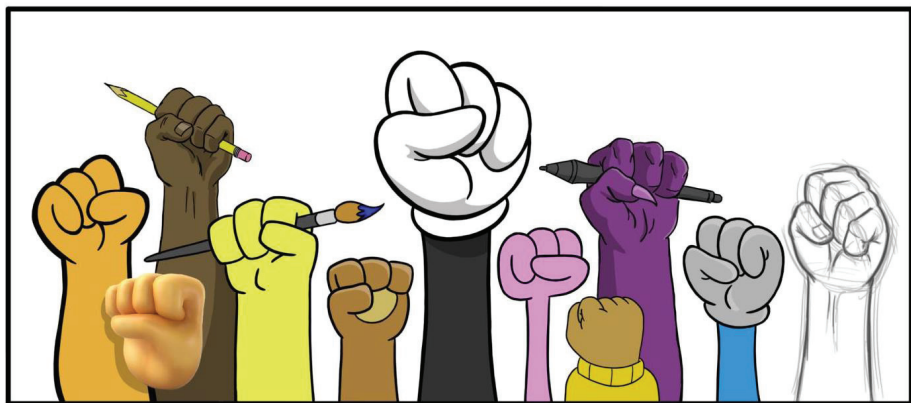


UNION



STRONG

There's a lot going on at The Animation Guild right now, and frankly my head is spinning. This issue of *The Pegboard* is delivering late because everyone who contributes by writing monthly articles has so much on their plates—when you're doing the work of running a labor union, it's hard to make time to sit down and write about it. But our writers always come through for us, sharing information and inspiration to engage our membership and bring us together as never before.

While this month's issue covers a range of topics, all hands at Local 839 are on deck for negotiations. Like all labor unions, The Animation Guild represents the collective interests of workers—in our case, those in the animation industry—and bargains with employers over wages, working conditions, and other concerns. Through collective bargaining, members of our Union negotiate contracts with our employers to determine terms of employment that include our pay and benefits, hours, leave, health and safety policies, and more.

Union Strong (continued on page 3)

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1105 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA 91505 • (818) 845-7500
www.animationguild.org • pegboard@tag839.org

PEGBOARD EDITOR Paula Spence	SHOP STEWARDS		
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Alexandra Drosu	Alternate Theory (Marvel) Joe Jones	Fox Animation Greg Colton Joie Foster	ShadowMachine Mira Lark Crowell Jeanette Moreno King Paula Spence
MANAGING EDITOR Kim Fay	Atomic Katya Bowser	Gaumont David DePasquale	The Simpsons KC Johnson Larry Smith
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So who at the Guild actually does this negotiating? WE do!

The Negotiations Committee at Local 839 is made up of over 40 members who have volunteered to put in the time it takes to represent their fellow members at the bargaining table. These members work among us—they come from all crafts and many different studios—and they are all involved because they see that they have the power to create change in an industry that needs it. Over the last year, committee members have given their time to:

- Learning how collective bargaining works through training with experts in the field of labor studies.
- Crafting surveys to determine members' needs and listening to them about their concerns and priorities.
- Reading through our contracts and finding ways to improve our terms of employment.
- Writing proposals and debating about them with the group to make sure that they are sound and meaningful.
- Sharing their knowledge and experience with fellow members through committee meetings, Town Hall events, and one-on-one conversations.

The collective bargaining process is complicated, and planning for negotiations takes time and continuous effort over the years. Frankly, most people don't have the time to think about how their contract works or how it can change for better or worse. And when union members aren't engaged in the process, those charged with negotiating don't have the power that an engaged and unified membership can have.

The good news is that changes in the way we communicate with members and bargain our contracts have been in the works for years at The Animation Guild. Many of the current members of the Guild's Negotiations Committee got more involved in union activities after we negotiated our last Master Collective Bargaining Agreement. They've been the ones to step up and start or join committees, which is where members can most easily find support and have a voice in this Union of nearly 6000 active members. And now they're ready to sit down at the bargaining table with the employers and tell them what we want.

