

# Houston Book Club

## By the Numbers

# Membership

- The Houston Book Club was formed in 1989, **thirty-five** years ago<sup>1</sup>
- **Seven** current members:
  - Louis joined ~1991
  - John joined ~1993
  - Linda joined ~1994
  - Barbara joined ~1999
  - Jessica joined ~2001
  - Drew joined ~2001
  - Sylvia joined ~2004
- Modern Era (with present lineup) can be represented by the **twenty**-year period of 8/2004 through 8/2024
- Membership fluctuated between **five** and **seven** with additions of Andy (2002-2005) and Suzanne (2007/2008) and temporary sabbaticals by Drew, Jessica, and Sylvia. Rashid left mid-2004 just before the beginning of this period.

<sup>1</sup>All data per Louis' invaluable website [HoustonBookClub.com](http://HoustonBookClub.com), my valuable email hoarding, and my not so valuable recall

# Meetings (Modern Era)

- There have been **one hundred eighty-five** meetings in the Modern Era, an average of roughly one meeting every **thirty-nine** days
- Half of the **eighteen** complete years had **nine** meetings per year, followed by **ten** meetings per year **five** times, with **two** years having **eleven** meetings and **two** years having **eight** meetings. **One** year had only **seven** meetings, 2008.

# Meetings (Modern Era)

Meetings per Year



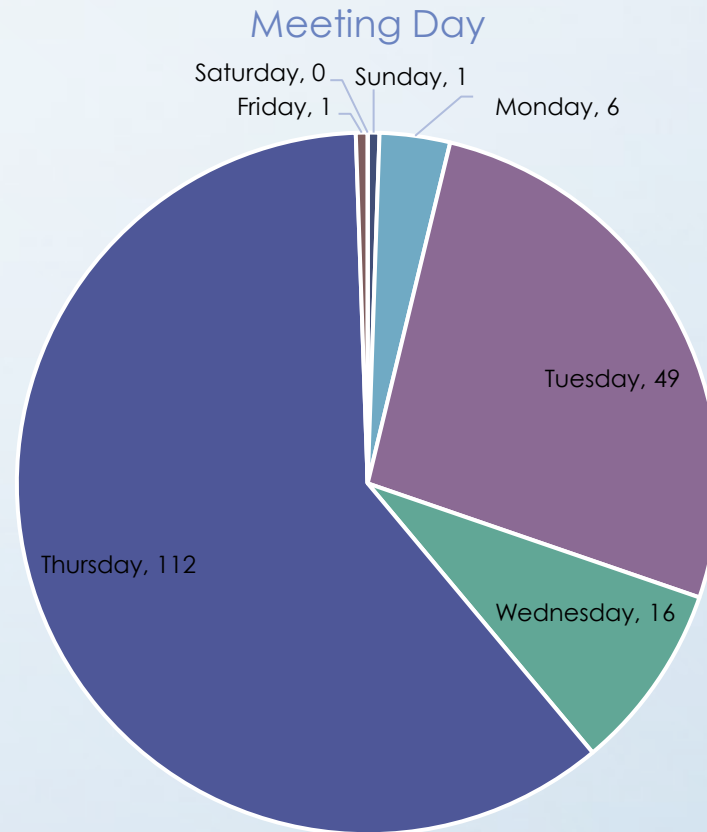
# Meetings (Modern Era)

- The longest time between meetings was **one hundred thirty-three** days at the onset of the pandemic in 2020, and the shortest was **fourteen** days, the very next meeting following our resumption
- The most common day of the week is Thursday, with **one hundred twelve meetings**, doubling up Tuesdays with **forty-nine**. We've met on Wednesdays **sixteen** times, Mondays **six** times, and **one** time each on Friday (Rita visit) and Sunday (Jessica's party). The group has never met on a Saturday in the Modern Era.

