

1994 PRIZE WINNER HAS NOVEL PUBLISHED

**The James Jones Literary Society
Congratulates Mary Kay Zuravleff On
Publication of *The Frequency of Souls*.**

**Winner of the Second Annual James
Jones First Novel Fellowship Award.**

Book Review: The Frequency of Souls

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*By Helen Howe, Secretary and Charter Member, The James Jones
Literary Society*

The critics seem to agree that for a first novel *The Frequency of Souls* by Mary Kay Zuravleff is a real winner. The story concerns George Mahoney, his family, his associates, and his life.

George is a design engineer for Coldpoint Refrigerators and his life has been and is one of unquestioned acceptance. His wife says he's "passive-passive" which presents an idea of the excitement he generates.

He has a beautiful wife, Judy, whose salary as a real estate agent surpasses his. a chubby 12-year-old son, Harris, who is quite brilliant and a very funny; and a six-year-old daughter, Sheridan, who is

fascinating. His son comes up daily with a quote of the day which I found hilarious. The last thing George invented, the ice maker, was far in the past but he continues to plug away.

All this changes when he gets a new associate, Niagara, who shares his office, his work, and, in a short while, his every waking thought. Niagara is the complete antithesis of his pretty wife, but George is deeply smitten and well on his way to the perfect mid-life crisis.

Her hobby involves the power of radio waves and conversations of the dead which George finds himself hearing as well. As the novel progresses it seems to make sense to listen and learn from these voices.

Zuravleff is very perceptive, witty, and entertaining as she delves into the farcial aspects of marriage and simple day-to-day living. She shows a genuine fondness for her characters and the reader experiences the same attitude. The critic for the *Chicago Tribune* calls it a "wholly original love story that weds the everyday to the supernatural and the mystical to the mundane." It is a book to be read and enjoyed.

Mary Kay received the James Jones First Novel Fellowship Award in 1994 which was the second tiem it had been given. Many of us met her when she was in Robinson to receive the award, so the publication of her novel is even more important to us. She is a charming and intelligent person and deserves every success.

Near the end of the novel, George hears the voice of hsi dead mother and imagines his son using this taped speech to provide the power for his science fair project. He visualizes this power as being able to "chill a steak or make ice from here to eternity."

I wonder if that was always the phrase used or if maybe it simply said "forever" before she received the award. I doubt that I will ever know!