— *Paula Spence, The Pegboard Editor*

FROM THE PRESIDENT JEANETTE MORENO KING



WHY I LOVE SPEAKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT OUR UNION

The next best thing to working in the animation industry is talking about it. Especially when it's to a group of eager, talented art students. They want to learn everything they can about how these shows are created and if there is a place for them in it.

We usually talk about the different jobs available and their hopes and ambitions. Eventually the questions become bigger, life choice questions. Such as, what does your work day entail? How secure are these jobs? What can I expect to earn? This is when I bring up the benefits of unionism. I share my personal journey and how our Union has been a stabilizing force in my life. Our Union has made it possible for me and my family to live a middle-class life.

I have had the opportunity to speak to students from all over the country. From CalArts to USC to Kansas City Art Institute and even a sixth-grade class in Memphis, Tennessee.

I most recently spoke to a class from my alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin. They run a fantastic program where students hoping to enter the entertainment industry spend a semester in Los Angeles, interning and making connections with working professionals. Our intern, Nicole Melendez, is a student in the UT in Los Angeles Program, and she has made good use of her time on *Little Demon* for FX. With Paula Spence (Local 839's Recording Secretary) as Art Director and me (Local 839's President) as Supervising Director, Nicole has not only been learning about how a primetime animated show is made, but also how our Union directly affects your work life.

It's important to the longevity of our Union that people hoping to work in the animation industry know that The Animation Guild is here, setting wage minimums and providing health and pension, as well as safe work environments. If they know their worth and their rights, they are less likely to be exploited, and that benefits us all.

In solidarity,

Jeanette Moreno King

President

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

jeanette.king@tag839.org



TAG President Jeanette Moreno King and a group of students from her alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin, met during the time the students spent a semester working as interns in Los Angeles.

FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

As I sat down to write this, the Basic Agreement and Area Standards Agreement Locals were facing another historic vote. The ratification vote for both agreements took place between Friday, November 12, and Sunday, November 14. The bargaining teams for both agreements saw advancements in all of their negotiation priorities and the establishment of conditions that have been sought in many previous negotiation cycles. The members had the opportunity to vote to ratify those changes and set the stage for the next round of negotiations in three years. This is one of the most beautiful parts of working in the Union with your peers, and one of the last truly democratic processes available to us.

On November 15, the IATSE released the results of the vote: the Basic and Area Standards Agreements were ratified, both by very narrow margins. The ratification vote followed the rules for IATSE officer elections wherein each Local is given a delegate vote count based on their membership totals reported to the IATSE. Each Local held a separate vote, and the majority of those votes decided how the Local cast its delegate vote count. IATSE President Loeb acknowledged that while the agreements have been ratified, there is work to do in the intervening period to both support and defend the new agreements and continue the engagement of the membership to ensure they have the opportunity to voice their concerns and be heard in preparation for the 2024-2028 negotiations.

This negotiation cycle saw an increased use of social media and virtual member engagement. These platforms have provided the ability to reach members in easier and more convenient ways, which resulted in larger engagement and participation. While the ratification vote did not show the same level of participation as the recent strike authorization vote (90%), the 76% of eligible members who did vote were part of a turnout that was higher than in any ratification vote in recent decades. I hope that this level of engagement continues. As President Loeb stated at the 2021 Quadrennial Convention: “Together We Rise.”

The terms and conditions of the agreement will take effect either immediately, or on dates specified in the agreement. Some of the discussion over the tentative agreements has shown that some members feel there was not enough achieved in negotiations.

The Animation Guild's negotiations are set for November 29 through December 2. The Negotiations Committee has done incredible work over the past year to create proposals to address concerns across crafts and committees. I look forward to bringing these proposals to the negotiation table with the committee, and working to achieve the strongest new agreement possible. I hope everyone will attend the General Membership Meeting on November 30 where we will share news of the first two days of negotiations.

Our mobilization effort has continued and shifted to mostly being run by engaged member-leaders in their crafts or studios. These efforts must continue to keep the membership connected to Guild leadership and to keep the most pressing issues at the forefront of our efforts. I look forward to moving the mobilization focus from negotiations in 2021 to negotiations in 2024 once we conclude and ratify our agreement, as our work never stops, and the agreement can always be made stronger and address more of our concerns.

