

## Online Science Fiction Book Club

### DRAFT OF Robert Heinlein Society Panel: Robert James, Marie Guthrie, Keith Kato, and Geo Rule, June 2018

*Dr. Robert James has been called the “Indiana Jones” of Heinlein studies, having tracked down numerous artifacts from Heinlein’s life which had either been lost or never known. His most famous find was the last remaining copy of Heinlein’s first unpublished novel “For Us, The Living,” which Scribners published in 2004, with an afterword by Robert James. Robert is presently examining and organizing about 15 boxes of Bill Patterson’s papers for The Heinlein Society.*

*Dr. Marie Guthrie is part of the English Department faculty at Western Kentucky University. Marie was the first person to be awarded a doctorate based on a dissertation on Heinlein. She is also the chair of The Heinlein Society’s Academic Committee, and the Editor In Chief of the recently revived the Heinlein Journal, an academic journal on Heinlein.*

*Keith G. Kato obtained his Ph.D. in plasma physics at the University of California, Irvine under the direction of SF author Gregory Benford. Keith began attending SF conventions in 1972, and since 1974 has been hosting his famous “Keith Kato Chili Party” at major SF conventions around the world. He is a Charter Member of The Heinlein Society and in 2014 was selected by the Board of Directors as THS’s fourth President. He was fortunate to meet Robert and Ginny Heinlein three times.*

*Geo Rule had the great good fortune to meet his wife, Deb Houdek Rule as a result of their common membership in a Heinlein fan group. Geo has authored, co-authored, or has been an editor on various online articles having to do with the works or history of Robert A. Heinlein. He currently serves as the Vice-President/Secretary to the Society.*

**Kevin Kuhn: Are there any plans to rewrite and publish "The Panki-Barsoom Number of the Beast"?**

**Robert James:** To the best of my knowledge, no. Heinlein already rewrote it, and I suspect the estate would look unkindly on any attempt to redo what has already been done. As for republishing it, I suppose that’s not impossible, but since anyone can buy a copy of the manuscript from the Heinlein Archives, then I’m not sure they would see the commercial viability of a published release. I suspect there might also be a concern over the confusion readers might have. But perhaps publishing a combined version of the two, with the original manuscript as a long appendix, might have academic value at the least.

**Kevin Kuhn: Are any new Movie or TV Series being discussed? As one of my first childhood sci-fi reads, I would particularly like to see a movie adaption of, "Tunnel in the Sky".**

**Keith Kato:** I was told by someone from the Trust just before leaving for the 2015 Spokane Worldcon that the movie based on “The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag” was in the can, but obviously not distributed yet. At the same time I was told casting for a re-make of “Starship Troopers” was underway as we spoke. SyFy Channel is allegedly doing an episodic version of “Stranger In A Strange

Land.” There was also some talk of Bryan Singer (“Superman Returns,” “X-Men”) being attached (though not specified as director) to a movie based on “The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress” with the title “Uprising.” It is not clear if Singer’s entanglement with “Me, Too” has put this project into hiatus.

**Matt Guse: I read Robert and Virginia were advocates of blood donation, why? Can you describe the scope and the impact of their activism?**

**Geo Rule:** Robert Heinlein was a “rare blood” himself and credited blood donors with saving his life during his health crisis of the early ‘70s. As a result, he and Ginny made it a mission of theirs to support and promote blood donation for the rest of their lives. They attended dozens of science fiction conventions in the early to mid ‘70s to promote blood drives at them, and often offered special incentives to anyone who donated (like donator-only book signings). At the 1976 Worldcon in his hometown of Kansas City, where he was Guest of Honor, he hosted an entire dinner/reception for blood donors at the con. He also extensively researched and published a non-fiction article “Are You a Rare Blood?” for the Compton Encyclopedia (at the time owned by the Britannica people) Yearbook of 1976.

**Carl Rosenberg: Would it be possible for someone to approach a publisher to reissue the collection The Past Through Tomorrow, which now seems to be out print? This collection (including the intro by Damon Knight) seems to me an important book in Heinlein’s work in particular and science fiction in general.**

**Keith Kato:** What RAH work is re-published (save a handful of titles held by the Butler Public Library), and by what publisher, is the purview of the Heinlein Prize Trust.

