

# Pegboard

ANIMATION GUILD AND AFFILIATED ELECTRONIC AND GRAPHIC ARTS

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## TRIBUTE TO DARWYN COOKE

By Adam Van Wyk

When I think of Darwyn Cooke, I think of that husky laugh and the squint he would give you when you told him a new idea. I think of us standing outside of Warner Bros Animation (was it the Imperial Bank building?) in Sherman Oaks with the wind stirring the palm trees as Dar worked his way through a few cigarettes. He always enjoyed talking about art and process. How do we tell the BEST stories?

I met Darwyn in 1998 when I was a newbie storyboard artist on “Batman Beyond”. One of my first assignments was a scene I was not very interested in, just two old guys talking. I lamented the fact that Darwyn was doing a big action piece and I was doing something boring. But Darwyn disagreed. “You’ve got the most important part of the show. These two guys are the most powerful men in Gotham.” He showed me how to compose the shots and the cutting to convey the hidden battle for dominance between these characters. He got me to change how I think about telling stories. Every scene could be a great scene...if you look at it the right way.

I think he came to work just to socialize and stir up trouble. I never really saw him work at the studio. He would kind of roam around, striking up conversa-

(see **TRIBUTE** on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Tribute to Darwyn Cooke..... 1  
 Cartoon Fight..... 3  
 From The Pres: Some Quick Thoughts About The Future ..... 4  
 Box Office Report ..... 5  
 From The Biz Rep: A Word (Or Two) About New Media..... 6  
 From The Editor: The New Media Fight ..... 9  
 Tom Sito’s This Month In History..... 10  
 Gallery 839 July 2016 Show..... 11

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE:

**ROGERIO NOGUEIRA**, page 6      **FRANCIS GLEBAS**, page 10

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# CARTOON FIGHT

Two movie companies duke it out over distribution rights for an animated feature.

A week after The Weinstein Company went after Open Road and the producers of the upcoming Playmobil movie over who actually has the right to distribute the animated pic, the other side hit back. ...

“There was never any contract with TWC,” says a cross-complaint (read it here) filed today by producers Moritz Borman and Dimitri Rassam and their respective companies in Los Angeles Superior Court.

“TWC launched this controversy, masking its current financial instability by filing a strike suit with no written license attached,” the eight-page filing claims, also calling the whole matter a case “about a failed movie license negotiation which cratered.”

*-<http://839iat.se/1Yq6Ux5>*

The interesting part of this? Forty years ago, No companies would be fighting over a cartoon. Nobody would care.

Some small-budget, animated trifle would get made, either domestically or overseas, and some podunk distribution company, working with fifty prints, would do a half-assed distribution. They would run matinees in medium-sized markets, make \$722,000 (all in) and call it a day.

Major distributors would stay away in droves because nobody cared. It was ANIMATION. There was no money in it. (Except for Disney).

How times change.

*-Steve Hulett*



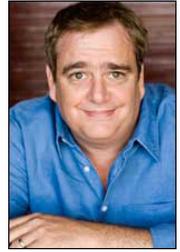
## Save Your Paystubs!!

Your paycheck stubs carry much needed information! They can serve as proof of employment for CSATTF when getting approved for reimbursement as well as records of your 401k deposits.

Keep your paystubs in a safe place for as long as you can! They can help out when you least expect it!

# FROM THE PRESIDENT, JACK THOMAS

## SOME QUICK THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE



### ELECTIONS

There will be union elections this fall. As of this moment, the Business Representative, the President (me), the Vice President and the Secretary do not plan to run for re-election. That's a lot of change in our leadership. The Business Representative is the only paid officer in the union, but all the officers and executive board members directly influence union policies. If you have ever felt you wanted to take a leadership role in TAG, now is the time.

### STAFF

TAG is rapidly approaching 4000 active members and yet we still operate with the same size staff we had in the 1980's when we had 900 members. It is time to modernize. It is time to give the current overworked office staff the backup it needs. We also need to hire assistant business reps to get out into the studios to represent our members regarding issues like unpaid overtime or abusively long tests. It is no longer a job for just one person. We need to replace our old union organizer, Steve Kaplan, who has gone on to work with IATSE, and then we need to target the non-union productions in this town and actively organize them, instead of waiting for them to come to us.

