



Mentor

The Newsletter of
Arisia, Incorporated

Volume 33, Issue 309, July 2023
519 Somerville Ave #371, Somerville, MA 02143
+ 1-917-7ARISIA (+1-917-727-4742)

Contents

About the Next Meeting	1
Meeting Attendance	1
Executive Board Report	2
President's Report	2
Treasurer's Report	3
Clerk's Report	3
Committees' Reports	3
Old Business	6
New Business	8
Subscription and Dues Information	8
Calendar	9
Membership List	9

About the Next Meeting

The next corporate meeting of Arisia, Inc. will be held on August 24, 2023, at 7:00 PM **via Zoom**. The link to the meeting and corresponding agenda will be distributed over the corp-announce email list in advance of the meeting. The quorum for the August corporate meeting is 14, based on 51% of the average attendance of the last three meetings $((22+25+34)/3 \times 0.51) = 14$).

Please send all proxies for the **August corporate** meeting in advance by email to corp-proxies@arisia.org, and CC the proxy holder.

Attendance

Nicholas "phi" Sheckman	Ken London	Wendy Abramo
Jan Dumas	Lenore Jones	DJ Toland
Brendon Chetwynd	Melissa Kaplan	Alex Morgan
Daniel Abraham	Nick Brown	Vic Macchi
Etana	Nightwing Whitehead	Rick Kovalck
Ilene Tatroe	Rachel Tanenhaus	Claudia Mastroianni
JB Segal	Cate Schneiderman	Richard Schmeidler
Allison Feldhusen	Vivian Abraham	Delenn Brumberger
Joseph Andelman	Mike Sprague	Mike Tatroe

Dale Meyer-Curley

Rebecca Brumberger

David Silber

Erik Meyer-Curley

Jason Schneiderman

Elliot Mitchell

E.J. Barnes

Meeting started at 2:06pm.

Proxy List

Sharon Sbarsky to Rick Kovalcik ok

Priscilla Ballou to etana ok

Gail Terman to Ilene Tatroe ok

Melissa Kaplan to Dale Meyer-Curley ok

Mike Tatroe to Gail Terman ok

Ilene Tatroe to Gail Terman ok

Executive Board Report

The EBoard voted on some incident recommendations from the IRMC.

The EBoard received a report of an incident involving members of the IRMC and other Arisia staff during Arisia 2023. We considered this report directly instead of having the IRMC do it. We investigated whether any code of conduct violations had occurred and did not identify any. We are taking no incident process action in response to this report. The report did suggest some trainings that Arisia might offer. We do not recommend the particular training suggested but we are investigating possible anti-racism or conflict management trainings to offer to the Arisia community. We will report further on those at the August meeting.

The EBoard also received an incident report about a staff member, but the incident was not con-related and had allegedly taken place in that staff member's professional capacity. The staff member was not legally allowed to talk to anyone about the incident. (Vivian gave the example that they are an attorney outside of their work on the EBoard, and if someone had sent the EBoard an incident report about something Vivian had done as an attorney, the EBoard would not be able to investigate it. The appropriate investigating body in this example would be the state Board of Bar Overseers). Therefore, the EBoard voted not to investigate the incident - because they couldn't - and referred the reporter to the appropriate investigating body. In the spirit of transparency, the EBoard is informing the Corporation of this vote. Some people suggested that further discussion take place on the corp-discuss mailing list. The EBoard also welcomes the discussion and proposal of a relevant policy in the future.

President's Report

The President appointed Vivian Abraham as chair of the Hotel Search committee, and himself (phi Sheckman), Rachel Tanenhaus, and Rebecca Brumberger as members. Gail Terman also volunteered.

A motion to charge the Hotel Search committee with producing a Request for Proposals for a hotel contract for Arisia 2025 and onward was passed.

A motion to set the meeting date for October for Tuesday, October 17 at 7:00 pm passes via voice vote.

Vice President's Report

None

Treasurer's Report

Dues are \$4 by the end of the meeting; \$2 next month. Please pay your annual dues before the Annual Meeting to retain your voting rights as we'll be electing a new EBoard.

Clerk's Report

The March Mentor was approved.

Corrections to April Mentor:

etana was in attendance at the April meeting Their name has been corrected in the corporate member list. The April Mentor was approved with corrections.

The Corporation sent the May and June Mentors back for review and re-writing.

Members at Large

None

Committee Reports

Incident Response Management Committee (IRMC) Report

Current status of incident reports:

Three reports from Arisia 2021, and nineteen reports from Arisia 2023, including reports received before and after the con that they bundled with A23, are remaining to be handled.

The IRMC sent eight reports to the Eboard for voting, and several reports have been sent to the Eboard to handle directly, as too many members of the IRMC had recused themselves.

