

LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING BACK



Have you gotten your shot?

I got my first dose of the Moderna vaccine at a local pharmacy on the day after I became eligible, and I look forward to getting that second dose at the end of the month. Eligibility opens for all Californians ages 16 and up on the 15th of April, though many of our members in that last eligibility group have shown initiative in finding ways to get vaccinated even sooner by taking advantage of all-ages opportunities in the Los Angeles area or by driving to less populated locations in the state where they're inviting all comers. Participants in the MPI Health Plans are being invited to make appointments at nearby clinics, and because the vaccine supply has dramatically increased, it's much easier now than it was weeks ago to make a plan to protect ourselves and our loved ones from Covid-19.

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the
animation
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International Labor Communications Association

So now that most of us are getting vaccinated, are we ready to go back to some kind of “normal” that is closer to our old ways of doing things? We’re still going to be wearing masks for a while, to continue protecting ourselves and others from the disease that has kept us mostly at home for the last year. And while infection numbers are alarming in some states that have opened up without restriction, the increasing vaccination rate and more cautious approach to reopening that we’re experiencing in California seems to be working. At the time of this writing, the state is scheduled to lift all coronavirus restrictions, provided that there are enough Covid-19 vaccines available and that hospitalizations remain low and stable.

Employers in the animation industry are starting to think about how they will reopen and bring people back to work. Some studios have announced their intention to continue on with more flexible working plans, possibly even allowing continued work from home or hybrid models that would allow for time at the office AND at home. It’s not clear yet how employees using special equipment or large digital files can make a hybrid model work efficiently and safely, but we’re ready at The Animation Guild to be a part of the conversation when the plans are made. Our members went home to do their work over a year ago and have been producing quality work with barely a hitch since then. We’re the reason that the animation studios have continued to flourish while live-action entertainment suffered massive layoffs and a complete cessation of production for several months. And when the studios open up again, I suspect that Animation Guild members will be leading the pack to get back to work and back to in-person collaboration with the coworkers we’ve missed so much.

A few studios have hinted at starting to reopen in early summer, and others have mentioned fall for a projected return. If you’ve received word from your employer about a plan for going back to work, we’d love to hear about it at the Guild. You can send news to our Business Representative, Steve Kaplan, at steve.kaplan@tag839.org, or to Field Representative Leslie Simmons at leslie.simmons@tag839.org. Thanks for sharing information with your coworkers and fellow TAG members, and for keeping us informed!

— *Paula Spence, Pegboard Editor*

FROM THE PRESIDENT JEANETTE MORENO KING



ARE WE THERE YET?

As I waited in line at Dodger Stadium for my first shot of Moderna, I wondered if I would cry, like I heard others had. Would I feel relief after a year of anxiety and sadness?

I've been lucky. No one in my immediate family has died. We didn't argue about whether the virus was real or not. We all agree that vaccines work.

My husband and I have been fortunate to continue working with no breaks. Our kids are doing fine with distance learning and thankfully, the school district is taking a cautious approach on reopening.

Even the work at the Guild has been able to continue, but with only some limitations from staff having to work remotely.

As our car inched along, I wondered what return to work would look like in an animation studio.

Studio heads are starting to send out tentative plans for reopening, and it's looking like it'll be a slow ease in with a hybrid model where workers will come into the studio two to three times a week. The logistics of it all sound daunting.

Will the studios set up shared workstations? Or will we have assigned laptops or mobile Cintics that we can carry between work and home? Will our software licenses travel with an employee or the device? How does the WFH stipend fit in this hybrid model?

As much as I miss seeing my colleagues in person, the flexibility of working remotely has a lot of appeal. Imagine being able to do visual development or design from life in an architecturally significant building or a park with a specific landscape.

Managing teams of artists working remotely will make communication from leadership a top priority. Supervisors and directors will need to keep constant contact to maintain team cohesiveness and productivity.

