

KaCSFFS Newsletter

February, 2005
Volume XXIX Issue 2

Kansas City Science Fiction & Fantasy Society, PO Box 36212, Kansas City, MO 64111
- www.kcsciencefiction.org - 816-545-4765 -

March KaCSFFS Meeting Information

3rd Saturday of the Month,
February, 19th, 7 pm
The Writer's Place
3607 Pennsylvania
Kansas City, MO

ConQuest Meeting

Same Date

Same Location
3 pm

The **ConQuest** team will be sharing the Writer's Place facilities at 3 pm on this date with the members of the Stargazer group.

Girls Rule! – Boys Drool!

See the complete details on the Feminist Revolution in the secretary's minutes later in this newsletter. Wondering where the artwork is to commemorate this occasion? I got many suggestions on what the artwork could be for this newsletter but while the new Board of Directors is comprised of some beautiful, intelligent, talented, charming and h*rn*y dames, none of us are artists. I look forward to submissions.

The Directors Cut

By Ruth Lichtwardt

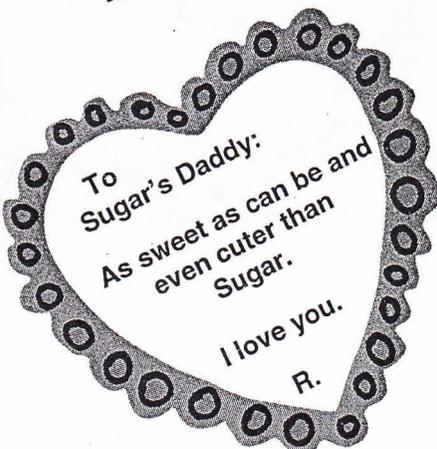
One of the really nice things about Kansas City is how easy it is to meet nice people, and for us fans, how many of those nice people turn out to be fans, too. There is so much that goes on in the KC area, from our own conventions to comicons to movies to bookstore groups that draw other people with interests like ours. Living in Lawrence as Bill and I do makes it easy to participate in a lot of the fannish activity that goes on in KC - although, as a friend has pointed out, it might also be Lawrence's proximity to KC that makes it so hard to sustain a local fan group.

However, Lawrence does have something that Kansas City doesn't: one of the most comprehensive collections of rare and seminal science fiction literature in the world. It's part of the Special Collections department at KU's Spencer Research Library, and it's there because of Jim Gunn and the Center for the Study of Science Fiction. Many of us in **KaCSFFS** know of the Center mostly through the annual Campbell Conference and the Sturgeon and Campbell Awards Dinner each July, but their mission to promote SF literature goes beyond that. People come from around the world to study the collection and participate in the workshops sponsored by the Center.

At our February 19 meeting, we'll have as our guests Kij Johnson, Chris McKitterick, and Lydia Ash, who work together with Jim Gunn on the Center's projects. They'll be telling us about what the Center does and how we Midwesterners came to have such a genre gem in our midst. It'll be a fun and interesting presentation, and they're looking forward to coming to **KaCSFFS** and meeting more KC fans.

And on an entirely different subject: it's been pointed out by The Great Paisley Himself, Jim Murray, that we are lacking a Con Chair for next year's **ConQuest**. If any of you brave folks have been contemplating taking on the mantle, this would be a good time to start giving it serious consideration. You know that, as always, you'll have plenty of willing, enthusiastic, and experienced volunteers, so please do think about it. See you at the meeting!

Ruth



January Meeting Minutes - Writer's Place: Meeting called to order at 7:15 by Cricket Beebe.

Agenda Item 1: Officer Elections. Nominations were as follows.

Director: Dennis Doms, Ruth Lichtwardt
 Treasurer: Sharlotte Dressler, Joe Myers
 Newsletter Editor: Tracy Majkol, Nancy Nutt
 Secretary: Sherri Dean.

Campaign Highlights from Dennis Doms for Director: Club needs new people to come in to help relieve burden/ burnout in established members. Proposed to resolve the not-for-profit status problem. General communication within club and public improvement. Draw in new members. Fundraising for a reason-charitable, public service oriented and literary. Background qualifications include having worked in NFP, supervisory positions, budget workings, technical projects. Why be director? To get in new people and ideas to lessen burden of same people having to do the same jobs. When asked favorite SF he said "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep" by Phillip K. Dick.

