

ANNUAL BHPI Board meeting 2026

Quick recap

The Bear History Project board held their annual meeting to discuss organizational updates and upcoming activities. The current board members confirmed their continued involvement, with Hunter stepping down due to dissertation work, and the group discussed financial matters including a current checking account balance of nearly \$23,000. Nick reported on his progress cataloging materials at Cornell University archives, with assistance from a newly hired student researcher, while Les shared updates about his upcoming trips to Estonia and Chicago to promote the organization and explore potential new archives. The group also discussed plans to hire a videographer to help process their backlog of interview videos, with Mel offering to help source candidates from the Bay Area, and they addressed ongoing issues with a missing video of Allen Ginsberg from their collection.

Next steps

- Phil: Move interview archives from personal Dropbox to BHPI Dropbox and provide access to Andy Langdon. 📅
- Hunter: Write and send thank you note to the Centaurs for their donation, including appropriate names (e.g., Ali Lopez, Chris Brush), and coordinate with Mel and Les for additional contacts/appreciation. 📅
- Alejandro: Follow up with Mike Hernandez regarding annual tax/financial filings; if no response, proceed with filing tax return and state filings, and post on website. 📅
- Alejandro: Contact David (friend) about potential interest in secretary role; Phil to follow up via Facebook if needed. 📅
- Phil & Alejandro: Review and resolve commingled transactions in Chase/BHPI accounts and ensure proper reimbursement/record-keeping. 📅
- Mel: Call Jessica (videographer) to follow up on delivery of video/audio-visual materials from January book signing/presentation. 📅
- Mel: Post in Facebook Messenger group (and/or broader BHPI group) to solicit candidates for video editing work, and coordinate with Phil to define parameters and test assignment for candidates. 📅

- Phil: Trace and follow up on return of pins and business cards sent to Nick (via FedEx/UPS), using original receipt. 📅
- Phil: Order new BHPI banner (2x3 feet, horizontal) for Les for June event. 📅
- Les: Reach out to Frank Mahoney (P-Town Bears) to explore fundraising opportunities at P-Town Bear Week 2026. 📅
- Les: Promote BHPI and recruit potential board members from Baltic countries during Estonia trip; instruct interested parties to contact Phil and reference Les. 📅
- Hunter: Send completed questionnaire to Les for interview for Les's anthology on long-term AIDS survivors; coordinate date to record interview. 📅
- Mel: Message Les on Facebook with contact for woman involved in Southern AIDS activism for Les's book/interview project. 📅
- Nick: Check Cornell archive materials for Mel's Frontiers Magazine article and report back to Mel. 📅
- Phil & Mel: Define and post job parameters for video editor role (including pay rate, test assignment, and process for candidate evaluation) to BHPI Facebook group and potentially the queer job board. 📅
- Phil & Mel: Organize Zoom meeting(s) with interested video editor candidates to explain project and distribute test assignment. 📅
- Les: Continue compiling and sending list of bear-related archives to Phil for posting. 📅
- Nick & Les: Produce a curated finding guide (with key items, photos, and practical visitor information) for the Bear History Project archives at Cornell. 📅

Summary

Board Projects and Archive Updates

The board discussed ongoing projects and organizational updates. Hunter announced he would step down from the board due to upcoming dissertation work. The group reviewed financial status, with current checking account balance at over \$23,000, and discussed the need to complete annual tax filings. Nick reported on progress with digitizing archive materials at Cornell, including the work of videographer Andy Langdon, though one important interview with Allen Ginsberg was missing. Les mentioned that Jack Fritcher had placed his materials at Cornell, and they would explore alternative archives given changes at the institution where they

previously submitted materials. The board also noted that a new student research assistant had been hired to help organize materials, with work expected to continue through July.

Project Videographer Contact Planning

The group discussed potential contacts for their project, including Ali Lopez and Chris Brush. They explored hiring someone to help with video editing and releasing a backlog of videos, with Mel suggesting they start a discussion on Facebook Messenger to find a suitable videographer in the Bay Area. The team also addressed an outstanding issue with a videographer named Jessica who had been paid but not delivered the promised audio-visual content, with Mel offering to follow up directly.

Package Tracking and Event Planning

The team discussed a missing package that Nick had requested to be returned, with Phil agreeing to trace it using the receipt. Les shared upcoming plans including a Bears screening at Manlyus Cinema in June and a trip to Chicago in May to visit the Little Archives. Les also proposed organizing interviews in Estonia with Hunter's participation and suggested exploring fundraising opportunities with P-Town Bears for Bear Week, noting that Centaurs' significant contribution might help attract other donors.

Event Logistics and Global Planning

The team discussed logistics for upcoming events, including creating a smaller banner for Les's June event and coordinating with Alejandro to collect items Phil will leave behind before his expected departure on August 1st. Mel suggested developing a larger presentation about the global reach of the bear community for the Barrison event, potentially including international bear groups from places like Hawaii, Estonia, China, and the Philippines. The group considered hosting a Zoom meeting to discuss the international bear movement, similar to a previous academic discussion led by Nick and Les.

Beer Bus Storage and Planning

The team discussed storage solutions for equipment used at the beer bus, with Alejandro offering to store items in his garage. Phil and Alejandro planned to visit Chase to discuss unspecified matters. Les announced plans to promote the BHPI and seek board members from

Baltic countries during an upcoming trip to Estonia. Hunter informed Les that a questionnaire for an interview about long-term AIDS survivors would be sent over the weekend, and Mel offered to connect Les with a contact for potential interview subjects related to Southern AIDS activism.

Bear History Project Archive Planning

The team discussed ongoing research and archive work, with Nick and Les planning to create a curated finding guide for the Bear History Project archives, including practical information about parking and booking. Mel inquired about locating an article she wrote for *Frontiers Magazine* San Francisco about the early bear community, which Nick agreed to investigate in the archives. The group also briefly discussed Les's upcoming research trips to Estonia and Germany, where he hopes to connect with bear community members.

Bear Archives and Copyright Updates

Les shared updates about compiling a list of archives with bear collections and mentioned that Brenda was impressed with their collection. Les also discussed finding correspondence between herself and Richard Bollinger regarding disputes over published content and copyright claims. Mel shared insights about meeting Richard Bollinger later in life, noting his attempts to rework his ideas and address past behavior, including struggles with drug addiction. The group briefly discussed the nature of conflicts in smaller organizations and communities.

Video Transcription Position Discussion

The meeting focused on finding a video transcription person and discussing organizational updates. Phil and Mel agreed to post a job opening on their Facebook page for a video editor, with a proposed rate of \$25 per hour. They plan to screen candidates by having them edit a sample video and conduct the process through Zoom meetings. The discussion also touched on Phil's house hunting process in Albuquerque and updates about board member Dave, who they hope to recruit for a secretary role. Mel shared personal updates about his health challenges and potential plans to reduce his work load when he becomes eligible for Medicare next year.