The IRMC has received some questions about their processes. One has to do with priority: The IRMC tries to prioritize incident reports that have been brought against those in leadership positions at Arisia, those that may impact staffing at the next convention, and those of a particularly serious nature. They would like to be able to resolve this work more quickly, but they continue to be understaffed. They welcome anyone who might be interested in joining the IRMC to reach out to them.

The other has to do with recusals: When an IR comes to them, one of the first things they do is determine who, if anyone, on the IRMC needs to recuse themselves from working on it. In general, there's an automatic recusal if an IR has been brought because of harm done to a person on the IRMC or because of harm done by a person on the IRMC. In addition, IRMC members have consistently recused themselves if the IR is brought concerning or against their family member or partner. They try to err on the side of recusing, even when they believe they can be objective about the IR, if it might create the appearance of bias. There are times that this means that several people on the IRMC are recused, which slows the process down considerably. In some recent cases, they have so few people on the IRMC that are not recused, that they refer the IR directly to the Eboard. The Eboard has a similar recusal policy.

Actions taken by the IRMC and the Eboard:

The IRMC received a report that, during and after a panel at Arisia 2020, an attendee had engaged in harassing behavior toward the panel members. This person had previously been banned from Arisia 2019 because of harassment. Considering the pattern of behavior, the IRMC recommended a three-year ban. The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

The IRMC received several reports concerning an Eboard member's failure to COVID test at or immediately before Arisia 2023. This person was also a division head and had contact with many people at the convention. The IRMC found that, although this person had not violated the specific letter of the Arisia 2023 COVID policy, their judgment with respect to keeping attendees safe was poor. As a senior staff member, and a member of the EBoard, it is appropriate to hold them to a higher standard. The IRMC recommended a two year ban on holding a position as senior staff (defined as anyone with management duties or an Area or Division head). The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

The IRMC received a report that, at Arisia 2023, a volunteer and their young child had stayed overnight in the Arisia coat check room. This was a concern because it violated hotel rules. The IRMC reached out to this person who apologized and stated that it would not happen again. The IRMC recommended a warning and no further action. The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

The IRMC received several reports concerning ableist comments and behavior by an Arisia staff member, one from Arisia 2021 and two from Arisia 2023. After the incident at Arisia 2021, the staff member was approached by senior staff who explained why this behavior was not acceptable and given a warning. The IRMC voted, with respect to that incident, to confirm the actions of the Arisia 2021 staff and take no further action. However, combined with the two separate incidents from Arisia 2023, the IRMC believes that this is a pattern of ableist behavior. Moreover, when the IRMC reached out to this person, they stated that they had done nothing wrong. The IRMC recommended a one-year ban on volunteering. The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

Content warning: suicide

The IRMC received a report that an Arisia attendee and staff member had called the hotel and the police, stating that they were suicidal and that all of their things had been stolen. When the police arrived, this person denied making those statements. As a result of this incident, the Westin has banned this person from staying in the hotel. Throughout the convention, this person demonstrated a frequent inability to care for their personal needs. The IRMC, concerned that this person demonstrated a risk to both themselves and Arisia's relationship with the hotel,

recommended a permanent ban on staffing and a one-year attendance ban. The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

Content warning: child sexual assault

The IRMC received a report that the former co-con chairs of Arisia 2024, knowing that an individual had been credibly accused of sexually assaulting a child, nevertheless asked this person to advise them on logistics and connected this person with the Division Head, with the intention that this person would join Arisia's staff. Neither co-con chair reported this person, although the person has since been banned from Arisia. The IRMC recommended a permanent ban for both co-con chairs from holding a senior staffing position (defined as any position, including an Area Head or a Division Head, that requires them to hire or manage other volunteers). The EBoard voted to adopt the IRMC's recommendation.

Membership then discussed various aspects of the IRs, the IRMC, and IRMC processes. Some people felt that IRs are perceived as punishment, while others saw IRs as consequences of actions that could potentially make the convention less safe. IRs address potential violations of the Code of Conduct, and consequences are not necessarily intended to be punitive, but to prevent further violations. IRs are not character judgments.

In particular, members addressed concerns about the second IR listed above. They debated the potential impact of IRs and the IR process on staffing numbers, versus the need to ensure that the staff we do have don't violate the Code of Conduct. Discussion also took place around intent versus impact of actions. In addition, some facts and details were called into question.

IRMC members indicated that in every report presented above, the IRMC has information that the public does not, and used this information to make decisions and recommendations. If people disagree with any of the IRMC decisions reported on at this meeting, they can make a motion to overturn them at the next one. Also, even if IRMC does not decide to ban a person from volunteering as staff, the Con Chairs for that particular year's convention make the final decision as to who may and may not serve as staff.

A motion to recess for five minutes to calm down passed on a voice vote. Discussion resumed after a five-minute break.

