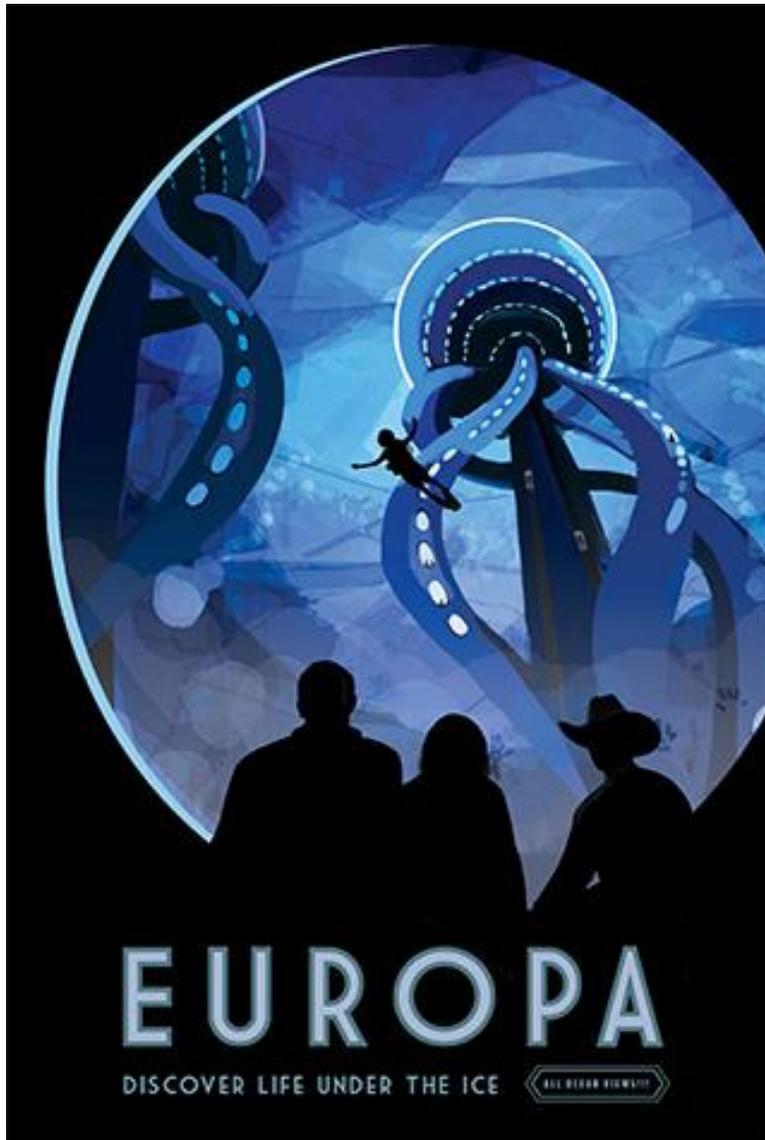


# The WSFA Journal

## Jan/Feb 2017

Edited by Sam Lubell



Graphic courtesy of NASA

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### WSFA Welcomes Lawrence Schoen

An abbreviated WSFA First Friday (1/6/17) meeting took place after Lawrence Schoen’s reading. Bob Macintosh chaired. The meeting was called to order at 10:23. No business was done at the last meeting.



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Bob asked the committees to pass unless something important to say.

Sam S. said we have money. “Pay your dues, see me after the meeting.” Dues are \$20. We have \$X in bank with a Year over Year of \$X. For trustees, Mike Walsh said there was a vacancy in the small press award committee. Kim Hargan ~~threw himself in front of bus~~, err volunteered.

There will be an election first Friday in February. Nominations from floor will be accepted.

For Capclave 2017, Elizabeth asked people to register. Sign up now while less expensive.

There is a new WSFA email list in google groups. It will be low traffic, intended for announcements, transactional things. To subscribe, give permission to Elizabeth or see your email.

For Capclave Future, Cathy said she had a productive meeting with Collette about hotels and discussed possible arrangements. Bill has nothing to report for 2020 or WFC.

The constitutional committee hopes to have something next meeting.

