



Mentor

The Newsletter of
Arisia, Incorporated

Volume 32, Issue 335, September 2025
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About the Meeting

The next corporate meeting of Arisia, Inc. will be held on **Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 7:00 pm ET over Zoom**. The corresponding agenda will be distributed over the corp-announce email list in advance of the meeting.

The quorum for the September corporate meeting was **12**, based on 51% of the average attendance of the last three meetings $((29+18+21)/3 \times 0.51) = 12$. The quorum for the October corporate meeting will be 13.

Please submit proxies in advance by email to corp-proxies@arisia.org (a mailing list which will be seen by some corporate members) and CC: the proxy holder.

September 21, 2025 Corporate Meeting Summary

The meeting was conducted over Zoom and called to order at **2:01 PM**. There were 35 members attending:

Vivian Abraham
Wendee Abramo
Joseph Andelman
Innana Arthen
Julia Austein
Priscilla Ballou
Adam Burdick
Adam Cohn
Alder Fehler
Allison Feldhusen
Charles Hannum
Joel Herda
Rick Kovalcik
Sue Kramer

Henry Leong
Megan Lewis
Ken London
Will McMain
Elliott Mitchell
John Nelson
Antonia Pugliese
Michael Rasnick
Laurel Richman
Sharon Sbarsky
Richard Schmeidler
Kylie Selkirk
Nicholas “phi” Shectman
Rachel Silber
Mike Sprague
Rachel Tanenhaus
Ilene Tatroe
Mike Tatroe
D.J. Toland
Tanya Washburn
Violet Zitola

Proxies:

- Jaime Garmendia to Julia Austein (accepted)
- Lisa Opus Goldstein to Henry Leong (accepted)
- Carolyn Heald to Henry Leong (accepted)

Approval of the August 2025 Minutes:

A motion was made to accept the minutes. **MOTION PASSES.**

EBoard Report:

The EBoard discussed upcoming elections and possible future motions. Hotel reservations for staff are slated to open on September 25 for testing and for everyone else on September 30. Rates are \$5 more per night this year.

President’s Report:

None.

VPs Report:

None.

Treasurer’s Report:

Our taxes are due on November 15, and are the responsibility of the outgoing Treasurer. phi does not expect to need to file an extension to get them done in time.

Clerk's Report:

Rachel talked about re-upping Corporate membership for the next year.

- Dues for the year are \$24 and are due by the time elections start in this current meeting, but if you get them in by October 1, you won't be removed from the Corporate mailing lists.
- Division Head and higher do not have to pay dues, but they must let Rachel know at tikva@arisia.org or clerk@arisia.org if they want to join the Corporation.
- Dues waivers are available by e-mailing eboard@arisia.org. The EBoard will vote on approval, but we don't want or need to know why you need the waiver.
- If your PayPal address is starkly different from the name by which Rachel knows you, please let her know so she gives you credit for paying dues.
- If you are paying by non-electronic means, such as a check, please alert Rachel so that she can add you to the membership list and someone visits Arisia's post office box to pick up your check.
- If you do not settle up one way or the other by October 1, your membership will have lapsed and you will have to re-join and meet all eligibility, time, and attendance requirements again in order to become a voting member of the Corporation.

Member-At-Large's Report:

None.

A25 Con Comm Report:

None.

A26 Con Comm Report:

The Arisia 2026 Writer Guest of Honor will be John Wiswell! John Wiswell is a science fiction and fantasy author who's won both the Nebula Award and the Locus Award twice each. He has also been a finalist for the Hugo, British Fantasy, and World Fantasy Awards. His debut fantasy novel, "Someone You Can Build a Nest In", is described as a "creepy, charming monster-slaying sapphic romance - from the perspective of the monster" and was released in spring 2024.

Elections:

President:

Mike S. is running for President. He read the statement of candidacy he had sent to the Corporate mailing list. There are no current Incident Reports involving him.

Joel spoke in support of Mike's candidacy. Charles H. asked all candidates how they were going to address the slow trickle of attendees from the con. Mike pointed out that all cons in the area have had a retention problem since COVID. Mike is encouraged by seeing more first-time attendees. He cited that Arisia had an increase in attendees between 2023 and 2024, and that while our 2025 numbers were close to those of 2024, we don't have an accurate count because we had to switch to hand-written badges halfway through. Moving hotels may have impacted our numbers slightly. Arisia should also get better at promotion - Mike noted that literature conventions tend to be bad at that.

Rick and Priscilla called for secret ballots. Secret ballots will be used in the election of all officers in this meeting.

