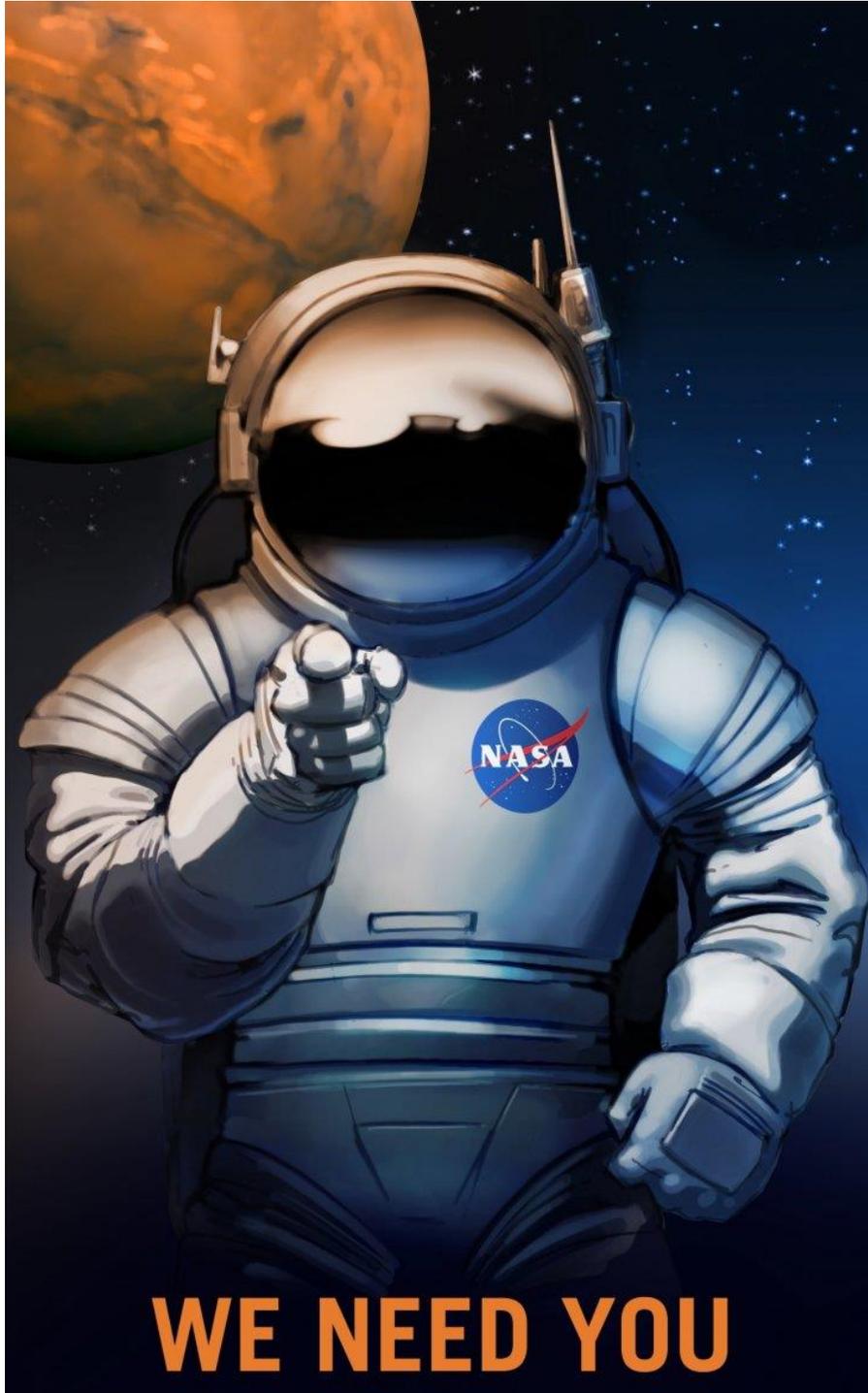


# THE WSFA JOURNAL

Edited by Samuel Lubell

November – December 2016



**WSFA Secretary  
Turns 50**

**Review of *The  
Wall of Storms***

**Elizabeth Will Fix  
Virginia**

**Santa vs Judah  
Maccabee**

**Be Like Fat Dodo**

**Better Than No  
Star Wars**

**WSFA's Last  
Meeting**

Art courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech

## WSFA Secretary Turns 50

The WSFA First Friday in November, 11/4/16 started at 9:15 with President Bob presiding. Sam L read minutes. Treasurer Sam gave the report. \$\$ since we paid the hotel bill. The year over year is \$??,???.???. Trustees had nothing.