Campaign Highlights from Ruth Lichtwardt for Director: Choose a direction. Planned campaign for membership growth. Improve communication of members. Organization, dedicated members, willing volunteers. Possibility of starting a **KaCSFFS** West in Lawrence area. Find out why long term members have been quitting. Gather sub-groups/cliques for more club interaction. Background includes Book buyer, Campbell Conferences, writer's workshops, SFF Hall of Fame member, League of Women Voters President. Cited Jasper Fort (sic?), Terry Pratchett and Ray Bradbury as favorites.

Campaign highlights from Sharlotte Dressler for Treasurer: Background in accounts payable/receivables, bookkeeping, union work, knowledge of benefits packages.

Campaign highlights for Joe Myers for Treasurer: Time to start working more actively, become involved more. DST mutual fund handling experience.

Campaign highlights from Tracy Majkol for Newsletter Editor: Present editor, 2 years. Still enjoys, but admits some burnout. Feedback from members is good, will try to be timelier in getting out letter and maintain enjoyable reading.

Campaign highlights from Nancy Nutt for Newsletter Editor: Agrees with Tracy's ideas, fun news to read, warns members "If I don't get anything I'll make it up!"

Campaign highlights from Sherri Dean for Secretary: None, running unopposed. Ballots were distributed and voting done. Ballots counted during meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Discussion of MidwestCon by Margene Baum. Contact her if interested.

Agenda Item 3: Member health updates:

John Taylor reported that Patti Taylor fell, was admitted to Lifecare Center of Grandview. He requested a separate copy of the newsletter be sent to her there. He is working to get her back online, but she has plenty of activities to keep her going and she is using her wheelchair without assistance and seems to be feeling better. Good thoughts go out to the Taylors.

Ken Keller reported that Vince Koehler was released from the hospital on 12/30/04. His pneumonia was better, has had some additional intestinal surgery and is trying new drugs. There has been a report of cancer possibly in his lungs. Good thoughts go out to Vince and family at this time as well.

Agenda Item 4: Discussion of Lazer Rangers by David Sooby. Contact him if interested.

Agenda Item 5: Discussion of Book Talk group by Carol Doms. Contact her if interested.

Agenda Item 6: Conquest

-Request to purchase more easels and dry erase boards with markers. Cost found to be under the Board's discretionary amount. These will be stored and used for **KaCSFFS** and their events.

-Any problems with the **Conquest** hotel need to be addressed through Carol Doms.

-As always, volunteers are appreciated.

-Nominations for **Conquest's** charity of choice:

SFWA Medical Emergency Fund- helps authors with their medical bills in times of crisis. Our own Robin Bailey has benefited and thus nominated this charity.

Pollard-Licklider Clinic/ Erin is Hope Foundation- an educational/treatment program for Autistic children. It is NFP and they desperately need funds. Nominated by Jim Murray.

CBLDF, or the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund- a defense fund set up to aid in the legal battles of comic book writers, artists and even retailers against censorship and other lawsuits. They have been busier than ever 'thanks to' new government policies.

Agenda Item 7: Operation Paperback

12 boxes of books were received. Nancy Nutt, Tanya Holthouse, Don Mull, David and Sharlotte Dressler worked on getting 330 books sent to our troops. Books that were not able to be sent were taken to Half Price Book store where they will be redeemed for store credit toward more books. Now looking for volunteers to take over this amazing project. For details on the process, Google online for Operation Paperback.

Election Results:

Treasurer: Sharlotte Dressler
 Newsletter Editor: Nancy Nutt
 Secretary: Sherri Dean

And a dead even vote for Director! After more campaigning, a second vote resulted in the election of Ruth Lichtwardt as Director. Great race to everyone who ran, and good luck to the new Board.

Outgoing Director Cricket Beebe established that the new club registered agent would be Becky Rickart. Club meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sherri Dean (Taking notes at the request of Becky Rickart.)

The Coming by Joe Haldeman

By Carol Doms

Book Talk from January 24, 2005

Attendance: 10 Vote by Proxy - 1
 Who started the book – 6 Who finished it – 4
 Who will finish – 3 Who liked it - 3
 Who couldn't find the book to start/finish it? – 3
 Who didn't – 1 Neutral/Don't know. - 0

Onward to (group) comments: (NO Spoilers, I think)

Why didn't you like this book? I think it was a bit of "Big Name SF Author" disappointment for me. I felt like Haldeman phoned this one in, or had a contract obligation he had to fulfill...They are not all going to be "gems", even Big Name authors put out clunkers every now and then....That is true, and it has been awhile since we read any Haldeman, but the books in the past we discussed: Forever War, Forever Peace and None So Blind were books we enjoyed. I just felt like he really didn't have anything to say.

