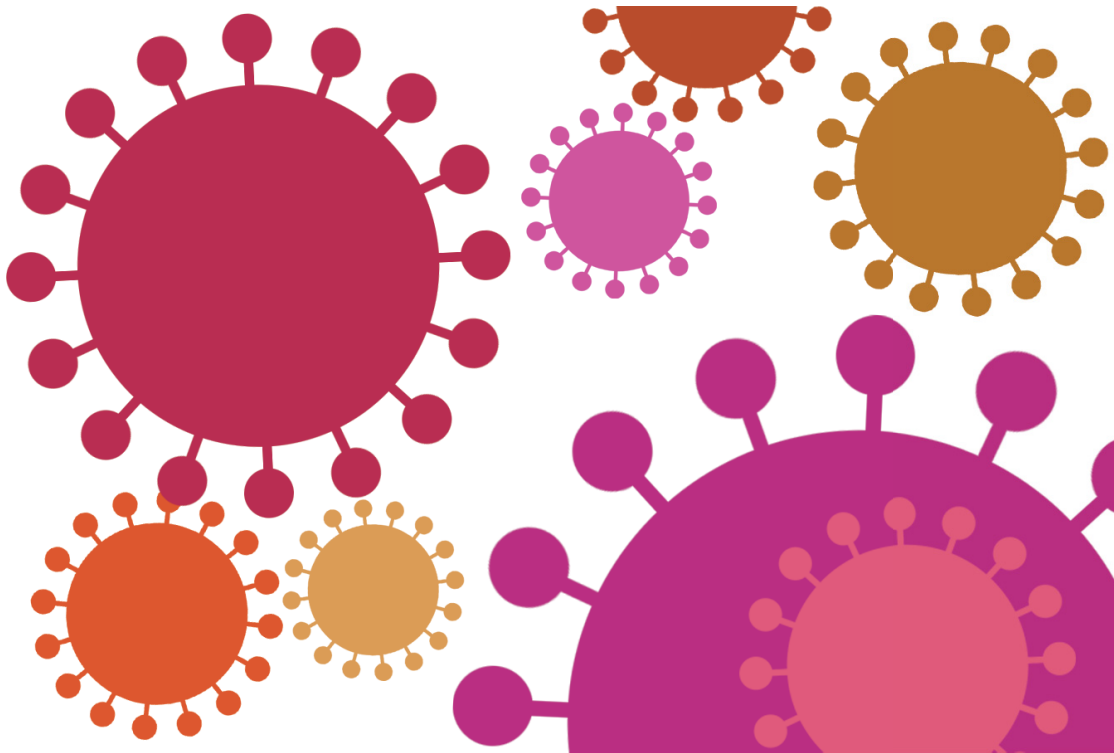




STAY GROUNDED WHILE YOU STAY HOME



I just looked back on last month's issue of The Pegboard to refresh and prepare myself for the April issue. Many of the details in the last newsletter are already out of date, but I have to remind myself that we put it together during a week when all of us experienced what has been possibly the biggest upset in our working lives. Studios have closed and just about everyone working in animation is doing it from home. It wasn't easy to make the transition, but judging by the responses we've gotten to the Working From Home Surveys we've sent out it looks like our members are settling in to a new – and hopefully temporary – normal.

By the time the March issue got to members, it had been revised several times: once during the pre-press process and two or three more times for the website version. Let that be a lesson to everyone – not only is the web version in color, but it's sometimes more up-to-date than the printed

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IATSE LOCAL 839

version. Sign up to go green so you can save a tree and be better informed! All of the changes were related to cancellations of Guild events. We were sorry to have to do it, but it quickly became apparent that we were all going to need to stay Safer At Home.

