

BEST OF THE PEGBOARD 2021

Yet another year has flown by and with it highs and lows. On the low side, the pandemic is still with us. On the high side, it didn't stop us from showing our might in our fight for better working conditions and benefits! Through it all, The Pegboard kept our TAG members up to date. Here are a few highlights from the past 12 months' articles.

January — As always, we began the year by honoring those industry members we lost at the Afternoon of Remembrance. For the hard work of those TAG members who have gone before us, it was especially moving to welcome labor-friendly President Biden, who would go on in March to appoint a top union leader, Marty Walsh, as Secretary of Labor. Closer to home we started Call the Hall, a way to track members' positions and projects they're working on so we can advocate for better contract terms.

February — Among this month's highlights was our volunteer Negotiations Committee members completing their training. They began monthly meetings to craft proposals and plans—based on TAG member input—for negotiations with the AMPTP.

March — TAG members shared their expertise, with Kristin Donner and Megan Kreiner playing a key role in a Neurodiversity Panel hosted by the Editors Guild, while Nicole Chen spearheaded a collaboration with the Pasadena NAACP for a public vaccination campaign. At the General Membership Meeting, we nominated our TAG delegates for the convention, and on a national level the Democrat-led House of Representatives approved the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.

April — With COVID-19 vaccinations widely available, we began to heave a sigh of relief. Meanwhile, The Pegboard business as usual included Annie Award nominations (congrats to all of our winning members!) and an introduction to [Keyframe online's Member Monday](#) Q&As spotlighting TAG members. Up in Canada, the negotiations cycle began to establish their first animation union.

May — In true union fashion, TAG members participated in L.A.'s May Day march. And events continued throughout the month with an Animation Show-

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runners' Panel and our annual (virtual once again) Portfolio Review Day—a huge success with hundreds of submissions.

June — Negotiations ruled The Pegboard news with updates on Canada and the Basic Agreement, and a negotiations survey to give every TAG member a voice at this year's bargaining table. The Return to Work agreement was also a hot topic, and members heard more about Keyframe's expansion of [*exclusive online content*](#) to bring greater attention to our talented TAG artists.

July — A new COVID surge put a damper on things, but that didn't slow us down. TAG delegates brought resolutions to the (virtual) 69th IATSE Quadrennial Convention, and we welcomed TAG Field Organizer Ben Speight. With an eye on the future, our Worker Action Readiness Planning (WARP) Committee introduced the Relief and Defense (RAD) Fund to help support workers when needed.

August — Lots happened this month as we navigated the possibility of vaccine mandates, participated in a “No on the Recall” for Governor Newsom campaign, and caught up on our TAG member delegate activism at the Quadrennial Convention. Our TAG staff grew yet again as we welcomed Member Programs Coordinator Jackie Huang.

September — TAG talent took center stage as we put out calls for our Back-to-School Draw-Along held in October and annual Post-it Notes Show in November. On a more serious note, we prepared for an IATSE-AMPTP showdown and the possibility of an IATSE strike authorization vote. And even though COVID continued to keep us at home, TAG members found ways to reach out by phone and text as we began concerted efforts for one-on-one conversations for organizing and mobilizing.

October — Our mobilization efforts amped up with the formation of the TAG Tactical Action Group—yep, TAG TAG! Our amazing members leaped into action with one-on-one conversations, forging personal connections between membership and other locals as we supported our IATSE kin. We hosted Town Halls with record attendance, and we had record numbers of members actively mobilizing as the Hollywood IATSE Locals approved a strike authorization vote, followed by an agreement with the AMPTP. We also wrapped up a major era in TAG history with the retirement of Office Manager Lyn Manta after 42 years of service.

November — The IATSE Basic Agreement was ratified, but with our own TAG negotiations looming member activism continued to surge. Our TAG TAG team stayed in motion, galvanizing membership, and our TAG staff expanded exponentially with the addition of Financial Operations Manager Kristal Landa, Member Operations Manager Leah Semiken, and Administrative Assistants Madison Robnett and Ken Roskos.

December — Turn the page for our final issue of 2021, faithful reader!

FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



HAPPY DECEMBER, ALL!

In keeping with my ongoing negotiations updates, I wanted to share some news about our recent bargaining sessions with the studios. The Animation Guild's 2021 Negotiations Committee, accompanied by TAG representatives Ben Speight and Leslie Simmons, TAG legal counsel Michael Feinberg, and IATSE Vice President and Motion Picture & Television Department Director, Michael F. Miller, Jr. met with representatives of the studios and their bargaining agent, the AMPTP, for five days starting Monday, November 29.