New *WSFA Journals* are up. WSFA Press will have the cover for new book May 1<sup>st</sup>. Ken Liu is popular. Go and pre-order.

For Small Press Award, Cathy is chair. The committee will talk about website, press release and notifications this weekend. Discussion about long term tweaks to rules for next year as online world has changed.

Intertivities: *Hidden Figures* is out, a movie about African American women who worked for NASA as human computers.

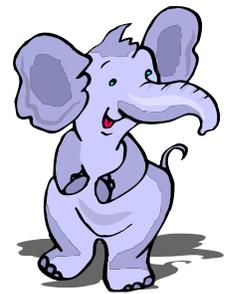
No old business. New business: nothing.

First, second, third meeting: Apura Desai. First time. Went to Capclave and known of the organization but got bogged down by world life.

Lawrence Schoen here for first time.

Announcements: Kim Hargan’s first novel is available at Amazon. *The Daulphant’s Lost Jewels*.

Bill said Paul will set up and will send out a voting list to decide on a Capclave special guest for 2020. Potential guests. Pick top 5 to invite. Lawrence said, “You forgot to say you could vote for me.”

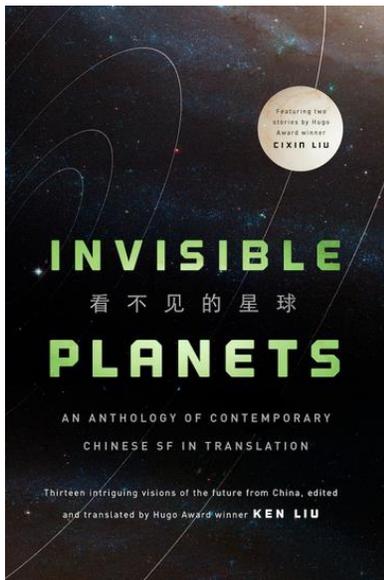


Meeting adjourned 10:35 unanimously.

Attendance: Ken Byrer, Courtni y. Burleson, Apura Desai, Vicki DiSanto, Eva Gaines, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Kim Hargan, Monica Herald, Frances Holland, David Keener, William Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Kathi Overton, Aaron and Angela Pound, Mark Roth, Lawrence M. Schoen, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Gayle Surette, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh

*Review of Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation.* Translated and edited by Ken Liu.

Reviewed by Sam Lubell



Traditionally, translated science fiction and fantasy does not do well in the United States. Even though science fiction readers say they enjoy reading about alien cultures, they do not want to seem to work at understanding real foreign cultures here on Earth, with the exception of anime fans, many of whom become ardent Japanophiles. This has changed recently with many science fiction publications, especially *Clarkesworld* buying and translating foreign stories. A Chinese novel, *The Three-Body Problem*, written by Cixin Liu (no relation) and translated by Ken Liu even won the Hugo Award.

Ken Liu, who will be Guest of Honor at Capclave 2017, has been in the forefront of this movement to share Chinese stories with American readers. Not only has he translated *The Three-Body Problem* and the third book in the trilogy, he also has translated a large number of stories from Chinese into English, including the Hugo-winning "Folding Beijing" by Hao Jingfang. *Invisible Planets:*

*An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese SF in Translation* collects thirteen of his translations including "Folding Beijing" and another story by Jingfang, two by Cixin Liu, and others by up and coming Chinese authors. In addition, the book includes three short essays on Chinese science fiction. Ken Liu writes that he hopes the anthology will introduce English readers to China's "vibrant, diverse science fiction culture".

In the introduction, Ken Liu warns that defining Chinese science fiction is as complicated as defining American science fiction. He especially warns against interpreting China's science fiction as promoting Western views of Chinese politics, writing "Imagining that the political concerns of Chinese writers are the same as what the Western reader would like them to be is at best arrogant and at worst dangerous. Chinese writers are saying something about the globe, about all of humanity, not just China". And yet, many of these stories do seem to have political messages and even Liu admits "there is a long tradition in China of voicing dissent and criticism through the use of literary metaphor".