What I did like about this book was his (Haldeman's) use of mixing languages (Spanish & English) and the different Points of View (POV) for each chapter/character. It was interesting to see him use the different POVs to move the story forward...I think this book was written with enough clues throughout the story for the SF fans and yet it was an easy enough read for mainstream audience...It was a quick read, good for people with short attention spans....I think that is what I found frustrating about this book...You really don't get to know any of the characters or details...That is something I can get from watching TV shows, with books, I want more meat....

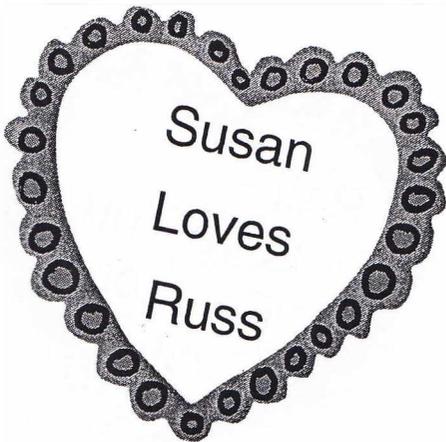
The only complaint I really had, is that I did not like the ending...What didn't you like about it?...Well, I can't say without spoiling it for those who haven't finished the book. I think the ending left as many questions as there were answers and depending on your POV that could be a good thing or bad...

I thought this was his most autobiographical of his writings. For example, Joe lives in Gainesville where the story takes place. He and his wife Gaye are professors, just like in the story. Joe likes to bike everywhere, shops at city market and likes to cook, just like one of the main characters. His main character has military experience; just like Joe...Well at least he didn't mention a war injury this time around. I remember we thought he did "over kill" mentioning the injury in his other stories....This may have been subconscious, but even the description of the house, is similar to Haldeman's house....Hmmm, Maybe he did phone this in as a contract obligation!

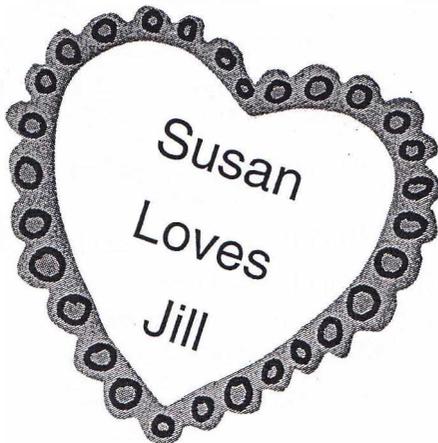
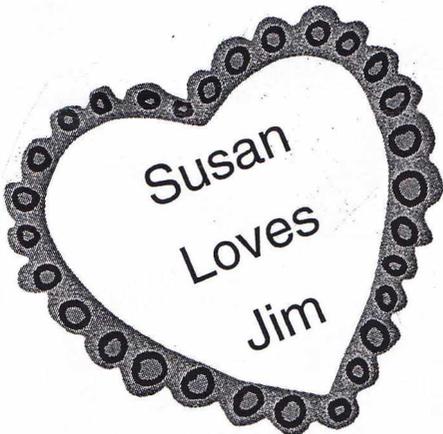
Hey wait a minute, I think I have read this book...It was that memorable, that you didn't remember that you read it?

Comments from our Proxy vote: What I liked best was the thinking out of what our society and culture might be like, especially Florida where it takes place, in the middle of the 21st century. Basically it rang true to me, especially the infusion of Spanish into common usage. I liked the way the President was a complete bimbo. I liked the sub-plot about homosexuality being illegal.

But I felt the book spent far too long on the build-up of the alien ship's arrival, and when it did come it was quite a let-down. Is that all there is? It's as if Haldeman eventually had a failure of nerve and couldn't come up with anything any better.



An aside to the poison pen postcard writer – 'Not a chance, pal. Save your postage That's not the kind of stuff I'll put in this newsletter.'



"Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest."

-- Mark Twain

Robert A. Heinlein Flight into the Future Project Contest

Submitted By Keith Stokes

The "Robert A. Heinlein Flight into the Future Project Contest" is a competition to encourage young international students and researchers in the field of space exploration. The competition will identify, support, and promote innovative projects by these researchers. Winning researchers will receive a cash award, a prize diploma, and international recognition of their work.