Remote work puts pressure on The Animation Guild. If studios can hire from anywhere, how do we, as a union, respond? It'll be more important than ever to protect all workers on a union production; to ensure that they are paid a fair wage, get benefits, and have a balanced life. We are having these conversations now.

Netflix, Amazon, and Apple, pre-pandemic, invested heavily in large studio spaces around L.A. County as they started building their animation divisions from scratch. I believe that the heart of the animation industry will remain L.A.-based even as demands reach farther afield. Just look at our live action brethren who have productions all over the world.

My first shot was painless and the person who delivered it distracted me with humor, entertaining me in that casual L.A. way. I didn't cry but I did feel relief. We are in the early stages of finding our way out of this terrible pandemic. We have all learned a lot about ourselves and our relationships, personal and professional. The animation industry will be forever changed and we have a long way to go. I truly believe that together we will have a say in that future.

In solidarity,

Jeanette Moreno King

President

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

jeanette.king@tag839.org

FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

One of the reasons most jobs in the entertainment industry have been able to provide a stable middle class lifestyle are the Union agreements that are in place with the employers. Those agreements are bargained with a relatively short life span so the Unions have the opportunity to continue to raise concerns and adjust the agreements to provide the best working conditions possible. As we've already shared, the entertainment industry Unions started to renegotiate their agreements in 2019, and this summer the IATSE will be renegotiating the various agreements in place with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). I wanted to provide you with an update on how the IATSE negotiations have progressed so far.

The AMPTP started negotiations with Local 873, the studio mechanics Local in Toronto that provides the workforce for the Motion Picture and Television industry in the area, in January. By that time, the AMPTP had already bargained successor agreements with DGA, SAG-AFTRA, the WGA, and then bargained a Return To Work Agreement with an unprecedented group of entertainment industry unions that called themselves the Multi-Union Coalition, which included the IATSE. Those negotiations were scheduled for a week, and were not concluded in that time.

The AMPTP then met with a number of other Canadian entertainment Unions to negotiate successor agreements across the country. Some of those Unions being the British Columbia Council of Film Unions (BC-CFU - comprised of IATSE Locals 669 and 891, and International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 155), the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), and Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA). Each of those negotiations ended without an agreement. Reports I have received indicate that discussions are continuing and progress is being made.

The AMPTP has indicated that they would not be prepared to begin negotiations with the IATSE for a successor to the Basic Agreement before May. President Loeb and Vice President Miller in his capacity as the Director of the Motion Picture and Television Department have formed the Basic Agreement Negotiations Committee and started the work of forming proposals to bring to the negotiations.

The Animation Guild's Negotiation Committee has been formed and currently has close to 50 members working to craft proposals for our negotiations. It is currently estimated that our negotiations will begin in June. I am proud to say that our committee is a diverse group of members representing various crafts and initiatives. One of our short term goals is to draft and release a negotiation survey asking members to help identify priorities for the negotiations. I recently presented a draft of that survey to the committee for review and discussion. If you have questions or suggestions for the committee with regard to proposals for the negotiations, please send them to me at steve.kaplan@tag839.org and I will try to connect you with a committee member who can work with you.

While the COVID-19 figures in Los Angeles seem to be trending in the right direction, with hospitalizations decreasing and vaccinations increasing, the rest of the world is not faring as well. As of the writing of this article, the Canadian cities of Toronto and Vancouver have re-entered restricted "lockdown" regulations as COVID-19 variant infections are spiking and hospitals are being overrun. Currently, the industry negotiations are being held virtually, and I expect that the IATSE Basic Agreement and the TAG Master Agreement will be negotiated in this way as well.

In Solidarity,

Steve Kaplan

Business Representative

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

steve.kaplan@tag839.org



SURVEYS: THEY MATTER!

Who doesn't love surveys? Who doesn't love data and crunching numbers? Well, some of us do!