For instance, "The City of Silence" by Ma Boyong is about censorship both online and offline. The State has shifted from listing forbidding words to listing permitted words, fewer and fewer each day, with each person required to wear a portable language-filtering machine. However it is also an interesting story about communication and small acts of rebellion. "Folding Beijing" by Hao Jingfang is about class separation as the lower, middle, and upper classes occupy the city during different

shifts. At the same time, there is character growth. "Taking Care of God" by Cixin Liu has the alien beings that created Humanity returning to Earth demanding that their children take care of them in their old age. Still, this is saved from being a message story by the growing relationship between Qiusheng and the God installed in his home. "The Year of the Rat" by Chen Qiufan has the Chinese army draft unemployed college graduates to try to fight intelligent (artificially uplifted) rats. What could be a political story, with overtones of class differences, the failure of education, and the unnecessary nature of the war, also turns into a story of a young man's maturation and confronting a bully.



Other stories are less political. "The Fish of Lijiang" by Chen Quifan shows how everything is becoming artificial and humans are mere lab mice. "The Flower of Shazui" by Chen Quifan is more of a traditional adventure story, but even here there are concerns about how valuing technology turns people into puppets. "A Hundred Ghosts Parade Tonight" by Xia Jia is a story, rich in atmosphere and metaphor, about what it means to be human. "Tongton's Summer" by Xia Jia deals with how to help the elderly still feel useful, and contrasts Grandpa with the young Tongtong. "Call Girl" by Tang Fei is about a prostitute of stories, rather than of her body. "The Circle" by Cixin Liu is an excerpt from The Three-Body Problem—the sequence where an advisor promises a king the secret to immortality if he can use the army as a calculating machine. This stands alone without the reader needing to know anything from the rest of the novel.

A few stories are hard to describe. "Night Journey of the Dragon-Horse" by Xia Jia features the creatures that exist in a world without humanity. The fun here is the strange landscape and growing relationship between the mechanical dragon-horse and a talking bat. The title story, "Invisible Planets" by Hao Jingfang at first appears to be just descriptions of various planets and their histories, without any real plot. Gradually, however, through insertions of dialogue, the story becomes about how the act of sharing a story transforms both the teller and the listener. "Grave of the Fireflies" by Cheng Jingbo could be a story of the far future with the remnants of humanity passing through the Door into Summer as the stars begin to go out. At the same time, it is a sad fantasy about a princess and her knight, the Magician of Weightless City.

*Invisible Planets* is a must read for fans of science fiction stories who are curious about Chinese science fiction. It's also an excellent read for fans of high-quality stories from any source. Judging by recent Hugo wins for Ken Liu's translations, a lot of readers enjoy his prose and do not feel that his role as translator, rather than author, is an impediment to enjoying it. Recommended.



### Pick Five for Capclave

The January Third Friday meeting on 1/20/17 opened with, "Alright ladies and gentleman, 9:15 ladies and gentlemen," said Bob. Sam L. read the minutes.

For the trustees, Mike Walsh said he had nothing, but then clarified the upcoming election. "Kim is in the corner and cannot escape. We'll have a big election meeting; make sure you have the electoral college locked up. There will be a big election in May, if you've ever wanted a position. Capclave chair position for 2019 available, the perk is you get to pick your guest of honor, hopefully a good one. The trustees will

be available for consultation should anyone wish to run.” Mike Walsh said has had a position in WSFA every decade since the 1960s.

Capclave Present had nothing. Capclave Future was not here. Bill for World Fantasy/Capclave 2020, said, “We now have someone in charge of every major area for WFC. Staff is still needed. There is no additional progress on guests. For Capclave 2020, Paul set up a poll on Google that will be sent out to all members of the club, to allow club members to pick five of the 23 suggestions for club guests. Only club members can vote, so pay your dues. Names on the list are people that we can ask, and they may say no. Otherwise, we’re waiting to see what happens with Cathy’s hotel search. Have to reach out to Marriot Wardman Park for a deal for 2020.”

For social media, Sarah said nothing really. Casts are being made from only available dodo head. Visit Oxford.