**Robert Matthew Knuckles: What were some of Heinlein’s favorite space colony and space travel proposals? For example did he know about and have an opinion on Gerard K. O’Neill’s space habitats, particularly the O’Neill Cylinder? Also, did he have favorite artists, like maybe Chesley Bonestell?**

**Keith Kato:** As to his fiction, he had stories with colonies on Venus, Moon, Mars, Jovian moon of Ganymede, the survival test planet of *Tunnel In The Sky*; and propulsion schemes of slower than light, faster than light, instantaneous transport, and generation ships. Those were fictional devices. RAH considered himself an engineer, who must honor both the laws of science and the laws of economics, not the whimsy of a plot device. I would guess he probably thought there were propulsion schemes in his lifetime that seemed preferable to try, but he also asserted “The Golden Age of Science has yet to begin” with the implication there would be schemes in the future unknown to him that would prove better than anything he knew. There is this Alcubierre-White “warp drive” scheme (I kid you not) that is being looked at even now, and who knows how that will turn out. The Heinlein Society has custody of three paintings that used to hang in the Heinleins’ home; we displayed them in the Art Show at the 2016 Kansas City Worldcon. One was a Moonscape (with tiny astronauts) by Chesley Bonestell; the second was a portrait of Nichelle Nicols as Lt. Uhura (part of a seven-painting commission of the original *Star Trek* cast; he made Nicols POTUS in *Expanded Universe*) by Frank Kelly Freas, and the third was a magazine cover by Fred Ludekins.

**Geo Rule:** He rather famously observed in conversation to G. Harry Stine that “Low Earth Orbit is halfway to anywhere in the solar system.” Somewhere in Expanded Universe there are his calculations for how much even a relatively low amount of constant boost drive would dramatically reduce travel time from point to point inside our solar system.

**Eva Sable: Did RAH have any opinion to share about Oberon Zell's Church of All Worlds?**

**Geo Rule:** Heinlein explicitly rejected the “guru” label whenever anyone tried to hang it on him, but the UCSC and online Heinlein archives do have some extended correspondence between RAH and the CAW folks, so he certainly knew about them and didn’t so much disapprove as had no interest in taking “credit” (or responsibility) for CAW. I’ve also had personal experience at a convention panel on Heinlein and polyamory within the last decade that that community takes the differences between the original published Stranger in a Strange Land version (heavily edited by RAH for size at request of his editors to the point of him calling parts of it “telegraphese”) and the “Uncut” (without really even a “usual” RAH final edit very seriously. For most of us the differences are about literary value –for some of them it’s a religious matter!

**Lee Russell: What would you say was the major theme running through Heinlein's stories?**

**Keith Kato:** Just IMHO, competence and personal responsibility for action.

**Geo Rule:** In addition to Keith’s answer, a definite desire to show you that at least in human relations there are no final victories (you always have to keep refighting battles –like slavery), there are no answers that are always and universally right every time. Starship Troopers is followed by Glory Road and The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, which show very different views of military service. The libertarian paradise of The Moon is a Harsh Mistress is a socialist hell by the time of The Cat Who Walks Through Walls. Slavery has transferred to the stars and must be defeated again in Citizen of the Galaxy. No final victories. Also, think for yourself, don’t sign up for gurus. And from the juveniles to everything else, education and continuing education (whether formal or informal) is a key to greater and greater adventures.

**Ed Newsom: This one's trivial, but I'd like to know if there's an approved way to sing "The Green Hills of Earth." At my very first convention, a filk singer pointed out it fit the tune, "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" and I've never been able to hear it any other way. I'd sincerely like to.**

**Keith Kato:** The late Dr. Jordin Kare and his wife Mary Kay Kare were noted and accomplished filksingers [sic] in the SF fan community. They sang a version of “Green Hills” at the 2007 Heinlein Centennial. I don’t know if a video exists.