For Capclave past, the chair was not here. There was discussion of registration. There is a core group who loyally come every year of around 200. The number of new people seems to be the same. We went ## in the occassionals. We're doing fine getting word out, we have a solid core group and it's building. 16 people since the GRMM year have come each year. We need to increase that or figure out why occassionals weren't here.



There was a nice thank you letter from Filthy Pierre. We don't know if broke even yet since don't have all receipts. Probably close to break even. In terms of getting people, go to regional conventions and promote it. We weren't getting as many as expected. Prereg at 2016 was up from last year. Books balanced. Thank you to people running reg.

Have we done surveys? Bob said we have in the past. Cathy said we need to do more. Email [info@capclave.org](mailto:info@capclave.org) with ideas. Maybe have survey forms in registration packets and box for people to turn them in. Elizabeth said there is a vast swath of things we can do. SurveyMonkey to attendees asking favorite panel and speaker. Mark hates surveyMonkey. Elizabeth said we also need feedback from program participants. Bill said if ask too much of people and too many contacts they start to dislike you. Cathy said, we might try at the mystery shopper level have WSFAans sit in on panels and fill out info sheet about participants and moderators.

Capclave present: Elizabeth said that's a scary thing to say. We will be going to Chessiecon. Sam L. volunteered. There are flyers for Philcon if someone is going.

Capclave Future: Cathy will get together with Collette. Looking at hotels.

World Fantasy: Bill attended this year's. Had some small gatherings. Thanks to WSFAans who helped. Sold 28 memberships (20 non staff). Website is up. Wfc2018.org. If working can get a supporting membership and do staff. Go up Dec 31<sup>st</sup> so buy now. Two confirmed guest Mike Walsh, and artist guest Tom Kidd. Ports in a storm theme. 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Frankenstein by Mary Shelly 1818. Code of Conduct and policies are online. Will be adding guests.

Capclave 2020: Nothing progressed. Still have good press.

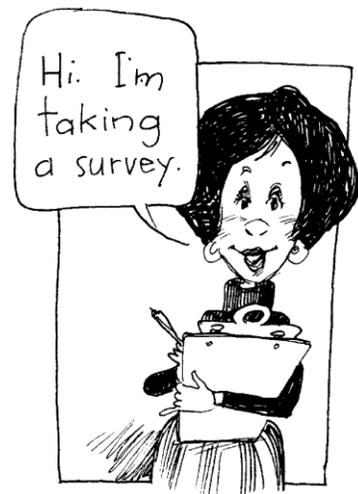
WSFA Press: Bill said there was a transfer of WSFA Press books to a dealer.

Intertivities: Monday 14<sup>th</sup>, National Geographic doing docudrama on Mars.

Kim saw a Little Library in his community, picked up a book of people asking engineering questions. Nov 11<sup>th</sup> film Arrival based on a Ted Chiang story. Story of Your Life.

Social media: Elizabeth has misspelled Virginia in meetups for two years without anyone noticing. Will add other conventions. F&SF doing \$5 Kindle versions.

Twitter is twittering. Instagram is instagraming. Dodos are costuming.



Small Press Award has been given out. Whoever heading it next year will take over. Cathy said was sent to Locus and 20 websites.

No old business. New business.

First meeting – Martin Wilsey, a sf author. Knows David Keener. This was his second Capclave. Had a great time. Ginny Schneider went to Capclave for the first time this year.

Announcements: WSFA Secretary Sam Lubell turned 50 two days ago. He is now officially old.