31 votes were cast for Mike, 4 for None Of The Above. **Mike Sprague is re-elected President.**

Vice President:

Joel is the outgoing Vice President but is ineligible to run again because he is the current Con Chair. No candidates for Vice President stepped forward, so the office remains open, but the current election has closed. A notice of the open position will be posted to the Corporate mailing list. Ilene noted that a Member-At-Large usually fills in when there's a vacancy in one of the other positions. **No one has been elected Vice President at this time.**

Treasurer:

phi is running for re-election as Treasurer. He likes doing jobs for Arisia that are easier for him to do than for someone else to do. He has been focusing on where we can save money and is happy to continue with fundraising and grant-writing efforts. He wants to adapt Arisia to the circumstances it's in and spend money in appropriate ways. A while back, a membership survey noted that we should grow the con to have 2000 attendees, but we had 3800 people at the time. Now we have fewer than 2000 attendees. How do we grow? Not by changing which side of the cultural schism we're on; let's keep our brand. There are no current Incident Reports regarding phi.

Rachel T. pointed out that the grants Arisia gets are because of phi's work. Mike S. noted that the grants add up to \$3,000-\$7,000 per year that doesn't come out of our coffers. Tanya added that the Cards to Culture initiative, which phi helped make happen, has been instrumental for getting new people to the con. 33 votes were cast for phi, 2 for None Of The Above. **Nicholas "phi" Shectman is re-elected Treasurer.**

Clerk:

Rachel T. read the statement of candidacy she had posted to the Corporate mailing list. She had also posted a response to Vivian's previous question about the organization's infrastructure

issues. In answer to the question about retaining convention attendees, she stated that retention is important, but if people are leaving because they are uncomfortable with the convention's or organization's commitment to centering the needs of marginalized or vulnerable people, their needs would best be served elsewhere. She also discussed her qualifications as Clerk and her previous experience with the role. She emphasized her commitment to transparency, clarity, and accuracy, and her desire to ensure that everyone can get the information they need in a manner that works for them.

32 were cast for Rachel and 2 for None Of The Above. **Rachel Tanenhaus is re-elected Clerk.**

Members at Large:

Mike S. explained Ranked Choice Voting. The candidates were Megan Lewis, Allison Feldhusen, and Julia Austein.

Megan read the candidacy statement she had posted to the Corporate mailing list. In response to the previous question about retaining attendees, she noted that the 2026 Writer Guest of Honor is a horror writer, so we should do more outreach to that community, and that the new Horror track in Programming was very popular at Arisia 2025. She suggests a mentoring structure for volunteers, with steadily increasing responsibilities. Serving as a Member-At-Large is the best way she can help Arisia; she does not have the capacity to be Vice President or Interim Vice President. Vivian asked how Megan will help address infrastructure problems. Megan responded that she can help with prompting committees to meet and make regular reports.

Julia has been a Member-At-Large several times. She had to step down last year due to being on the Con Chair team. She likes supporting the rest of the EBoard on initiatives and committees. She doesn't always have a lot of time, but she gives asynchronous support to the EBoard. She has been working for the Art Show for 11 years straight. She is on the Long Range Planning Committee. To retain attendees, she feels that Arisia needs to clarify promotion and be more visible. She likes Megan's mentoring idea and wants to support others' ideas regarding infrastructure. Vivian asked if Julia could help with shepherding a committee. Julia says she believes so. She is good at reporting problems and finding the person to solve the problem.

Allison read the statement of candidacy she had sent to the Corporate mailing list. She took over the role of Member-At-Large partway through the year. She stated that Arisia should continue on the path of acceptance and inclusion - don't lose that when concentrating on numbers. She can not take on the role of Interim Vice President now; maybe in another month or so. She pointed out that the Corporation doesn't put out help wanted notices like the convention does when it identifies problems and suggests that it do so.

Megan asked Vivian which committee(s) they think have more urgency. Vivian responded that Arisia's e-mail issues are pretty urgent, but deferred to Joel as Con Chair. Joel agreed that tech

problems are a big deal. Communications are sorted because Jason and Cate Schneiderman will be doing communications and publications..The convention needs help with Planorama.

Round 1: Julia 26, Allison 4, Megan 3. Julia is elected.

Round 2: Megan 18, Allison 14, None of the Above 1. Megan is elected.

Round 3: Allison 32, None of the Above 1. Allison is elected.

All three candidates were elected over None Of The Above. **Megan Lewis, Julia Austein, and Allison Feldhusen are elected Members-At-Large.**

Committee Reports:

Budget:

phi (Chair), Kelly Fabijanic

None.

Corporate Communications:

Rachel T. (Chair)

None.