In Solidarity,

Steve Kaplan

Business Representative

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

steve.kaplan@tag839.org

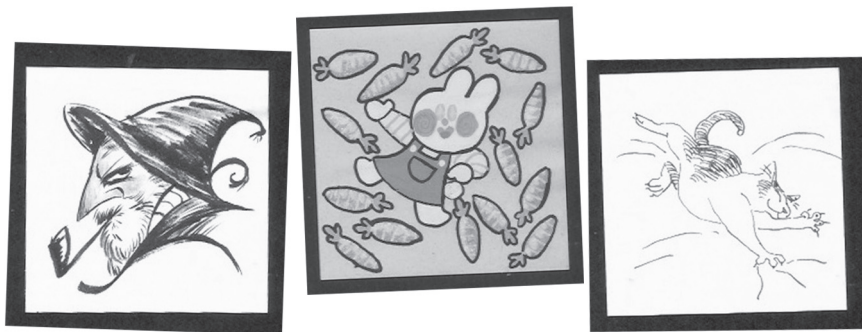
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FIELD REP CORNER

IT'S POST-IT NOTE SHOW TIME!

For the third year in a row, TAG's Political Action League Committee (PAL) hosted the annual Post-it Note Show & Auction. This is one among many unique fundraisers IATSE members across the country do for the IATSE Political Action Committee fund. You can learn more by going to IATSEPAC.net.

I wanted to focus on the Post-It Note Show for this column because it highlights the unique talents of our TAG members. The idea for the show came from the PAL committee throwing around ideas of how TAG artists can help the IATSE PAC. Why Post-its? Well, if you walk around any studio, you'll notice a plethora of Post-it Notes artwork. Some members have just a few Post-it doodles on their desks, while others adorn office doors and walls from top to bottom with them. As the committee discussed various ways of raising money for the PAC, the discussion turned to Post-it Notes and how the Guild could harness these mini-masterpieces into a full-on show and auction.



The first year of the show was in-person, and unfortunately due to COVID, we've had to hold the others online through Bidding Owl. But that hasn't stopped the high bids and interest. In fact, it's actually expanded interest to every IATSE member in the United States! Last year, we had winning bids from IATSE members across the country, and we're hoping to replicate those results this time around as well.



What's been added to the show this year has been more creativity from the membership. Trisha Butkowski, a CFX artist for DreamWorks Feature, said she wasn't really an artist and couldn't participate. But when she said she knits and does embroidery, the ideas just started to pop. And for the first time, we have two beautiful embroidered "Post-Its" available for bidding in the show!

Shop steward and master woodworker Drew Newman, an animator on Bob's Burgers at Bento Box, upped his contributions this year by creating one-of-a-kind wooden frames for his entries. Another Post-it Notes art!

This year, Experienced Workers Committee Co-Chair Bradley Rader, who each year contributes incredible installations with his Post-it Notes art, created multiple pop art Andy Warhol-style Post-its of famous experienced workers, including Spike Lee, Ed Asner, and labor leader Dolores Huerta.

Some TAG artists, including Candice Stephenson and Robert Mariazeta, took advantage of the extra Post-it Notes in each packet by creating layered artwork. At the "Drink and Draw" kick-off for this year's submissions at Golden Road Brewery, googly eyes were a theme among many of the submissions, including those of Yaron Farkash and Jonathan Peartree.



I am consistently impressed and in awe of the artistry of our members. To ask someone to create a unique piece of art on a 3" x 3" Post-it shows how truly gifted and creative TAG members are.

I just want to thank all the participants who contributed this year—and those who bid on the artwork. I also want to thank Recording Secretary Paula Spence, who donates her time and money to put together the hundreds of Post-it Notes show packets every year for members to pick up and return. And to the PAL Committee for creating such a unique event that is demonstrative of the talent of TAG.

And if you bid on any of the fantastic pieces in this year's show and won . . . congratulations!

