



It's June, and for months now The Animation Guild has been deep in planning for our upcoming negotiations with the AMPTP. So what does that mean?

Our contracts: The Animation Guild has five major contracts (collective bargaining agreements, or CBAs) with employers—the major studios who fund and produce the projects we work on—and many individual agreements with smaller studios and producers, that are generally based on our Master Agreement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). These CBAs govern the minimum wages, hours, working conditions and benefits for our members who are employed at signatory studios.

Who we bargain with: The Guild and its parent union, the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE), negotiate with Walt Disney Animation Studios (TSL), Sony Pictures Animation (SPA), Nickelodeon and Warner Animation Group (WAG Pictures, Inc.). The AMPTP is a trade association that represents a number of American television and film

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the
animation
guild

IATSE LOCAL 839

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ILCA
International Labor Communications Association

production companies, including Cartoon Network Studios, Disney TVA, DreamWorks Animation and TVA, Fox Animation, Marvel Animation, Universal Animation, Walt Disney Pictures and Warner Bros. Animation, among others, and the collective bargaining agreement between them and The Animation Guild is known as our Master Agreement—this is “the contract” that we talk about the most. And it’s this Master Agreement, with the final year of its three-year term ending on July 31, 2021, that is coming up for renegotiation.

Who’s on our side: The IATSE is in our corner. The President of our parent union, Matthew D. Loeb, is currently working with IATSE Vice President Michael F. Miller (in charge of the West Coast Office and Director of the Motion Picture & Television Production Department) and the IA’s 13 Hollywood Locals to negotiate the Basic Agreement, which sets the pattern for our working conditions and our health and pension benefits. Turn the page to read an update about the Basic Agreement negotiations from our Business Representative, Steve Kaplan, who has been observing the bargaining sessions over the past few weeks.

Who sits at the table to bargain with the AMPTP: Steve Kaplan is our head negotiator; he has participated in Animation Guild negotiations since 2012. We always bring the Guild’s attorney with us to negotiations, and International Vice President Mike Miller has been there with us in the past, too, as he will again be this year. And who else is there? OUR MEMBERS! This year we have 45 active members on our Negotiations Committee, and since the beginning of the year they’ve been attending meetings every couple of weeks to discuss our union members’ needs and concerns, to craft proposals based on those needs and concerns, and to tear those proposals apart and put them back together so that they are ready to take to the bargaining table when the time comes. The committee also went through a weekend training course on collective bargaining, and most participate in ongoing sub-committee work to gather data and hone those proposals. These are your co-workers, and they’re dedicated to fighting for all of us when we meet with the AMPTP later this year.

Want to learn more? Read our Town Hall recaps for additional information about negotiations, strategies, and challenges at <https://animationguild.org/2021-negotiations-town-hall-meetings/>.

— **Paula Spence**
Pegboard Editor

FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATES

My last update regarding negotiations was in the April Pegboard, where I shared the current state of IATSE Canadian Motion Picture and Television negotiations, and the plan to begin negotiations for a successor IATSE-AMPTP “Hollywood” Basic Agreement. I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on what has transpired.

The IATSE Canadian Motion Picture and Television negotiations took place in Toronto and British Columbia. Those Locals faced difficult discussions with the AMPTP, who came with a corporate mandate for change that was in stark contrast to the Union’s demands for wage and working condition improvements. Those negotiations had to be extended in order to complete, which I understand will happen soon.

Here in the U.S, the Multi-Union Coalition and AMPTP have met to expand the Return To Work Agreement to continue to provide 10 days of pay for COVID-related illness, and included an adverse reaction to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine as a “COVID Sick Pay Eligible Event”. Thanks to the hard work of the Unions who bargained with the AMPTP for months, live-action production has been able to return to work as safely as possible, keeping the hard working people who make live-action productions employed during these unprecedented times. That agreement is scheduled to be renegotiated at the end of this month to make sure it addresses current COVID-19 infection levels and keeps production crews safe.