Because the situation changed so quickly in March, and because the vast majority of our live action IATSE siblings found themselves out of work virtually overnight, there has been a lot of thinking being done behind the scenes to help figure out how best to help those most affected by the pandemic. Read Steve Kaplan's *From the Business Representative* column to learn what the Board of Directors at MPI has voted to do regarding participants' premiums, qualifying hours and IAPs, what the Trustees of the Guild's 401(k) plan have announced as an option for those suffering financial hardship, and what the Animation Guild's office has always done to make settling financial obligations easier for our members. Read *Field Rep Corner* to find out how Leslie Simmons is connecting with members despite physical distance. Link to Mindy Johnson's latest blog posting to learn how animation workers have a history of overcoming adversity in times of trouble. And, read Jeanette Moreno King's *From the President* column to remind yourself that we're all in this together.

We ARE in this together, even though we're apart for the time being, and we need to remember that as we work through the next month, and the one after that. We also need to remember that we are actually quite fortunate because we can continue our work when millions are suddenly out of work because their workplaces have been shut down. About 120,000 of members in the IATSE are out of work due to the pandemic measures – that's roughly 80% of our union kin. Please think about that as you overcome the daily annoyances that make working at home a little more difficult than going in to your studio. You can do your part in getting through this by continuing to work, supporting your local businesses as much as you can while staying safe and healthy, being thankful for the grocery, food service and health care workers who are putting themselves on the line daily to keep us fed and to care for those who become ill.

I didn't include one important article in this issue in the list above because I think it deserves special attention. Please check out the volunteering options (page 12) that have opened up since the pandemic changed things for the world. While you are safe and healthy, working and being paid, you may be able to volunteer or give to charity in order to help those who are most affected by COVID-19. Now that's solidarity!

— **Paula Spence**, Pegboard Editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT JEANETTE MORENO KING



As I write this, it's been a month since Safer At Home orders were issued by Mayor Eric Garcetti in the city of Los Angeles and by Governor Gavin Newsom across the state, and it makes me appreciate our animation community more than ever. How lucky we are to have each other, to live in a time that technology makes it possible to reach across our social distances and be together. Seeing everyone's screenshots of work meetings and virtual drinks after work warms my heart and makes me feel a little less alone. We all are having this shared experience in real time, going through these highs and lows together yet apart. It's kind of like we are all watching a season finale or televised concert or sports game together and tweeting about it as we go along. Just like that but with a palpable sense of existential dread and anxiety about the health and wellbeing of our friends, our family, our city, our industry....our world as we know it.

It can be overwhelming.

And then, I click open Zoom for Quarantini Time happy hour with my new Titmouse crew and all those fears drop away. We really are in this together.

We are in it with our 150,000 strong IATSE members, also – 120,000 are now out of work according to the IA's central office. That number is mind blowing. President Matt Loeb and the IATSE board have approved \$2.5 million to be given to charities, the Actors Fund and MPTF, that help entertainment professionals who have fallen on hard times. There are strict laws on how member dues can be used so this is the best way to get immediate assistance to our brothers and sisters. IATSE also successfully petitioned congress to include entertainment workers in the CARES Act passed by congress. I have personally never felt more connected to our sibling Locals than I do now.

The most recent Presidents Meeting of the Hollywood IATSE Locals was conducted over Zoom. Though it was good to reconnect and hear how they are managing this crisis, I could feel the weight of this pandemic on them. Work has come to a full stop and they are trying their best to help their members who are in need while being able to maintain their offices with staff with no income or ability to plan for the future. They were even exploring applying for small business loans through the CARES Act to keep their respective Locals afloat. Heavy stuff.

We, at 839, are so incredibly lucky to be able to keep working and that the studios are doing all they can to make sure that we all stay in business. While it is great for us that we can keep working, the picture is much bigger than our personal needs. Our sibling Locals are counting on us to keep the wheels turning on our shared industry so that when this pandemic blows over there is still a place for them to return to.

We have to keep going for our sibling Locals and for all the support staff that makes our jobs possible. If we are the only revenue stream for these studios during the pandemic, then we need to help them make this work.



FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



I hope everyone is staying healthy at home as we weather this difficult and unpredictable time. I wanted to make sure you were all aware of some of the changes that have been put in place as well as update you with changes to our office operations.

