



You are cordially invited to

The Animation Guild's Annual Party

Friday, January 3, 2014 ★ 7 pm-11 pm

Autry National Center of the American West

4700 Western Heritage Way

Griffith Park, Los Angeles

Free admission ★ Free food ★ Free parking

Cash bar ★ Free soft drinks

No RSVP necessary

Open to the communities of animation and labor



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

Los Angeles, California, December 2013

Vol. 42, Nº. 12



From the President

Thanks to William Gilbert

Sure, someone else would have gotten the credit sometime later but, for now, we owe our careers and lifestyles to **William Gilbert** (May 24, 1544 – November 30, 1603.)

In 1600 Bill made a study of electricity and magnetism, particularly the creation of static electricity produced by rubbing amber. I can't wait to get my hands on some amber. The collective discoveries that followed over the next 300 years led to everything that the world now takes for granted.

Where would we be without electricity?

Les Paul still would've been a great guitar player but strictly acoustic. **New Years Eve in Times Square** would have to be held in the afternoon so people could still see the ball drop. Everyone would have to communicate with each other either face-to-face or by mail. Nobody would have his finger on the button. The **Indy 500** would have teams of strong men pushing cars around the track. We wouldn't need much oil but whatever we did need could come from **Texas**. Flights to **Paris** in a two-seater glider would be dependent on westerly winds between JFK and Orly. Freeways would be knee deep in horse poop. 25% of your refrigerator space would be filled with ice shipped down river from up north. Supermarkets would smell rotten. Apartments above the first floor would be progressively cheaper the higher up you went. **Dubai** would be all single story buildings. The population of **Las Vegas** would still be about 25. Movie producers wouldn't exist. Movie theaters would be packed with people sitting in the dark. Public viewing of animation would involve huge sheets of paper being flipped by large, burly men who could roll up to ten pages at a time, blowing the hats off the ladies in the front row of the theater. Illumination would involve the risk of setting fire to the animation and fanning the flames into a maelstrom of glowing embers. You really would have to be an idiot to watch the idiot box. No A/C, DVD, RCA, PayPal, eBay, CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, NPR, Dish or HBO. No *Sopranos*, *American Idol*,

Honeymooners, Snow White, Flintstones, Toy Story, Simpsons, Citizen Kane, Seven Samurai or Monday Night Football. The only way to see the game would be to go to it. No toasters, microwaves, blenders, telephones, cell phones or light switches.

No computers.

Thanks, Bill.

— Bob Foster

In memoriam

Artist and Director **FREDERICK (TOBY) BLUTH** died on October 31. Between 1973 and 2005 Toby worked at quite a few studios in town including Hannah Barbera, Bakshi, MGM, Warner Bros. Television Animation, and Disney Television Animation.

WANTED: RECORDING SECRETARY

As there were no members who were nominated for the position at the September Membership Meeting, and no Executive Board members elected to fill the position at the December Board meeting, our constitution allows for a member to fill the position with Executive Board approval.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for The Animation Guild's **Recording Secretary** position, email Steve Hulett (shulett@animationguild.org) at your earliest convenience.

The same restrictions apply as to seeking nomination during the regular election process. All members who express interest in being a candidate will have their membership status reviewed for eligibility before being considered.

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IATSE LOCAL 839



From the Business Representative

The Outing

Daniel comes out of the shadows ..

The anonymous blogger behind the VFX Soldier blog revealed his identity today to lead the visual effects protest outside DreamWorks Animation in conjunction with President Obama's visit.

Daniel Lay, a visual effects professional who has worked at Sony Pictures Imageworks, DreamWorks Animation, Digital Domain and other visual effects companies, said he felt obliged to reveal his identity for two reasons. First, the movement he helped found to fight back against foreign tax incentives is becoming a formal organization, the Association of Digital Artists, Professionals and Technicians (ADAPT). Second, he said "people have been falsely accused of being VFX Soldier and have been blacklisted, so this is the time for me to come out. That got my blood boiling." ...

- Variety: <http://goo.gl/FYDIWB>

Steve Kaplan has known Mr. Lay's identity for a long while now. (Me too)

He's a former active member of TAG, and a guy who cares about what happens to the industry to which he's devoted a lot of time and sweat and high energy.

Glad he revealed himself. This will prevent others from losing jobs because they were falsely accused by employers for being "VFX Soldier."

— Steve Hulett



From President Loofbourrow

The first meeting of the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists I ever attended was in a packed room in September of 2001. I was there to be sworn in, a quaint custom we'll still do if you ask. President Tom Sito was there to pass the torch to his successor Kevin Koch, and nominations for all offices were flying in from the crowd.