The IATSE and AMPTP began negotiations for a successor “Hollywood” Basic Agreement on May 17. The negotiations were scheduled to take two weeks, yet entered week number four on Monday, June 7. Again, the IATSE seeks to improve working conditions and benefits against a mandate from the corporate owners of the entertainment studios to reduce costs. While the two sides remain far apart, the IATSE has returned to continue to negotiate and address the Union’s priority issues.

The extended negotiations have pushed the IATSE-AMPTP Area Standards Agreement negotiations, and will likely force other negotiations that were scheduled after the Basic Agreement talks to later dates, including our negotiations. We currently do not have negotiation dates set. I assume we will be extending our current agreement and negotiating in August or September. We had a similar situation three years ago when the Basic Agreement talks took months longer than anticipated to complete.

The TAG Negotiations Committee has been meeting regularly to craft proposals that stem from issues brought up in our craft and community committees. The extended time will give the committee more opportunity to prepare for our negotiations.

On behalf of the committee, **I urge you to take our Negotiations Survey.** For a member who may not be as engaged with the Union, this is your opportunity to share your concerns with the committee and add your voice to ours as we go into negotiations. All active members in good standing who have not submitted a response to the survey should recently have received an email asking them to participate. If you have not received any messages about the survey, please email survey@tag839.org to let us know.

In Solidarity,

Steve Kaplan

Business Representative

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

steve.kaplan@tag839.org

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/>.

The following message was emailed to Animation Guild members on June 8, 2021



the animation guild

IATSE LOCAL 839

Dear TAG member,

The IATSE Basic Agreement negotiations are currently underway, with the 13 Hollywood Locals that make up the IATSE Bargaining Unit and the AMPTP entering the fourth week of negotiations. The Union and Employers originally scheduled two weeks for bargaining a new contract; however, extra time is needed to work through some of the most crucial issues. These delays will push the start date for The Animation Guild's negotiations later into the summer.

You might wonder, why does this matter to me? Doesn't The Animation Guild negotiate its own Collective Bargaining Agreement?

Yes, however our collective agreement references the Basic Agreement MPI provisions in order to provide that benefit to our members. Any changes to MPI made during the Basic Agreement negotiations will carry into ours through those negotiations. We do not directly negotiate changes to MPI.

One of the critical issues during the current IATSE Basic negotiations is the employers' position to increase cost sharing for the MPI Health Plan.

The IATSE is continuing to stand firm on its position to fund the Plans with streaming residuals and increased hourly and percentage contributions by the employers. These proposals are designed to fund our benefits over the long-term and in a sustainable manner without impacting the workers.

It is our hope that the IATSE Bargaining Unit and the AMPTP will be able to resolve their differences soon and agree on new terms and conditions that benefit workers. We will keep our members informed of news as it develops.