MPI

The Board of Directors has met almost daily to institute changes designed to address these difficult times. The MPI website now includes a COVID-19 button on the left side of the homepage at <https://www.mpiphp.org/home>. This button points to a PDF of an evolving document outlining changes that have been made to the plans. Please be sure to check it regularly.

There have been quite a few productive changes that MPI has made to the Health Plans. Some of these include a one-time waiver of your premium for one eligibility quarter, instituting a hardship withdrawal procedure for a portion of your vested IAP balance and providing earlier access to prescription refills. Please visit the document to read further and contact MPI with any questions that you have about these changes. <https://www.mpiphp.org/home/contactus>.

A temporary change has been made to address participants who are facing a shortage of hours for the current qualifying period. For those Active Participants currently enrolled in the Motion Picture Industry Health Plan (MPIHP), excluding those on COBRA and those who maintain enrollment through MPIHP as a result of a disability, and whose benefit period ends on June 30, 2020, the MPI Health Plan will provide a credit of up to 300 hours toward the Participant's next eligibility period. In order to receive any credit, all of the Participant's banked hours and all of their worked hours for the qualifying period from October 27, 2019 to April 25, 2020 must be exhausted. Only the minimum amount of hours needed for that Participant to continue their eligibility in the MPI Health Plan for the benefit period of July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 will be credited. No hours will be credited toward a Participant's bank of hours or any other qualifying period. To check your eligibility visit www.mpiphp.org/home/eligibility.

The Board of Directors and Plan Staff are aware that many of the participants are now facing a loss of work hours and are concerned about continuing eligibility in the Health Plan. The Board of Directors and Plan Staff continue to discuss options to minimize any disruption to access to the Health Plan benefits. As soon as there are any further changes in this regard, MPI and the Guild will forward the news.

TAG OFFICE OPERATIONS

The Guild office is closed until further notice and the office staff is working from home with access to emails and our database. Email us at membership@tag839.org with any questions or concerns.

We have set up our own COVID-19 Resource page on the website, and continue to add to it as the situation develops. Please visit <https://animationguild.org/covid-19-resource-page/> regularly to make sure you have the latest news.

We have purchased a Zoom Pro account, and are making it available to groups and committees to meet virtually with up to 100 people at one time. If you are in a group or committee and want access, please reach out to Jupey to schedule a time (jupey.krusho@tag839.org).

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have received some requests for consideration regarding financial obligations to the Guild. While we are all grateful that the animation industry has not experienced a complete shut-down like the one many of our live-action sisters and brothers are facing, we understand that finances have been affected due to the pandemic.

We are always ready to work with a member who needs to prioritize other life expenses over their obligations to the Local. Anyone interested in such consideration should email Lyn Mantta (lyn@animationguild.org) to discuss alternative solutions with her.

STUDIOS

As previously mentioned, we are fortunate that animation work allows for working from home. At this time, all of our studios have implemented some kind of work-from-home structure. It has not been an easy process for some of them. If you are having difficulties with your studio (hard-

ware, software, hours), please first reach out to the studio and request assistance before reaching out to me at steve.kaplan@tag893.org.

Many thanks to the members who shared their experiences in our first Work From Home Survey. In an effort to continue to monitor the status of the industry, we created a second Work From Home Survey. Please take the time to fill it out and submit the information to us: <https://animationguild.org/work-from-home-survey-follow-up/>.

TAG 401k PLAN

The Trustees of the 401k Plan met on Tuesday, March 31 to discuss the CARES Act. Vanguard provided the Trustees with a CARES Act Election Form outlining the necessary changes to the Plan's Trust Agreement to implement the appropriate provisions outlined in the Act. The Trustees unanimously agreed to implement the following:

- Hardship distribution up to \$100,000.00 with no 20% federal tax (10% early withdrawal penalty can elected to be waived) for all plan participants
- Suspensions of Loan Repayments up to a year upon request of the participant
- Waiver of Required Minimum Distributions

If you are planning to take a withdrawal from both your IAP and 401(k) accounts, you will not be penalized unless the combined total withdrawn is more than the \$100,000 allowed by the CARES Act. The TAG office will not be processing hardship withdrawal requests. In order to take the hardship withdrawal, **you will have to contact Vanguard to speak to a customer service representative.**

The Executive Board and Guild Staff are eager to support you during this difficult time. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions on how we can help. We are eager to connect with you and are finalizing ways we can do so. You can find our contact information on the Contact page of the Guild website: <https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/contact/>. Please prioritize your health and safety during these difficult times and let us know how we can help.