Discussion continued about allowing people to make and learn from mistakes while still minimizing harm done as a result of those mistakes. People expressed concern that they might receive harsh consequences for making simple mistakes. One person asked if the subjects of IRs could be notified as soon as the IR was submitted, but that might threaten the confidentiality of the reporter and the safety of the process overall, and therefore be a deterrent to people submitting IRs when they need to do so. Furthermore, it can take some time to gather enough information to determine who the subject of an IR is, and the IRMC is already understaffed. Attendees agreed that finding out that one is the subject of an IR long after the incident being reported has occurred can be very frustrating, and can lead to the perception that the IR process is unfair, whether or not it actually is.

A member asked the IRMC if they had a limited number of outcomes they could recommend when evaluating IRs. The IRMC has a fair amount of flexibility. The role of warnings for small violations was discussed. Sometimes warnings have already taken place, but the membership doesn't know about those because the subjects of IRs are not named publicly when warnings

are given out, so the thing that gets people's attention is when people are banned or suspended from the con or from staffing or holding leadership positions. They may in fact have received a warning previously and the general membership just hadn't known about it. Warnings sometimes contain the cultural context for a Code of Conduct violation, and can enable the person receiving the warning to learn from their mistakes. Individual or group staff training or coaching can also be helpful, and can even be facilitated by Division Heads .

Other members pointed out that a violation that looks like a minor occurrence to people who are not adversely impacted by it may in fact have a great deal of impact. People with privilege are not going to understand the full impact of oppressive behaviors. Is there a threshold for how much racism/sexism/ableism/etc. a person needs to put up with because the person carrying out the behavior didn't know better or didn't have bad intentions? Someone's hurt feelings for being corrected are not more important than the harm done to the person impacted by the violation. The transparency of the IR process can also make the subject of an IR feel like they are being subjected to public criticism.

EBoard members pointed out that there is no one to whom the Code of Conduct doesn't apply, and it's there to establish a standard of behavior. In general, most IRs don't result in taking action. Most people about whom an IR is filed realize they did something wrong and correct their behavior, or it's established that a violation didn't occur. No one has skills that are so specialized that the Code of Conduct doesn't apply to them.

One member pointed out that if you aren't good at picking up cues, the Code of Conduct and the IR system can provide helpful guidance and feedback. Another agreed and noted that people who are neuroatypical or not skilled at picking up on social cues are still responsible for their actions when they cause harm, even if that harm is inadvertent. This doesn't mean we can't be kind to people when they make mistakes.

A member asked if the EBoard has ever disagreed with or voted to reject an IRMC decision. They have, but statistics on how often or when were not available. The EBoard takes IRMC decisions very seriously and has been known to discuss them at great length.

The membership then discussed the fact that the subject of the fourth IR listed above had doxxed a number of current and past staff, IRMC members, and EBoard members - all women and non-binary people - in retaliation for the actions taken by the IRMC and the EBoard. The subject also referred to these people using anti-Semitic language. IRMC members pointed out that making decisions to ban someone who takes such actions doesn't drive people away from the convention; it makes the convention safer.

Old Business

Change to By-laws

Current By Law - 6.8

6.8 All senior staff (e.g. the ConChair, Assistant ConChair(s), Treasurer, and Division Heads) must be General members of the Corporation. If the ConChair or Eboard wishes to appoint a

member of the senior staff who is not already a General member, that person must immediately join the corporation and has until four (4) months before the convention for which they are appointed to achieve General membership status. The Executive Board may waive General membership requirement for a stated cause, if replacement within four (4) months of the convention becomes necessary.

Recommended Changes - 6.8

~~6.8 All senior staff (e.g. the ConChair, Assistant ConChair(s), Treasurer, and Division Heads)~~
The ConChair team (i.e., the Conchairs, Assistant ConChairs, and other roles as designated in any given year) and the Convention Treasurer must be General members of the Corporation. If the ConChair or Eboard wishes to appoint a member of the ~~senior staff~~ ConChair team or a Convention Treasurer who is not already a General member, that person must immediately join the corporation and has until four (4) months before the convention for which they are appointed to achieve General membership status. Members of the ConChair team and the Convention Treasurer must also gain voting rights as described in Article I Section 1.1(a) of the ByLaws at least one (1) meeting prior to the convention.

The Executive Board may waive General membership requirement for a stated cause, if replacement within four (4) months of the convention becomes necessary.

All senior staff (i.e., the ConChairs, Assistant ConChairs, other members of the ConChair team, Treasurer, and Division Heads) can become members of the Corporation at no cost, just by asking to join. Senior staff will not be required to pay dues during any years they are in a senior staff role, although they may voluntarily do so. This means that if a senior staff member's role crosses membership years, they are granted an unpaid membership for both years. Senior staff who are already members of the Corporation will not receive a refund if they are appointed as senior staff after they have paid their dues for that year. A year is defined as starting on the full dues payment date, and ending with the following full dues payment date, as determined by the Membership.