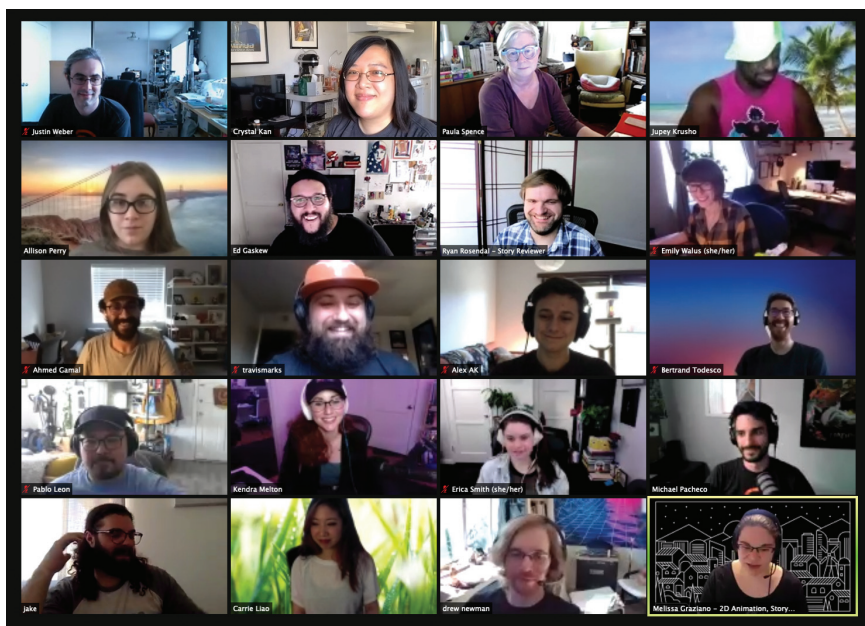
In Solidarity,

Steve Kaplan
Business Representative

Jeanette Moreno-King
Executive Board President

PORTFOLIO REVIEW SUCCESS!

Thanks to all our TAG members who volunteered for this year's Free Portfolio Review Day! This year we had a record-breaking 469 reviewees selected for the event, and 80+ TAG members who volunteered their time. Our reviewees came from all over the world, including Australia, India, Malaysia, South Africa and Italy. Despite last minute discoveries of Zoom's participant limitations and breaking the software halfway through the event, everyone who participated was gracious and forgiving of our technical hurdles. Special thanks to Crystal Kan, Jake Hollander and the People of Color Committee, who helped organize the event prior to the big day.



Pictured above are just 20 of the many Animation Guild members who volunteered their time on Sunday, May 23rd, to review the 469 selected portfolios.



RETURNING TO WORK: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

As we enter June, we're starting to receive outreach and notifications from a few studios about having staff, including TAG members, returning to the workplace.

It's important for TAG members to know that we are working with the studios to ensure your safety is the utmost importance. There are several rules and protocols in place to ensure a safe return and I wanted to share them with you:

1. **Hollywood Unions/Studios Agreement:** Last summer, the Hollywood unions and the producers/studios met to work out a "Return-to-Work" Agreement that created standards for safe productions. While most of the negotiations centered on safely returning to producing live-action TV and Film, The Animation Guild was part of these negotiations. Local 839, as it is referred in the agreement, is in a Zone for office staff – Zone D.
 - a. Summary of Unions/Studios Return-to-Work Agreement: <https://bit.ly/2TDnmRt>
 - b. Full Unions/Studios agreement: <https://bit.ly/3pvPy4T>
 - c. Update/Extension to the agreement as of April 2021: <https://bit.ly/34XoJgo>

Additionally, employers are to follow Los Angeles County Protocols established by the Department of Health to ensure safe working conditions in the pandemic. TAG members mostly fall under Office Spaces in these protocols but there are also some protocols for Music, Television and Film Production that may pertain. (See following links.)

2. **County Protocols for Office Spaces:** <https://bit.ly/3fZlaeC>
3. **County Protocols for Music, Television and Film Production:** <https://bit.ly/3v1rrfa>

In general, studios should have a Covid Compliance Officer who enforces the protocols and guidance by the city, county, state and federal governments. Additionally, those who contract Covid-19 or experience side effects of their vaccination can utilize the Covid Sick Pay agreement with the studios.

Additionally, staff should be spaced out safely. Some studios will have hybrid models where members are working from home and in the studio. There's a lot of "what if" questions we have—and you likely do as well—with a hybrid model.

First is the equipment. If you're using the studio's equipment at home and you're splitting time between the studio and home to do your work, what does that mean? Remember that our TAG contract has Article 4, Section H, which states the studio needs to provide you with the necessary tools and equipment if you're required to perform your work outside the studio. Similar language was put into the union and studios return-to-work agreement thanks to TAG's precedent.

Does the studio still pay a stipend? They should. California Labor Code Section 2802 indicates the employer must provide a stipend/reimbursement for costs associated with working from home, including internet, personal cell phone use and utilities. The costs of running a studio and production should not be put upon the employee. This doesn't change with a hybrid model. You should still receive a stipend. Employers paying healthy stipends to members may lower this weekly or monthly payment if your time is split between home and the studio.