In solidarity,

Leslie Simmons

Field Representative/Political Coordinator

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

leslie.simmons@tag839.org

Call or text: (747) 238-0287





Field Representative Leslie Simmons and members of TAG's Young Workers Committee walked as part of the "United LA Union" team at this year's WalkUnitedLA event at SoFi Stadium on November 6th. Pictured here are Leslie and TAG members Nora Meek, Jess Simms, Caroline Kane, and Andy Scherman.

STAFFING UP

This autumn is a season of transition for The Animation Guild. As Office Manager Lyn Mantta retires after 42 years, four new members join our full-time team. We want to welcome each of them, and until you have the chance to meet them in person, we have invited them to share a little bit about themselves.

Kristal Landa: *Finance Operations Manager*

Tell us about your job at TAG.

My role as Finance Operations Manager is to manage and oversee all membership financial matters including dues and payment plans, as well as the internal day-to-day functioning relating to finances for the Local.

How does your past work experience tie into your job now?

I owned and operated a bookkeeping business providing accounting services for small to medium-sized businesses and independent professionals. I enjoy helping people and keeping things organized, which along with my experience was a great fit for this new role!

What's your favorite cartoon or animated character and why?

I loved *Schoolhouse Rock* “Interjections!” as a kid. Then jumping ahead to when my daughter was growing up, *Adventure Time* was always on at home, and I quickly became a huge fan of Jake the Dog and bacon pancakes!!

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time?

Thrift shopping, vinyl record hunting, listening to music, bingeing shows, eating, laughing, and spending time with family and friends!



Leah Semiken: *Member Operations Manager*

Tell us about your job at TAG.

My role has a lot to do with assisting our members by getting them onboarded, placing their accounts on hold, and also reinstating them. I keep track of all the hiring and layoff information for members that comes to us from the studios. I also help answer questions about member benefits and other membership-related questions.

How does your past work experience tie into your job now?

My background up until this point has been working with professional associations. Before starting with TAG, I worked for the American Guild of Organists (AGO) as the Manager of Membership and Chapter Relations. So my experience is in membership—however, this is my first time working for a labor union.

What's your favorite cartoon or animated character and why?

My favorite animated character from childhood is Ariel from *The Little Mermaid*. I watched the movie so many times as a kid that I can still recite pretty much every line. Thanks to Ariel, I've been obsessed with mermaids and red hair ever since!

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time?

When I'm not working, I'm likely bingeing something interesting (and sometimes something not so interesting) on TV, riding my Peloton, chasing the perfect sunset photo at the beach, and spending time with my partner and friends.



Madison Robnett: *Administrative Assistant*

Tell us about your job at TAG.

I'm an administrative assistant to Kristal and Leah. Essentially, I help them with anything they need assistance with in order to lighten their workload and allow their jobs run as smoothly as possible.

How does your past work experience tie into your job now?

I worked (and still do) at a jewelry and art collective. This ties into the Guild because I am a lover of all forms of art, ranging from high-end jewelry to animation. I also work well with people and strive to help others seamlessly resolve issues.

What's your favorite cartoon or animated character and why?

It's really hard for me to pick a favorite cartoon because I love animation and still watch cartoons to this day. Cartoons have been comforting to me since I was a kid. It's a tradition in our home for us to watch *Scooby-Doo* every Sunday morning, so I would say that is a favorite of mine. Lately, we have had *Over the Garden Wall* on repeat.

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time?

Outside of the office, I am an artist. It's hard to define my role as an artist, though, because I do a little bit of everything: I enjoy painting, hand-sewing stuffed animals, making home-cooked meals, and everything in-between! I'm happy as long as I'm creating. I still work at a jewelry and art shop on the weekends to stay social and look at all the fun things!



Ken Roskos: *Administrative Assistant*

Tell us about your job at TAG.

I am now an Administrative Assistant. Currently, I work on filing, processing mail, and archiving documents. I also help prepare support and outreach materials for our members.

How does your past work experience tie into your job now?

In the past, I worked in feature, commercial, and TV animation. Later, I moved on to operating The Animation Guild computer lab to help our members with equipment and software issues. I also worked as an adjunct at Woodbury University's Department of Animation. So I have a solid background in traditional assistant and layout work, along with some experience in seeing how the animation business and new technologies have shaped our careers.