The first place award will be US\$3500. Two second place prize of \$1500 and three third place prizes of \$1000 each will also be awarded. Academic advisors of the winning teams will also receive a special award of \$1500, \$500, and \$300 respectively.

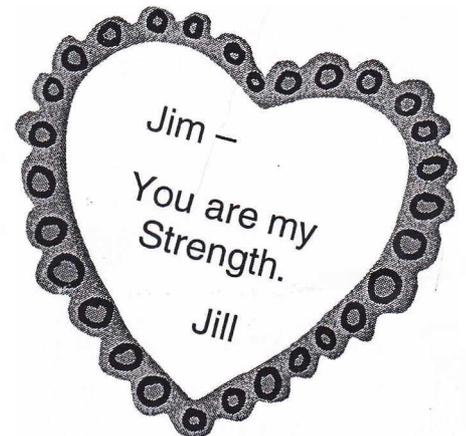
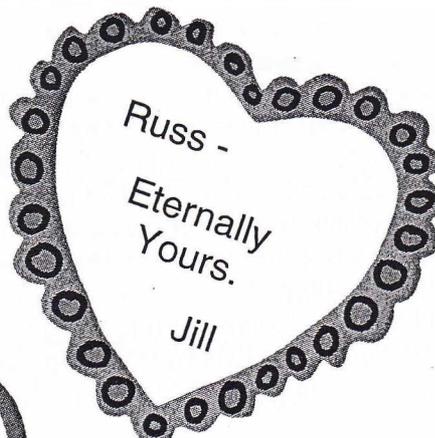
Created to honor the memory of renowned American author Robert A. Heinlein, the contest was established to forward the shared dream of a future of humankind expanding ever outward into space. The contest is being conducted by the Heinlein Prize Trust and assisted by the Russian Aviation and Space Scientific Innovation Educational Complex (RASSIEC). Further information can be found at: www.heinleincontest.info.

The competition is open to citizens from or students and post-graduate students at European, African, and Middle Eastern nations. All contest entrants must be less than 30 years old on July 7, 2005. Entries may be submitted by individual authors, or by teams of no more than three authors. Academic advisors may be associated with the development of the contest works.

Contest entries should include scientific, technical, and economic substantiation (business plan) of the proposed project. Entries must describe the peaceful use, and practical applications of the work in the field of space exploration. Entries will be judged by an international team of experts. The entered works will be judged on a basis of the novelty and originality of the proposal, the economic and social benefits, the technological substantiation and profundness of research, and the veracity and investment attractiveness of project.

Entries must be sent by May 14, 2005. Authors of the top ten entries will receive invitations giving them an opportunity to meet directly with the judging committee to discuss and evaluate their projects. Presentation of the top entries will be on July 6, 2005. Awards will be presented on July 7, 2005, the anniversary of the birth of Robert A. Heinlein.

The Heinlein Prize and the Robert A. Heinlein Flight into the Future Project Contest honor the memory of Robert A. Heinlein, best-selling American author regarded as one of the founders of modern science fiction, and of his wife Virginia.



Book Talk Selections.
Borders SF&F Literati
119th & Metcalf
4th Monday of the Month
7 pm

Feb 28th - *Tinker* by Wes
Spencer
Mar 28th - *Blade Dancer* by
S.L. Viehl
Apr 25th - *Time Traveler's
Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger
May 23rd - *Dragon Kin* by
"some local author, that no
one's heard of, Robin
Bailey" ;-)

Three charities were suggested at the January meeting for the club's charitable activities at ConQuest. This is the only submission received promoting any of them. Submitted by Steve Roberts who is running the charity this year.

If I were to plug one single charity for consideration, it would be the Pollard-Lickluder Clinic/Erin Is Hope Foundation..

Pollard-Lickluder Clinic provides speech and behavior therapy for children with autism and other communication disorders. The cost of therapy for children with these disorders is horrendous, averaging over \$100-\$150 an hour. With intense therapy during the ages of 3-8 all of these children benefit, most show some dramatic improvements, and fully half of them can "graduate" to real lives. But we're talking about a *minimum* of several hours of therapy a WEEK, 50 weeks a year, for four or five years. An annual bill for one of those can run \$75,000 or more. The average amount insurance will pay, IF it pays at all, is about \$2500-\$3000/year. Many insurers won't pay anything if you're transferring in, calling autism a pre-existing condition. Many simply won't pay on the grounds that autism is considered incurable. While it is incurable, it's not at all untreatable.