Most of the folks there still worked in traditional media, although some time ago computer screens had replaced acetate for ink & paint and camera & compositing. But the end result was still a series of drawings made directly by human hands.

Today much of that handwork is hidden from the audience, but it still forms the spine of what we do: concept artwork, character designs, background paintings, and storyboards. While all of those may be shown off a computer screen these days, they begin with an artist and a Wacom pen.

But many others do a job that did not exist back in the early days of Disney. I learned to build character rigs for video games back when "PlayStation" didn't have a number next to it, and those skills were fortunately a key part of making CG animation.

Most of the folks I met in the video game industry -- and many I met in feature film animation -- thought little of union membership. Unions, they said, were for people that couldn't negotiate a better deal themselves. I grew up in New Jersey, where unions were better known for people getting paid *not* to work -- perhaps unfairly to many, but others had earned them that reputation.

But back in 2001 as "the guy from DreamWorks that attends union meetings that isn't Kevin Koch", I got a few questions and a lot of complaints about the union from my colleagues. Today I get mostly questions. Back in 2001 the Motion Picture

Screen Cartoonists were sharply rejected by Sony Imageworks; today as an officer of the Animation Guild I hear some of their regrets.

I learned a lot about the union just by sitting in on the general membership meetings those first few years. One is that fundamental changes happen in the animation industry, and the union has no magic wand to make them go away. But I also learned that many people endure things in their workplace that the union can take action on -- *if artists are willing to stand up*. I take pride every time we are able to win our members raises, back pay or dismissal pay they earned but did not receive. It happens more often than you might think.

But most importantly I learned that animation was not just a job but a potential lifetime career. It's not an easy one, and the life of seasonal work and layoffs that traditional artists have known for decades is a reality now for CG artists as well, especially those in the VFX end of the business. The union is here to help by providing a continuity of benefits as you go from one job to another, or from a season of work to a season of downtime. Frankly, that safety net works best if you can stay in the union from job to job, but even if you take non-union or freelance work, you have the health coverage you earned and your 401(k) investments are working for you.

These are difficult times for our industry, but they're not the first. My hope is that we can continue to grow the Animation Guild to respond to new challenges. Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts and concerns. You can email me at nathan@animationguild.org.

— Nathan Loofbourrow



Help us remember

The steering committee for the annual Afternoon of Remembrance has met to make plans for the next ceremony to honor veterans of the animation community who have passed on.

The event, honoring those who died in 2013, will be held on Sunday, February 23rd, 2013. This year, the event will be held in the meeting hall of The Animation Guild. Refreshments will be served at noon, and the memorials start at 1 pm.

At the meeting we will be honoring the following veterans and any others who've passed away prior to January 1, 2014.:

Gerry Anderson, Frederick "Toby" Bluth, Martha Buckley, Reed Cardwell, Ron Dias, Terri Eddings, Bob Godfrey, Denise Greenawalt, Marcella Hahn, Ray Harryhausen, Lee Hartman, Tenny Henson, Eric Heschong, Nicholas Hoppe, Ray Jacobs, Bob Kirk, Jay Lawton, Ed Levitt, Shirley Mapes, Tom McLaughlin, Diane Disney Miller, Charlene Miller, Armen Mirzaian, Eileen Moran, Mitzi Mucerino, Don Nelson, Don Payne, Lori Pickett, Lois Ryker, Jesse Santos, Lou Scarborough, Lou Scheimer, Eva Schneider, Gerrit Van Dijk, Hetta Van Elk, Dardo Velez, Petros Vlahos, Marcia Wallace, John David Wilson and Jonathan Winters.

At this time we'd like your help. If you knew any of the people listed above (or knew someone who knew them), drop a line to Bronwen "Bronnie" Barry (bronwenbarry@att.net) if you're willing either to speak a three-minute tribute at the event, or write something to be read by someone else.

This year, the memorials will be able to utilize the Audio and Visual capabilities we have in the meeting hall. If you have anything that should be included, please message Bronnie and arrange its use.

Finally, should you know of anyone else who deserves to be on this list, please let us know. We look forward to seeing you at the event!