From Animation Historian Mindy Johnson:

ANIMATION — WE CAN DO IT!

After a month of working at home, it feels like doing our jobs away from the office is old hat. But we're actually doing something extraordinary by keeping our industry moving forward at a time when most of our live-action fellow IATSE members are out of work. This isn't the first time animation workers have worked through adversity, though!

Animation historian Mindy Johnson has put her time working at home to good use by accomplishing more of the excellent research she's known for. And on top of that, she's written a new blog post that chronicles the historical role animation and animation workers have played in times of public health crises.

You can read Mindy's very timely blog posting here:

<https://www.mindyjohnsoncreative.com/blog>

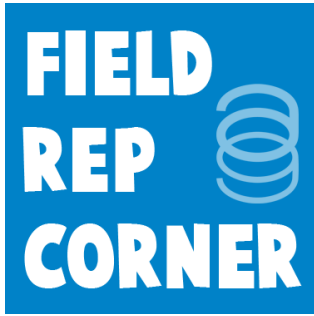
And if you find yourself with a little more time on your hands, check out the rest of her website – books, events and more of her blog:

<https://www.mindyjohnsoncreative.com/>

***Mindy Johnson** is the recipient of the 2019 Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Film Scholar Award for her continued research into the women of early animated cinema.*

She recently moderated an Animation Guild panel discussion: Championing Diversity Within the Animation Industry, which featured animation luminaries Jane Baer, Floyd Norman, Willie Ito and Enid Denbo-Wizig. Looking forward to having Mindy back again soon!





MEMBER OUTREACH IN A TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

As TAG's Field Representative, my job – first and foremost – is to go out and visit our membership in their work locations. You may have seen me: popping around, checking in, seeing if you have any questions or need help with anything union-related. I'm not one for being in an office all the time, and studio visits are one of my favorite parts of the job.

That, of course, all changed when I started working from home on March 17. As a Field Representative, it's important to have knowledge of a variety of different things, from the contract to member assistance. So, for the first couple weeks of working from home, I attended a lot of different webinars, learning what resources are available to our members and their families during this crisis, be it unemployment insurance, student loan forbearance or housing assistance, and share it with the union's communications director and others.

I also sat in on various conference calls and town halls with local political leaders, the California IATSE Coalition and others to keep up with what's happening on a state and federal level. This included helping spread the word about sending letters to your representatives telling them to include displaced entertainment industry workers in any relief legislation. The IATSE had more than 100,000 participants in that effort and important protections for our industry's brothers, sisters and kin was included in the CARES Act. Thank you to all who participated!

Many of you are fortunate to continue working on projects from home and being employed. But this work from home reality we're all living in at the moment has hampered my ability to check in and make sure all is well.

To that end, I started holding a few weeks ago, Virtual Studio Visits. It's basically virtual office hours. I log in for an hour on Zoom and those who received my invitation to join can log in, ask questions and get any help I can provide. It's not a webinar and there's no need to stay on for the duration of the visit (usually an hour). It's just a way to connect and a way for me to continue to be of service and to support our membership during this time. And also, it's nice to see familiar faces and new ones!



So, if you receive an invite for Virtual Studio Hours, log-in, say hi. Even if you don't have a question, it's always good to connect with your union.

We're all looking at new ways to keep connected during this time. If you have any suggestions please free to contact me at leslie.simmons@tag839.org or call or text at 747.238.0287.

Stay healthy and I'll see you back in the studios soon!

