



- 1. Read the *Peg-Board* online**
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For those who would like to help our Guild save costs as well as sustain our environment and reduce your trash/recycling burden, we offer the option to take your name off the “snail-mail” list to receive the *Peg-Board*. Instead we will send a monthly message to your home e-mail address with links to the newsletter in PDF format and also in a “flipbook” format that can be read with your web browser.

You'll get *The Peg-Board* just after it's gone to the printer, a full week before it shows up in snail-mailboxes. The photographs and illustrations in these online editions will be in color (so, for example, you could see the Gallery artwork the way it's supposed to be seen!). Perhaps best of all, this service is ***totally free to everyone*** — active members, members on suspension or withdrawal.

To receive the online *Peg-Board*, you have to be enrolled on our e-mail list. Send a message to jeffm@animationguild.org from your *home* e-mail address (no employer addresses, please), and include your name in the body of the message. In addition to the *Peg-Board*, members will receive listings for Guild-shop and non-Guild jobs, and notices of upcoming events such as membership meetings and Gallery 839 openings. It's easy and it's smart — read us online!



**André Nieves
at Gallery 839
opens June 3
6 to 9 pm
see page 8**



From the President

An idea worth spreading

I don't think being president of a labor union has to be only about the things everyone seems to expect from the president of a labor union. Therefore ...

Ever been to **TED**? It's a very interesting website.

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to "Ideas Worth Spreading". It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design.

I visit the site every once in awhile and always find something riveting and inspiring. And they have archives of previous **TED** presentations.

Here's a link to a recent presentation I think you'll enjoy. It's eighteen minutes long and it's by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones of the **Handspring Puppet Company** in South Africa. They've designed a full-sized horse named Joey that stars in the current stage production of *War Horse* at the Vivian Beaumont Theater in New York. Prior to that it premiered at the National Theater in London. It opens June 20, 2012 at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles.

tinyurl.com/ted-warhorse

Back in the '50s **EC Comics** were the best and most notorious comics ever created. Some of the greatest comic artists and writers of all time worked for **EC**. They included Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, Bill Elder, Wally Wood, Alex Toth, Al Williamson, John Severin, Graham Ingels, Johnny Craig, Reed Crandall, George Evans, Al Feldstein, Joe Orlando, and Bernard Krigstein.

One more name on that list is Jack Kamen. I don't know what it was about Jack Kamen that blessed him with a son named Dean but the world is a better place thanks to him.

- ❖ Dean Kamen holds more than 440 US and foreign patents.
- ❖ He invented the **Segway**.
- ❖ He invented a portable dialysis machine.
- ❖ He created the **iBOT**, a motorized wheel chair that climbs stairs.

The list is very long and you can read more about Dean on Wikipedia at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dean_Kamen. Here's Dean Kamen talking at **TED** in October of 2009: tinyurl.com/ted-kamen.

Inspiration comes in many forms and from many places, and they're not always related to cartoons. Great artists, great writers and great cartoonists draw inspiration from everything, everywhere. After you've watched these presentations, look at some more of your choosing and find a way to infuse the inspirations they provide into your work. It'll probably make the results a little bit better.

Next time you have twenty minutes to spare at lunch, think about spending it with **TED**. The **TED** website is at ted.com.

I think anything with a motto of "Ideas Worth Spreading" is entirely appropriate for discussing in the Guild's newsletter. Have fun.

— Bob Foster

Upcoming contract holidays:
Memorial Day (May 30)
Independence Day (July 4)
Labor Day (September 5)

PEG-BOARD SUBSCRIPTION POLICY: Active members automatically receive *The Peg-Board* free of charge. Members on honorable withdrawal may continue to receive the newsletter without charge by sending an annual written request on or before the expiration date on the mailing label. The subscription rate for suspended members and non-members is \$10.00 per year (\$15.00 foreign, check in U. S. funds), checks made out to the Animation Guild and sent to 1105 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA 91505-2528, U.S.A.



From the Business Representative

The more things aren't the same

Recent talk on the TAG Blog centered on a collection of pro-union circulars and cartoons from 1950, the year of difficult contract negotiations between the Screen

Cartoonists Guild and major animation producers such as Disney, Warners Bros., Lantz and MGM.

