



ANIMATION
GUILD AND
AFFILIATED
OPTICAL
ELECTRONIC AND
GRAPHIC ARTS,
LOCAL 839
I.A.T.S.E.

Los Angeles, California, July 2013

Vol. 42, N^o. 7

Nick CG artists ratify contract

Newly organized CG artists have ratified a contract negotiated between the Animation Guild, Local 839 IATSE and Nickelodeon Animation Studios.

Ratification was overwhelming, with 90.1% of the bargaining unit's seventy employees voting "Yes".

The Guild has had a contract with Nickelodeon covering traditional animation artists since 2004. Talks extending union contract protection to Nick's CG artists extended from March to July of this year, between management and a committee of seventeen employees along with Guild representatives. The primary issue was bridging from Nickelodeon's corporate insurance to the Motion Picture Industry Health Plan, to insure uninterrupted health coverage for covered employees.

"Five years ago, the Animation Guild went to work organizing Nick's CG department.", said Steve Hulett, the Guild's Business Representative. "We had a number of setbacks, but last year, thanks to Guild organizer Steve Kaplan, communication with employees accelerated and support for the Guild increased dramatically. Early in February, Nickelodeon agreed to a neutral card count and negotiations for a contract started soon thereafter.

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JULY 30: **TOM SITO** AT THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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AUGUST 2: **WALT PEREGOY** AT GALLERY 839

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NICK CG CONTRACT

(continued from front page)

“Talks went on for months. TAG had a large negotiating committee of unit employees, most in their early to mid-twenties, and they were focused and tenacious through several long days of work. I doubt we could have reached agreement without them.

“Nick negotiators Bill Cole and Kevin Ellman were tough but flexible, and had a lot to do with the parties reaching agreement.”

Final negotiations over the Memorandum of Agreement wrapped on July 10, with ratification by unit employees taking place at the studio’s Burbank facility on July 12.

“Moving Innovation”: Tom Sito interview at July membership meeting

Computer graphics (or CG) has changed the way we experience the art of moving images. Computer graphics are the difference between Steamboat Willie and Buzz Lightyear, between ping pong and PONG. It began in 1963 when an MIT graduate student named Ivan Sutherland created the first true computer animation program. Instead of presenting a series of numbers, Sutherland’s Sketchpad program drew lines that created recognizable images. Sutherland noted: “Since motion can be put into Sketchpad drawings, it might be exciting to try making cartoons.” “Moving Innovation”, the first full-length history of CG, shows us how Sutherland’s seemingly offhand idea grew into a multibillion-dollar industry.

The author of “Moving Innovation” is **TOM SITO**, president emeritus of the Animation Guild and author of “Drawing the Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions”.

At the membership meeting on July 30, Sito will answer questions and will autograph copies of his book which will be for sale. (See *page 15*).

SAVE YOUR PAY STUBS!



From the Business Representative *It's not 1997 any more*

For as long as we've been having our annual wage survey, there's a tradition of leaving anonymous comments on the form. Here are a few comments the Guild has received from this year's survey participants:

... The studio is working us hard and fast, but at the same rate as 15 years ago. We have a smaller crew, more work, and all of us are freelance. This amounts to a 35% pay cut. ...

\$600 per page. NOTE: 600 dollars per page is frickin' CHEAP!! *(This from a freelance storyboard artist.)*

Never asked to work more than 40 hours in five days in the past three years. *(This from someone working 50 hours per week.)*

We don't get paid overtime, but we work over 50 hours per week. Design is paid O.T. — story isn't.

No paid overtime, salaried position only, including some Saturdays. Sometimes we work a 70-hour week. *(This from a non-signator studio.)*

No raises in the last three years. *(This from a character designer.)*

I'm making less than I was paid in 1997. I'm making \$1,485 now. *(This from a storyboard reivionist.)* ...

In the 1990s, animation artists were making two to three times Animation Guild minimum rates. Often I heard the cry: "What do we need a contract for? We're making three thousand dollars a week!"

But there was a reason for this: Demand, for a few happy years, way outstripped supply. (And Adam Smith isn't wrong.) But that

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FROM THE BUSINESS REP

(continued from page 3)

reality didn't last, the industry dipped, and universities, colleges and art schools began turning out animators, board artists, and computer graphic tech directors by the thousands. And whattayaknow? Supply got up with demand. And overshot it.