**Richard Whyte: Do you believe that the Patterson biography is definitive, or do you think there's room for another version of the author's life story? (not that I'm volunteering!)**

**Geo Rule:** I think most of us think there’s still room for a lengthy analysis of his writing that’s not really there in Bill’s 2<sup>nd</sup> volume because of size constraints. I know there was something of a struggle with the publisher, and at one time there was discussion of going to three volumes instead of two to provide

more space for that kind of discussion. But obviously that didn't happen. Bill did a major service in getting most of the details of his life out, but there's still room for talking about the writing, in part using Bill's work to help frame and inform that discussion.

**Jim Harris: Do you think Library of America will ever publish collections of Heinlein's work like Philip K. Dick and Ursula K. Le Guin?**

**Keith Kato:** See the Virginia Edition, [www.heinleinbooks.com](http://www.heinleinbooks.com), if you have \$1,500 to spare. I've been told the only reason the VE could be made was that it is a "Luxury Edition" with limited sales capacity, only 2,000 sets. Except for new parts never published, it mostly cannot be made into e-books because many different publishers still hold those rights, and the same would be true for a "Compleat Heinlein" until all the present publication rights expire.

**Geo Rule:** Btw, if you join The Heinlein Society (\$45/year) by August 31<sup>st</sup>, you'll get two chances in a raffle to win your very own free set of the Virginia Edition, which also comes with free access/downloads to the Online Heinlein Archives. Heckuvadeal. There will probably be less than 400 total chances to win, so having two of them is better odds than most lotteries!

**John Grayshaw:** In your studies of Heinlein did he or his wife Virginia ever recall an incident in which Virginia had a drink spilled on her, but she didn't know by whom? According to an interview we did with Julie Phillips who is working on an Ursula K. Le Guin biography, it was Le Guin: "She asked if she had told me the story of how, at an awards banquet, she spilled beer down the back of Robert Heinlein's wife's dress. She was jostled in a crowd, her glass tipped, the dress was low-cut, and the beer went right down. She laughed ruefully. 'I just faded very rapidly into the crowd. I took no responsibility whatsoever.'"

**Geo Rule:** Haven't heard that one!

**John Grayshaw:** I was fascinated to learn when we interviewed Larry Niven that Heinlein did a full proofing of "Mote in God's Eye." In retrospect it's not so surprising as most copies of the book have a quote from Heinlein on the cover. What other books did Heinlein proof?

**Keith Kato:** That is the only one of which I am aware; Robert James would know better. RAH apparently had an almost-lifelong policy not to comment on his own works, or others. OTOH he did give Ted Sturgeon several story ideas when Sturgeon was blocked, and I believe *Godbody* won the Hugo. Joe Haldeman was walking on air after RAH, personally complimented his Forever War books. Spider Robinson (I think) said at a book signing that RAH cited "The Man Who Travelled In Elephants" as one of his personal favorites.

**Geo Rule:** In part he had by policy a non-aggression pact with other major authors in the field, so he didn't want to be in the reviewing business, even private reviewing like critiquing. He also didn't love getting reviewed himself quite often, so again inclined him to not do it to others. Lastly, he genuinely didn't have time for that kind of thing, especially if done *\*thoroughly\**. Both The Virginia Edition letters volume and the Online Heinlein Archives have the correspondence between Heinlein and

Niven/Pournelle (carried on by Jerry with Larry's input). It's extensive and detailed. Heinlein must have put dozens of hours at the least into it.

**John Grayshaw: Did Heinlein ever comment on the covers or blurbs of his novels? Did he have any favorites or least favorites? The most egregiously bad blurb I've ever seen is the 1966 Avon Books paperback of "Podkayne of Mars." It says:**

*Tomorrow's answer to the anti-missile-missile*

### **Podkayne of Mars**

*An interplanetary bombshell who rocked the constellations when she invaded the Venus Hilton and attacked the might mechanical men with a strange, overpowering blast of highly explosive sex appeal.*

*A centTERRIFICAl tale of two planets by the mastermind of Science Fiction Robert Heinlein.*

**Geo Rule:** I can't really say Heinlein was very good with titles for the most part. A few exceptions stand out, "Citizen of the Galaxy", for instance. "The Green Hills of Earth". He loved Chesley Bonestell's art and owned a piece (now in the possession of The Heinlein Society). He loved Clifford Geary's illustrations for the Scribner's juveniles. He and Ginny kept a framed print of the original cover to Friday on the wall in their home. He also had the original artwork for the Saturday Evening Post version of The Green Hills of Earth (which is now in the possession of The Heinlein Society).