### CONTRACT

The next negotiation in 2018 is going to be a watershed moment for TAG. Like every union in town we will be fighting to bring new media into the general overall contract. Let's not mince words, it will be a brutal fight. But while we are at it, isn't it time to totally revamp our contract? It has no job descriptions. It has rates for jobs that don't exist. It leaves out many jobs that do exist (for example: Story Editor) It has failed to keep up with technology. Shouldn't an artist who storyboards and makes their own animatic be paid more for the extra work? We ought to hire a labor law firm or consultant to start the process now, instead of trying to do it ourselves six months before the negotiations begin.

### DUES

They need to go up. TAG works with the same amount of money per person that it got in the 1980's. Every dues increase since then has gone straight to the national union. It's time we raised our dues a moderate amount and in return gave our members better representation.

# BOX OFFICE REPORT - MAY 14TH

- 1). Conjuring 2 (WB/NL)**, 3,343 theaters / \$16.4M Fri. (includes \$3.4M previews) / \$14M Sat. (-15%) / \$9.8M Sun. (-30%) /3-day cume: \$40.4M / Wk 1
- 2). Warcraft (UNI)**, 3,400 theaters / \$10.7M Fri. (includes \$3.1M previews) / \$7.8M Sat. (-27%) / \$5.86M Sun. (-25%) /3-day cume: \$24.4M/Wk 1
- 3). Now You See Me 2 (LG)**, 3,232 theaters / \$8.4M Fri. (includes \$1.75M previews) / \$8.2M Sat. (-2%) / \$6.4M Sun. (-22%) /3-day cume: \$23M/Wk 1
- 4). Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows (PAR)**, 4,071 theaters (0) / \$4M Fri. / \$6M Sat. / \$4.77M Sun. /3-day cume: \$14.8M (-58%) / Total: \$61M/Wk 2
- 5). X-Men: Apocalypse (FOX)**, 3,585 theaters (-568) / \$2.77M Fri. / \$4.3M Sat. / \$2.9M Sun. / 3-day cume: \$10M (-56%) / Total cume: \$136.4M/Wk 3
- 6). Me Before You (MGM/New Line/WB)**, 2,762 theaters (+58) / \$3.1M Fri. / \$3.5M Sat. (-21%) / \$2.6M Sun. /3-day cume: \$9.2M (-51%) / Total cume: \$36.8M/Wk 2
- 7). The Angry Birds Movie (SONY/ROVIO)**, 3,083 theaters (-401) / \$1.86M Fri. / \$2.76M Sat. / \$2.1M Sun. / 3-day cume: \$6.7M (-34%) / Total cume: \$98.2M / Wk 4
- 8). Alice Through the Looking Glass (Disney)**, 2,898 theaters (-865) / \$1.6M Fri. / \$2.3M Sat. / \$1.6M Sun. /3-day cume: \$5.5M (-51%) / Total: \$62.4M/Wk 3
- 9). Captain America: Civil War (Disney)**, 2,101 theaters (-983) / \$1.1M Fri. / \$1.9M Sat. / \$1.2M Sun. / 3-day cume: \$4.3M (-45%) / Total cume: \$396.9M / Wk 6
- 10). The Jungle Book (DIS)**, 1,496 theaters (-494) / \$736K Fri. / \$1.1M Sat. / \$816K Sun. /3-day cume: \$2.7M (-39%) / Total cume: \$352.6M / Wk 9

- <http://839iat.se/052016MovieReport>

## FROM THE BUSINESS REP, STEVE HULETT A WORD (OR TWO) ABOUT NEW MEDIA

The term “new media” refers to live-action and animated product (like Peabody and Sherman below) produced by studios for delivery over the internet.



This usually refers to “Subscription Video On Demand” (SVOD). The one-offs and series produced for that new age pipeline by signator studios are covered by the Animation Guild Contract under “Sideletter N” ... “Productions Made For New Media.” ... .

The Sideletter goes on for multiple pages (pp 99-113 to be exact) and declares that New Media Work is covered work, and that wages, health and pension benefits will be paid to employees performing it.

That’s the good news.

The less good news is that the contract’s minimum wage rates don’t need to be paid if the budgets for New Media productions don’t hit certain tiers. And guess what? Currently no productions hit the budgetary tiers that are required for minimums. And so ... the studios are free to engage employees at lower weekly pay rates.