So here we are in 2013, and the contract minimums again have relevance. Last week I spoke on the phone with the manager of a non-signator, L.A.-based animation studio who marvelled at another studio in New York who was paying artists \$400 and \$500 a week. "How do they do it?" she asked me. "How do they make movies and t.v. shows on some of their teeny, tiny budgets?"

I answered that there is no hindrance to paying low wages in New York City, because there is no union there putting upward pressure on wages. Added to which New York is a small animation market with little competition and a lot of hungry artists.

The entertainment industry in general, and animation in particular, is global. The United States has minimal trade restrictions on cheap and/or subsidized movie work. Little wonder then that the Los Angeles entertainment community has taken it in the shorts, work and wage-wise, for the last several years. Animation in Los Angeles has done far better than wide segments of live-action because the talent pool is wide and deep and not easily replicable.

However, "not easily" isn't the same as "not." Animation artists, as witnessed in the comments above, have taken economic hits along with everybody else, and they have long-term and short-term remedies.

The short-term solution to not getting shorted on pay is to work cohesively with peers, and build a culture that demands to be compensated for actual hours worked. At union studios, this means encouraging people not to work for free when the schedule is tight, and letting the Business Representative (moi) know what's going on. This is often easier said than done, but I've seen artists that have worked together to not get shorted. I have been phoned. And I've seen artists succeed.

For the long term, we've got to push for a level playing field where some countries aren't being subsidized to the detriment of other countries. That should be simple to achieve, yes?

— Steve Hulett

NOTE: The results of this year's wage survey will appear in the August Peg-Board.

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Minimums going up in August

Effective August 4, all minimum rates of pay under the standard agreement will increase by two percent (2%). Here are some examples of the new minimums (based on a forty-hour week):

| | <u>Hourly</u> | <u>Weekly</u> |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| Journey Animator/Background/Layout/ Model Designer/Animation Writer | \$42.359 | \$1,694.36 |
| Journey Assistant Animator/Storyboard Revisionist/ Assistant BG/Assistant Layout/Assistant Model Designer | \$36.251 | \$1,450.04 |

Unit rates, half-hour subjects:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Synopsis and outline | \$1,655.03; 91 benefit hours |
| Storyboard | \$2,940.10; 100 benefit hours |
| Screenplay or teleplay | \$5,815.92; 309 benefit hours |

Bear in mind that these increases apply to the contract minimums *only*; if you are paid overscale, your rate will not increase unless it falls below the minimum. For all other rates (including sideletters), refer to the CBA booklet.

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BOOKMARK
THE TAG BLOG
animationguildblog.blogspot.com

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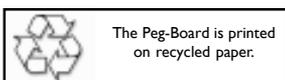
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attribution is given. You can stop by the Animation Guild office weekdays between 8:30 am and
5 pm and pick up current or recent back copies of *The Peg-Board*, free of charge.



IATSE LOCAL 839

Six reasons to become an Executive Board member

6. **You get a direct say in the Guild's affairs.** The Executive Board oversees the Animation Guild's activities. By serving as a Board member, you'll be part of the decision-making process.

5. **You'll be among the first to know what's going on in the animation industry.** At the monthly Board meetings and bi-monthly membership meetings, Executive Board members find out about the state of the business and how the Guild is making progress towards its goal of furthering the members' interests.

4. **If you like the way your Guild is being run, you'll have an opportunity to support it.**

3. **If you *don't* like the way your Guild is being run, you'll get an opportunity to change it.**

2. **If you don't know how your Guild is run, you'll learn.**

1. **You will be part of a process that has improved the careers and livelihoods of people in the animation industry for eighty years.** You'll be the latest in a line that started with Grim Natwick and Hicks Lokey through Shamus Culhane, Jack Zander, Bill Littlejohn, Dave Hilberman, Bill Melendez, Eric Larson, Chuck Jones, Frank Tashlin, Walt Kelly, Art Babbitt, Bob Hathcock, Bill Hurtz, Ben Washam, Bill Scott, Bill Perez, Selby Kelly, Lou Appet, Moe Gollub and Tom Sito ... all of whom served as Executive Board members.