Corporate Inventory Control (CIC):

phi, Ben, Kylie, Skip, Sharon

We have changed the locks at storage and most of CIC has their new keys.

Our lease at storage is up at the end of January, after the 2026 convention. The landlord has generally not wanted to discuss renewing leases until November. We don't know what we will want to do about that, but there's plenty of stuff in storage that we don't need any more and even if we don't move it will be helpful to reduce the amount of stuff we have in storage. We've had several worksessions over the summer to identify and get rid of unneeded equipment. We are trying to give as much as possible to other community organizations or else dispose of it in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Yesterday we took an inventory of all of the old video equipment in storage. There is one tote of high value items that were collected together by former video staff to sell. Our understanding from them is that most of the rest is e-waste, but there may be a few things that we should donate to other organizations, and once we do the data entry from yesterday's inventory we will try to find a taker. If you know of an organization that wants a lot of approximately 20-year-old video gear please let us know at cic@arisia.org.

phi will be organizing more worksessions in October and November. If you're interested in helping with this work please let him know.

Discord:

Will (Chair), Justin, Ken, Jason, Andrew

None.

Fundraising:

phi (Chair), Julia

None.

Grants:

Joel (Chair), Joseph

This Committee has been suspended until finances are stabilized.

Hotel Search Committee:

phi, Ben, Kelly

We haven't yet pursued an overflow hotel contract because last year's got very little use. We won't know how many rooms are going to Boston University until November. Last year many of the possible overflow hotels were under threat of strike; that's not true this year, so we have more options.

Incident Response Management Committee (IRMC):

Jaime (Interim Chair), Kris P. (advisory member), Rachel T., Megan, Will, Adam

None.

IT:

phi (Chair), Sharon, Ben, Mike T.

Like many areas in Arisia the IT Committee is understaffed for the work we would like to do. Not only have we lost committee members, but the committee members we do have are also busy with important work for other committees. This last year we have focused on projects that will simplify our work going forward. At the start of the year we had five different e-mail servers for different purposes, and two of these were run by a volunteer who didn't want to continue doing that work. We have gracefully decommissioned three of these servers and mostly consolidated on Google Workspace. One remaining server was decommissioned ungracefully and currently we have a problem affecting people who are set up to send as an arisia.org address from their personal Gmail accounts, or from shared non-workspace Google accounts. We know what the solution is, but we don't have anyone who has time to implement it. In the meantime, we would like to give more people accounts in the Google Workspace, so that they don't have to use Gmail's "send as" function.

phi is willing to continue serving on this committee but he would be happy to pass off the position of Chair to someone new.

phi (separate from the Committee) made a motion to authorize Joel Herda to approve accounts on our Google Workspace. Rick made an amendment (deemed friendly by phi) to change “Joel Herda” to “the Con Chair, their designee, or any Division Head”. Rachel T. agreed, because Joel had to leave the meeting early, and there should not be a vote about his responsibilities without him being present.

Motion to authorize the Con Chair, their designee, or any Division Head to approve the creation of accounts in our Google Workspace. **MOTION PASSES.**

Long Range Planning (LRP):

Tanya (chair), phi, Dan T., Julia, Henry

The LRP Committee was asked to address some of the following questions:

- Root causes of volunteer burnout and/or reluctance to volunteer and ways to address them
- Viability of a four-day con vs. a three-day con
- Possibility of hiring external consultants to review processes/procedures (need clarity)
- Possibility of Arisia taking an intentional break of one or more years to address challenges and anticipated effects of such a break
- How to make Arisia a more inclusive space for fans from marginalized communities.

Who did we talk to?

- We had two Town Halls, one in person, one virtual.
- Interviewed people from Readercon and Wiscon (both cons have taken breaks), as well as members of the Arisia Community including experienced staff, volunteers and attendees.
- We solicited email from people who could not attend the town halls.

What did we learn?

Regarding taking a break:

A break will not solve our underlying volunteer problems in and of itself. If poor communication, lack of direction, support and training, and a model that discourages long term planning are still in place after we come back, we will be worse off. We might be a little fresher, but the problems will be the same, and we may have lost attendees and volunteers to other endeavours. If we take a break, it should be to make the kind of structural changes that are hard to make while also trying to run a convention. We would need to plan to have some smaller events to keep the community in contact, and keep Arisia fresh in people's minds for when it does return.

Location of the convention, the number of days, etc.:

- People are concerned about these, and any change we make might lose people.
- There is a group asking if we can move to “not the middle of flu season”.

In the end this is the province of the Hotel Search Committee, but there would have to be a big benefit (far cheaper, great weekend, great facility, good location to make most people “follow the con”).