At TAG, surveys are so important for the union to be informed of what's happening in the industry, with our members and more. We've sent them out for a variety of things.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we sent out surveys to see who was working from home, what equipment and support you were receiving – both for home office setup and for stipends.

This survey helped us in understanding that initially many studios were not reimbursing their employees for expenses incurred while working from home (which is required for employees working at home under California Labor Law). This resulted in outreach by Business Representative Steve Kaplan to the studios and pushing for members to get reasonable stipends for their work at home. And it also helped in educating TAG members on the section in the TAG Master Agreement and most of the other studio-specific contracts that says the studio has to provide the necessary tools and equipment needed to do work, if it cannot be performed in the studio.

Now, as I write this, we're collecting responses to TAG's Wage Survey. This is one of the most important surveys – aside from the TAG Negotiations Survey – that members can complete.

Firstly, the TAG Wage Survey helps YOU! Members utilize this survey to see what the trends are in pay, and it helps in negotiating a wage or wage increase. Secondly, it informs those looking into working in this industry. Thirdly, it helps us in negotiations and our economic proposals.

If you haven't filled out the survey, please do so as soon as possible! And if you have not received the survey, please contact us at survey@tag839.org (also check your SPAM, junk and promotions folders!). And visit <https://animationguild.org/know-your-worth-wage-survey-faqs/> to learn about other commonly asked questions.

After the Wage Survey ends, we will be sending out a Negotiations Survey. This is a survey specifically for our upcoming negotiations with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (the AMPTP) and for the other studio-specific contracts that will expire this year.

This survey helps inform the TAG Negotiations Committee on what your top priorities are as we enter negotiations. What would you like to see changed in the TAG contracts? What would you like to see added in the TAG contracts? Not everything makes it to the bargaining table. But if the Negotiations Committee sees a trend in priorities, they know this is something of the utmost importance to the membership. Remember, this committee is representing the interests of the membership, so filling out that survey will be incredibly helpful to them and to you!

Surveys are an important tool for any organization – including labor unions. They inform us in so many ways as highlighted here. And for the TAG membership, it's your chance to participate and be engaged in the work the Union and its leadership, stewards, and member volunteers do on your behalf.

Thank you for participating!

In solidarity,

Leslie Simmons

Field Representative/Political Coordinator

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

leslie.simmons@tag839.org

Call or text: 747.238.0287



WAGE TRANSPARENCY

WHY TAKING THE WAGE SURVEY MATTERS

First: Thanks to those of you who have already taken the survey. Please reach out to your Guild colleagues and urge them to take it at <https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/B5r8sB>. It takes just a few minutes to share this link with fellow members to make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Next: If you haven't taken the survey, here's why you should dig the SoGo Survey email out of your spam file, contact us at survey@tag839.org if you didn't receive it, or stop procrastinating (no judgement, we've all been there)!

Let's face it, employers are at their strongest when information about wages is kept secret.

The Union is at its strongest when there is a record of what every member is making.

Soon The Animation Guild team will be negotiating our next contract. How can they make sure that everyone is being paid fairly? Simply put, they can't. And, unfortunately, the studios don't always report information about wages, so we need you to take the survey and share what you get paid.

This is about money—at the same time, it's about more than just money. It's about making sure all the terms and conditions of your employment are fair, and that there is equity regarding race, gender, and age. But without your input, that can't happen, because without knowing what you make, the Union is negotiating partially blind.

While we will be sharing the overall results of the survey with members, it's important to note that it is **completely anonymous and confidential**.

It is also vital to our collective success—so please take 10 minutes and answer the survey questions today.

Feel free to contact us with any questions at survey@tag839.org, and read on for answers to the most commonly asked questions.

WAGE SURVEY FAQ

I didn't get the wage survey. What should I do?

We are getting reports that many people received the wage survey in their spam folders. You can also do a search for “animation survey” or sender “survey@tag839.org” in your email to find it. If you use Gmail, check your Promotion tab for the survey. If you still didn't receive the survey, email survey@tag839.org.