**John Grayshaw: Who were some of the science fiction authors Heinlein liked and/or influenced him?**

**Geo Rule:** He loved Wells. Somewhere, when last heard in the possession of the late Leon Stover, given him by Ginny after RAH's death, is RAH's own personal copy of a Wells novel that Wells autographed for him before WWII. Can you imagine that? That's as close to the Holy Grail of written science fiction as one can imagine. James Branch Cabell. Not science fiction, but he also loved Twain deeply. Alfred Korzybski of General Semantics is a heavy non-fiction influence. Read The Number of the Beast and you can pretty much see what he loved, literarily, all the way to the attendees of the big party at the end.

**John Grayshaw: I divide Heinlein's work into three categories the Early (Juveniles), Middle, and Late (Future History). What is your favorite from each of these three periods? And why? And also if Heinlein ever indulged in self-examination what were his favorites and why?**

**Keith Kato:** *Starman Jones with Have Spacesuit, Will Travel* a very close second (most people put *Spacesuit* first) because they are fun; *Job with The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress* second because the former was highly thought-provoking, the latter rollicking good fun; special fondness for *The Door Into Summer* and *The Cat Who Walks Through Walls* because I too, am an ailurophile, who named one of my Siamese girls "Pixel." Too many shorter works to think through and sort out at the moment, but "By His Bootstraps" pops up because even now in physics, we cannot really define the nature of time. Best explanation: Nature's way of not having everything happen at once. "Lost Legacy" for its fanciful but cogent assembly of religious and philosophical ideas; "The Man Who Travelled in Elephants" maybe the most sentimental RAH story; "The Year of the Jackpot" which uses what mathematicians and physicist

call Fourier analysis, summation of components of various frequencies. If you know the term “epicycle” in older astronomy, that was Fourier before Fourier. There actually was a stock investment scheme that attempted Fourier analysis (and projection) on stock prices.

**Geo Rule:** A lot of days “Citizen of the Galaxy” is my favorite, and the one I most regret he never wrote a sequel to, because it cries out for one. “If This Goes On—” (usually captured in *Revolt in 2100*) is another favorite because it announced to the science fiction world that a major new talent had just arrived on the scene and would be a force to be reckoned with—John W. Campbell, Jr certainly saw it that way. *Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is a favorite as well. I love *Time Enough for Love*, Ginny often said the “Tale of the Adopted Daughter” (Dora) section of *TEFL* was her personal favorite of his work.

**John Grayshaw:** I’ve often heard people say that they really love Heinlein’s Juveniles, but couldn’t connect with his later works. Why do you think his Juveniles are so enduring and relatable? And, why do you think his later work is more challenging?

**Geo Rule:** Where (which novel) are you drawing the line for “later”? He was definitely going for a classic young adults adventure feel with the juveniles. At one point he cited Captain Horatio Hornblower as one of his ideals for what he was aiming at. He always had his pot of message about education, particularly STEM education, being a pathway to adventure. I do think as he got older he started writing for himself a bit more. One of Bill Patterson’s “other” RAH works is an in depth study of *Stranger in a Strange Land* (\_A Martian Named Smith\_) that will pop your eyes out at how much is really going on literarily in *Stranger*. Job is his paean to James Branch Cabbell, another of his early influences.

**John Grayshaw:** Was diversity an important issue to Heinlein? A number of his protagonists are minorities such as, Johnny Rico, Podkayne, and Mannie.

**Keith Kato:** You forgot Franklin Roosevelt Mitsui in *Sixth Column*. I personally doubt the accusations of racism against RAH are valid. It is an easy accusation to hurl. A couple of my black SF writer friends say they really don’t like *Farnham’s Freehold*, which I (having no dog in the fight) took as a fictionalization of Lord Acton’s “Power Corrupts” statements. I personally can testify how he treated Elliot Kay Shorter (black New York SF fan) or me (Asian) when he met us at his private party: Polite (he fetched me my drink personally), funny (story being locked in the bathroom during the Apollo 11 telecast), cat-loving (both his pregnant cats went into labor during Apollo 12; they dragged the boxes in front of their TV to monitor men walking on the Moon and kitten being born), absolutely no perceived animus. I kind of doubt his opinions match the modern usage of “diversity” as more-or-less bean counting. He perceived people as individuals with a spectrum and gradient of talents.