Please think about it ... seriously. Your Guild needs your help and your input. Upcoming *Peg-Boards* will discuss the prerequisites to running for office, and the nomination and election process.

Nominations will be held at the membership meeting on Tuesday, September 24. If you have questions, ask them at the July 30 membership meeting (*see page 15*).

THE ANIMATION GUILD

presents

WALT PEREGOY: DRAWING!

Selected Works

August 2 - 30, 2013



**Reception, Friday August 2nd, 2013
6:00 - 9:00 PM**

**Gallery 839 at The Animation Guild, Local 839, IATSE
1105 North Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA 91505
(Gallery 839 hours : Fridays, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM)**



From the Organizer

Organizing Nick CG

As you know from this month's front-page article, the CG artists at Nickelodeon have voted in favor of an Animation Guild contract.

On July 12 between the hours of noon and 2 pm, sixty-one of the seventy eligible voters cast their ballots to decide if the agreement struck between the negotiation committee and the studio was acceptable. Fifty-five of those people said it was, and with that, effective August 1 the artists of Nickelodeon CG will join their traditional animation colleagues as members of Local 839 IATSE - The Animation Guild.

This unit holds a special place with me. It was the first assignment that I was given by Steve Hulett when I started with the Guild. I learned quite a lot from what transpired in the past three years, and I'd like to share some of the important points here.

1. NEVER GIVE UP

When I first connected with some of the supporters of the unionization effort at the studio, the effort was about to hit a snag. I was fresh into the position and eager to reinvigorate those who wanted union representation. I created a website dedicated to providing information and feedback for the artists. I had some representation cards that artists had signed, and gathered email addresses.

For all my outreach efforts, I got little return. Eventually, one of the artists met with me and talked about the strong anti-union sentiment among some of the crew. At this stage, that sentiment was held at positions of authority and the supporters didn't feel comfortable making a push. They asked that I stopped messaging them, for the time being.

I was dismayed and disappointed. I explained this to Steve who assured me that "they just need to cool off a bit. They'll be back, and you never know what may come up". After some time, and much to my surprise, he was right. I was approached by artists

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FROM THE ORGANIZER

(continued from page 9)

who had just joined the studio and wanted to find out why the CG Unit was not represented by TAG when the traditional animation artists and writers were. These people became the cornerstone to a renewed push.

2. ALWAYS SPEAK IN FACTS. AVOID SPECULATION.

To a large degree, organizing has strong parallels to sales. As a former salesperson and sales manager, I found myself slipping into old habits of talking up the good points while avoiding the problem areas. I made some speculative statements to some of the artists which turned out to be completely false. This, rightfully, caused my credibility to drop. I learned that it was just as important to jump into the potholes as it was to highlight the benefits.

Being forthright about such things as the six-month gap that artists face before being able to participate in the health plan and then explaining that in negotiations, we could possibly get a pre-payment for their participation (as was negotiated back in 2003), helped to instill more confidence in the union's intentions and goals. This lesson has been one of the most important for me since taking the job.

3. ARTISTS DO THE ORGANIZING, I JUST PROVIDE INFORMATION.

The above lesson led to this epiphany. The real organizers are those who desire representation. Union organizers are nothing more than a repository of information that, mostly, is used to counter and defeat anti-union arguments.

As I mentioned, the effort to organize the studio stalled shortly after I started at the Guild. I kept in contact with some of my original organizing group, but the effort was jump started again when new artists contacted me. These artists had questions about what Guild representation could bring, and why the CG Unit wasn't represented. Through a series of meetings and email discussions, I was able to empower artists to speak to their colleagues and get more questions to answer. More people became interested, and I had a core group of "Point People".

These “Points” were the ones who spoke to their colleagues, answered the hard questions, and got artists to sign cards. They were the ones who did the hard work. Their numbers changed but their resolve never did. As much as I’d like to name them all, they know who they are and how much their efforts were responsible for the contract now in place.

4. CONCLUSION

While I’d like to think that my presence and availability was the reason the effort was reinvigorated, it really wasn’t. It played a part, but there were many other factors that pushed things along: the channel’s ratings, the overhauling of the management and the push for new IP, the overall change in the entertainment delivery business ... all of these influenced the change in sentiment towards unionization from the artists.