I'm a little confused. I get paid hourly. Should I select Daily or Weekly?

If you are employed full-time and you get paid by the hour, you should select Weekly. If you are doing freelance work and getting paid as a Daily hire, select Daily and multiply your hourly rate by 8 hours.

Should I enter my pay before or after taxes?

Please enter your gross salary before taxes have been levied.

How do I know if I am On-call or Salary?

If you're employed full-time and you get paid a flat weekly rate for 56 hours, no matter how many hours you work, you should select On-call/Salary. For more details on On-call or Salary, visit <https://animationguild.org/what-does-on-call-mean/>. If you worked through the On-call language, you should **not** indicate that overtime was built into your salary. Only share your weekly rate and leave the other fields blank.

What does built-in overtime mean?

If your employer guarantees you “built-in overtime” in your weekly pay per your deal memo, please note it. For example, DreamWorks and Walt Disney Animation Studios sometime guarantee a 40 + 5 OT weekly pay. On the other hand, if you usually enter 40 hours on your weekly time card, click “No.” Again, if you worked through the On-call language, you should not indicate that overtime was built into your salary.

I work at Wild Canary, and it's asking me to insert the name of the studio multiple times. What should I do?

Unfortunately, there is a technical issue with Wild Canary in the drop-down menu. Instead of clicking on the studio name, please enter the name of the studio under Other.

What if I can't find my job title on the list?

Please scroll to the bottom of the list and enter it under Other.

Where can I find my job code?

In some cases, you'll find your job code on your pay stubs or in your deal memo. If you don't know it, don't worry. Just skip the question and continue with the survey.

How should I input unit rates? Page rate? Project rate?

We know that unit rates can be tricky to calculate. As long as you explain how you are calculating your rates, we will review the information and apply it to the survey data.

And just a reminder if you've already participated:

We sent out unique survey links to all members through the SogoSurvey application. Please do not share the link from your unique email but feel free to share the universal link at <https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/B5r8sB>. If you have trouble accessing the survey or can't find the email, please email us at survey@tag839.org or use the universal link.



The Animation Guild
congratulates our members
on their
Annie Award nominations!

We are 839. We are animation.



the **animation** guild

IATSE LOCAL 839

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Forget the Monday blues. This is the day we showcase Guild members with our new Member Monday feature. We think it's important to shine a light on our talented members and their art. We also want to help you get to know one another—something that can be especially hard these days when we're still working from home.

Each profile showcases one member and is featured in *This Week @ TAG*, the Keyframe website, and on our social media platforms. Check out past Member Mondays at <https://keyframemagazine.org/?s=member+monday>. As for what's next, **we'd love to feature you!**

The more we're connected, the stronger we are as a Guild. If you're interested in participating in Member Monday, drop us a note at editor@tag839.org.



Clockwise from top left: Abelley Hayford, Wynton Redmond, Joie Foster, Aaron Brewer, Josie Campbell and Katya Bowser have recently been featured on Member Mondays.

EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

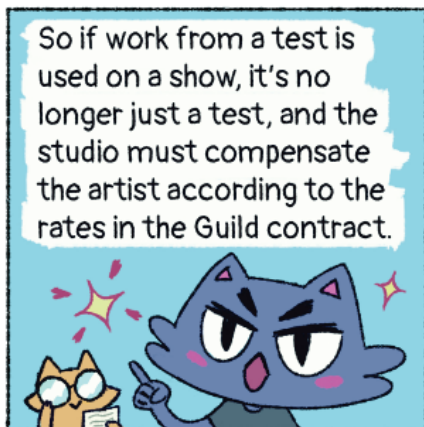
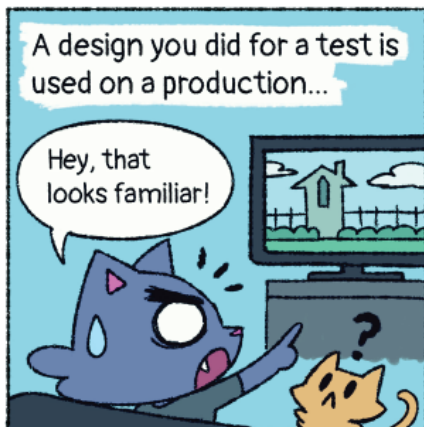
It is with great pleasure that I announce the formation of The Animation Guild's Education and Training Committee. This committee was born out of the need to provide a place where members can communicate thoughts and ideas about training opportunities, teaching opportunities, and outreach to students as well as educators. We will be working closely with the teams at EIDO and 5 Star, and helping to steer the initiatives and policies to keep members up-to-date on class offerings, providing feedback and creating new avenues for member education and training. We are looking for members to join the committee to help educate, raise awareness, and find innovative ways to continue to provide training and education well past the pandemic and into the future, especially as we near contract negotiations. If you would like to join the Education and Training Committee, please e-mail us at committee-education-training@tag839.org. If you have a passion for education, whether you are a member who also teaches drawing and software courses, or would like to teach a course, or even just want to have a voice in the educational needs of our members, please join us on the Education and Training Committee.

Pete Michels

Chair, TAG Education and Training Committee

committee-education-training@tag839.org

The first meeting of the Education and Training Committee will be April 21 at 7pm. All members interested in joining the committee or even just thinking about it will be welcome. If interested, e-mail committee-education-training@tag839.org and we will send an invite.



ANIMATION SHOWRUNNERS VIRTUAL PANEL

Congratulations! You made it through development and are now a showrunner on your first animated series! But how will you find and manage your writers? What sort of conversations will you have with your pre-production, production, and post crews? How will you balance your show responsibilities and still have a life? Join us **Wednesday, May 12th** at **7pm** for an evening with both new and veteran showrunners as they discuss what they learned on the job and how to avoid problems along the way. [RSVP at rsvp@tag839.org](mailto:rsvp@tag839.org)

Just a reminder that our next Writers Craft Committee meeting will be Monday, April 26th at 7pm. To get more information, you can email the committee at animationwriters@tag839.org, or use [THIS LINK](#) to sign up.



WE'RE THE TAG TIMING COMMITTEE AND WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER

Hello from the brand new TAG Timing Committee! TAG granted us Committee status in early March, with co-chairs Christine Smith Ishimine and Ray Kosarin (there had earlier been a more informal “Group”—and we realized timing professionals both needed and deserved better). If we haven’t met already, it’s time we did! Plus, in this contract negotiations year, we can help each other.

So, who are we? Like you, animation timers, or timing directors (it feels better when we get that credit), are talented and hard-working, and our work matters a lot. As one supervising director puts it, timing is “the last line of defense” between the preproduction creative team and the overseas animators who will sit down and bring all your work to life. We steer their work, as animator-to-animator: we study and interpret all the preproduction work that has to do with character acting and anything that moves—the board, the animatic, the voice recording—and we convert it to frame-by-frame direction for the animator and camera programmer.



Design and graphic by John McIntyre

Your beautiful work lives or dies in our hands: we make sure that character acting and action work at the right speed, with the right soft or hard hits to sell the voice performance; that gag setups read; that jokes hit on the frame that makes them the funniest. When the animatic is perfect, we preserve it like a historical monument; when it’s looser, we tighten, flesh out, draw breakdowns here and there, to make emotions and jokes hit home. We love what you do, and what we do, and what the animators will do!