In solidarity,

Leslie Simmons

Field Representative/Political Coordinator

leslie.simmons@tag839.org

Call or text: 747.238.0287

HELP THOSE AFFECTED MOST BY COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our community deeply and many people are struggling and in need of help. It can be challenging sometimes to find the best way to lend a hand so the Animation Guild has created a Volunteer Hub (<https://animationguild.org/volunteer-hub/>) compiling community service opportunities into one comprehensive list that will be updated weekly. Here are a couple of ways to give back:

IATSE C.A.R.E.S.

With COVID-19 ravaging communities and industries across the world, we need to provide support to our most at-risk, elderly, and disabled members. To that end, the International has launched C.A.R.E.S. (Coronavirus Active Response and Engagement Service), a new initiative to organize aid for the most vulnerable. The initiative establishes a “Buddy System” — [sign up to volunteer](#).

LA COUNTY FED VOLUNTEER CORPS

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor is working with the Mayor of Los Angeles to build a base of volunteers that can help our city and county be ready to support our most vulnerable Angelenos. They are calling on all union members in good health to stand with our community by volunteering to join our LA Labor COVID-19 Volunteer Corps to join our efforts over the coming weeks and possibly even months. Sign up to volunteer by filling out a registration form: <http://bit.ly/lalaborvolunteer>. Please contact Claudia Magana at Claudia@thelafed.org with any questions.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Give Blood – Due to the coronavirus there is a critical need for blood. The Red Cross has many donation drives occurring across the county so [schedule an appointment](#) and save a life!

Urgent need for Volunteers – The American Red Cross is closely monitoring the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and preparing to carry out lifesaving missions in the event of any possible disruptions, as well as supporting public health agencies to help communities prepare. Their need for volunteers is constant and continues to evolve as they navigate this health crisis. They are working with public health officials to help keep local communities and volunteers safe. Volunteer opportunities include supporting blood donations and delivering much-needed services to your community. There are even a wide variety of remote (work-from-home) opportunities available. [Sign up to volunteer.](#)



VOLUNTEER FOR A FOOD BANK OR TO DELIVER MEALS

California Food Bank – Food banks are in great need of volunteers to help pack and sort food. They are taking precautions to prioritize volunteer safety. Visit California Association of Food Banks at www.cafoodbanks.org/COVID-19.

LAUSD Food Distribution Volunteers – The American Red Cross is conducting distribution of emergency supplies (feeding) at fixed points of distribution (PODs) in support of population affected by school closures in coordination with a whole community effort led by LA County Unified School District. More than 160 volunteers are needed every day at 50 plus sites. Learn more [here](#).

Meals on Wheels – Vulnerable seniors are at greatest risk amid COVID-19. Let's help keep them safe and cared for. To contact your local Meals on Wheels organization to volunteer, you can visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

(continued on next page)

CAN'T VOLUNTEER? CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION.

MPTF IATSE COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

Providing temporary financial assistance for needs created or complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic including health insurance, mental health assistance, rent, food, and other essentials.

[COVID-19 RELIEF FUND](#)

UNITED WAYS COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

A statewide relief fund to help Californians impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Monies raised will help families impacted by quarantine, disruption of income, and other challenges.

[UNITED WAYS COVID-19 RELIEF FUND](#)

Don't miss out on Animation Guild events! Keep your contact information up-to-date and sign up for our e-mail list at <https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/change-address/>. You can GO GREEN – and save the Guild printing and mailing costs – by choosing to view our TAG publications digitally rather than receiving a hard copy in the mail. Visit <https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/publication-preferences/>.

TAG DELEGATES PREPARING TO REPRESENT

The work of a labor union must go on, despite the pandemic. Our Constitution & By-Laws requires the election of Delegates who represent the Animation Guild at the IATSE District 2 Convention each year. At the convention, these Delegates hear directly from IA Leadership about planning and progress within our parent union, take part in committee work and educational sessions, and vote on resolutions brought by the Locals in attendance.

