

# Pegboard

ANIMATION GUILD AND AFFILIATED ELECTRONIC AND GRAPHIC ARTS  
Los Angeles, California, December 2015

Vol. 44, Nº 12



Save the Date

HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday January 22, 2016

7 pm - 11 pm

The Autry Museum  
4700 Western Heritage Way  
Griffith Park, LA

Free Admission \* Free Food  
Free Parking \* Cash Bar

No RSVP Needed

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IATSE LOCAL 839

# CONFESSIONS OF A SHOP STEWARD-AHOLIC

For over two years now I've been a shop steward for the animation guild. In that time my main duty has been explaining what a shop steward is. Ha! And that's ok, because until I became one, I didn't know either!

I see a shop steward's role as basically an information booth. Union benefits/401k applications/health care applications/etc can be confusing and it's very helpful to simply pop into an office two doors down and ask your shop steward. I don't have to threaten line producers with sharpened Blackwing™ pencils or have any part in grievances. I'm simply there to help answer questions from fellow artists. And if I don't know the answer, I search it out and report back.

I find myself spending maybe a couple hours a month talking to union members (mostly new members and boy howdy do we have a lot of new members). Other than that, I also go to new member lunches once every couple of months, and try my best to make it to shop steward meetings/general membership meetings (hey, I ain't perfect!).

Simply put, having a shop steward around encourages talk about the union. Most artists aren't aware of the current union goings-on or how our union works. Having more shop steward volunteers is essential to building and maintaining a strong union. I'd like to see one on every crew.

Sadly, you probably don't have a shop steward near you, but wouldn't it be great if you did? Consider volunteering! And if you'd like to volunteer but feel as though you don't know enough about the union, have no fear! You'll be brought up to speed and will be able to explain the guild's three different pension plans in no time. (You'll be the life of the party!)

Knowledge truly is power and a strong union is built upon its members knowing the right information and communicating it with each other. Shop stewards are a simple way to spread that vital knowledge and keep more artists engaged in what's happening in our union.

*-Chris Houghton, Nickelodeon Shop Steward*

# NOT GUNNA TAKE IT ANYMORE

Word reaches us that BECTU, the big entertainment union in the United Kingdom, is organizing VFX house Motion Picture Company (MPC)

“The VFX branch of BECTU has given formal notice to MPC’s management that the Compositing Department at MPC are unionising, and will be applying for union recognition.

Yesterday (2nd Dec. 2015), MPC responded to this, and called the entire comp department (over 130 people) into a short meeting. They announced that the company had received a petition from BECTU for recognition of the union for the comp department.

They announced that they will begin negotiations with BECTU, and that they intend to fight this bid for union recognition. They took no questions, and made no attempt to justify the excessive unpaid overtime in the VFX industry, or other issues that have made this recognition bid necessary.”

[-839iat.se/1RFIGM9](http://-839iat.se/1RFIGM9)

Visual effects is really the last frontier of unionized motion picture work.

Pretty much every other aspect of moviedom is performed under a collective bargaining agreement. But every other aspect has been part of production since forever. Digital visual effects, of course, came into existence after labor’s collective strength had commenced its decline, and ... here we are.

When live-action VFX became a significant presence inside film production during the nineties, the CG artisans with significant experience were few and far between. And ... let’s be frank about this ... these folks were self-confident about their ability to secure and retain high-paying jobs all by themselves because their skill-sets were at a premium in the marketplace. I had more than one visual effects employee tell me in the go-go nineties: “What do I need a g.d. union for?! I get five g.d. job offers a month! I make my own deals!”

And they did. And they thrived. For awhile.

But, over time, Adam Smith’s law of supply-and-demand has a way of

catching up and leveling the sunny meadow in which highly paid employees frolic. Such is the case with the visual effects industry. The composers, animators, surfacers and others who used to command respect and top dollar now find themselves abused in the same special way every other non-union movie employee gets trampled. There's lots of under-paid and/or uncompensated hours to work, lots of unreasonable demands, lots of insane schedules.

And so now a large chunk of the employees at the Motion Picture Company have had enough, and are standing up. It's high freaking time, and we wish them all a speedy victory in this latest battle for less maltreatment and fairer compensation.