And what else was going on in 1950?

For one thing, income distribution was just a teensy bit different then. The 95th percentile of income stood around \$63,000 (in 1950 dollars). The 80th percentile was making around \$40,000. (You'll note that the top category has recently grown more distant from the lower categories.)

Today, of course, forty or even sixty grand seems like a whole lot of lower middle class income, but let me provide a first-hand anecdote. In the 1950s, little Stevie Hulett *knew* that his sixty-two-year-old grandfather was fabulously wealthy. Gramps drove a new Cadillac, lived in the Hollywood Hills, and spent a couple of days a week at Santa Anita playing the horses. But what really nailed down Stevie's certitude about Gramp's fabulous wealth was Mother telling him that the old gent pulled down *fifty grand* a year.

But maybe another reason income distribution was different sixty years back was that income taxes were more steeply progressive then, with a top rate of 91% if you were high-powered enough to make over \$200,000. (We paid for our military-industrial complex in those days, rather than financing it with a credit card.)

Today, of course, with a Muslim Socialist in the White House, taxation is as low as it's been in six or seven decades, to wit:

... Federal, state and local income taxes consumed 9.2% of all personal income in 2009, the lowest rate since 1950, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reports. That rate is far below the historic average of 12% for the last half-century ...

Ah, but it isn't a zero sum game, some will say. If a few lucky duckies do really, really well and pay lower taxes, well that's the free market working with all its cylinders churning, right? (We'll forget about the big earners who are really just high-priced welfare queens. You know, the Top Dogs at Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan, Citibank, Wells Fargo, and other recipients of the Federal Government's trillion dollar subsidies.)

So where do I come down? Lefty union boss that I am, I lean toward a tax rate like we had in Dwight Eisenhower's time, when rates were steeper and budgets were balanced. Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon and Clinton are the presidents who presided over balanced budgets in my lifetime, and I voted for the last two of them.

I'll be honest. It isn't just balanced budgets I crave, but a stable society. You might have noticed the unrest roiling the Middle East these days. Impoverished masses in Egypt, Syria, Libya and a few other countries have apparently grown tired of the mega-wealth and power concentrated at the top, and they've been demonstrating and rioting in the streets. My thinking is, you let the top one half of one percent control everything and you start courting unrest, because people begin to notice how they're eating it financially ... while a chosen few dine on caviar and champagne.

And so these factoids from the CIA World Fact Book are kind of sobering:

The U.S. is ranked as the 42nd most unequal country in the world, with a Gini Coefficient of 45.

Happily, U.S. wages are a lot higher than in those desert kingdoms, so we don't have any problems with Americans being unhappy with the way things are going, right? Or taking matters into their own hands, right?

Right?

— Steve Hulett

"Tax bills in 2009 at lowest level since 1950":

tinyurl.com/ustaxes-1950

U.S. income distribution, 1947-2007: tinyurl.com/us-income-1947

History of U.S. Federal individual income tax rates, 1913-2011:

tinyurl.com/us-tax-history

Don't forget the wage survey!

Within the next month, everyone who has worked under our jurisdiction in the last two years will receive our latest wage survey in the mail. It shouldn't take you more than a minute to fill out, and it even comes with a postage-paid return envelope.

The Guild office gets a LOT of requests for the survey results, which are published in the *Peg-Board* and on our blog and website (animationguild.org/contracts-wages). There's always a great deal of interest in these statistics, for good reason. It's invaluable information for each and every one of us. And your response is totally confidential.

It is very important that you fill out and return this information to us. This is information that the studios already know, and use to their advantage and our disadvantage.

So help yourself out, and help your union brothers and sisters out, and take a moment to fill out the survey and send it in. A duplicate copy of the form in PDF format will be available online, or you can call (818) 845-7500 and we'll get one out to you.

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In the land of the one-headed cartoonists ...

... two-headed cartoonists were king on May 6 as “The Two-Headed Cartoonist,” a show of comic and fine art by members of the **Comic Art Professional Society (CAPS)**, opened at Gallery 839.