We know that returning to the workplace may be stressful situation or a concern. The studios who have reached out to us so far have said current return to work plans are voluntary, not mandatory. If you're experiencing any anxiety about returning and you're having a hard time communicating this to you employer, please contact me at leslie.simmons@tag839.org.

If you've received communication from your employer about returning to work, send us the information to fieldrep@tag839.org. So far, most studios have contacted us but that doesn't mean all of them will. Providing this information to us will be very helpful in our representation of you and your colleagues!

Returning to work also means I'll be conducting field visits to check in with our TAG members working at the studios. I look forward to seeing you again in person! Just know that I'm fully vaccinated and will be taking COVID tests at the IATSE West Coast Offices prior to those visits.

In solidarity,

Leslie Simmons

Field Representative/Political Coordinator

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

leslie.simmons@tag839.org OR Call or Text: 747.238.0287

KEYFRAME MAGAZINE EXPANDS ITS ONLINE CONTENT

As The Animation Guild grows, its publications are growing with it—as a way to dive deeper into industry news and feature more of our talented members and the work they are doing. As part of this effort, Keyframe online has begun regularly publishing exclusive online content along with articles from the print magazine.

Online exclusives range in subject, from interviews with studios about trends in adult animated series to TAG’s partnership with the NAACP Pasadena to create vaccination awareness posters. Articles seek to spotlight members and their crafts, such as Q&As with Production Designer Paul Duncan about *Spirit Untamed* and Director Ryan Crego about *Arlo the Alligator Boy*, and a round-robin interview with Director Mike Rianda, Production Designer Lindsey Olivares, and Head of Story Guillermo Martinez about *The Mitchells vs. The Machines*. Member Mondays (which are also featured in This Week @ TAG) are now a weekly column, and regular Artist Spotlight interviews take an even closer look at members and their careers.



For “The Art of Adulting,” we investigated the forces driving the rapidly growing trend in adult animated series. (Collage by Studio Fuse. Images courtesy of Netflix, Cartoon Network, and Adult Swim.)

To suggest a story idea or submit your name for a Member Monday or Artist Spotlight, drop us a note at editor@tag839.org.

To read the above online exclusives and more, head to <https://keyframemagazine.org>.



Artist Spotlights shine the light on our members' career paths and achievements, as well as their personal artwork.



"Best Shot" featured the collaboration between TAG and the Pasadena NAACP to create posters and billboards promoting vaccinations to communities of color.

NOTES FROM A SHOP STEWARD

TYLER WHITE



THE HEALING POWER OF TIME

Feelings of selfishness hang over you, that you let them all down, that you did a bad thing and should be punished. You feel pretty good about that chocolate cake you ate in record time (it was divine after all), so what is causing this eternal weight on yourself? Walking into work you bow your head in shame entering the door and go to your desk hoping no one sees you and sarcastically thanks you for finally being there. “I should have been at work instead,” you think to yourself.

Has this ever happened to you? Hi, I’m Dr. Tyler White—specialist in cleaning up my dog’s vomit and cutting through the stranglehold American work culture has over our brains. Disclaimer—I am neither a doctor nor licensed in . . . anything, but hear me out, you are too hard on yourselves. Speaking as a queer person in the month of ~Pride~ one of the most valuable lessons I’ve learned that I like to pass onto people, is that at the end of the day, you have to take care of yourself first. You have to take time and step back from all the people you are with, all the labor you are doing, and ask yourself if you are protected, if you are safe and if you are healthy. It sounds like one of those silly affirmations you see on a poster that has a person with perfect teeth, they’re holding hands in the woods with their partner and all the words are in cursive for some reason—an abomination. But I promise you it is a learned skill that we must all work on. It is something most of us do not have the opportunity to learn while we are young, or even when we are adults; as we are constantly swimming in the pool of toxic American work culture. Perpetrated by people who sit high on wooden thrones, giving themselves bonuses you cannot satirize, all for work they did not do. You do not owe these people anything. You were not put on this Earth to toil away for profit margins.