- Steve Hulett

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## ARE YOU ON THE EMAIL LIST?

The Animation Guild Email List is reserved for members only and the quickest way to get the latest news and offerings we distribute. Members can now customize which emails are received in order to reduce or expand the amount of messages you get. Don't miss the latest job postings, Gallery 839 announcements or union news! Sign up at:

<https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/email-list/>

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and the TAG Blog ...

<http://animationguildblog.blogspot.com/>

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## Save Your Paystubs!!

Your paycheck stubs can serve as proof of employment for CSATTF when getting approved for reimbursement as well as provide records of your 401k deposits.



# EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MPIPHP

**(the Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plan) but were afraid or too preoccupied to ask**

From time to time, when I'm loping through a studio or gaping at the computer screen in my office, somebody comes up asks questions about the MPI Health Plan or MPI Pension Plan.

Like "How much pension am I going to get?" or "When do I qualify for a pension?" or "Is there enough money in the fund to pay my pension?"

Some bullet points ...

The Individual Account part of the pension contains \$3.745 billion.

The Defined Benefit Part of the pension (that's the monthly annuity) contains \$3.247 billion.

The Active Health Plan costs \$12,000 per eligible per year.

Residuals paid to MPIPHP (supplemental and post sixties) equals \$429 million.

To qualify for the Retiree Health Plan:

Age 62 with 15 Qualified Pension Years and 20,000 Contribution Hours (three years after age 40; 1 year after 2000)

Age 62 with 20 Qualified Pension Years and 20,000 Contribution Hours

Age 61 with 30 Qualified Pension Years and 55,000 Contribution Hours

Age 60 with 30 Qualified Pension Years and 60,000 Contribution Hours

We repeat this information from time to time because people tend to forget what pension and health benefits they've accumulated and some folks never absorb the information in the first place.

(Remember, there are two Motion Picture Industry pension plans, and three if you count the Animation Guild's 401(k) Plan).

-Steve Hulett

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## ACROSS THE BOARD: STORY

Reoccurring article spotlighting different 839 Union positions on various productions at different studios. The idea is to start comparing everyone's schedules and workloads so we can all be aware of what is happening throughout the Union.

*Studio:* Cartoon Network

*Production:* Uncle Grandpa

*Job Title/Responsibilities:* Board Artist/Writer, Springboard, Outline, Rough Character Designs

*Breakdown:* In teams of 2, we have 4.5 weeks to write/board and 11 minute episode (9 weeks if solo). Average length of a board that doesn't need much trimming/adding is between 600-700 panels. There are 2 rounds of pitches, first a small one to the creative show heads, then once to the whole crew. Generally the springboard writing and outlining is done on own time as freelance. We usually offer around 5 episode ideas as springboards and have strongest selected with feedback. Outlines are around 2 pages, 3 pages as a max.

*Comments:* Pretty manageable. Never had to use OT to reach deadlines, so not sure if production does unofficial unpaid OT or paid. Notes are very minimal if we ever get any at all (either creative, from executives, or legal)

\*thanks to two anonymous sources on the show for this information

If you would like to submit your anonymous information for future Peg-board issues, email the editor at [info@laurahohman.com](mailto:info@laurahohman.com). We are going to do several more storyboarding features, then move on to other job categories per requests.



## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

All in all, 2015 was not a bad year for our union. The animation boom, especially in new media, has swelled our ranks so that we have about 3700 working members. We signed a new, three-year deal with the major studios that gave us 3% raises each year and we won better benefit hour calculations for freelance timers and storyboard artists. These incremental improvements were superior

to what most other IATSE locals received, but they were far less than we deserve. Frankly, we are still the second-class citizens of the entertainment world and we always will be until we show the willpower to stand up for what we really deserve.

The union itself has taken some steps into the 21st century this past year. We have updated our website and modernized our internal computer system and we are on the brink of hiring more staff to run things more efficiently and effectively. We have added more shop stewards and have tried to raise our profile with our own membership.

But we have some significant challenges ahead in 2016.