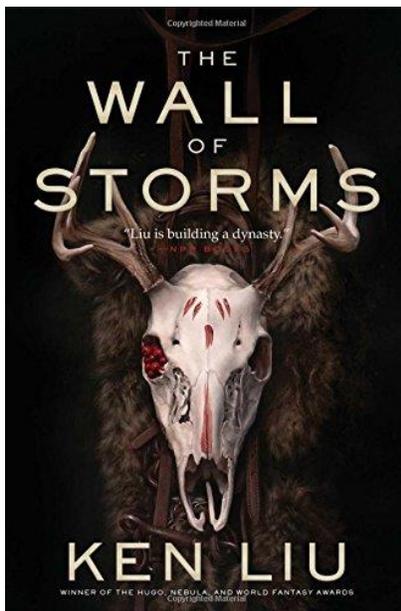
Meeting adjourned unanimously at 9:54.

Attendance: Courtni Y Burlison, Rodger Burns, Cathy Green, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Aaron & Angela Pound, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Sam Pierce, Ginny Schneider, and Martin Wilsey



### Review of *The Wall of Storms (Dandelion Dynasty)* by Ken Liu

Review by Sam Lubell



**Wall of Storms**, the sequel to **Grace of Kings**, follows the adventures of Kuni Garu, now Emperor Ragin, and his family. At 852 pages, this novel is a big doorstopper fantasy epic set in an invented archipelago with substantial Chinese influences (Ken Liu is known for his translations of Chinese science fiction). However, while **Grace of Kings** was full of interesting segments that struggled to hold together as a unified novel, **Wall of Storms** is much more coherent.

At first there are two main plotlines. In the first, Empress Jia schemes to establish her son, Prince Timu, oldest child of Emperor Ragin, as the rightful heir to the throne. Realizing that his claim would be stronger if he could become a military hero, she tricks Rin Coda, Imperial Farsight Secretary, into nurturing a rebellion against the Dandelion Dynasty. She then tries to undermine other potential rivals and nobles, even some of Kuni's original supporters. However, Kuni Garu secretly wants his daughter Princess Thera to succeed him.

Meanwhile, in the other major plotline that is an extended flashback, Scholar Luan Zya acquires a new protégé, Zomi Kidosu, who grew up in poverty and was partially crippled in a lightning strike. Part of the book is a travelogue of their adventures in a flying airship.

Then, halfway through the book, Kuni's kingdom is invaded by barbarians from the other side of the wall of storms, whose fire-breathing garinafin (essentially rideable dragons) are able to challenge Kuni's airships. With the country divided by Jia's plots and the country's great strategist imprisoned as a traitor Kuni's children face this new threat with varying levels of effectiveness.

Even more than the first book, **Wall of Storms** finds clever ways to invent technology for the pre-steam age--what some are calling silkpunk. There are some nice scenes of scientific investigation into how the garinafin breathe fire and some very elaborate descriptions of how different types of airships could work--unfortunately, at times the descriptions get in the way of the story although never as badly as in some other novels I've read.

Princess Thera is a great character, relying on her brain to solve problems and help her father. Zomi is also an interesting character, at times challenging the emperor and the entire scholarly community for maintaining rules and traditions that give advantages to children of the rich, while at other times acting unsure of herself and her position. Unfortunately, Jia, who in the first book was wonderfully unconventional, defying her parents to marry Kuni in the days of his wild youth, and encouraging him to make interesting choices, now seems reduced to a conventional role--a fairy tale's evil queen with plots and manipulations. Although there are a few scenes where she claims to be doing what is best for her country, her disavowals seem unconvincing. It is worth noting that most of the major characters in this book are female. Even among the enemy Lyucu, Princess Tanvanaki plays an important role.



Ken Liu, who will be a guest of honor at [Capclave 2017](#), continues to impress. While **Grace of Kings** sometimes read like the product of a short story writer who mixed loosely connected stories together into one book, **Wall of Storms** shows how Liu has become more comfortable with the larger canvass of an epic novel. Although this novel is not set in China, much about it--from the names to the politics to the themes--seem taken from Chinese history and culture. Still, this is not copying, but translating and adapting what he understands about China into his own created world. This gives his novel an unusual flavor, at least for Western readers.

Although **Wall of Storms** takes place several years after **Grace of Kings**, as the second book in a series it does not stand alone. While the book does not end with a cliffhanger, the main situation is not resolved. I look forward to reading the third book in the *Dandelion Dynasty* and seeing how much the author continues to learn and grow. I recommend this book (on the understanding that readers should start with book one) to anyone who enjoys epic fantasy, Chinese history and culture, and creative ways to imagine modern technology in a pre-steam era. (Although I hope the term silkpunk is not meant to be taken seriously.)