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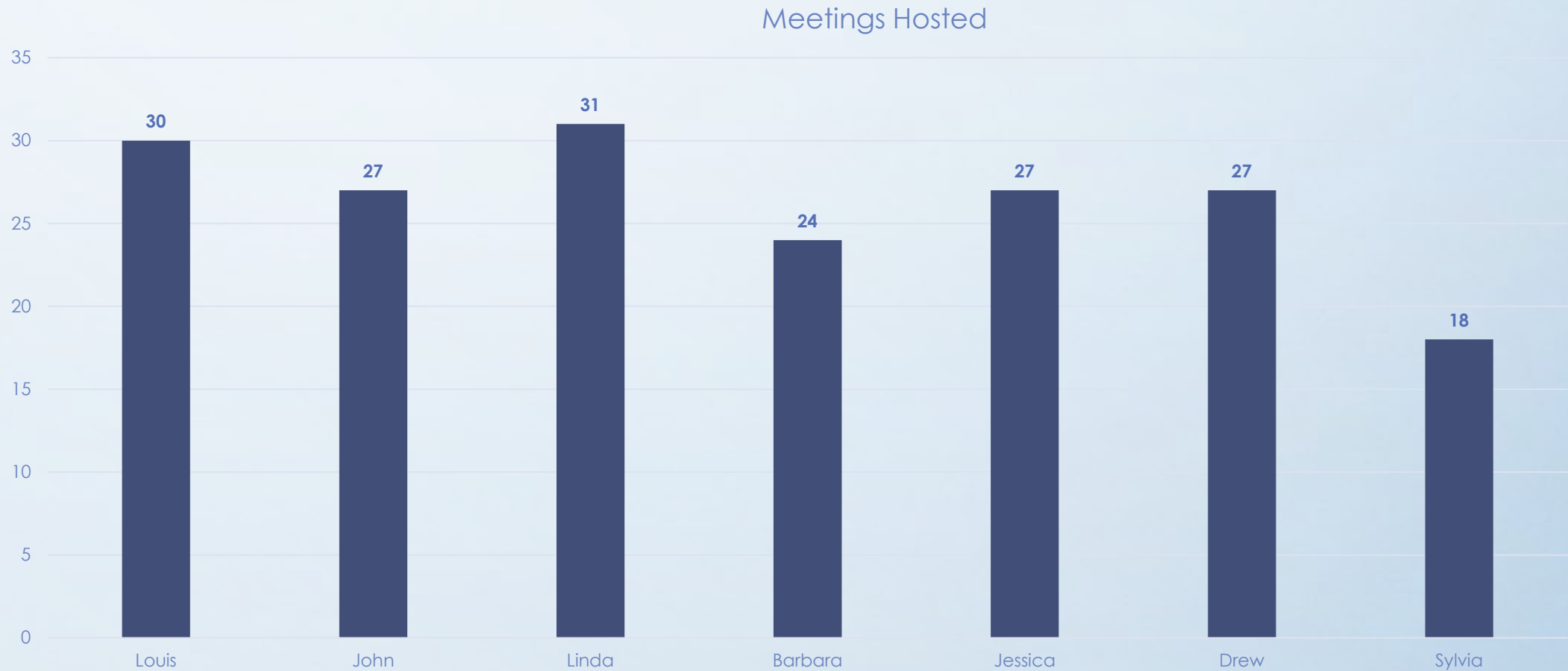


# Meetings (Modern Era)

- During that time, we've met at each of the **seven** member's houses (Drew, Jessica, and Linda have had **three** houses each, Sylvia **two**)
- We've also met at **four** restaurants
  - Brian O'Neill's
  - Down House
  - Riva's
  - Stag's Head



# Meetings (Modern Era)



# Books (Modern Era)

- During this period we've read **one hundred eighty-five** books
  - (well, some of us have)
- Totaled, that's **fifty-nine thousand, two hundred and fifty-one** pages, or a little over **eight** pages per day for **twenty** years
- We've read **one hundred-eighty one** authors, with **four** authors selected for **two** books each
  - Alan Furst
  - Bruce Chatwin
  - Carl Sagan
  - Mary Roach