1. We need to hire a new union organizer. Steve Kaplan has been poached by the west coast office of IATSE.
2. We need to find some candidates to replace Steve Hulett as business representative. This is an elected position. Whoever wins the job will run the day-to-day operations of the union. The business representative cannot do any other work under our union's jurisdiction during their three year term, so whoever takes the job is putting their career (at least) on hold.
3. In my opinion, we need a third position - an "internal organizer" who helps both the business representative and the organizer do their jobs. We need this position because -
4. We must reach out to our working members and be more responsive to their needs and more active on their behalf in 2016. That can involve anything from fighting against unpaid overtime, to appointing more shop stewards, to increasing the availability of free or subsidized training classes (and much, much more.)
5. We need to aggressively seek out the non-union productions in this town and bring their artists and writers under the protection of our contract.

6. We need to take steps to become a national union so that we can go after non-union productions all across the country. I'm looking at you, Pixar.
7. We need to keep modernizing our operations. If we want the studios to take us seriously in future contract negotiations we need to be every bit the equal of the DGA, WGA and SAG-AFTRA in how professionally we conduct our business.

These are ambitious goals but I know we can achieve them. We are a union of creative, intelligent people who already know how to collaborate to accomplish great things. If we turn just a small amount of that brainpower and talent and collective will toward strengthening our union we can make it a powerful force to improve all of our lives.

See you in 2016 at the Holiday Party where I invite any of you to tell me how wrong I am.

*- Jack Thomas*

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## **BOOKMARK THE JOB EMAIL ARCHIVE!**

Accidentally delete that email with the latest job posting? Did you hear about a posting and not get a copy in your Inbox? Now there's a way you can review the latest job posts that have been sent out:

<https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/jobs-post-archive/>

Thanks to the latest features in MailChimp, the bulk email program we use, this archive will feature the latest job emails we've posted to the membership for both union and non-union work.

### **In memoriam**

Animation artist **E.M. LOUISE SANDOVAL** passed away on October 8, 2015. She worked at Hanna-Barbera in the early 1960's and moved over to Filmation where she worked for more than 20 years as an Animator.



# This Month in History

by Tom Sito

Dec. 1, 1951- MIT scientists booted up Project Whirlwind, the TX-0 Computer. Called the Tixo, it was the first computer that could do more than one program at a time. It also had the first computer screen and first light pen. The TX-0 was used to write the first animation program Sketchpad, and the first interactive game Spacewar, both in 1962.

Dec. 1, 1953- Ex- Esquire magazine art director and frustrated cartoonist Hugh Hefner published the first issue of Playboy Magazine. It featured a centerfold of actress Marilyn Monroe. She joked to the press “ I had nothing on but the radio!” Playboy went on to employ a lot of cartoonists, including Harvey Kurtzman, Alberto Vargas, Rowland Wilson, Arnold Roth, Gahan Wilson and Dean Yeagle.

Dec. 2, 1935- Animator Marc Davis’ first day at Walt Disney Studios.

Dec. 3, 1934- Lee Blair, Disney artist and brother of Preston Blair, Disney artist, married Mary Browne Robinson, Disney artist. She became the most famous of them as Mary Blair.

Dec. 4, 1941- film “Mr. Bug Goes to Town”-opened. Max Fleischer’s last gamble to keep up with Walt Disney and keep his studio alive. Songs written by song writer Hoagy Carmichael. However the events of Pearl Harbor three days later not only sink the American Navy, but also Hoppity’s box office and puts Max out of business.

Dec. 6, 1915- Max Fleischer patented the rotoscope- This system enabled you to film an actor then draw the cartoons over the still frames of the live action to achieve a realistic motion. (an early form of Motion Capture) Max would film his brother Dave in a clown suit then draw Koko the Clown over him. The Fleischer’s New York studio would be Disney’s chief rival for most of the 1920’s-30’s.

Dec. 6, 1964- Rankin Bass’ TV special ‘Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer’ first broadcast.

Dec. 7, 1941- The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor brings America into World War II. Animation artists and writers like Frank Thomas and John Hubley join Army & Navy Signal Corps Film Units to make training films. Animator/ Cartoonists in uniform include Art Babbitt, Dale Oliver, Rudy Ising, Willie Bowsky, Victor Haboush, Bill Mauldin and Charles Schulz.