### Elizabeth Will Fix Virginia

The November Third Friday 11/18/16 opened at 9:20 with President Bob presiding. There was a motion to accept minutes, Bill objected for no reason. Sarah objected to his objection. Treasurer was not here, but has called for receipts. Bob said hopefully we will have the final figure soon.

Capclave present: Elizabeth said she will go to Chessiecon for tabling. Ken Liu is doing amazing things, being interviewed. New anthology. Ken Liu = Rock star. Doing stuff. Planning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of

November. Bill said checked on Hilton page, got \$99 a night for the weekend. Hilton members may want to check. We get credit anyway for room nights.

Cap Future is at Philcon, tabling. Off topic talk.

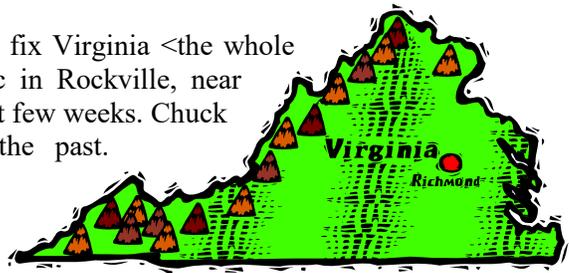
World Fantasy: Bill said bad news, first choice for toastmaster said no. Other invites out. Getting bios of guests up. Sold 30-40 memberships. Sold some staff memberships. Sign up supporting and convert to staff. Have twitter feed.

Capclave 2020: Bill said, really early. Once we get to the new year will talk to Paul about club vote. Ann putting together stuff to see about <hotel name>. Can expand easily since we wouldn't be using all of it. Also dangling a Worldcon, so may be more willing to make a deal for 2020.

WSFA Press is not here. Story is already out and we have a contract. Question of if order form is already up. No, it is not.

Third Friday in December Arat Patterson, winner of BSFS amateur contest will do a reading. First Friday in January, Lawrence M. Schoen will talk at the Library of Congress and then do a reading for us at First Friday. We will keep business meetings short or maybe do readings first, we will be flexible.

Website not here. For social media, Elizabeth promised to fix Virginia <the whole state?>. Dodos doing their thing. Intertivities – Artamatic in Rockville, near Montrose. Artists are displaying works this weekend for next few weeks. Chuck Devine has exhibited at this travelling art show in the past. Artamatic.org.



No old business. New business: Elizabeth said we have a banner for Capclave which is getting older. Good investment for club to purchase new Capclave banners so can do two tables and put them up at Capclave. Sam L suggested it fall under the Capclave chairs responsibility. Bob said cost can range so something we should fund out of regular treasury. Elizabeth suggested paying \$100 to a designer to make it look nice. Kim suggested bringing it up on First Friday as no one seemed interested in taking this on. Sarah started talking and round up volunteering. Bob said take a month or so, look at options and come up with something first Friday in January. Bring to club as a whole. Should be ready first Friday in Feb (for Mysticon)

Sam L. said there is a fifth Friday next month. Bob said there is a new year's eve the following day. So mix it with the Pomerantz party. No more new business.

First, second third meeting. Joe Radko, hasn't been here in a while.

Announcement: Erica said Karl is now adjunct professor at Georgetown in mentoring IT.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:49.

Attendance: Carolyn Frank, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Steve Smith, Ivy Yap, and Joe Radko.

### Santa vs Judah Maccabee

Considering how Hanukkah started on Christmas Eve this year, I'm surprised no one made a TV special or movie of Santa vs. Judah Maccabee.

Let's look at the stats:



Fighting experience: Judah fought a Greek Syrian army, Santa makes toys. Advantage Judah!

Magical powers: Santa has immortality and super-speed (to deliver presents all over the world in one night). Judah can make oil last eight nights. Advantage Santa.

Support troops: Judah has his brothers and the Israelite army. Santa has Mrs. Claus and the elves. Advantage: Judah.