Small Press Award: “We already have 30 stories,” said Carolyn. More entries are coming in. Any club member can nominate a story published by a small press, but not stories that were self-published. If not sure, she checks with the committee. So far have been seven she had to check. <Discussion about Chuck Tingle>

Intertivities. There will be a minicomic convention tomorrow at the Silver Spring library. Nancy Kress will be speaking at New America’s Spawn of Frankenstein event on Feb 2. WonderCon opened hotel reservations in Anaheim.

The Constitutional committee was focused on getting journals done.

Paul was not here. Will talk about storage on the first Friday. Cost is in triple figures per month. We will need to really think about. Not cheap.



No old business. For new business, Courtni is talking to Elizabeth about doing a WSFA recommended reading list, stories and novels throughout the year. Prez Bob said if you organize it, you can decide. Put it in the journal and online. Now an active committee, said Bob. You can be a committee of one or bring in people. We can put it up on Meetup, there’s a section for files, said Courtni. If people have suggestions, email her at [courtru@gmail.com](mailto:courtru@gmail.com).

Sam L gave a slightly altered version of the usual WSFA Journal rules, saying that the Journal won’t take sport scores. Bob asked what about current politics, is that horror? Sam L. said dystopian.

Kim Hargan has copies of his book.

Bill said, on next meeting, we need to check with Elizabeth about rack cards and bookmarks.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38.

Dues paid: Joe Radko, Steve Smith, Michael Ikeda,  
Attendance: Courtni Y Burluson, Rodger Burns, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Michael Ikeda, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Steve Smith, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, and Joe Radko.

**SF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

I will ask for opponents' mothers' names before I start fighting them. – Superman and Batman in unison



I will remember that nothing's more important than one's family – Corwin of Amber

I will respect women as people, unless they're aliens whom I will respect as aliens – Captain Kirk, after a record amount of sensitivity training

I will keep mysticism out of my science fiction movies – Hollywood scriptwriters/producers

I will learn the difference between a suitable boyfriend and a bloodsucking stalker – Bella Swan (from Twilight) and Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

I will write a nice happy future for my teen heroes – Authors of YA dystopias.

I will keep my life separate from my reading. – Thursday Next

Killing people is bad. Unless you get paid for it - Vlad Taltos

I won't break any more of the laws of magic – Harry Dresden

I won't try to tie all my novels together, that trick never works. – Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Brandon Sanderson etc.

I will check that I have the right target before casting spells – Raederie of An (*Heir of Sea and Fire*)

We will remember that writers are allowed more than one female character per book – Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle after writing *The Mote in God's Eye*



**Kim Wins Special Election**

The 2/3/17 First Friday in February began at 9:14 with President Bob Macintosh saying “Let’s get going. This is first Friday WSFA meeting.” Sam L. summed up minutes from the last meeting. In the bank accounts we have \$X with year over year of \$X. Pay your dues, said Sam S.

Trustees will have an election for WSFA Small Press award committee. Kim is the candidate, but we will take nominations from the floor. The big election is in May.

For Capclave present, Elizabeth said we are having a Capclave. We have 78 people pre-registered. We will send out a reminder to everyone who has attended past Capclave reminding them about this year. We

will start sending out invites to program participants in batches. Will go out. Bookmarks and rack cards will have the final art tomorrow. Both Neil and Ken are still coming.

There is nothing exciting on Meetup but let her know if you have anything.

Capclave Future, Cathy said he is looking at hotels. She is willing to move date if necessary. It is always helpful to have multiple bids.



Bill said for the Capclave 2020 club members will have a chance to vote for an additional guest. Bill announced that World Fantasy 2017 picked Tamara Due as a guest of honor and Bill had wanted her for our Toast master. So now we are in a holding pattern. At some point will have major discussion with Ann. Capclave 2020 is on hold until know what's going on with WF. We will invite past guests who still alive. Bill is talking to Wardman Park hotel, lots of space and flexible.

WSFA Press and website not here.

Small Press Award: Cathy has report from Carolyn. 50+ stories nominated so far, 45 uploaded to our site. Cathy and Sam are checking if publishers are small presses. This is more stories at this point in time in the past couple of years. All WSFA members can nominate a story, email administrator@wsfasmallpressaward.org. Rules are up online. Nominations close April 2. You need to be an active member to nominate.