**Geo Rule:** Go back even further and read some of the pre-WWII stories like “Magic, Inc”. And if you include women as “diversity”, see early stories such as “We Also Walk Dogs”.

**John Grayshaw:** Alexei Panshin and/or Spider Robinson, were either of them successful at capturing the magic of Heinlein’s Juveniles? Is there another author that was?

**Keith Kato:** Greg Benford (full disclosure: my PhD dissertation advisor) once told me RAH thought *Greg's Jupiter Project* was very close to his own juveniles. For our Education CD, the "Killer Bees" (Bear, Benford, Brin) each donated a Heinlein-like short story. I thought David Brin's story ("Tank Farm Dynamo"?) was very Heinleinesque hard SF.

**Geo Rule:** I loved Varley's "Red Thunder". So does Spider, as we talked about it at the Heinlein Centennial, where he also bemoaned how hard it is to actually nail a Heinlein juvenile feel.

**John Grayshaw:** Since I play bridge, I really enjoyed the passages about the game in "Farnham's Freehold." Was Heinlein a bridge player?

**Geo Rule:** No idea.

**John Grayshaw:** What would Heinlein say about the inherent contradiction as portrayed in several of his novels that women were equals to men in intelligence and strength and yet a woman's highest aspiration is to find a man that will take care of her and have babies?

**Keith Kato:** He was born in 1907, and I'll bet even today's most "woke" people will be found culturally deficient eventually. Spider Robinson once commented that RAH understood the strengths women possessed (during the Apollo 11 telecast, he said they were missing half the human race for space exploration, and that female athletes like Olympic ice skater Peggy Fleming would make very good astronauts; Arthur C. Clarke sported this dubious "You're kidding" grin), but male-female-ness could not be ignored. He also stated (somewhere) that what is considered proper morality, the proper way to think, proper behavior, historically varies from time to time, place to place, society to society. So what people think at this point in history is probably not a metaphysically perfect and provable "It." (SF readers should appreciate this notion in their bones, but many do not.)

**Geo Rule:** Seems to me Dora was a partner in TEFL, not a toy. Heinlein was certainly aware of the pioneering history of his own country. Pioneers go out and make babies and hold and expand that land for the next generation. Armstrong and Aldrin weren't "pioneers" –they were scouts, like Kit Carson or John Fremont. For Heinlein you aren't pioneers until you bring the women folk with you and make babies. Man doesn't go out to the stars (a major Heinlein preoccupation) to stay unless he brings women with him and those women are ready, cheerfully willing, and able to help propagate the race, including raising children not just providing them free room and board for nine months. Do you have an alternate model to propose that actually works for that?

**John Grayshaw:** Did Heinlein believe in any of the ideas he wrote about? Like the Rational Anarchists in "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress" or the Military society of the Terran Federation in "Starship Troopers" or polyamory in "Stranger in a Strange Land," and "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress." What stories were closest to his actual beliefs?

**Geo Rule:** He wrote a longish letter to his Stranger editor about what was "really him" in Stranger versus authorial license. He disowned cannibalism, admitted that the Heaven scene at the end was more to just not let the atheists get too cocky at the message of the rest of the book, and pretty much owned the