Weapons: Judah has his hammer, sword, and shield. Santa has toys, which these days can include chemistry sets, BB guns, and remote control drones.

Advantage: Santa.

Toys: Judah gets the dreidel, a spinning top that teaches some Hebrew. Santa gets the Elf on the Shelf, a figurine that prepares children for the modern surveillance state. Advantage: Judah



Music: Judah can rally his troops with "I have a little dreidel." Santa's marching band can play zillions of Christmas tunes. Advantage: Santa

So, it's a tie. Everyone wins. Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!

### Be Like Fat Dodo

The WSFA 12-2-16 First Friday meeting started at 9:13 with George Shaner presiding. "Let's get this train out of the station." Sam L. summarized minutes. Treasurer reported \$money which is \$money compared to a year ago (but last year, the hotel hadn't cashed check yet, so \$\$\$ when consider that.

For Capclave Past, Paul yielded the floor to Sam S because he owns it. Sam S. had final report. Attendance ### attendees ### paid. Income \$\$\$\$\$, Expenses \$\$\$\$ so \$\$\$ in surplus.

Cap present did some tabling at Chessiecon. Next tabling is at Mysticon, passes are available. Elizabeth won't be able to make it. Looking for someone who knows origami. Would be a lot of fun to put some origami papers in con suite.

Cap future, Cathy is at Smofcon. Sarah said no messages or anything to pass on.

World Fantasy has 45 registrants. 2018 World Fantasy will have an extra hour due to time change.

Publications: Have a book for Capclave, pre-orders are available but doubt will get any right now. Sold three *Silently and Very Fast* books this week. Christmas is wonderful time for Two Turtledoves.

Sam L. did plea for content for Journal.



Small press award.  
Sam S said dues next month due.

Online presence – Sarah said fat dodo tweeted about buying WSFA Press books. Be like Fat Dodo.  
Elizabeth said will spell Virginia right and do meetups on the upcoming readings. Can post to Facebook.  
Capclave registration is online, can buy membership and buy books.

Intertivities. 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday Irette Patterson doing reading. Plans for dinner beforehand. First Friday in Jan will be Lawrence Schoen, who is also speaking at Library of Congress. There will be a dinner before the meeting.

Dodos are in the movie *Fantastic Beasts*. See *The Arrival*.

Sarah on banner committee. She suggested 3 throws for \$400 and shipping with two days turnaround. Bill gets 10% off. Mike Pederson will do the design. Banner would be \$120 plus shipping. Two business days. \$150 including shipping. Elizabeth suggested multiples. These would be stand-up banners. They come with equipment and case. 2 would be \$342, 3 would be \$417. Table throws would be 6 feet and washable. Comes down to how many do we want?



Elizabeth made a motion that we spend up to \$900 for 3 tablecloths plus at least one banner. Mark said why three? Elizabeth said we can use them at the convention and we can do tables at more than one convention without worrying about handoff.

Chair asked about when art will be ready. Sarah not sure. George said we should may want to wait for art. Sarah said probably near February. Kim seconded motion. Two abstentions. No one said nay. Motion carried. Clock is ticking.

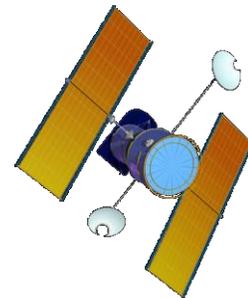
No new business.

First meeting: Eva, Frances' niece. Second meeting: Jinny. No one for third.  
We did a round of introductions.

December 23<sup>rd</sup> is Sam P's 60<sup>th</sup>.

Sam, Elizabeth, and David went to Chessiecon. It's a concert with some sf and religious programming.

Paul said the Gozer satellite is now in orbit. Next generation of satellites.  
Worked on it for 6 years. SpaceX said next flight will be December 18<sup>th</sup>, can't promise it won't blow up.  
It's rocket science.



Mike Walsh, have you heard the good news of Chuthulu.

Meeting adjourned unanimously at 9:49 PM

Attendance: Courtni Y. Burluson, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, David Keener, Sam Lubell, Sarah Mitchell, Aaron & Angela Pound, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Eva Gaines, and Ginny Schneider.