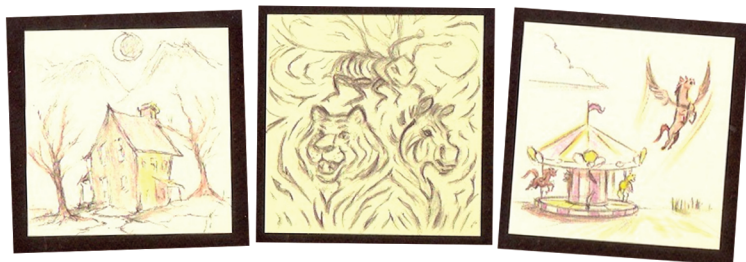


What's your favorite cartoon or animated character and why?

If push comes to shove, I'd have to say the original *Jonny Quest*. It had great stories and characters that dealt with adventure, science, and the current events of the time. And it didn't overtly talk down to the child audience.

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time?

Get outdoors, work on my art and stories, and try to keep up on media and technology as best as I can.



Ken created several pieces for this year's Post-it Notes Show & Auction.

STRIKING BACK TO WIN

By Ben Speight

Did somebody say “STRIKE”?!

TAG is soon to enter negotiations with the AMPTP, but all that everyone is talking about these days seems to be going on strike. Why is strike the “go-to” tactic when workers stand up to their employers? What would it take to actually win a strike?

There are few words more hyped, more slandered, more misunderstood, more maligned, or more celebrated in any language than the noun that means the mass refusal to perform work. To fully understand why this one word has such potency, you would have to review the entire history of workers’ asserting our fundamental right to withdraw our labor to advance our collective interests—a topic that space in this issue of *The Pegboard* does not permit.

If you are interested, however, in learning more about the importance of collective action in expanding democracy in the U.S. in particular, check out *A History of America in Ten Strikes*, by Erik Loomis. Below, I try to summarize why this word has such importance right now to TAG members and how you can collectively ensure the best outcomes for all in Local 839’s upcoming contract negotiations.

Strikewave 2021

Over the past few months, thousands of workers in the U.S. have voted to walk off the job. Millions more have voted with their feet by resigning from abusive workplaces or refusing to accept unsustainable, underpaid positions. Whether it’s the continuation of “Striketober” (Strikevember?) or the “Mass Resignation,” one thing is clear—working people are showing our collective power at work. With corporate profits at record highs and with 10 million job openings available for 7 million job seekers to pick from, now is the time for workers to demand more.

In the wake of the IATSE live-action members authorizing a strike, reaching a tentative agreement for the Basic contract, and entering the ratification process, the question before TAG's members is what you can do to maximize leverage for your own next contract and into the future. What can be done right now to greatly expand member participation to build leverage for the best possible contract for all TAG members?

Collective Action: Where to Start

If a person hasn't ever participated in any form of collective action, they aren't ready to participate in the highest level of collective action. That logic holds true for all important things, especially with group activities. We can't win without almost everyone impacted being engaged. As organizers, we ask people what changes they want to see in the workplace and then task them with ways to become invested in their own and collective priorities on the job. In this way, a good organizer meets a fellow worker "where they are at." Through these one-on-one assessments, the Union builds up its internal capacity before even considering deploying its highest risk and most important tactic.

It's about starting our current position and building up our organizational muscle. There are countless forms of small-scale collective actions that can build on each other toward larger collective actions and greater member participation. From button and t-shirt days like TAG Tuesdays, to petitions, "marches on the boss," "just practicing" informational pickets, "work to rule" tactics—the list goes on and is as creative as the workers themselves. Such low risk, high participation tactics are also a great way to evaluate the union's strength long before the question of the ultimate weapon is even discussed. It allows us to see what percentage of members actually participate—a number that is also watched by employers, who use it to evaluate our organization's strength at all times. A union's power and leverage is not in the amount of members it has paying dues, but in the percentage of members who actively participate in union actions.

Collective Action: Pitfalls

Poorly planned collective actions don't achieve high participation. They feel more like a protest than a movement. The same goes for so-called "spontaneous" one-off collective actions led by a group of the most outraged. Effective, mass collective action can't be an impulsive emotional response. It must be part of a strategy intended to build power and participation over time.