Our biggest areas of concern:

- Communication is one of our biggest problems.
- The Phoenix Model (in which each Con Chair hires their own team, so the previous year’s team’s term ends automatically) is serving us poorly.
- We have significant “tech debt” we need to prioritize.
- Volunteer burnout is real, particularly at leadership levels.

External Consultants:

- We need to have a clear scope of work.
- Tech Drawings (of Program Audio/Visual equipment).
- Organization of the scattered information we already have.

Inclusion:

- Gender discrimination is not a “solved problem”.
- Age discrimination is not a “solved problem”.
- Fan gatekeeping of jobs, spaces and expertise is still a problem.
- Fans who are underrepresented have taken the time to tell us where we can improve; it’s a matter of listening to what we have been told, and acting on it.
- We need to choose what culture changes we want to see, and commit to making lasting change.
- Recruitment Idea: Bringing friends helps people to enter new spaces and feels safe. We could use the “Scholarship Fund” (a fund some members donated to several years ago which has not yet been used) to offer 2 for 1 deals for first time attendees.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Looking at tech debt and information management:

- Outside expertise could help.
- Tech drawings.
- New art show system.

Priority: We need someone in charge of Communication year round.

Proposal: The Corporation should consider having an archivist manage the records we do have, solicit materials from convention volunteers, and conduct searches for the information new volunteers need, to learn about what they have taken on.

Proposal: A three year pilot to suspend some of our bylaws to permit people to volunteer for multiple years, with the understanding that they may need to step away, or that they may be asked to step down. These conditions are true of all volunteer positions under the current system. Revisit if that has improved documentation, recruitment or succession planning in three years.

Discussion:

Violet offered to help with tech drawings. Some members noted that drawings and photos might both be helpful. Video is hard to search, but can be useful as a tutorial for using equipment.

The membership discussed the pitfalls of the Phoenix Model. Julia noted that some departments (e.g., Art Show) just start up for the year before they get official Con Chair instructions. Joel pointed out that this year there is a lot less lead time - he started as Con Chair very late in the game. But if people are volunteering for too many years in the same position, that can also cause problems. Having an Assistant Con Chair (ACC) not only helps make sure there's someone set up for the future, it means people know who they'll be working for in the future. The Phoenix Model is written into our Bylaws, so doing something else requires Bylaws changes.

Tanya was on the LRP Committee, but will not be in charge of implementing its recommendations.

Ilene likes the idea of having lots of lead time for positions, but also pointed out that circumstances are more likely to change over long periods of time. Will noted that we should have expectations that people carry out documentation and look at succession, and also that there should be consequences for not doing one's job properly. Rick stated that just because someone is good at doing a task doesn't mean they will be good at documenting it. Kylie wondered where the documentation would go and if the staff Wiki was active and an appropriate location for it. Some documentation is in Google folders, but it's not easy to find. phi pointed out that one size will not fit all and needs will vary depending on the specific area in question.

A member pointed out that we are not currently prepared to hold an Arisia 2027. If we do take a year off because we have to, Tanya emphasized that we have to use that time constructively. The LRP Committee was divided on the subject of taking a year off. Mike S. expressed concerns about signing a 2027 hotel contract when we don't have anyone to run the con. Rachel T. thinks this is what "us being exhausted and falling down" looks like. Mycroft said that toxic members are driving volunteers away, and that if we announce a hiatus this close to the con, people will not go to Arisia 2026. People disagreed with the latter issue. A possible vote in October will give people time to provide feedback ahead of time. Vivian suggested that we have someone prepared to handle media requests when we announce our decision one way or the other.

Tanya welcomes feedback on the LRP Committee report at lrp@arisia.org.

Postmaster:

Sharon (Chair), Ben, phi, Mike T. (Advisory)

None.

Recruiting:

Wendee (Chair), Allison

None.

Social:

Mike S.

None.

Student Contests:

(members needed)

None.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

The Corporation voted via voice vote to set the December corporate meeting date for **Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 7:00 pm on Zoom.**

Announcements:

- The NESFA used book sale will take place on Saturday, October 18 12-6 pm; donations accepted. Books and DVDs sold at the book sale will be donations that NESFA already has or are out of genre. The parking lot is at 359 Lowell Street, Somerville.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm.

Calendar

Corporate Meetings

- Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 7:00 pm (Zoom)
- Sunday, November 16, 2025 at 2:00 (Zoom)

- Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 7:00 pm (Zoom)

Other Meetings and Events

- ConComm meeting - Sunday, October 5, 2025 at 3:00 pm (Zoom)

Upcoming Conventions

- Boskone - February 13-15, 2026 - Westin Boston Seaport District, Boston, MA

Please also see <https://corp.arisia.org/calendar>.