sexual stuff as unobjectionable to him personally. He also admitted that he expected that if there were no laws and taboos on the matter, that probably 98% (or something like that) of the human race would still settle down into one man/one woman long-term relationships. And while he specifically ruled out belief in a God with a long-white beard meeting him in the afterlife, he stated a firm, yet knowing it be unprovable, belief that he had an immortal soul that would go on somehow. He told Neil Schulman that he was more libertarian than Ayn Rand, so presumably a good bit of Moon is a Harsh Mistress is “really him”, but I always note the author stacked the cards quite heavily in his favor on that one, as the preconditions necessary to that society’s development include a fascist overwhelming strong external force (the Lunar Authority) making sure there are no internal groupings that develop strong enough to take over. The reason you don’t get something like Somalia today is because the Lunar Authority was there to make sure it didn’t happen while that libertarian ideal society was developing. Starship Troopers definitely has a good bit of “him” in it. He liked to say that if you understood all three of those books without seeing them as contradicting each other, then you really understood him. If you liked/understood at least two of them he could get along with you. The “Heinlein’s a fascist” crowd who hates Starship Troopers rarely is able to reconcile the Heinlein of Troopers with the Heinlein of Stranger, yet they are published only two years apart. Did he change that much? He certainly didn’t think he had changed at all.

**John Grayshaw: Do you agree or disagree with the premise of a recent blog post by author John Scalzi that due to the age of Heinlein’s books and stories they are fading in significance and the only way to renew interest in them is through TV and movies? Why or why not?**

<https://whatever.scalzi.com/2018/05/09/reader-request-week-2018-6-the-fall-of-heinlein/>

**Keith Kato:** While RAH’s writings have not been translated to the screen with the same volume as, say, Phil Dick’s, I’ve listed elsewhere a few extant movie/TV projects. IMHO the Spierig Brothers’ “Predestination,” the adaptation of “All You Zombies,” is the best RAH adaptation to screen I’ve seen. THS has struck up a friendship with the Brothers, they’ve come to one of my convention parties, and I personally wish them well in their careers. There is a question of influence and significance I’ll address separately. As for John Scalzi’s opinion: We know he attended and was quite active at the 2007 Heinlein Centennial, and I don’t find his statement pejorative at all. He may be stating a simple marketing fact that the tastes of modern audiences are more resonant with visual instead of textual modes.

**Geo Rule:** I’d certainly like to see more of those projects actually make it to fruition. Wouldn’t Glory Road make a great HBO or Showtime show? So far as I know, all the major RAH movie rights are pretty well continuously being worked on to some degree.

**John Grayshaw: Heinlein wrote “A dying culture invariably exhibits personal rudeness. Bad manners. Lack of consideration for others in minor matters. A loss of politeness, of gentle manners, is more significant than is a riot.” What would Heinlein think of the state of the world today?**

**Keith Kato:** Again, born in 1907, into a different world and culture from today. Even Alexei Panshin wrote RAH was the kind of guy who would “dress for dinner in the jungle.”



**Geo Rule:** IMO, part of why RAH valued manners so highly is he knew he himself had quite a hot temper when it got away from him (which generally upset him when he allowed it to happen), and so reliance on formal manners was his way of trying to manage that personal issue.

**John Grayshaw Heinlein wrote that "A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects." Was Heinlein truly the Renaissance man/Polymath of this quote or were there any notable gaps in his knowledge and skills?**

**Keith Kato:** In 2016, about 30 Heinleinians attended RAH's Induction Ceremony into the Missouri House of Representatives "Hall of Famous Missourians," for which The Heinlein Society coordinated the fundraising for RAH's bust, pedestal, and plaque. This was post-Kansas City Worldcon, too, so we were tired. I used this quote in my speech inside the House chambers. I would opine, looking at the content and arc of his life, that he was a polymath's polymath. So was Jerry Pournelle. We learn RAH was an omnivorous reader, as a child walking to school, on shipboard fighting boredom, in hospitals of an extent I did not realize until *Grumbles From The Grave*. He said the stool of knowledge stood on mathematics, history, and foreign languages, then said Ginny was more capable in all three areas than he was. I was a panelist on "I Knew Robert Heinlein" at the Centennial with David Gerrold (who told the story "I Killed Heinlein's Cat"), Yoji Kondo, Neil Schulman, and a couple of others. His sister-in-law Dorothy (brother Jay's wife IIRC) was asked to join the panel, too; she said among his brothers and sisters, Robert was considered "The Dumb One" (to much laughter, you can imagine). I later learned from her niece Jane Heinlein that Dorothy died only a few months later, and the photo I took with her was her only photo from the event.