Steve H. describes this as the “tipping point”. A fixed moment in time where a confluence of factors brings the option of unionization and the protections and benefits it provides to the forefront of people’s minds. I certainly see this as the way Visual Effects will be organized.

Take part in any of the public conversations about unionization of VFX, and you’ll be faced with the persistent counter-arguments/ fears. Those fears parallel the ones I faced in this campaign. VFX organizing will take the same resolve from dedicated artists who are willing to be the organizers and see their campaigns move forward and succeed.

— *Steve Kaplan*

Upcoming contract holidays:

Labor Day (September 2)
Thanksgiving and the day after
(November 28 and 29)
Christmas (December 25)

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affordable price
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*Not available in all areas.

NOTE: To qualify for a special membership rate on any of these programs, you must enroll directly through GlobalFit. These rates are not available to the general public. Fitness club participation is not available for current club members.

Call **1.800.294.1500** to speak with a fitness representative.

For more information about these benefits available to union members go to:
www.UnionPlus.org/HealthClubs

Studio Arts classes for the summer

Beat the heat this summer with the cool new **Houdini** and **Rhino** classes that are being offered at Studio Arts in the Summer Quarter. If you are looking to learn how to do digital storyboarding, you may want to learn to use the new features of **Toon Boom Storyboard Pro** ... they are chill!

Other classes that might fan interest are: **Python 101**, **Dynamics**, **FX and Systems**, **Mudbox** and a brand new **Creature Design Workshop**.

You concept design-types in particular should consider taking the **Digital Mattes (VUE)** class... a new "vue" on doing concept illustration. With that in mind, since concept art is changing so much... Keep up with the latest trends with **Concept Design 101** and/or our all-new **Environmental Design** and **Character Design (Mechs)** classes.

Plus **Photoshop for Art Dept**, **NUKE**, and **Avid Media Composer** just to name a few...

Out of work or can't afford full price? There are CSATTF, ETP, WIA and other grant opportunities available to you to dramatically defray the costs of these classes ... working or not. For more detailed information on grants and schedules, check out our website at studioarts.com, email admin@studioarts.com or call (323) 227-8776.

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In memoriam

We have learned of the death of layout artist, Executive Board member and Golden Award honoree **RAY JACOBS** on May 3, 2010 at the age of one hundred and one.

From 1938 until 1986 he worked for Disney, Herb Lamb, Jerry Fairbanks, Michael G. Wolff, Lantz, Format, Kinney, Pantomime, Ruby-Spears and Hanna-Barbera. He served on the Guild's Executive Board from 1976 to 1985, and he received the Golden Award in 1988.

v

Animator and director **JOHN DAVID WILSON**, founder of Fine Arts Films, died on June 20 at the age of ninety-three.

Born in England, Wilson served in the London Rifle Brigade in WWII where he lost a leg in the African campaign. After the war he was employed at the art department at Pinewood Studios, where he worked on David Lean's *Great Expectations*.

After working at GB Animation as an apprentice to David Hand, he moved to the U. S. in 1950 and worked for Disney on *Peter Pan*, *Lady & the Tramp* and the Oscar-winning short *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*. He also did stints at UPA and Hanna-Barbera on such projects as Mr. Magoo and The Flintstones, respectively.

In 1955, Wilson formed Fine Arts Films and produced and directed the animated short *Tara the Stone Cutter*, an adaptation of a Japanese folk tale, and an animated version of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* ballet. Under his guidance, Fine Arts also did the trailer for *Irma La Douce* and the opening sequence for *Grease*, which featured caricatures of John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John.

A founding member of ASIFA Hollywood, Wilson was a painter in oils, watercolors and pastels whose work has hung in the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**TUESDAY,
JULY 30**

**PIZZA &
REFRESHMENTS,
6:30 PM
MEETING, 7 PM**

**1105 N. HOLLYWOOD
WAY, BURBANK**

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

AGENDA:

DISCUSSION OF OFFICER ELECTION

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INTERVIEW WITH TOM SITO. AUTHOR OF "MOVING INNOVATION"

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