I am proud to say that the negotiations committee is a representative body of our membership that volunteered to participate after my request for volunteers at the September 2020 General Membership Meeting. The committee has worked for over a year to bring proposals that address member concerns and industry issues that have been identified by our craft and community committees. Committee leaders wrote proposals to address those concerns and correct issues affecting our members, and then brought the proposals back to their committees and groups to work through the nuts and bolts, to refine language, and in some cases to create presentations that were brought to the bargaining table to illuminate and explain the changes we are seeking to make.

During the discussions, the Union explained our proposals, identified our priority concerns, and gave our arguments in support of key proposals in the form of presentations made by the committee representatives who helped to author them. Unfortunately, the five days did not provide us with enough time to reach an agreement, and the studios have indicated they can only resume negotiations in 2022. As of now, we do not have new dates but expect to meet with them again in late January or early February.

The level of member activism during this negotiations cycle has been seen and felt, not only by our own membership, but also by the employers. The AMPTP has noticed our increased level of engagement and

preparedness, and has voiced their desire to reach a successor agreement. It is clear, however, that more time is needed in order to reach an agreement that our Negotiations Committee can bring to the membership and recommend for ratification.

As we briefly pause the negotiations and prepare to enjoy the holidays, we must keep in mind that heightened member engagement is essential to showing our unified strength at the negotiations table, and continued outreach by our TAG Tactical Action Group of volunteer member mobilizers is no small part of how we are able to achieve that. If you receive a call from a mobilizer, please take the opportunity to have your voice heard by answering a few questions and sharing your thoughts and concerns. You can also help the effort by joining the mobilization team!

The mobilization effort is not just about negotiations! We must continue to build member engagement and solidarity if we want to build our strength! There are a number of initiatives that need our focus, and the mobilization team is the best way to engage the members on these issues. The mobilization team is made up of member volunteers who dedicate time during the week to reach out to other members. The larger the mobilizing group, the easier it becomes to reach as many members as is possible. “Many hands make light work,” so if you have the time and inclination, please consider joining the mobilization team. You can find out more by emailing mobilize@tag839.org.

A town hall meeting to update members on negotiations will take place on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. Watch your email for details or register now at <https://tinyurl.com/TAGTownHallJan11>.

Enjoy the rest of the holiday season! Please adhere to the safety guidelines set by the city and state in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. If you haven’t done so yet, please get vaccinated or boosted to maximize your immunity to being infected and to protect you from suffering the worst effects of the COVID-19 virus.

I hope you have a fantastic, relaxing, and healthy holiday season.

In Solidarity,

Steve Kaplan

Business Representative

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

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KNOW YOUR TAG CONTRACT: OVERTIME PROVISIONS FOR “ON-CALL” EMPLOYEES

There are several areas of the TAG Master Agreement that cover overtime that many members—and studios for that matter—are unfamiliar with. We often receive inquiries from members who are unsure whether they qualify for overtime. Usually this is because they work on a weekly salary and are classified as “on-call.”

Regardless of whether a member is paid weekly or hourly, on-call or not, they may receive overtime based on certain provisions in the TAG contract. This column will highlight provisions for members who are classified as on-call. I encourage members to read the contract and their deal memo, hiring paperwork, or personal service agreement to fully understand where they may fall under its terms and conditions.

The TAG agreement is available online on the contracts page in PDF form here: <https://animationguild.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2018-2021-L839-Master-CBA-Book.pdf>

Article 4: Wage Scales, Hours of Employment, and Working Conditions

Under this section of the TAG agreement, the subject of overtime for “on-call” members is addressed in Article 4(B). On-call employees are defined as those considered “exempt” per federal guidelines. You can read more about who is considered an exempt employee here: <https://www.flssa.com/coverage.html>

There is additional information on the TAG website about on-call employees: <https://animationguild.org/what-does-on-call-mean/>

TAG members who are exempt employees and are paid at least 10% above the minimum Journey rate in their classification may be considered on-call. Being on-call is something that is mutually agreeable between the studio/producer and the member—per the contract. When a member is on-call, they receive a weekly salary. While daily overtime doesn’t apply, they can receive overtime if they work a sixth or seventh day, such as Saturday and/or Sunday.

If an on-call employee works a weekend day or both days, Article 4(B) states that the member is paid for the “sixth or seventh workday.” The rate paid is one and one-half (1 ½) times one-fifth (1/5) of the minimum basic weekly rate for their classification. It’s a mind-numbing formula for some, so let’s break it down with an example!

- If you were classified as on-call Production Board Journey, the current minimum weekly rate is \$2373.60. But for on-call, there is a 10% increase in pay, so the minimum rate is \$2610.96.
- Divide that rate by 5 (to get 1/5) and that equals \$522.19.
- Multiply \$522.19 by 1.5 (1 ½) and that equals \$783.29 (rounded up). That is the overtime rate for on-call Production Board for a sixth and/or seventh day. If an on-call Production Board artist works both a 6th and 7th day, that’s \$1566.58.