**BETTER THAN NO STAR WARS, BUT ONLY JUST  
MOVIE REVIEW BY JUDY NEWTON**

Do you want to feed your Star Wars habit until the next promised blockbuster installment comes out? Then you will enjoy *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, now playing just in time for the holiday crowds.

It has a lot of pyrotechnics, a slight but derivative storyline, almost no character development, sometimes impressive special effects, and most of the characters fit right into the archetypes developed by the movies that have gone before.

There's a plucky heroine, a daring pilot, an (unfortunately uncharismatic) swashbuckler-love interest, a mystical Jedi, and a Wookiee-like shambling hulk. Oh, and a droid. A singularly unlikeable one: C3PO with the didacticism but without the shine.



The storyline involves a plucky band of rebels against enormous odds. In this case, they are acting against not only the Empire but also the main body of the Rebellion, running off in a stolen ship to set the stage for the sabotage of the Death Star by Luke Skywalker in *A New Hope*. There are enough hints and foreshadowings in this movie to keep fans' minds diverted from the thin plot, but not enough to make it a satisfying "standalone" story, as advertised (as if no one in the known world would be unfamiliar with at least the original movie).

Some of the familiar characters from other movies make brief appearances: C3PO and R2D2 continue their guest appearance streak, and Darth Vader has a more extended role as archvillain. And the appearance of one last old acquaintance in the very last scene is almost worth the price of admission all by itself.

One way *Rogue One* may differ from the rest of the oeuvre is in its body count. Many, many storm troopers get hacked up, mowed down, blown away and otherwise neutralized. I continuously marveled at how fragile that armor actually seemed to be - no protection at all, really, but then it made the elimination of enemy hoards so bloodless and antiseptic that this movie is suitable for viewing by the young. And that's why it was made, after all, wasn't it - to draw in the holiday movie family traffic?

**WSFA's Last Meeting (in 2016)**

Let's get this thing on the road, said Prez Bob. It's 9:16. Last meeting of WSFA in 2016 on Third Friday 12-16-16. <The fire is going nice.> "As prerogative of the president I want to thank everyone for making this year a successful one. Those who worked hard I thank you and hope you do this next year. Season's greetings."

Capclave future, pause, Oh that's me <laugh> Elizabeth said, "We're exciting we have great GOHs, membership is going up at end of year. So buy now. Committee meeting end of Jan. Looking for volunteers. Talked with Paul about website. Lots of discussing of programming and events. Things will be awesome. Ken and Neil will talk about whatever they want, alone and together.

Cap Future not here.

World Fantasy / 2020 nothing to report



Trustees: Mike said, Surprise. Sarah Mitchell is stepping down from Small Press Award committee. Trustees will review blackmail file and announce a candidate at first Friday Jan meeting and hold the election First Friday February. Nominees from floor are welcome.

Elizabeth said, Members get lots and lots of stories to read.

Mike said, Unfortunately most WSFAns won't be embarrassed by dirt.

Paul for WSFA press said preorders are available but no one has taken advantage of it. Sold another *Silently and Very Fast*.

Locker committee: Paul reported he has done minimal work on that, but got a satellite launched.

Committee to talk SF, Bill said we have a reading from BSFS amateur writing contest. Next month will be Lawrence Schoen.

Elizabeth said Virginia is now spelled correctly. Bob asked about emails to the gmail list. Will pass along paper for the email listserve. Yahoo gets hacked.

Constitution committee will have something meeting after this one.

Small press award. Sam L. said, he contacted Neil to see if Clarkesworld was still under the limit, he said half that.

No old business. No new business.

Second meeting. Eva, aunt Frances brought her

Joe Ranco, invited from Capclave.

First meeting Irette Patterson. Won the amateur writer contest and asked to come here and do a reading.

Announcements: Judy and Barry Newton saw the star wars movie and had light sabers. Worth seeing but not the best Star Wars movie ever.

Erica made white fruitcake. Recipe is from white house wedding of LBJ's daughter and a family tradition.

Kim is doing galley proofs and should have completed books by next meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 9:35 unanimously.

Attendance: Courtni Y Burleson, Rodger Burns, Erica Ginter, Paul Haggerty, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Mike Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Eva Gaines, Irette Patterson, Joe Radko, Nicki Lynch, and Beth Jones.