American Animation Institute

Winter 2014 “Mini-Semester”

January-February 2014

<u>Weekday Classes</u>	<u>Evening Classes</u>
<p>◆ HEAD AND FIGURE PAINTING Karl Gnass - \$150.00 January 6-February 10 6 Mondays 9:30 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>◆ FUNDAMENTAL FIGURE DRAWING Karl Gnass - \$90.00 January 6--February 10 6 Mondays 7 pm to 10 pm</p>
<p>◆ ANATOMY Glenn Vilppu - \$225.00 January 7--March 12 9 Tuesdays 10:30 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>◆ CHARACTERIZATION OF THE HEAD & FACES Mark McDonnell - \$90.00 January 7--February 11 6 Tuesdays, 7 pm to 9 pm</p>
<p>◆ FIGURE DRAWINGS TO CHARACTER DRAWINGS Karl Gnass - \$150.00 January 10-February 14 6 Fridays 9:30 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>◆ DRAPED FIGURE AND COSTUME Karl Gnass - \$180.00 January 8-February 13 12 Wednesdays and Thursdays 7 to 10 pm</p>

Full class descriptions are available on the flyer posted on our website: <http://animationguild.org/education/>

Register for classes by calling (818) 845-7000. After registering, send checks payable to the American Animation Institute to the following address:

AAI
 1105 N. Hollywood Way
 Burbank, CA 91505.

Payment is due by December 23, 2013. No refunds will be given after the first day of class.



From the Editor

Cons and Expos

I'm writing this shortly after attending the 2013 CTN Expo. My voice has not fully returned, and I am still going through the business cards I got and reaching out to people I met. I came across this post (<http://goo.gl/wAtglv>) from Floyd Norman, who summarizes my feelings about the event with these words:

“CTN for me is a celebration of the amazing business we're in. It's not about big shot studios or big shot studio executives. It's not about high profile celebrity appearances or very well paid animation voice actors. ... It's about us. It's about the artists who create the amazing content that millions consume each year. While it's true we're not a part of the glamour, we're the creators who make it all happen.”

“CTN Expo, unlike other expos and cons puts its focus on the animation professional. I'll say it again. It puts its focus on the ***animation professional*** and dammit, that's something worth celebrating.”

Having attended SIGGRAPH as an IATSE representative, and discussed the possibility of attending Comic-Con as a representative of TAG, I can completely relate to Mr. Norman's sentiments. Most conventions or expos that I've ever attended were showcases for the latest gadgets or add-ons and don't lean towards focusing on the workers of the industry they're attempting to showcase.

SIGGRAPH focuses on forums and seminars that share the latest innovations in Computer Generated Imagery (we just call it CG these days). The SIGGRAPH Exhibit hall was always a place I wandered aimlessly pondering how I could possibly afford all that cool software. While I enjoyed attending, I never really had the opportunity to interact with other VFX artists like I see Animation folks do at CTN.

Comic-Con was once a fun place to check out the current comic scene, and is now nothing more than a week-long commercial for the Big Six studios. I know plenty of people who want TAG to set a table up, but I still cringe at the thought of it. Considering the cost of being in the room, and staying in San Diego during the length of the conference, I could likely find better ways to spend Guild funds on increasing awareness of the Guild and its purpose.

In contrast, CTN celebrates the craft of animation and those who pursue it. Tina and the gang at CTN have grown it steadily over the years, but it hasn't lost its goal of trumpeting the art and beauty of the Animation industry. The time I spend representing the Guild at the CTN Animation Expo and answering the oft-asked query "So, there's a Guild for Animation??" is far better spent in my efforts at Brand Marketing than anywhere else. I know the Expo will continue to grow in scale, as Tina isn't one to stop pushing the envelope. I'm looking forward to participating and watching it grow under her direction.

If you haven't attended one, I would urge you to make next year's Expo. I would wager that you'll return home having had a pleasant and meaningful experience. If you skipped this year, I hope to see you there in 2014.

- Steve Kaplan

Do You Remember "The Watercooler"?

For a while, the Pegboard had a recurring section called "The Watercooler" where members shared fun life events and happenings. Things like children's birth announcements or news of other accolades that could be shared with our community. These postings helped to bring our membership closer and foster a sense of community.

I'm interested in bringing back The Watercooler! Send your contributions to skaplan@animationguild.org in order to create a new recurring column in the Pegboard!

The No-Match 401k Plan

One of our tasks here at the Animation Guild is to hold New Member Lunches. We provide these meetings to members who are a few months in to their first 839-covered animation job, and go over the Health Plan in some detail, the Pension Plan ... and the Guild's 401k Plan.

Upon mentioning that our plan doesn't offer an employer match, we see eyes roll and the "I'm Here" light in people's faces wink out. "Why would I want to put money in the TAG 401k, if the employer isn't going to match? Can you get them to match my contributions?"

Thanks for asking, Mr./Ms. New Member, but getting an employer match to the plan isn't likely. The chief argument our partner studios use is: "We're already paying into two retirement plans for the members!"