Membership List

This membership list is as of 9:00 PM on 3/11/2025. Please report any corrections to clerk@arisia.org. Names in italics are non-voting members.

Vivian Abraham
 Wendee Abramo
 Dawn Albright
 Robert Allison
 Joseph Andelman
 Inanna Arthen
 Julia Austein
 Priscilla Ballou
 Fred Bauer
Rob Bazemore
 Anna Bradley
 Andrew Brockert
 Rebecca Brumberger
 Adam Burdick
 Brendon Chetwynd
 Adam Cohn
Brian Cooper
 Skyler Crossman
 Garret DeJong
 Regis Donovan
 Jan Dumas
 Dennis Duquette
 Daniel Eareckson
 etana
 Kelly Fabijanec
 Sabina Fecteau
 Alder Fehler
 Allison Feldhusen
 Bernie Gabin
 Jaime Garmendia
 Lisa Opus Goldstein
 Charles Hannum
 Carolyn Heald
 Joel Herda

Diana Hsu
Elaine Isaak
Angela Jones
Lenore Jones
Rick Kovalcik
Susan Kramer
Henry Leong
Megan Lewis
Ken London
Glen Macwilliams
Claudia Mastroianni
Will McMain
Penelope Messier
Dale Meyer-Curley
Erik Meyer-Curley
Elliott Mitchell
Eliot Mohrmann
Hope Moore
Skip Morris
Sarah Morrison
Lia Olsborg
Charles Olson
Kris Pelletier
Antonia Pugliese
Danielle Reese
Laurel Richman
Phoebe Roberts
A. Joseph Ross
Sharon Sbarsky
Richard Schmeidler
Jason Schneiderman
JB Segal
Kyle Selkirk
Jude Shabry
Nicholas “phi” Shectman
Cris Shuldiner
Rachel Silber
Mike Sprague
Mary Stock
Rachel Tanenhaus
Ilene Tatroe
Mike Tatroe
Ben Thornton
D.J. Toland
Edward Trachtenberg
Melia Vaden
Wendy Verschoor
Tanya Washburn
Nightwing Whitehead

Executive Board - eboard@

President	Mike Sprague	president@
Vice President	Joel Herda	vice-president@
Treasurer	Nicholas “phi” Shectman	treasurer@
Clerk	Rachel Tanenhaus	clerk@
Members-At-Large	Megan Lewis	at-large@
	Julia Austein	
	Allison Feldhusen	
Arisia '25 Con Chairs	Wendee Abramo, Julia Austein, etana, and Dale Meyer-Curley	conchair@
Arisia '25 Treasurer	None	con-treasurer@

Committee Membership

Budget (budget@) Nicholas "phi" Shectman (chair), Kelly Fabijanic
Corporate Communications (corpcomms@) Rachel Tanenhaus (chair), Justin du Coeur, Lenore Jean Jones
Corporate Inventory Control (cic@): Benjamin Levy, Skip Morris, Nicholas “phi” Shectman
Discord: Will McMain, (chair), Justin duCoeur, Jason Schneiderman, Andrew Brockert, Ken London
Fundraising - donations@: Nicholas “phi” Shectman (chair), Julia Austein
Grants (grantsrequest): (on hiatus) Joel Herda (chair), Joseph Andelman
Hotel Search (hotelsearch): (no chair), Benjamin Levy, Nicholas “phi” Shectman, Kelly Fabijanic
Incident Response Management Committee (IRMC) (incidents@): (no chair), Rachel Tanenhaus, Megan Lewis, Will McMain, Adam Burdick (advisory members: Jaime Garmendia, Kris Pelletier)
IT (it@): Benjamin Levy, Sharon Sbarsky, Nicholas “phi” Shectman (Chair), Mike Tatroe
Location Search (no email address): Gail Terman (chair), Sol Houser

Long Range Planning (lrp@): Tanya Washburn (chair), Nicholas “phi” Shectman, Julia Austein, Henry Leong, Dan Toland
Mailing List Monitoring (monitor@): Claudia Mastroianni, Rachel Tanenhaus
Postmaster (postmaster@): Sharon Sbarsky (chair), Benjamin Levy, Nicholas "phi" Shectman, Mike Tatroe (advisory member)
Recruiting (recruiting@): Wendee Abramo (chair), Allison Feldhusen
Social (social@): Mike Sprague (chair)
Student Contests (student-contests@): In need of members

Subscription and Dues information Membership runs from September 1st to August 31st (*) and costs \$24 for the year. Dues are pro-rated 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 ebboard@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 on the form at <https://corp.arisia.org/membership>. (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