Learning from each member what their own priorities are ensures that everyone is more or less equally invested in a collective action before it's even launched. This is essential because group participation is essential. If we don't build consensus from the members, an action will fail and workers will lose. And the lesson workers will take away becomes a tragic irony: collective action doesn't work and we can't win. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This is the worst response a person can have to collective action in the workplace, because to reject collective action and its value to working people is to reject our power to come together and to advocate for our common interest. We can not afford to have a cynical or an ahistoric view of our own power.

Strikes are the Ultimate Union "Structure Test"

To cut through the hype of "strike talk" and defeat anti-strike fears, unions must be able to accurately evaluate the organization's current power. As we have seen with TAG's ongoing mobilization campaign, that means having multiple organizing conversations with every single co-worker that can be tracked down in-person, online, via phonebanks, and direct outreach. That methodical process is incredibly time consuming and resource intensive, but there is simply no substitute to being fully prepared for a strike.

Long-time union organizer and negotiator Jane McAlevey calls strikes the ultimate "Structure Test" for unions. As Jane points out, long before the use of the ultimate weapon, unions should engage in escalating forms of structure tests to gauge current participation first. In her book *No Short Cuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age*, she notes that a union is not "strike ready" without having successfully performed multiple structure tests that demonstrate almost unanimous consensus among the impacted members.

Strikes require more than a “militant minority” of the most pro-union activists to win. They require much more than a simple majority. They even require more than a supermajority. In order to be effective, they require more than 90+ percent support and active participation from the workers in any bargaining unit or workplace. It requires widespread support from the community. It requires immense resources. In order to strengthen a membership and then actually sustain a real, open-ended mass strike, constant internal Structure Tests are essential. They evaluate where membership is strong and where it is weak, and they offer opportunities to maximize member participation in every shop or studio on every show throughout the entire union in an ongoing process of union building.

Collective Action Gets the Goods

The creation of every single labor union came about through some form of mass collective action—primarily through strikes. This is our origin story: without exception, strikes created our leverage to even exist. Workers either confronted their boss in the workplace or out in the streets. The results were some of the most important events in advancing equality and democracy in modern history. Unions would do well to reclaim that legacy of collective action as not just a point of past pride but a guide to how we can rebuild our power into the future.

Strikes don’t always work, though. Just because our cause is righteous does not mean we automatically prevail. In fact, an ill-prepared, poorly organized strike often leads to far worse consequences than just maintaining the status quo. That history of lost strikes has tainted the way even working people and union leaders view this tactic to this day. Decades of pushback from employers and their allies in government have so disparaged the legacy of strikes that many workers have forgotten how strikes remain central to creating a more democratic society.

Strikes shouldn’t be scary. But in order to understand how workers can and should use this ultimate weapon, we should be grounded in the immense organizing work it takes to be truly “strike ready” when it matters the most. As the saying goes, “failing to plan, is planning to fail”. In that case, let’s get and keep TAG ready.

READY, SET . . . DRINK & DRAW!

By Erica Smith

The first Virtual TAG Drink & Draw was held on October 28th at 7 p.m. About 25 members showed, and honestly, it was lovely. We were spread out over three virtual rooms on the TAG Discord, and members popped in and out, chatting and drawing, playing games, cracking jokes, and talking about their lives. As someone who got involved with TAG during quarantine, it was so refreshing to finally be able to speak with some of the members that I've grown familiar with over the past year—along with new folx that I did not know before.

There were very few times during quarantine where I got to meet someone new. Not just formal greetings and polite conversations in work meetings, but actually get to talk with someone and learn about *them*. I'm don't know if this little Drink & Draw event had any kind of resounding impact on anyone else who attended, but for me it really was a healthy spoonful of humanity that quenched a part of me I've been forced to ignore during this difficult time. Ultimately, that's something I really want to bring back to TAG.

I want to help create safe events where people can connect, listen, share, and engage with no strings attached. I want to meet people where they are at, find out what their interests are, listen to their troubles, and help them if I can. As a young member, I feel out of place in certain situations because I am still learning how a union runs and works, but one thing I know I can do is find out what people are interested in and foster opportunities where we can all come together and just be people.