Dec. 8, 1941- The day after the Pearl Harbor attack, The LA civil defense command placed anti-aircraft guns on the Walt Disney Studio lot because of it's proximity to the aircraft plant of Lockheed (Burbank Airport). Walt Disney himself was turned away at the front gate for not wearing his identity badge.

Dec. 9, 1965- Bill Melendez's "A Charlie Brown Christmas" TV special. A Charlie Brown Christmas has run every year for 50 years.

Dec. 9, 1968- Dr. Douglas Engelbart of Stanford held the Mother of All Demos at Brooks Hall in SF. He demonstrated the first prototype computer workstation, using hot keys, printer and internet connection to Stanford, 40 miles away. Engelbart also invented the computer mouse and coined the term "on-line".

Dec. 9, 1994- Disney feature animators in Burbank moved into their new animation building designed by Robert Stern, topped by a big Mickey wizard hat.

Dec. 10, 1607- Captain John Smith left the Jamestown camp with two men to find food. They were captured by the Indians who killed the other men and dragged Smith before chief Powhatan. He ordered Smith's head to be placed on a flat stone and bashed in with a war club. But Powhatan's favorite daughter Pocahontas threw herself over Smith and protected him. Smith could speak no Algonquin and the Pocahontas no English, and neither could sing any Broadway tunes. Was this an execution prevented or a ritual of admission into the tribe? No one knows for sure. Smith didn't write of this incident until back in England 14 years later.

Dec. 10, 1905- O. Henry's short story "A gift from the Magi" first published.

Dec. 10, 1938- To make the film "Gone With the Wind" Producer David O. Selznick staged the massive "Burning of Atlanta" in Culver City, California. The sequence was storyboarded and designed by William Cameron-Menzies, who created the sets for Intolerance and the 1925 Thief of Bagdad.

Dec. 10, 2013 Richard Williams famed unfinished epic animated film the Thief and the Cobbler received it's premiere at the Motion Picture Academy in Beverly Hills. It was begun in 1972.

Dec. 11, 1970- Walt Disney's the 'Aristocats' premiered.

Dec. 11, 2009- Walt Disney's "The Princess and the Frog" opened.

Dec. 12, 1897-The Katzenjammer Kids comic strip by Rudolph Dirks

*(see THIS MONTH IN ANIMATION HISTORY on page 12)*

## **THIS MONTH IN ANIMATION HISTORY**

*(continued from page 11)*

appeared. The first comic where characters spoke in word balloons. The adventures of Hans & Fritz were so popular a rival Hearst newspaper started an imitation called the Captain & the Kids, leading to the first artistic plagiarism lawsuit.

Dec. 12, 1952- The first Screen Actors Guild Strike. President Walter Pidgeon -Dr. Morbius in Forbidden Planet- had the movie stars hit the bricks to win television and commercial residuals.

Dec. 13, 1940- Fleischer Popeye cartoon "Eugene the Jeep" .The Thimble Theater character would give its name to the new army General Purpose vehicle- G.P. or "Jeep".

Dec. 13, 1971- Disney's film "Bedknobs and Broom Sticks" opened.

Dec. 14, 1913- Cartoonist Johnny Gruelle entertained his dying daughter by making up stories involving her rag dollies. After her passing, friends urged Gruelle to publish them. The RAGGEDY ANN stories are born.

Dec. 14, 1957- Hanna Barbera's first TV cartoon "Ruff and Ready" premiered.

Dec. 14, 1983- Disney Studio released the short film Frankenweenie, done by a young artist named Tim Burton.

Dec. 15, 1966-Walt Disney died at age 65. A heavy cigarette smoker- his favorites were Marlboro and French Gitanes- he suffered from lung & lymph cancer and respiratory failure. He was alone in the room at Saint Joseph's when he died. In his hand was a piece of paper with the name "Kurt Russell" written on it.