Your sick days and your vacation days are there for you to use. They are the remnants of the long and constant struggle with the hand that feeds and you owe it to yourself to use the spoils of that war. It is perfectly okay to recognize that you are not physically sick, but mentally exhausted, burnt out, run down, and starved of your energy. Recuperating that energy is a valid and necessary use of your time. Just as you would recover from the flu, you need to recover from working 50+ hours a week. Not only do you need it, your family needs it, your pets need it, your friends need it, the sweater with the hole you've been neglecting to patch needs it.

You also cannot be punished in the state of California for taking sick time, and in some instances if the sickness falls under the ADA you don't even have to tell them why. It is important to define what it means to be sick for you so that you know when you are hitting your limits and need to reel it back in with an off day. Everybody is different.

It is important to always be on guard though, and know how you can be abused or bullied away from using your time. For example, at Dream-Works they allocate a total of twice your yearly accrual (accrual rate * 10 months) but do not pay out vacation once you hit your cap. Know how your studio allocates its vacation time, know how it rolls it over or if it doesn't. If you're ever concerned, confused, or uneasy about something you may always reach out to your studio Shop Steward, like myself—we are here as the ears of the union and your first line of defense. We also answer general questions, and I will always be available to talk about *The Last Jedi*, too!

When in practice, the act of putting yourself before your work in America is a radical notion and oftentimes looked down upon. But building a culture of safety for yourself and those around you is a vital step towards creating an ethical and fair workplace. When we are all in positions where we know we can rely on each other, that we know that the person—not the work—is seen as the most important, we become much stronger for that. It is up to us, as cohorts, dare I say comrades, within the Animation Guild to lift ourselves and each other up when those above us do not. Because when time is on our side, we have the power, and when we have the power, we win.

CELEBRATING GUILD FAMILIES



The Family and Membership (FAM) Committee is highlighting Guild parents in celebration of Mother’s Day (May), Father’s Day (June), and National Parents’ Day (July) 2021. This month, they chatted with Guild dad Kevin Kramer and his two sons, Myles (8) and Jack (5). Kevin is a two-time Emmy-nominated writer, story editor, creator, and occasional whittler whose credits include *Archibald’s Next Big Thing*, *Chowder*, *Harvey Beaks*, and *Scooby-Doo*. He is currently in development with Silvergate Media.

Conversation: Kevin on Childhood

As a kid, I had a routine after school: My 8-year-old self would hop off the school bus, make a bologna and cheese sandwich, and wait for *Tom & Jerry* to begin on our wooden, floor-console television. If I got home early, I’d sit on a stool and stare down the oven clock and watch the minutes tick down to showtime. I never thought I would one day write cartoons. Growing up in rural Ohio, surrounded by woods and creeks, many dawns and dusks and in-betweens were spent imagining storylines as I played outside. I’m convinced that I do what I do in animation because of that early exploratory freedom to create stories of all kinds. And I’m forever grateful to my parents for that gift.





Being a single dad raising two wild animals can sometimes be a challenge —though I’m reminded often of my own childhood and just how important storytelling and play really are. My boys and I explore the world and create together quite a bit, so I see first-hand how our adventures can feed and form growing minds. I even love talking shop with Myles and Jack—sometimes referring to them as “my own personal focus group,” bouncing ideas around with them for inspiration. It’s fun hearing their wacky ideas for a scene. Their input also keeps me in check and reminds me not to overthink things. It reminds me to ask myself, “Why not?” After all, the world of animation is limitless (I mean, depending on the budget, I suppose). Myles, who is now 8 himself, has come to understand quite a bit of animation jargon and will usually run up to me with a fun new idea or show concept... some of which are pretty darn good. I love what I do in the industry, but I’m mostly proud of being a father. I can’t wait to see what my boys create next. They’re currently in pre-production on an action comedy, starring our weirdo cat, Walnut.

Conversation: Kevin and Jack on Good Stories

Kevin: So Jack, what makes a good story?