But too many of us have been struggling. In recent years, more studios have moved timing jobs from in-house to freelance, and freelance pay has been stagnant. Worse, many of us are paid not by how long the work takes, but by footage. That means, when we get scenes crowded with characters or complicated action (which writers love to write), same as you, it slows us way down, and sometimes we end up with one day's pay for an honest week's work. On top of that, our freelance health and pension are calculated on a made-up formula that the AMPTP pretends has something to do with how many hours we actually work. We all know how much more ambitious shows have gotten. Too often, freelance timing professionals work more hours than we are being paid and getting health and pension for, and we need to fix this in the 2021 agreement and get back to earning a living!

TAG timing professionals, and TAG friends, help us help each other! Sign up for our emails and meeting announcements at <https://tinyurl.com/TimingComm>. And you, all other TAG workers being battered by flat-unit-rate pay—storyboarders, animators, checkers, anyone else—let's talk to each other to form a united front for the 2021 Agreement. If, this year, the AMPTP hears the same message from multiple TAG classifications, we can get them to realize it is now time to pay us all for our actual time. Write us at timingcommittee839@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

Christine Smith Ishimine and Ray Kosarin

Co-Chairs, TAG Timing Committee

Learn more about what timing professionals do here:

<https://keyframemagazine.org/2019/12/01/timing-is-everything/>

Don't miss out on Animation Guild events! Keep your contact information up-to-date and sign up for our email 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/>.



HELP WANTED!

The Memorial Committee is seeking a new audiovisual person to help plan and support the yearly Afternoon of Remembrance memorial event. Responsibilities include organizing and facilitating the display of images, names and video clips during the live and/or virtual event. If interested in volunteering, please email aor@tag839.org.



TAG Local 839 People of Color Committee's

FREE PORTFOLIO REVIEW DAY

Sunday, May 23rd, 2021

1PM-5PM via Zoom

Interested in volunteering?

sign up at bit.ly/tagportfoliovolunteer



Any questions? Please email
tagportfolioreview@gmail.com

IN MEMORIAM

Daniel De La Vega d. 1/3/21 – Daniel de la Vega enjoyed a long career as an animator, sheet timer, and animation timing director. While working for studios that included Hanna-Barbara, Filmation, Bakshi, Disney TV Animation, and more, his credits ranged from *Yogi's Space Race*, *Challenge of the Superfriends*, and *The New Scooby and Scrappy-Doo Show* to *She-Ra: Princess of Power* and *Dora the Explorer*.

Richard "Rick" Bowman d. 3/19/2021 – As an assistant animator and sheet timer at Hanna-Barbera, Marvel, Disney, and other studios, Rick Bowman worked on a wide range of shows, including *The World's Greatest Super Friends*, *Muppet Babies*, *Conan: The Adventurer*, *X-Men: The Animated Series*, and *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*. He was 69.

Edwin Aguilar d. 4/10/2021 – A character layout artist for *The Simpsons* for more than 20 years, Edwin Aguilar came to the United States from El Salvador when he was nine. After studying at ArtCenter and Bridges Visual Institute, he got his start at Graz Entertainment. Following stints at Hanna-Barbera and Warner Bros., he began drawing the iconic characters of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie. Aguilar also worked as an assistant director for many years on *The Simpsons*. He was 47.



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

EVERY FRIDAY, Noon to 12:30 p.m.

TAG Office Hours via Zoom – Reserve your spot: RSVP@tag839.org

APRIL

April 27th

TAG Tuesday

Wear your TAG T-shirt and share your solidarity on social media while we work at a distance—there is strength in numbers!

MAY

May 23rd, 1 to 5 p.m. via Zoom

TAG Portfolio Review Day

Sponsored by the People of Color Committee.

Questions? Email tagportfolioreview@gmail.com

May 25th, 7 p.m. via Zoom Webinar

Virtual General Membership Meeting

Register ahead of time to save your spot and receive a meeting link; watch your email account for details and instructions.

May 25th

TAG Tuesday

Wear your TAG T-shirt and share your solidarity on social media while we work at a distance—there is strength in numbers!

Check the full TAG calendar, including special events and committee meetings, at: <https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/calendar/>



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