Last year, when we negotiated the guild’s new collective bargaining agreement, TAG’s negotiating committee knew that every other entertainment guild and union, the DGA, the WGA, the Editors Guild, the Camera Guild (etcetera, etcetera) had negotiated the exact same language.

We also knew that animation budgets were lower than live-action budgets, and argued that fact with management. (I jawed with the head of the AMPTP on the subject in an Alliance hallway.) The killer for us was that SAG-AFTRA’s cartoon voice over unit had negotiated the same terms and conditions we were faced with, and they had already accepted the deal. In the end, we made the same agreement that the actors’ union and every other labor organization made.

What does all this mean one year later?

It means that DreamWorks Animation TV, which produces all its half-hour shows under “Sideletter N” can negotiate lower weekly wages with employees. It means that other studios who get into internet distribution in a major way, will be able to do the same thing. (Right now, DreamWorks Animation TV is the only signator studio heavily involved in this type of work).



*(Peabody and Sherman Television Show, Dreamworks Animation)*

Because the market is relatively tight, we haven't seen lower pay rates across the board, but there are certainly newer employees who are working under scale.

It's important to know that the current terms and conditions of "Sideletter N" sunset on July 31, 2018, and the Animation Guild and every other entertainment union will be negotiating new terms and conditions for internet delivered work. At that time, it will be TAG's goal and aspiration to equalize "New Media" pay rates with all the other minimums in the contract.

So ... change. We've seen it before. When Disney got new management in the mid-eighties, the animation staff there wondered if anybody would have jobs in six months. Or if the department would even be OPEN in six months. It turned out that not only did they have jobs, but the animation business exploded, and Disney added another studio to create television animation. Shortly after, Warner Bros. Animation got into the TV business in a major way, and other studios quickly followed. Animation roared along at full throttle through most of the nineties, before changing technologies and changing markets caused it to transform yet again. The early oughts saw layoffs, retraining and dislocations, but then (as it often does when product is doing well in the marketplace) the animation industry bounced back.

And now here we are in 2016, at one more crossroad. DreamWorks Animation, a constant in the industry for two decades, will be moving in new directions. Animation employees, as they always do, will have to change as well, but the happy reality in the second decade of the century is that animation is booming as never before. And regardless of which conglomerate owns the last free-standing feature cartoon company in California, the future of the business is bright.

## TRIBUTE

*(continued from page 1)*

tions and waiting for people to go on a “smoke break” so he could go outside and chew the fat some more.

Everything Darwyn touched had to look cool and act cool. Even corny stuff should be treated with respect and sincerity, thereby making it cool. I think of him being a performer on the stage of life. He was always thinking of how to make the biggest impression, with his clothes, his drinks, and his art. He tried to improve my fashion (“Wear a shirt with buttons for once”) and my taste in drinks (“At least take the straw out of your girlie-drink”) to no avail.

He was a perfectionist, which I think is a lot of what got him into trouble. (Yeah, he got himself into plenty of trouble too...) He expected everyone to work as hard as he did and come up with ideas as good as his. I remember him in his rental house dining room meticulously cleaning his vintage G.I.Joe collection. Each costume and accessory looked new, like the day it was made. Even those toys had to measure up to his demanding expectations.

He was amazing at putting on a show. When he was getting ready to launch his epic “New Frontier” comic, he got a booth at a Las Vegas convention to tease it. The whole display was themed like a space-tourism airline, New Frontier, from the ‘60s...complete with flight helmets, bombs, space-age posters and friends dressed as Pan Am style pilots and flight attendants. (I’m not sure anyone knew what kind of comic “New Frontier” was...but they knew it was going to be awesome.) He even stayed at the New Frontier hotel and casino. Darwyn was never one to go half-way on anything.

He was always generous with his time and knowledge. Some artists like to hide their hard-won techniques, but Darwyn was always ready to share. When I went to a convention he was at, he would make a big deal out of it and shine the light on me. He would put me on the schedule as an “animation event” and he would encourage his fans to get a sketch from me, “the great storyboard artist, Adam Van Wyk!” (even though nobody knows who I am).

I’m going to miss seeing him at conventions, wowing his fans by day, dining with friends at night. I’m going to miss all his ideas for projects never completed. He told me about a Batman story he wanted to illustrate with paper cut-outs, a line of children’s books to introduce heroes like Spider-man and the Hulk to the next generation, and a crime comic set in a jazz club. He was a fan of the history of comics and loved Jack Kirby so much, he initially wanted to draw “The New Frontier” doing his best impersonation of the King. Thankfully for us, his editor encouraged Darwyn to draw that epic in his own style.