Among the artists showing are **Sergio Aragones, Michael Aushenker, Tim Burgard, Bob Foster, Trevor Goring, Steve Greenberg, Pat McGreal, Bill Morrison, Chari Pere, Brad Rader, Tone Rodriguez, Patrick Scullin, Scott Shaw!, Terry Wilson, Dean Yeagle and Jeff Zugale.**

The show is open Fridays from 11 am to 2 pm through May. For the June show, see pages 8-9.





Art Is Magic!

Art is Magic!, a contemporary abstract art exhibition featuring the work of artist **Andre Nieves**, will be on display at Gallery 839 at The Animation Guild beginning June 3. An opening reception is scheduled for 6-9 pm.

Art is Magic! will be the first solo show by the artist, inspired by the great contemporary abstract masters of the past. Inspired by Warhol, Basquiat, Rauschenberg, Pollock and Disney as a teenager, Nieves developed a vision and style of his own. Twenty years later, his art evolved into a symphony of design and texture. His colorful paintings, which appear to be chaotic, are influenced by Abstract expressionism and Pop art. The new show reveals his study of these influences.

Andre Nieves is currently a story artist on the popular Fox animated series, *The Cleveland Show*, a spin off of the hit show, *Family Guy*.

The exhibition will be opens Fridays from 11 am to 2 pm from June 3 to June 24 at 1105 N. Hollywood Way in Burbank.



Events calendar

Contact Jeff Massie at jeffm@animationguild.org if you have listings for the Events Calendar.

❖ Thursday, May 26, 9:30 am-3:30 pm:

IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS: PUBLIC SPEAKING & NETWORKING

Sponsored by the Actors Fund ❖ Held at IATSE Grips Local 80, 2520 W. Olive Avenue (at Buena Vista), Burbank

Parking on street or for a small fee next door at St. Joseph's Medical Center. NO PARKING IS AVAILABLE IN LOCAL 80'S LOT.

RSVP is required for Networking Breakfast at afNetworkBreakfast@gmail.com.

9:30 am-1 pm: Social workers will be available for referrals, financial assistance inquiries, and more. You call (323) 933-9244 ext. 50 for an appointment to meet with a social worker.

10am-11am: Special Event!

You don't want to miss this fun, interactive Networking activity led by AWP's career counselor, John Mattson and Joanne Webb.

11 am-1 pm: Toastmasters!

Looking to improve your speaking and leadership skills? Ignite your career? Win that job interview? You've come to the right place. Since 1924, more than 4 million people around the world have become more confident speakers and leaders because of their participation in Toastmasters. Toastmasters International is a world leader in communication and leadership development with over 260,000 members. Representatives from the Warner Brothers Club will lead the group in interactive exercises.

1 pm-1:30 pm: Lunch Break & Actors Work Program Orientation for new participants

1:30 pm-3:30 pm: Optimize Your Networking Strategies – John Mattson, Director of The Actors Work Program, Western Region.

This workshop will help you to jump-start your job search by providing you with practical tips on how to improve your networking skills, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your



current networks, and help you to enhance your professional and social networking capabilities.

For further information, contact Caitlin Moon at (323) 933-9244 ext 450 or cmoon@actorsfund.org.

❖ Tuesday, May 31, 7 pm

ANIMATION GUILD GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

1105 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank

See inside back cover for details.

❖ Friday, June 3, 6-9 pm:

FIRST FRIDAY AT GALLERY 839 – ANDRE NIEVES

1105 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank

See pages 8-9 for details.

❖ First Wednesday of every month, 1:30 pm-3 pm

GETTING AND KEEPING HEALTH INSURANCE

The Actors Fund, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 400, Los Angeles

Monthly seminar for members of the entertainment industry and the performing and visual arts communities who want to know their options for obtaining affordable health insurance and health care in the Los Angeles area. Participants will learn to use The Actors Fund's Access to Health Insurance/Resources for Care website (www.ahirc.org). Registration is encouraged.

For details, go to actorsfund.org/services-and-programs or contact dkitowski@actorsfund.org at (323) 933-9244 ext. 32.

.....
SAVE YOUR PAP STUBS!

From the Organizer

VFX: the experts speak



The latest entertainment industry conference was held in Stuttgart, Germany last week. FMX, which started as a local biennial gathering for students, has grown into an annual “must-attend” meeting for anyone interested in animation, visual effects, games and interactive media.