Erica hopes to host both regularly scheduled and one-off Discord events that cover a range of interests. If you have suggestions for casual get-togethers, (recent requests include a virtual Dungeons & Dragons campaign and a virtual game night), you can connect with her at smith.n.eric@gmail.com.

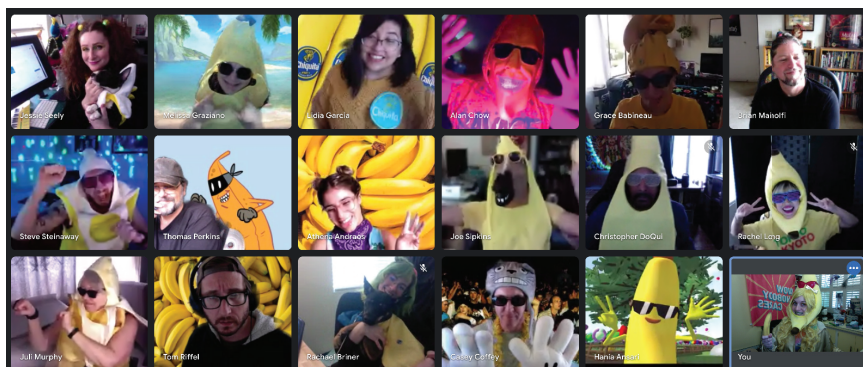


COMING ATTRACTIONS

When the winter issue of *Keyframe* lands in your inbox or mailbox, you'll find helpful articles about navigating the tricky road of being in charge. Along with a feature on the art of delegation, TAG member and Supervising Director Ashley Long has written about what she calls Big Boss Energy.

“People want to work somewhere they feel genuinely cared about,” she writes. “That is an element I personally feel is essential to great team management.” So what does caring for your crew look like? Ashley answers this with practical tips for fostering a respectful, inclusive work environment.

The next issue—which has an exciting interactive cover and interior images—also includes a feature article on dance in animation, a profile of veteran animator Eric Goldberg, highlights from this year’s virtual holiday market, and more.



Ashley Long and her crew vote on costume themes for each Friday leading up to Halloween and dress up weekly to enjoy the whole month. They started this the last year they were in-house and continued the tradition over Zoom.

IN MEMORIAM

Julie Benenati 8/11/1969 to 7/28/2021 – Julie Benenati’s career as an Animation Checker at Cartoon Network included many of the studio’s iconic shows, such as *The Powerpuff Girls*, *Samurai Jack*, *Close Enough*, *Victor and Valentino*, and *Craig of the Creek*. She was 51.

Marion Wells 4/1/1948 to 9/9/2021 – Writer Marion Wells penned scripts for Hanna-Barbera, Walt Disney, and Marvel. Among her credits are *Quack Pack*, *Goof Troop*, *Darkwing Duck*, and *A Goofy Movie*. She was 72.

Lewis “Lew” Ott 4/23/1927 to 10/16/21 – Lewis Ott worked as a Layout Artist and Model Designer for studios including Hanna-Barbera, Filmation, and Marvel. His prolific career encompassed Scooby-Doo, Flintstones, and Yogi Bear specials, as well as numerous shows such as *She-Ra-Princess of Power*, *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, and *Fantastic Four*. He was 94.

Sean Gallimore 8/21/1965 to 10/20/2021 – Sean Gallimore worked as a Clean-Up Animator for Disney, Warner Bros., and DreamWorks. His credits also include Key Assistant Animator on movies including *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*, *Fantasia 2000*, and *Tarzan*. He was 56.



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

NOVEMBER

November 25th & 26th

Contract Holidays: THANKSGIVING

November 30th

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!

November 30th, 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.

DECEMBER

December 24th

Contract Holiday: CHRISTMAS

December 28th

TAG Tuesday

Wear your TAG T-shirt and share your solidarity on social media while we work at a distance—together we rise!

December 31st

Contract Holiday: NEW YEAR'S DAY

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



The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839
1105 N. Hollywood Way
Burbank, CA 91505-2528



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