Intertivities mentioned nominations for BSFS' Compton Cook award for best first novel.

Cortni's Recommended Reading List committee – She is developing a list of recommended reading 2016 and earlier. If people want to do a review, the WSFA Journal takes reviews.

No old business. New business: none.

Rick Elron was here for his first meeting. He's been a sf reader all his life. He attends the science fiction and fantasy book club meetup. He's never been part of fandom before but better late than never.

Discussion of baby Diet Crystal Pepsi.

Announcements: Mark has song circle tomorrow starting at 7:30.

Kathi said that next weekend the Friends of Arlington Planetarium are hosting Darwin Day. Talks Friday and Sat about evolution. Talk on Sunday on Dinosaurs and Evolution.

Ken has copies of his new book. Also on May 7, Jeff Vander Meer will be at Politics and Prose promoting his new novel 1-3.

Bill has an extra membership for Mystycon, last weekend of February in Roanoke Virginia.

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 9:52.



Attendance: Courtni Y. Burleson, 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, Sam Pierce, and Rick Ellred.

At the special election, Kim Hargan was elected to the small press award committee.

### **SF Recommended Reading List**

By Courtni Y Burleson

The Expanse Series – James S.A. Corey (Leviathan Wakes, Caliban’s War, Abaddon’s Gate, Cibola Burn, Nemesis Games, Babylon’s Ashes)

Old Man’s War Series – John Scalzi (Old Man’s War, The Ghost Brigades, The Last Colony, Zoe’s Tale, The Human Division, The End of All Things)

The Foundation Trilogy (Foundation, Foundation and Empire, Second Foundation)  
World War Z

American Gods – Neil Gaiman

Crosstalk – Connie Willis

The Dispossessed – Ursula K. Le Guin

Revenge – Yoko Ogawa

Dawn – Octavia Butler

More books are needed. Send your candidates to [courtru@gmail.com](mailto:courtru@gmail.com).

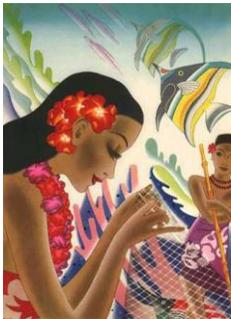
### **Review of Dadr’Ba by Tetsu’Go’Ru Tsu’Te Review by Kimberly G. Hargan**

Capsule summary of this review: if you don’t have a compelling reason to read this book, my recommendation is that you skip it. Reading it is too much of a chore to be enjoyable.

The mechanics: the author could really have used a native speaker of English as an editor. He has a tendency to switch from past to present tense on the same page, within the same paragraph, and even within the same sentence. On occasion he switches to future tense. He also appears to feel that longer words have more impact, so he goes for what appears to be a longer version of the word he wants, with rather comical results. The most egregious example, which turns up repeatedly, is the use of “to equivocate” (to use equivocal language, especially with the intent to deceive; to lie) when the context shows he clearly means the verb “to equate” (to make equal, to represent or regard as equal). I’m not quite sure why all the proper nouns have apostrophes in them – perhaps it is an attempt to show how the language has “worn down” over the course of a centuries-long trip. So, we get inundated with Su’Zi, Kr’T, Chn’Gi, Ol’Tn (for Old Town), Nu’Tn (for New Town), Mi’Nr (for the Miner class in society) and so on. Furthermore, the author appears to be unsure of how to actually use the apostrophe in English –

often enough it is on the “wrong” side of the “s”, indicating possessive plural when it should be singular and singular when it should plural. On top of that, there are also frequent random occurrences of apostrophes where they make no sense at all; some pages look like they were taped up against a wall, and a shotgun shell loaded with apostrophes was fired at them.

The story: the plot is built around a sub-light colonization expedition that hasn't gone entirely wrong, but has still been fairly messed up, with a couple of twists. The home world (Or-Gn – Origin) was messed up (it's not made clear if the problem[s] was pollution or an exhaustion of energy resources or politics), and so a comet was built into an “ark” ship. The frozen gases of the comet provided fuel for the fusion engine, and the continual excavation of fuel increased the living space inside the ship. The original crew consisted of biologicals (“real” people), most of whom were frozen in cryogenic sleep, but some of whom took turns “awake” to administer the ship; “gene-locked” clones (gene-locked apparently meaning non-aging and perhaps non-reproducing as well); and androids. An appropriate exoplanet, without evidence of intelligent life was identified, and Dadr’Ba, the ship, was launched on its way.