In the past, TAG Delegations were usually made up of a small group of Executive Board members who joined the Business Representative and sitting President, who are ex officio Delegates, in representing our Local at the convention. In recent years, however, we've experienced a rise in member engagement and activism, and many of those engaged members have stepped up to volunteer as committee members and leaders, Shop Stewards and Delegates.

Under the leadership of former Business Representative Jason MacLeod, the TAG Delegation grew beyond the Executive Board, and in 2018 we sent 16 people to Las Vegas to represent the Guild. Excitement and interest spread, and in 2019 we sent a Delegation of 36 to Honolulu, Hawai'i. Not only was this the Animation Guild's biggest group ever to go to the convention, it was the largest Delegation sent by any District 2 Local to last year's event!

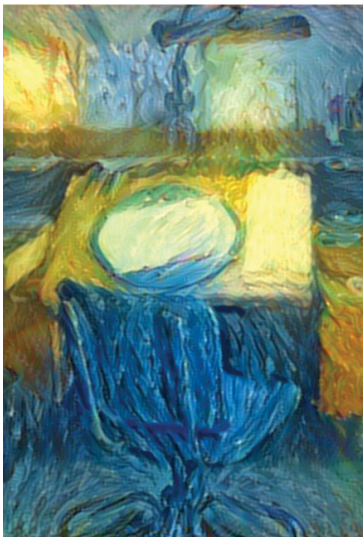
Delegate nominations usually take place at the March General Membership Meeting. Since Safer At Home orders prohibit group gatherings, we were forced to cancel our March meeting, and that meant coming up with a new way to elect our Delegates to this year's District 2 Convention, which is currently still scheduled to take place in San Francisco in June. Members were asked to make nominations via email to the Recording Secretary, and this year 32 members stepped up and will be ready to represent our Local if called to do so.

Thanks for sharing your strength and solidarity, Delegates!

AFTERNOON OF REMEMBRANCE

The Animation Guild's Afternoon of Remembrance took place on February 29th. Attendees filled Hulett Hall and 65 people connected to our animation community who passed in 2019 were remembered with personal memorials shared by friends and family.

The Memorial Committee works throughout the year to research, organize and plan the annual Afternoon of Remembrance event to honor our members and others with ties to the animation industry. If you'd like to get involved, please email committees@tag839.org.



IN MEMORIAM

Roman Arambula passed away on March 19, 2020 at the age of 83. Born and trained in Mexico, he started his animation career at Gamma Productions, where he animated on Jay Ward's "Rocky and Bullwinkle" and "Fractured Fairy Tales" before finding his way to Los Angeles. While working at many LA area animation studios, Roman kept up a sideline career in comic books, and eventually took over the daily "Mickey Mouse" comic strip on the Disney lot – a position he held for close to two decades.

Ink & Paint Artist ***Ann Sullivan*** passed away on April 13, 2020 at the age of 91. She started her career at Disney in the 1950s and left the industry to raise four children before returning to animation at Hanna-Barbera in the early 1970s. She eventually made it back to Disney, where she worked on some of their most cherished films, such as "The Little Mermaid" and "The Lion King." Ann retired in the early 2000s, and in recent years had delighted her fellow residents at the MPTF Retirement Center in Woodland Hills with her infectious giggle.



TAG TUESDAY:



**WORKING
FROM HOME
EDITION!**



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

April 28th – TAG Tuesday – Wear your TAG T-shirt and share your solidarity on social media while we work at a distance!

May 25th – Contract Holiday: Memorial Day

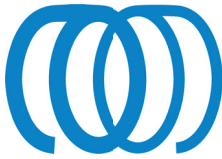
May 26th – TAG Tuesday – Wear your TAG T-shirt!

May 26th – General Membership Meeting

Please watch for details in an upcoming email



Some of TAG's Shop Stewards and Executive Board members took part in Shop Steward Training on March 21st. The workshop was created by Pat White, Director of Education and Training at the IATSE's head office in NYC, and then customized and led by TAG Field Rep Leslie Simmons, who swiftly adapted the agenda to an online format when, a week before, animation workers were asked to work from home in response to the coronavirus pandemic.



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