**Geo Rule:** He was an artillery officer on a major US Navy ship (U.S.S. Lexington) when compute power was close to non-existent. That's one of the major places he learned his respect for mathematics and ballistics and their applicability to rocketry. The Secretary of The American Rocket Society was thrilled to have a Navy-trained man join (according to his welcome letter) in the early '30s. John W. Campbell used to say if he wanted another Heinlein story, first he had to convince RAH he wanted something like a new swimming pool with changing rooms, then he had to convince him to write stories to get the money for it rather than build it with his own two hands from locally available materials.

**John Grayshaw: What do you think is Heinlein's legacy?**

**Keith Kato:** Harlan Ellison once joked about literary legacy being a doctoral dissertation on "The Use of the Semi-Colon in the Lesser Work of Henry James." I am not a literary guy, so I have no clue in that regard. John Scalzi may be correct. I can't recall who thought RAH's legacy might be his juveniles *à la* Kipling. I was present at RAH's Guest of Honor speech at the 1976 Kansas City Worldcon, where at one point he was booed. He did say something to the effect "Three full generations of young people have come into their professional age during my writing career. I have drawer [after drawer, after drawer] of letters from young people from around the world, stating 'I became a scientist/engineer/physician because of your writing.'" Since he had no progeny of his own, I got the impression he felt THAT was his greatest accomplishment—being the midwife, as it were, to cohorts of technical people. I should add in aftermath that, at one time something like half the managers and two-thirds of the engineers at NASA

were Heinlein readers. Even now, Professor Michael Rose of the University of California, Irvine, is doing research on longevity, inspired as a child from reading *Methuselah's Children*. I should also add that The Heinlein Society has coordinated the collection of nearly 37,000+ units of blood, a dozen+ undergraduate scholarships in STEM, maybe 20,000+ books to troops in theater and at hospitals, millions of career technologists, and (Geo Rule would know better) God knows how many education CDs to teachers and librarians. Not bad for 80 years' worth of living.

**Geo Rule:** To some degree, "Heinlein's Children" are his legacy. All the kids he turned on to the idea of STEM as life path who because of him became scientists and engineers themselves. At the Heinlein Centennial the then head of NASA observed that the s-f writers of the 40s and 50s made it politically possible (i.e. they prepared the social ground) for Kennedy to stand up and promise to go the Moon by the end of the decade without having the American public laugh him out of the room the way they might have done if an American president had said the same thing twenty years earlier. It's no accident Heinlein's NASA medal prominently mentions *\_Destination Moon\_* which was heavily influential at the time not as just another skiffy yarn but as "Hey, we can really do this!".

For another, I firmly believe that maybe an even bigger reason Heinlein was first Grand Master of SFWA than the quality of his writings was that for American s-f authors he "lead the way out of the ghetto". Before Heinlein it was not considered possible to make a living wage \*just\* writing science fiction in the US. It was a hobby, not a profession. If anybody made a full-time living out of s-f it was a tiny handful of editors, not writers. Heinlein changed that, and showed the rest what the formula for commercial success looked like and you could too make a living from doing that and only that. Guys like Scalzi probably appreciate how important that was for them even more so than the stories themselves.

**John Grayshaw: Have you ever had a free lunch?**

**Keith Kato:** No but I calculate I've fed about 15,000 SF fans since 1974, including Ginny Heinlein in 1982. Found out she could not put raw onions on her chili.

**Geo Rule:** I once heard the argument made that the difference between the price you would have been willing to pay and the price you actually paid (assuming the former is higher) qualifies as a "free lunch".

**John Grayshaw: Thanks so much for answering our questions!**

**Keith Kato:** Final Comment 1: KEITH KATO'S THEOREM: Among N Heinleiners, there will be  $N^2$  opinions on what to do. Bill Patterson said "The exponent is too small."

Final Comment 2: Bill Patterson and Robert James were on the same panel, I believe at a Loscon in Los Angeles, where it was revealed when Robert Heinlein died in 1988, his estate was worth \$1M. Fifteen years later when Ginny died in 2003, the estate was worth \$10M. They joked Ginny was actually "Heinlein, Inc." and she simply sublet the writing part to Robert.