Every day I think about something I learned from Darwyn. Every time I’m in an awkward situation, I wish I could handle it with as much confidence as

Darwyn did. Every time I draw, I hope it is something he would like. There is a little Darwyn perched on my shoulder whispering, "Push it farther, make it better..."

I wish he was here to tell me his next great idea...

Many wonderful tributes have been written about Darwyn in the past couple of weeks. (Google 'em.) His many heartfelt works (New Frontier, The Spirit, Parker, etc.) speak for themselves. We are lucky to have them. Thank you, Dar.

## CALL FOR TESTS

839 is redoubling its efforts to stop unreasonable job testing, but we need your help. When you receive a test for any job from a studio, please take a minute and forward the test to us as well. The more information we have, the more we can help everyone. Email [shulett@animationguild.org](mailto:shulett@animationguild.org), with "Sample Test" in the subject line.

# BOOKMARK THE TAG BLOG

<http://animationguildblog.blogspot.com>

## FINAL DRAFT DISCOUNT

Our friends at Final Draft have set-up a coupon code for IATSE members. It will discount Final Draft to \$149 for a full copy or \$59 for an upgrade, which is 40% off the MSRP. The code IATSE2016 is good for 2016.



Simply go to [www.finaldraft.com](http://www.finaldraft.com), select the product, enter the coupon code, and the discount will apply.

## 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.



# This Month in History

by Tom Sito

June 1, 1939- SUPERMAN- Joe Seigel and Jerry Shuster, two aspiring cartoonists in High School create a character called “Superman”. As Jewish kids, they had read about the Nazis’ racial concept of the Aryan Superman; They wanted to show a Superman could be on the American side. On this date, they sold all the rights to their characters to Detective Comics (D.C.) for \$130.

June 2, 1973- London animator Richard Williams closed down his Soho studio for a month so his staff could be lectured by Hollywood animation legends Art Babbitt, Chuck Jones, Grim Natwick and Ken Harris.

June 4, 1938- Date of the Walt Disney Studio crew party to celebrate the success of Snow White. The young artists, released of tension and filled with booze, swapped bedrooms and galloped horses through the Hotel Norconian, sending Walt and Roy and their wives fleeing the scene for fear of bad publicity.

June 4, 1944- American armies enter Rome. A G.I. cartoonist named Vinny solicited laughs from the troops by appearing on Mussolini’s balcony on the Via Del Corso and doing a mock interpretation of Il Duce.

June 6, 1982- The film Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, premiered. Besides Ricardo Montalban as the bad guy with the great pects, it features the Genesis Effect. This one minute sequence was a landmark of computer graphics effects. The sequence was created by the Lucas Graphics Group, who four years later would break off and rename themselves Pixar.

June 6, 1984- In Moscow, 29 year old mathematics Professor Alexey Pajitnov invented the game Tetris.

June 7, 2002 -Kim Possible premiered.

June 16, 1902- A musical play of L Frank Baum’s fantasy story the Wizard of Oz premiered at Chicago’s Grand Opera House.

June 19, 1998- Disney’s Mulan premiered.

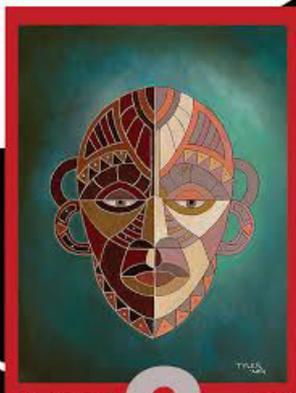
June 21, 1988- Who Framed Roger Rabbit? premiered at Radio City Music Hall.

June 22, 1342 – According to JRR Tolkeins’ book the Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins returned to his home at the Shire with the one true ring.

June 25, 1982- Ridley Scott’s sci-fi film Blade Runner opened.

*The Animation Guild Gallery 839*  
*Featuring*  
*Christine Mallouf & Bob Tyler*  
*July 8th thru July 29, 2016*

*H*is



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Reception-Friday July 8th, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
[www.animationguild.org](http://www.animationguild.org)

Please join us for the show's reception at Gallery 839 on  
Friday, July 8th, from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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