Two notable speakers at this year’s conference were visual effects supervisor and recently re-elected chairman of the Visual Effects Society Jeffrey Okun, and former LucasFilm executive, Digital Domain founder and latest visual effects industry blogger Scott Ross.

Jeff Okun’s presentation was titled VFX Politics. Reading a description from an attendee, Mr. Okun describes the rampant nepotism and personal agendas within the vfx and film industry as well as the general insanity that takes place on set during the making of a feature film. In keeping with his direct manner of speaking, Mr. Okun ends his presentation with the following warning:

“What only matters is what ends up on the screen. Nobody will ask you whether everybody had a great time or you barely made it out alive.” ... “[A]lways be aware of the agendas and politics of the people around you.”

Scott Ross’ contribution to the conference was a report on his views of the current state of the visual effects industry and where he foresees its future. He restated his views on the non-viability of visual effects studios due to unattainable profits, high cost of vfx artist salaries, overseas tax incentives and outsourcing. His solutions center around studios following the example of Pixar and Dreamworks in capitalizing on full ownership of content.

The article goes on:

“The VFX community are the people driving the box office, and the film studios know it.”

[Mr. Ross] then points out that on a list of the 20 biggest box-office movies, one is CG animation and 19 are blockbuster visual effects films – and there’s only one really bankable ‘film star’: Johnny Depp. The next 20 entries feature two CG animated movies and 17 VFX movies.

After digesting the two points of view offered from these industry veterans, the option of collective representation for visual effects artists becomes abundantly important. Mr. Okun points out the Industry Is Crazy and doesn’t much care about you. Mr. Ross points out VFX Drives Sales and vfx studios need to be desperate in their strategies to stay viable.

The contract achieved through collectively bargaining with visual effects artists through the IATSE would help protect against the insanity that is prevalent in the visual effects world. By delineating workplace standards and providing portable health and pension benefits, visual effects artists would construct a shield for some of the Crazy Mr. Okun describes.

We have argued that signing an IATSE contract could be a cost savings measure to a visual effects studio. Having recently been shown that studios will find necessary funds to complete visual effects when necessary, a union contract with contributions for portable health and pension benefits may now also be a line item cost that vfx studios can add to help shore up profits, thus addressing Mr. Ross’ viability concerns.

The IATSE will not be the golden key to solving the problems highlighted by the two presenters or that are prevalent in the industry today. We *will* be a large factor in providing a stable, healthy and long-term industry to the artists who strive to succeed within its ranks. We feel this is an important factor in remaking the industry and invite all artists to take part.

— Steve Kaplan, skaplan@animationguild.org

FMX: fmx.de

Summary of Jeffrey Okun presentation:

tinyurl.com/fmx-okun

Summary of Scott Ross presentation: tinyurl.com/fmx-ross

Sign a representation card (PDF): tinyurl.com/tag-repcard

Changes in our health insurance eligibility rules

Notification has been sent out from the MPI Health Plan offices regarding the change in eligibility requirements that will soon take place.

Starting in August, the amount of hours required to be employed per six-month period to remain eligible in the MPI Health Plan will rise from 300 to 400.

This increase was negotiated in the 2009-2012 IATSE Basic Agreement and approved by the membership, to counter the rise in healthcare costs and avoid cutbacks in coverage.

There will be more on this important subject in the June *Peg-Board*.

PAYING YOUR DUES? PAY THEM ONLINE!

animationguild.org/payments

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The Peg-Board is printed on recycled paper.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



**TUESDAY,
MAY 31, 2011**

**PIZZA &
REFRESHMENTS,
6:30 PM
MEETING, 7 PM
1105 N. HOLLYWOOD
WAY, BURBANK**

Between Chandler and Magnolia
tinyurl.com/new-tag-hq

AGENDA

Panel discussion:

"The Transition To Compositing"

Join TAG Executive Board member **CHRIS SIMMONS**, member **SARI GENNIS** and a panel of compositors and experts* in a wide-ranging discussion of compositing, and how it has served as a transition craft for traditional artists making their way into the worlds of 3D and visual effects.

* Other panelists to be announced.

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