It’s important to note the language in this section regarding hours reported to MPI. As hours are not counted when working on-call, the whole day is reported as eight hours.

This benefit in the TAG Master Agreement is unique. Many employers provide no additional pay for their exempt, salaried, and/or on-call employees if they’re required to work additional days beyond a standard five-day work week. It’s just another example of how the TAG Master Agreement works for you!

In solidarity,

Leslie Simmons

Field Representative/Political Coordinator

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Call or text: (747) 238-0287

NATIONALIZING TAG: NOT IF, BUT WHEN

By Ben Speight

For years, The Animation Guild has faced the same perennial and existential questions: When will TAG go national? Why isn't TAG a national union? Why are artists, writers, and others only eligible to be TAG members in L.A. County but are stripped of union coverage the moment they step foot to work outside of L.A.? Why is it accepted as a norm that the only way to achieve a decent standard of living while working in this industry is to move, live, and remain working in L.A. County for an entire career? How is that sustainable?

Asked a dozen different ways, the inquiry wasn't just rhetorical. It came from the daily experience of TAG members themselves once moving across the country to Los Angeles to pursue their professional dream only to arrive and confront the reality of a now global animation industry.

First, what got us here?

The source of the problem is right there at the very beginning of the current master agreement between TAG and the AMPTP. In Article 1 “Scope,” the contract defines and limits the jurisdiction of the union via the use of the geographical boundary of L.A. County. Known as a “geo-fence” in labor relations, this provision restricts TAG representation to only those working in L.A. County or assigned work by the employer, at its discretion, outside of the county. To be eligible to join TAG, gain the full rights of a union member, and access all the benefits it affords, an animation worker is required to both be hired in L.A. County and reside within L.A. County.

For decades, this “geo-fence” around the rights of animation workers made a lot of sense. For TAG's entire history, the studios relied heavily on brick-and-mortar studios that were founded and located specifically to access the concentrated talent pool of artists, writers, and other creatives in and around Hollywood. Both parties in negotiations then recognized the practicality of geo-fence language at the time. For the Union, L.A.-

based animation workers were ensuring that their hard fought-for standards would not be undercut by artists in other parts of the U.S. who had not yet organized and therefore received much lower wages and inferior working conditions. For the employers, a global workforce was technologically and logistically untenable; better to have a production pipeline within the confines of a single ZIP code if possible.

Clearly, ahem, times have changed. Yet, the “geo-fence” persists.

As animation has grown throughout the world, tax incentives have birthed studios in places from Vancouver, B.C. to Atlanta, GA. The growth of animation outside of L.A. County has been apparent for years to everyone in the industry. It’s become even more of a reality for TAG members during this pandemic. As members leave L.A. to return to their home states, follow their partners and families, or just move for a different quality of life, many have maintained their employment with TAG signatory studios. In other cases, they’re artists who’ve always lived on the East Coast or other places in country while being employed remotely by signatory studios at a non-union status. More and more, TAG members’ co-workers are not covered by the TAG agreement. The studios know that very well and, increasingly, it is in their interests to see the disparity grow.

Even if the scope of the TAG contract is stuck in a long-gone era, the animation production process itself could not be more advanced. TAG members are part of an ever-expanding global labor supply chain of animation work done around the clock from L.A. to New York, from Austin to Korea, over to Australia and back.

Why are studios so invested in having both a nationwide and global production process? Because they know too well they can take advantage of the structural inequalities that exist across labor markets. For example, according to TAG’s own research, the average wages of an Atlanta animator are 50% of what an average L.A. animator makes. This does not include benefits. Studios have an obvious economic incentive to expand the production processes wherever and whenever they can pay somebody drastically less than what a TAG member is making for essentially the same work. And on top of that, they offer them zero or very limited health coverage and retirement benefits, and absolutely no job security.

If you're a TAG signatory studio executive, why wouldn't you want to move production outside of L.A. County? TAG members know very well that one of the reasons for this is that the talent and the skill sets of L.A. artists and writers remain the gold standard around the world. The studios rely on people remaining in L.A. County to support, through their labor, the primary infrastructure of the animation industry, which still remains very much within L.A. County. How long that will continue to be the case remains to be seen. But what we do know is that there are animation studios from New York to Atlanta and many other places with remote co-workers who are scattered in rural parts of the country and cities alike.

TAG has a historic opportunity to answer the question that members have been asking for years. When will TAG become a national union? The answer is: We're doing it right now. Animation workers throughout the United States are in contact with The Animation Guild in Burbank to begin the process of organizing their non-union studios and to raise standards in their own animation hubs. TAG is also developing a network of remote co-workers at TAG signatory studios, from former Local 839 members to staff hired to work remotely from the start.