Should a senior staff member resign from their role prior to convention, they will retain their membership until the start of the next membership year.

The membership discussed the proposed by-laws change. One member asked whether a Division Head could choose to pay corporate dues if they wanted to even if they were exempt from doing so, and they can. Another asked if the Arisia Slack was an acceptable way for a Division Head to request Corporate Membership, and phi recommended that the requests be submitted via the same mechanisms as a dues waiver request would come in. The Corporation brings in about \$2000 per year in dues, which at one point was used to pay for the cost of producing Mentor, but can now be used for other expenses.

A motion to accept the proposed by-laws change passed, with 30 in favor and 2 against.

New Business

The membership discussed the recent incident in which a former staff member doxxed current and past convention staff, IRMC members, and EBoard members. The EBoard has no process to address doxxing, and in any case the post doxxing people was taken down. Many of the people who would ordinarily be making decisions around consequences for the offender have recused themselves from the issue because they were themselves doxxed in this situation. The offender has unsubscribed themselves from staff accounts, but they do have keys to Arisia storage. The Corporation could act to change the locks. Some of the people doxxed mentioned that they have filed IRs against the offender.

Meeting adjourned at 4:53 pm.

Subscription and Dues information Membership runs from September 1st to August 31st (*) and costs \$24 for the year. Dues are prorated on a monthly basis for members joining throughout the year. Subscription to the Arisia, Inc. newsletter, *Mentor of Arisia*, is included with corporate membership.

New members must attend one meeting after joining to receive voting privileges at subsequent meetings.

Pay for the month in which the next corporate meeting will take place (per the [calendar](#)).

September	\$24	March	\$12
October	\$22	April	\$10
November	\$20	May	\$8
December	\$18	June	\$6
January	\$16	July	\$4
February	\$14	August	\$2

If you cannot afford to purchase a membership, you may reach out to the Executive Board at eboard@arisia.org and request a dues waiver.

You can pay in cash at a corporate meeting, mail a check for the appropriate amount to Arisia, or use the PayPal button below. (You do not need a PayPal account to use your debit or credit card with PayPal.)

Arisia's mailing address is:

Arisia, Inc.

519 Somerville Avenue #371

Somerville, MA 02143

Calendar

Corporate Meeting

August 24, 2023, 7:00 PM via Zoom

September 17, 2023, 7:35 PM via Zoom - Elections

Upcoming Conventions

July 14 - 16 2023 Readercon

July 20 - 23 2023 NASFic Pemmi-con

July 28 - 30 2023 Sand Sculpting Festival

September 8 - 10, 2023 Albacon

September 29 - October 1 2023 Capclave

October 13 - October 15 2023 MCFI Relaxacon Dennisport

October 18 - October 22 World Science Fiction in Chengdu China

Membership List (Honorary Members are in italics)

Vivian Abraham

Wendee Abramo

Joseph Andelman

Priscilla Ballou

E.J. Barnes

Fred Bauer

Rob Bazemore

James Boggie

Bridget Boyle

Anna Bradley

Nicholas Brown

Chen C

Brendon Chetwynd

Brian Cooper

Heather Cougar

Tom Coveney

David D'Antnoio

Regis Donovan

Kaiden Drew

Jan Dumas

Daniel Eareckson

etana

Kelly Fabijanic

Sabina Fecteau

Allison Feldhusen

Jennifer Fitzsimmons-Gauger

Dan Franklin

Jamie Garmendia

Lisa Goldstein

Erik H

Sol Houser

Crystal Huff

Lenore Jean Jones

Melissa Kaplan

Terry Karney

Rick Kovalcik

Chris Lahen

Alex Latzko

Henry Leong

Megan Lewis
Ken London
Glenn MacWilliams
Claudia Mastroianni
Penelope Messier
Daniel Miller
Elliott Mitchell
Hope Moore
Alex Morgan
Lisa Olsborg
Kris Pelletier
Melissa "MPA" Perreira-Andrews
Danielle Reese
Shannon Reilley
A. Joseph Ross
Kylie Selkirk
Sharon Sbarsky
Richard Schmeidler
Cate Schneiderman
Jason Schneiderman
JB Segal
Seph
Cris Shuldiner
David Silber
Rachel Silber
Mike Sprague
Mary Stock
Rachel Tanenhaus
Maria Taranov
Ilene Tatroe

Mike Tatroe

Gail Terman

Emily Tersoff

Persis Thondike

Dan Toland

Dorothy Trachtenberg

Melia Vaden

Alan Wexelblat

Michelle Wexelblat

Nightwing Whitehead