# Books by Good Reads Rating (Modern Era)

| Rank | Topic                   | Selector | Rating |
|------|-------------------------|----------|--------|
| 1    | Fate Is the Hunter      | John     | 4.56   |
| 2    | The Fire Next Time      | John     | 4.55   |
| 3    | Demon Copperhead        | Louis    | 4.50   |
| 4    | Labyrinth of Ice        | Barbara  | 4.46   |
|      |                         |          |        |
| 181  | Last Days of the Condor | Drew     | 3.3    |
| 182  | Snowdrops               | Louis    | 3.29   |
| 183  | Three Strong Women      | Sylvia   | 3.22   |
| 184  | Waterloo                | Drew     | 3.14   |

# Books by Book Length (Modern Era)

| Rank | Topic                                       | Selector | Pages |
|------|---|----------|-------|
| 1    | The Pillars of the Earth                    | Linda    | 976   |
| 2    | 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea                | Louis    | 739   |
| 3    | The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay | Linda    | 639   |
| 4    | The Dead Hand                               | Drew     | 592   |
|      |   |          |       |
| 182  | The Stranger                                | Louis    | 123   |
| 183  | The Lover                                   | Sylvia   | 117   |
| 184  | Stories of Ships and the Sea                | Drew     | 108   |
| 185  | The Fire Next Time                          | John     | 106   |

# Topics (Modern Era)

- During this period, we've selected books from **twenty-eight** topics, **one** still ongoing (Pulitzer Prize for Fiction) and **one** finishing up at the start of this era (History of Science)
- **One** topic was selected **two** times (Scandinavian Authors)
- Topics have been:
  - **Twelve** geography-based (Australia, Eastern Europe, France, India, Mexico, Native American, Outer Space, Russia, Scandinavia [twice], Southern Writers, Texas)
  - **Four** fields of Study-based (History of Science, Music, Medicine, Exploration)
  - **Three** elements-based (The Sea, Fire, The Sky)
  - **Three** prize-based (Pulitzer, Edgar, Newbery)
  - **Two** War-based (WW1, WW2)
  - **Two** genre-based (Spy, Historical Fiction)
  - **Two** wildcard-based (Our Favorite Books, Member's Choice)

# Topics by Good Reads Rating (Modern Era)

| Rank | Topic                   | Books | Average Rating |
|------|-------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1    | Fire                    | 7     | 4.15           |
| 2    | Member's Choice         | 7     | 4.11           |
| 3    | WW II                   | 7     | 4.06           |
| 4    | Outer Space             | 7     | 4.06           |
|      |                         |       |                |
| 26   | Native American Authors | 6     | 3.87           |
| 27   | Music                   | 6     | 3.85           |
| 28   | México                  | 7     | 3.71           |
| 29   | France                  | 7     | 3.70           |

# Topics by Book Length (Modern Era)

| Rank | Topic                          | Books | Average Pages |
|------|--------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1    | Historical Fiction             | 5     | 471           |
| 2    | Pulitzer Prize Winning Fiction | 7     | 402           |
| 3    | Outer Space                    | 7     | 395           |
| 4    | WW II                          | 7     | 378           |
|      |                                |       |               |
| 26   | México                         | 7     | 262           |
| 27   | Member's Choice                | 7     | 256           |
| 28   | Native American Authors        | 6     | 254           |
| 29   | Newbery Medal Winners          | 6     | 222           |

# Selectors (Modern Era)

Books Selected - 8/2004 to 8/2024





# Selector by Good Reads Rating (Modern Era)

| Selector | Books | Avg Rating | Avg Pages |
|----------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Louis    | 29    | 3.89       | 366       |
| John     | 27    | 3.95       | 321       |
| Linda    | 28    | 4.06       | 335       |
| Barbara  | 24    | 4.02       | 279       |
| Jessica  | 27    | 3.95       | 293       |
| Drew     | 27    | 3.87       | 337       |
| Sylvia   | 21    | 3.84       | 299       |
| Andy     | 1     | 3.97       | 293       |
| Suzanne  | 1     | 4.20       | 309       |

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