If you are in contact with any non-union animation worker anywhere in the United States, and they want to have a voice on the job about their pay, working conditions, and benefits, encourage them to contact organize@tag839.org. If you are a TAG member who wants to support external organizing outside of L.A. County, reach out to TAG organizer Ben Speight at ben.speight@tag839.org.

Imagine the power that TAG can generate for its membership in L.A. County when we raise standards for animation workers wherever they are.

Registration for the next Negotiations Update & Town Hall here:

<https://tinyurl.com/TAGTownHallJan11>



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/>.

2021 POST IT NOTE SHOW A HUGE SUCCESS!

For the third year, The Animation Guild’s Political Action League Committee hosted it’s annual Post-it Note Show featuring submissions from the Guild’s talented members.

When the show launched in 2019 as an in-person auction, 237 submissions raised \$1,915 for the IATSE PAC. The following year, the pandemic required the event’s planner Field Rep and Political Coordinator Leslie Simmons to come up with a creative solution. The Post-it Note show was turned into a virtual auction on the Bidding Owl platform. Though the show featured only 86 submissions, we raised the substantial amount of \$1,791.50 thanks in part to inviting IATSE members from across the U.S. to participate in the auction.

This year, the Post-it Note show topped all expectations with 206 submissions raising \$4,627 for the IATSE PAC. The top five winning bids included:

1. “Pumpkin Pie” by Will Patrick
2. “Spike Lee – Experienced Worker” by Bradley Rader
3. “The Seasons” by Candice Stephenson
4. “Remember to Stretch” by Janice Chun
5. “Unlucky” by Danny Ducker



Several TAG members showed their creativity with additions like the mini frames crafted by Drew Newman and embroidered Post-its hand-made by Trisha Butkowski.

Thank you to all of the TAG members who took the time to create and submit artwork for the show. Additional applause to all our members who bid on these unique artistic pieces.

To learn more about and donate to the PAC, visit www.iatsepac.net.

Reprinted from the TAG news page:
<https://animationguild.org/2021-post-it-note-show/>

AFTERNOON OF REMEMBRANCE HELP WANTED

The Memorial Committee seeks an AudioVisual Coordinator experienced in preparing Keynote or Power Point Presentations to work with us on the upcoming Afternoon of Remembrance, which honors animation industry colleagues who have passed away during the previous year. The Event will be taking place on February 5, 2022 via Zoom.

Light video editing skills, good organization, and an interest in respectfully honoring those who have come before are required and appreciated.

This is a short term PAID volunteer position. Estimated hours needed: 40-45. Please email AOR@tag839.org for more information.



IN MEMORIAM

Noreen Beasley 2/9/1939 to 7/22/2021 — A Layout, Design, and Breakdown Artist, Noreen Beasley worked at Disney Feature, Warner Bros., and Hanna-Barbera. Her credits are many and eclectic, from movies like *The Rescuers Down Under* and *The Lion King* to TV shows including *Centurions* and *The Completely Mental Misadventures of Ed Grimley*. She was 82.

Myrna Gibbs 1/1/1937 to 9/28/2021 — Myrna Gibbs enjoyed a long career as an Inker and Painter. She worked at Hanna-Barbera, Warner Bros., Filmation, and Marvel on movies and numerous iconic TV series, including *The Flintstones*, *The Pink Panther Show*, and *The Transformers*. She was 84.

Marlene Robinson-May 2/6/1937 to 10/22/2021 — Animator and Timing Director got her start at Disney in the 1950s. She worked at studios including Universal, Warner Bros., Filmation, and Hanna-Barbera, and was known for her mentorship. She worked on classics like *The Jetsons* and *The Flintstones*, numerous Chuck Jones' specials, and a range of series, from *The Addams Family* to *Thomas & Friends*. She was 84.

Virginia Sherwood 9/14/1946 to 10/22/2021 — A background and model designer, Virginia Sherwood worked for Film Roman and Fox Animation. She was 75.

Chris Duncan 5/13/1963 to 11/10/2021 — Background Designer and Matte Painter Chris Duncan worked at Bento Box, Nickelodeon, Marvel, and Warner Bros. Among his TV credits are *The Great North*, *HouseBroken*, and *Guardians of the Galaxy*. He also worked on the *DC Super Hero Girls* series and videos, and *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie*. He was 58.

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

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

JANUARY

January 11th

Virtual Negotiations Update & Town Hall

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/TAGTownHallJan11>

January 17th

Contract Holiday: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

(Nickelodeon and DreamWorks only)

January 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!

January 25th, 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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