Around halfway through the trip a gamma ray burst occurred near enough to the ship to kill off the biologicals and clones, and to knock out the majority of androids. (There is a suggestion at one point that at least some of the frozen biologicals might have survived, but it is only a suggestion – we still don't know if that is the case by the end of the story.) The burst (by whatever mechanism) appears to have “shocked” the surviving androids into consciousness and given them a sense of empathy with each other (perhaps actually Wi-Fi or Bluetooth?).

The androids build more androids to fill up the ship's crew complement and carry on with the mission. However, the androids believe they are actually gene-locked clones, except that the ruling cabal at the very top knows better.

The ruling cabal is seen as heavy handed in their control of life aboard Dadr’Ba and in their censorship of certain “sensitive” topics, both for research and simply for mentioning in everyday speech. The bulk of the story has to do with the rebelliousness of certain youth, which eventually comes to nothing. The eventual twist here is that the rulers have to be heavy handed: whenever an android (actually very few) learns that they are androids and not gene-locked clones or that the reasons for leaving Or-Gn were not as taught in the schools, it unavoidably “crashes” their brains, driving them insane. So the heavy-handedness that the youth are rebelling against is actually a good thing, and the rulers have to do this in order to preserve the sanity of everyone aboard ship.

The observation staff discover evidence of industrialization, and then actual radio and television transmissions from the planet ahead. Nuts! There is a native civilization, and it is polluting what should have been their pristine new home. The rulers begin a propaganda campaign describing the natives as an “infestation” who have forfeited their right to their own planet through their fouling of it. Everyone, including the rebellious youth, eventually climbs on board this concept.

The big twist comes, of course, at the end. As the comet-ship approaches the new planet, the natives detect it and began to scramble for a response, seeing it simply as a comet headed in on an impact course. The new planet is revealed to be our Earth, and the Dadr’Ba's crew is obviously revealed to be extraterrestrials. The Chinese, who have secretly put up a nuclear weapon for just such an eventuality (secretly, because it contravenes all the agreements on non-weaponization of space), decide that being the heroes who saved the Earth from the comet will more than outweigh any indignation at their having

a weapon out there in the first place. The detonation causes considerable damage to Dadr’Ba and does indeed deflect it, but most of the crew actually survives. In response they direct an EMP barrage at Earth, effectively crashing our technological civilization, as they continue on a cometary orbit that will bring them back around. The story ends with an Earth grandmother telling her grandchildren that she fears the returning comet as an omen of bad things to come.

### Three Cats, a Possum, and Some Sewers. No Dragons

The 2/17/2017 Third Friday meeting was called to order at 9:19 pm. In the absence of the club secretary, Elizabeth Twitchell took notes. <Thank you!>

Many people were absent due to conflicting conventions and weather

No prior minutes, no treasurer update

- No Treasurer’s Report
- No prior minutes
- Capclave Present- Capclave is pushing ahead, rack cards and such are in process.
- Capclave Future- Absent
- Capclave Distant Future – A poll will be sent to paid WSFA members regarding guest options
- WSFA Press- one book sold. Buy more.
- WSFA Small Press award- Kim Hargan is the new committee member. Six weeks out there are 55 stores to be read, will be 70+ soon. This year features 3 cats,



a possum, and some sewers. No dragons.

- There was a call for members to nominate more stories.
- Intertivities – Space X will launch tomorrow 10-11 am EST
- Committee to Discuss Science Fiction – Latest issue of Clarkesworld
- No Old Business
- No Quorum



#### Announcements

- Household standard announcement + Cookies!
- Kim Hargan has copies of his new book
- Bill Squire, longtime WSFAN died last week after some significant medical issues
- Hidden Figures has free showings in DC & Baltimore
- Mike Walsh & books in LA

Adjourn unanimously at 9.42

New attendees: Keven Foster- first meeting

No attendance.