Jack: (after much thought)... Grass. And a kitten. And a friendly robot. And a kitten house and a person house. And that’s it. That’s all you need.

Kevin: I like that. But what happens?

Jack: Nope. That’s it. The end.





Open JULY 1-23 Enrollment

Each year, the Motion Picture Industry Health Plan (MPIHP) holds an Open Enrollment period when a Participant can change his or her medical and/or dental plan election. If you are a COBRA Participant, you may add or remove dependents or switch between Core and Non-Core coverage during the Open Enrollment period.

If you do NOT need to make changes to your health coverage:

If you are not planning to make changes to your health coverage then you do not need to take further action. You do not need to complete any forms – your current coverage with MPIHP will remain in effect

If you would like to make changes to your health coverage:

If you would like to make changes to your health coverage, please download the required enrollment forms by visiting MPIHP's website at www.mpiphp.org and clicking on the Open Enrollment link.

You may request Open Enrollment information and forms be sent to you by emailing service@mpiphp.org or by calling (855) 275-4674.

Please complete and submit all of your Open Enrollment materials to MPIHP by July 23, 2021. Your new plan selection will be effective August 1, 2021.

However, if you are in the Retiree Health Plan, and are Medicare-eligible and choose to enroll in an HMO plan, you will have a later effective date.

Important!

If you are receiving the federal COBRA continuation coverage subsidy and would like to change your medical plan, please call MPIHP.

Questions

Please call MPIHP at (855) 275-4674 if you have any questions about Open Enrollment.





IN MEMORIAM

Sharon Potter d. 3/29/2021 – A Cel Painter credited under the name Sharon Thomas, Sharon Potter worked for Filimation, DePatie-Freleng, Hanna-Barbera, Don Bluth Entertainment, Warner Bros., and Disney. Her career spanned a range of TV series, from *Baggy Pants & the Nitwits* to *Spider-Woman*. She also worked as a Digital Cel Painter on the original *Space Jam*.

James “Jim” Stocks d. 3/31/2021 – Jim Stocks spent his career as a Xerox Processor and Cel Service at Filimation, Disney, Hanna-Barbera, Ruby-Spears, and Don Bluth Entertainment. His work included movies such as *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* and *The Little Mermaid*, and TV series including *Thundarr the Barbarian*, the original *She-Ra: Princess of Power*, and *BraveStarr*.

Marcia “Bunny” Munns d. 4/19/2021 – Bunny Munns worked at Hanna-Barbera, Ruby-Spears, DreamWorks and Warner Bros. She was a Color Key Artist and Color Stylist on TV series including the original *Ani-maniacs*, *Thundarr the Barbarian*, *Punky Brewster*, *Centurions*, *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, and *Pinky and the Brain*. Her career also included numerous TV movies and ABC Weekend Specials.

Mark Barrows d. 5/4/2021 – As an Assistant Effects Animator, Mark Barrows worked mainly on Walt Disney movies, including *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, *Hercules*, and *Tarzan*. His career also included time at Filimation, and additional feature credits such as the *BraveStarr* TV series and *The Simpsons Movie*.

Michael Edens d. 5/7/2021 – Writer and Story Editor Michael Edens began his career in animation on shows such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *The Real Ghostbusters*. His work for studios including Disney TV, Universal, Marvel, MGM, and Graz Entertainment encompassed the series *Beetlejuice*, *Exosquad*, *Spider-Man: The Animated Series*, *Nascar Racers*, *Mummies Alive!*, and many more.

William “Bill” Schaeffer d. 5/11/2021 – Bill Schaeffer spent his career as a digital rotoscope artist and paint artist, working on numerous live-action films and live-action/CG hybrids such as *Scooby-Doo* and *Flubber*.

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

JUNE

June 29th

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!

July

July 1-23rd

MPIHP Open Enrollment

July 5th (*Observed*)

Contract Holiday: Independence Day

July 25th

2021 IATSE District 2 Convention

July 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!

July 27th, 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.

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



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