PL Clinic is staffed with professionals who work for less than market wages because they love their work, and the kids. It's NON-profit, as in sometimes it's really hard to make payroll. Sometimes they *don't* make payroll--yet surprisingly few of their people ever quit. They bill a quarter the "going rate," and I've never known Judy Pollard-Lickluder to EVER turn a bill over for collection. They simply bust their butts to serve as many kids as they can and still make ends meet. If they get a little ahead in the bank, they take in more patients. If you try to Google them, you won't get much. They live hand-to-mouth, and "non-profit" doesn't begin to describe them. They get not one dime in government grants or aid. Their tax-deductible fund-raising arm is the Erin Is Hope Foundation.

These people, and Judy Pollard-Lickluder in particular, are angels. I can't think of a better word. I know all this first-hand. My son Devin was a PL patient for five years. When I finally went under financially from the massive pile of medical bills that comes with an autism diagnosis and couldn't pay them anything at all, with over a year of therapy left to go, Judy said "Don't worry about it, we'll find a way." And they did, and I can't say enough good things about them.

You can see why I might object to working for (and donating pile\$ of material for) some charity that has lovely corporate offices and a multi-million dollar payroll. I already spend several hundred hours a year in community service of one kind or another, but I simply won't spend that time and effort on a major national that already has a big bankroll when I know how many worthy small organizations so badly need the funds and don't have huge PR staffs to raise it for them. I'm not knocking the Big Guys, but our few thousand dollars doesn't mean all that much to them. But it can mean one hell of a lot right in our own communities.

I went over this with Robin and Jeff last year when I agreed to take over the charity auction. I certainly don't insist that it go to MY charity (though the PL Clinic would be thrilled, is certainly worthy, and I'd like it on the list for consideration) but that it go to a good cause relevant to our communities, and that really needs it and could really use it. I worked and donated to the auction for the SF Hall of Fame for years, because it was a good cause that met those requirements. SFWA medical fund fits the script. Local literacy programs that scabble for funding. And so on. I know it's kind of a broad distinction, not a "bright line," but I think the drift is clear. Help our own people. Give where we live.

Is that clear enough?

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## Cool Links

Center for the Study of Science Fiction - <http://www.ku.edu/~sfcenter/index.html> - This is the org that Kij Johnson, Chris McKitterick and Lydia Ash will be presenting at the February meeting.

Kingdom of Loathing - <http://www3.kingdomofloathing.com/login.php?results=> adventurers as stick figures? On-line interactive game that is too funny for words.

Boing Boing, A Directory of Wonderful Things - <http://boingboing.net/> - can't add to much to that blurb, it kinda says it all.

A Photo A Day - <http://www.aphotoaday.org/index.html> - striking, topical, endearing.....all the words that can describe photographs belong to this site.

The Old Farmer's Almanac - <http://www.almanac.com/index.php> - who knew you could teach an old dog new tricks? They've been on-line for several years with old knowledge.

By n2

So here we are with a new Board. I'm sorry to say I shan't be at the February meeting to hear the comments, discussion, analysis and criticism of the changes to the newsletter. Friendship duties call me out of town on that weekend. A friend in need called on me and I didn't even think about saying 'No'.

And admittedly, it'll take awhile before I'm comfortable with the habit of attending the monthly meetings. I'm a firm believer in the fannish saying of 'When it's not fun anymore, stop doing it.' I didn't enjoy going to the meetings so I stopped going. I don't like going to Nichols Luncheonette at any time, I'd prefer to hang out at the Writer's Place and talk with other club members over a beer after the meeting. I'm not a debate team member and most of the long term discussions that occur on KDL I trash, not interested.

There are a lot of strong willed individuals in this club and we are all fond of sharing our opinions on the world around us. Just remember, compromise has gotten us this far and it will continue to take us further if we practice it. The new BOD will be suggesting changes in the coming year, keep an open mind when you hear them and do your best not to bring up the worst case scenario when an idea is suggested. We are pretty much decent folk on the BOD and we have the club's best interests in mind.

I'm your new editor and I approve of this message.



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**Annual Dues of KaCSFFS, Inc.**

For the general membership; dues are \$ 15.00 per year for the first adult member of a given household. Additional adult members at the same address may join for \$ 12.00.

Dues are payable at the Fiscal meeting in March.

One club newsletter is mailed to each household on the membership list. Additional members of that same household can pick up copies of the newsletter at the monthly meeting. Non-club members that choose to pay on a monthly basis will be charged \$ 2.00 per

meeting.

Send Payments to:

**KaCSFFS**

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Kansas City, MO 64171-6212



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