See, contributions to the Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plans (MPI) are mandated in our contracts with the studios. Payments made to MPI on behalf of our members funds the Health Plan as well as both Pension Plan accounts. The Pension accounts are funded as follows:

- Defined Benefit: \$1.2665 per hour worked
- IAP: 6% of contract wage minimum for listed job category

If you're an animator making the contract minimum at a union studio (\$1,694.36 per week), your employer pays \$202.64 into the Defined Benefit plan and \$406.65 into the Individual Account Plan (IAP) per month. Your employer (and all the others) have said they won't provide a 401(k) match on top of those sums.

Even so, the addition of contributing to the TAG 401k plan helps you complete the "Three-Legged Stool" to your retirement savings (<http://goo.gl/N6qAxN>). Combined with Social Security and the union pension, the Guild's 401(k) Plan adds a stabilizing leg to the funding of your "Golden Years".

And the TAG 401k offers participants the ability to self-direct

the investments within a wide range of funds. This includes stock funds (available in all-domestic, all-international or a mix of both), bond funds that include Pimco Total Return Fund and Vanguard Target Retirement funds (age-based funds-of-funds that auto-rebalance to a more conservative profile as they reach a specified time.) All of these funds have been selected for quality and lower cost by TAG 401k Trustees.

While the choice of participating in the TAG 401k is up to you, we hope you consider the long-term benefits of participation. Understand how, coupled with the employer funded MPI Pension Plans, the 401k plan can add a significant degree of comfort when the time comes to hang up your animation tools.

- Steve Hulett, Steve Kaplan

**TAG 401(k) Selected Accounts Performance
as of Dec. 1, 2013**

Vanguard Target Retirement 2010	8.54%
Vanguard Target Retirement 2030	18.65%
Vanguard Target Retirement Income	5.54%

SAVE THE DATE!

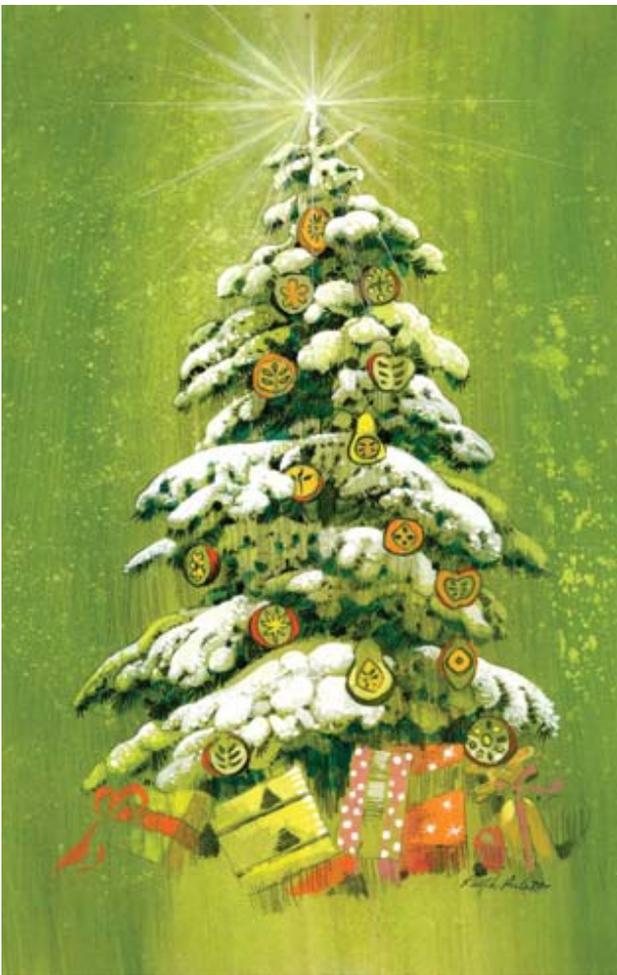
IATSE and MPTF

DAY AT THE RACES

A FAMILY EVENT

On **Saturday, January 25, 2014**, IATSE locals from Southern California and the MPTF (Motion Picture & Television Fund) will join together to celebrate the **3rd Annual Day at the Races – A Family Event**. This fun filled event will take place at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia and your ticket price includes valet parking, admission, race program and lunch buffet. All the proceeds from the event will benefit MPTF, a charitable organization that has been synonymous with Hollywood for nearly a century.

For more information and to purchase your tickets contact **Steve Kaplan** at skaplan@animationguild.org or at the Guild office (818) 845-7500.



Gallery 839 presents

**The Annual
Ralph Hulett Christmas Cards
Display**

**1105 N Hollywood Way, Burbank 91505
Monday - Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm**



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