Dec. 16, 1900 -EARLY ANIMATED FILM "ENCHANTED DRAWINGS"; James Stuart Blackton was a New York World cartoonist who used to do a vaudeville act in drag. He came to do an article on Thomas Edison then Edison put him on the payroll. He created this and several other trickfilms. It doesn't move much more than his vaudeville lightning drawing act, His 1906 film Humorous Phases of Funny Faces is considered the first animated cartoon.

Dec. 16, 1905- Variety Magazine born.

Dec. 16, 1978- The Disney short The Small One, directed by Don Bluth.



# THE ANNIE AWARDS

## What the Ceremony Means to the Me and for the Animation Community

The Annie Awards recently announced its nominees for the 2015 year. Excited as ever, I chatted with some of my colleagues about it, only to find that many are still unaware of the Annie Awards and what they stand for. Others felt some powerful disdain for the ceremony. Why do we need it? Isn't it just a popularity contest?

The Annie Awards were created by June Foray (that famous voice over artist of many loved cartoons) in 1972 due to the lack of awards for animation in Los Angeles. The Annie Awards is a ceremony done through ASIFA-Hollywood and is voted on by animation professionals who hold memberships.

This feeling of a lack of acclaim is still prevalent today in the awards circuit. Animation is generally looked at as a genre, rather than a medium. No real credit is given by other organizations to try and support animation as something more than just children's television. This opportunity to support and acknowledge the amazing work done by our peers and mentors is the main reason I love the Annies. To really show off all this hard work and talent to audiences everywhere (the event is now livestreamed).

Not that it hasn't had its own growing pains and trials along the way. There have been a few scandals in the past years, including a period where Disney and Disney/Pixar completely backed out. Some controversy about studios buying their employees ASIFA memberships to try and stack the votes. Also other "technical problems" on their voting website during key hours. Yet things have come together the last few years and will continue to streamline.

Coming from a show that almost always lacks nominations, I can be bitter at times that our talent don't receive the proper recognition I think they deserve. I think that is normal. There is just so much talent everywhere and we all think we are the best; don't let that spoil the whole thing for you.

In the end, I remember that this event means more to me than the actual award. It's the symbol of the Annies. Of a night where we can all come together, pat each other on the back, and pay tribute to the amazing industry we all love.

*- Laura Hohman*

# GALLERY 839 JANUARY SHOW



**The Long Way Around:  
A Solo Show By Maria Vitan  
Opens Friday, January 8th  
Reception 6:00pm to 9:00pm**

# CTNX 2015

It was a pleasure to be able to represent The Animation Guild at the 6th annual Creative Talent Network's Animation Expo this year.

As I've mentioned in previous articles (see the December 2013 Pegboard: <http://839iat.se/dec2013-pegboard>), the CTN Animation Expo is a must-attend event for any animation professional and enthusiast.

No other event focuses around the craft or it's professionals as much as CTN. The best example of that is found on BOTH Exhibit Hall floors. (the event has grown so much, there was a second exhibit hall created under a large tent in the parking lot!) Animation studios were there to speak to job seekers, Animation professionals were selling their art and tools, schools featuring their programs that teach animation art skills were there promoting their curriculums, and organization that center around the industry were there raising awareness of their efforts.

Our table was in the smaller, indoor hall situated to the left of the entrance in the front corner of the room. It felt as if more people attended this year's event than ever before. Even with the addition of a second large exhibit hall, corridors and walkways were packed with attendees.

Over the three days of the event, I spoke with more people about the Guild, it's contracts and the purpose and goal of unions than any other year I've attended the event. The breakdown between enthusiasts, students looking to break into the industry, artists looking to get back in and members was about the same. While the Guild doesn't do a remarkable amount of marketing, I'm still surprised to find people approach the table exclaiming "There's a union for animators??"

While it was a shame we weren't able to provide copies of our contract (we're still waiting to be able to print new copies after the negotiations), visitors to our table left with the latest Wage Survey, Studio List and a handful of our newest TAG branded giveaway items.

We've already received our invitation to pre-register for next year's Expo, which we'll be sending back with our reservation payment soon. While my tenure at the Guild is coming to its close, I certainly hope that the Guild's presence at CTN continues. If I'm able to participate next year, I hope to see all of you then.

- Steve Kaplan

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