to be released include *Remembering Willie* (April 2000), the paperback *Twenty-seven Eulogies and Tributes*, *Conversations with Willie Morris* (May 2000), the paperback *Twenty-five Fascinating Interviews*, and in the fall of 2000 the father-and-son collaboration from Willie Morris and David Rae Morris of photographs and words capturing Mississippi.

## **Literary Musings of Interest**

I've just finished rereading James Jones' *The Thin Red Line*-his epic novel of World War II combat depicting the U.S. Army's capture of Guadalcanal from the Imperial Japanese Army. Fascinating. Disgusting. Horrifying. Pitiful. Obscene. Humorous. Engaging. All the above, and more. Though Gen. (William) Sherman bequeathed us the pithy maxim of War being Hell, I doubt that any other novelist has more fully evoked the sheer terror and insanity of the combatant's experience of Hell. Jones enters the young infantrymen's hearts and minds in all their sordid vice and virtue.

I read this novel the first time nearly 20 years ago and passed it on to my father afterwards. He later angrily castigated me for reading and recommending something so offensive. Though he

didn't elaborate upon his feelings, I now imagine he was deeply offended by the book's graphic realism in depicting what frequently amounted to feckless bestiality perpetrated in the waging of his generation's "good war."

I now find his response somewhat amusing and enjoy imagining Jones himself being delighted in the offense his book provoked in a noncombatant. I took as a major theme of the book the incredible disparity of the combatant's experience of and motives for waging war, and the sanitized Hollywood version propagandized back home in the states. In a semi-functional democracy, must war-waging by necessity be honey spun and sugarcoated?

-- **Pat Gariety, Dolores, Colo.**

*Editor's note: More of Gariety's comments on Jones and his work will be shared in future issues of the newsletter. Much of what he had written was in advance of the release of the Terrence Malick-directed film of **The Thin Red Line**. He wrote, "My interest in Jones' work is long-standing. ... My writing is mostly informal journal musings. I'm prompted to submit them, not so much out of any hope they'll be published, but rather from a desire to correspond and share with anyone else who harbors an appreciation for the work for this now generally forgotten American novelist."*

## **Panel On Jones Planned For Cinema Studies Conference**

A panel called, "James Jones: *The Thin Red Line* and Cinematic Adaptation," is scheduled for the opening day of the 2000 Society for Cinema Studies Conference to be held March 9-12 at Chicago's Congress Plaza Hotel.

JJLS board member Tony Williams of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, will chair the panel, which includes Brian O'Leary of Kutztown University, "Narrative Agency in *From Here To Eternity*: A Linguistics-based Interpretation"; Leger Grindon of Middlebury College, "Codes of Violence, Modes of Suffering: The Reluctant Boxer in *From Here To Eternity*"; Donald E. Staples of the University of North Texas, "Reader vs. Spectator on *The Thin Red Line*"; and Joan McGettigan and David Whillock of Texas Christian University, "Film Realities and Audience Expectations: Reading History in(to) *The Thin Red Line*."

## **Tropic Lightning At Schofield Barracks Includes Jones Exhibit**

When James Jones was in the Army, he was a member of the 25th "Tropic Lightning" Infantry Division stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. The division was activated in 1941, just 10 weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. What was once the post library in Carter Hall is now the home of the Tropic Lightning Museum, which includes exhibits about Jones and *From Here To Eternity* (both the book and the movie).

The museum is located in the only lava rock structure on the post and was established in 1956. After a major renovation in 1991, the exhibits describe early Army life in Hawaii and the 25th Infantry Division's experiences during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The museum's archives also include Jones' Army record; articles about the novel, the barracks and the

filming that was done on location for the film; most of Jones' books; books about Jones; and a copy of the documentary script, *James Jones: Reveille to Taps*, co-produced by Society board member J. Michael Lennon and Jeffrey Van Davis.

## **Bookmark Your Society Web sites**

The James Jones Literary Society - <http://rking.vinu.edu/j.htm>

James Jones First Novel Fellowship - <http://wilkes.edu/~english/jones.html>

## **A Heideggerian State Of Mind**

A post-graduate student at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia contacted the Society through the Web site because her "thesis is a study of the two contemporary war films, *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line*," and she had some questions about the latter's adaptation from the James Jones novel.

"I haven't been able to find much on Terrence Malick," Michele North-Coombes wrote, "however, I do know that he has translated (Martin) Heidegger, which is one of the theoretical angles I am using. I am particularly interested in how Mr. Malick has adapted the novel into the screenplay and the reasons for omitting or selecting what he has. While I doubt that I will be successful in getting his input on this, I hope my thesis will nevertheless be a worthy one."

She later wrote that both she and her supervisor, Gary MacLennan, "were surprised at the Heideggerian connection":

"By pure coincidence, Gary was reading Heidegger as a separate interest. He has now read *The Thin Red Line* and *From Here To Eternity* because his interest in Jones has been awakened through seeing Malick's film. We were particularly intrigued by the differences between Jones' book and Malick's film. It was on this account we hoped to correspond with him.

"I must confess that I am more drawn to the transcendental aspects of the film; however, Gary feels that the rational thinking approach is what makes Malick's film truly original. We shall have to draw our own conclusions.

"I will be sure to keep you updated as my thesis progresses."

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