



It's been three long years since the pandemic shut down our lives in L.A. and around the world. Not only did everyone start working from home, but all social life withdrew to the isolating land of Zoom. We've had to reshape how to live, work, and socialize, but rather than bow down, TAG is more connected than ever.

The past six months have seen TAG members interacting—in-person!—for so many exciting reasons. Gallery 839 has its groove back, and we've been hosting gallery openings on the first Thursday of each month since the end of last year. In just that brief time, we've showcased the range of our history and talents, from the works of legendary Disney animator Walt Peregoy to mixed-media exhibitions by our Queer TAG Committee and Black Artists Group to shows from contemporary members including Kathy Zielinski, Umaimah Damakka, and Jiny He. Learn more about Gallery 839 at [animationguild.org/gallery839/](https://animationguild.org/gallery839/).

*We're Back, Baby!* (continued on page 3)

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Members also had the chance to mingle at our first post-pandemic mixer at Golden Road Brewery in February—the response was so positive that we maxed out and needed a waiting list. Of course, that means we'll have another mixer coming soon! Plus, several committees are hosting Drink & Draws at local pubs to connect and discuss TAG-related issues. We share the dates through email and on Discord. Not on Discord? Email [committee-comms@tag839.org](mailto:committee-comms@tag839.org) to get an invite link.

What the past months have shown is that TAG members want to not only spend time with one another in person, but they also want to uplift each other. On April 3, TAG leadership and Disney's TAG members joined a crowd of Disney production workers at the Disney lot for a lunchtime Solidarity Walk. More than 100 people walked in partnership with a lead team that delivered a petition with more than 18,000 signatures of support to Disney labor relations. It was energizing to see the resilience of the production workers as they fight to be a part of TAG, and it was inspiring to hear TAG members speak out in support of their colleagues.

We have also hosted our first in-person panel event since the start of the pandemic. On April 5, Branding Expert Goldie Chan moderated a conversation with TAG members Jorge R. Gutiérrez, Kelly Lynne D'Angelo, and Bill Robinson about personal branding to an enthusiastic audience in Hullett Hall. Taking time from their busy schedules, these three TAG members volunteered to share their experience and insights on how to brand yourself to grow your career. After an appreciative Q&A, Chan gave everyone in the room a homework assignment—to be completed before they left. She instructed each person to meet two new people.

It was exhilarating to watch members introduce themselves to one another, and to literally see connections being made in that room. The conversations were so lively and intense that we had to flicker the lights more than once to bring the evening to a close.

TAG is more than simply a labor union. It's a community—growing both in numbers and in engagement. We're just four months in to 2023, and as the upcoming year brings more opportunities to spend time together in person, we look forward to the many ways these connections will make us stronger.

# FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



## SPRING IS IN THE AIR

Spring is in the air, and much is changing for the animation industry and for us as TAG members.

We held our first in-person membership mixer event in a long time in February. We reserved space at Golden Road Brewery, which quickly was filled with members who were eager to meet and mingle. While the weather that evening forced us to move inside due to the threat of rain and colder temperatures, we aren't facing those challenges now. We are looking to set our next event soon, and aim to find a space and time where we can accommodate more people and activities!

I am proud to share that we have added another Field Representative to the staff! Leslie Simmons has been a one-woman army tackling a mix of contract questions through our Member Help Form (<https://tinyurl.com/MemberHelpForm>) and general membership questions through calls we receive at the Local, as well as keeping up with political matters that affect TAG and IATSE members through her role as Political Coordinator. She will be getting some much needed support from Eva Nevarez. Eva comes to TAG with years of experience representing union workers, most recently at IATSE Local 600, the Cinematographers Guild. After taking some time away from union representation, Evangelina is eager to return to supporting IATSE members and learn the animation industry and our various contracts.

We are moving closer to being able to switch our operations off of the outdated Union Accounting System (UAS) and on to the much more modern and robust eMembership database by WinMill Software. Member Operations Manager Leah Semiken and Finance Operations Manager Kristal Landa have been working with the WinMill Software team to customize the eMembership platform to fit our operational needs, and we expect to be fully transitioned to the new system this year. This will bring much needed changes like a Member Portal that will give you greater access and ability to review and modify your membership account with

TAG, as well as view and pay your account balance. We are also looking to move our invoicing to an improved and more expedited system that will do away with the current carbon-paper invoice forms you have been receiving from us. More to come on this in the near future!

Another big change in the entertainment industry is the beginning of the triennial negotiations cycle. The Writers Guild of America (WGA) began their negotiations for a successor minimum basic agreement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) in late March. After two weeks of bargaining, on a planned break in the negotiations schedule, the WGA announced they would be taking a strike authorization vote before going back in with studios. Their agreement expires on May 1. The Directors Guild of American (DGA) and the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) agreements both expire at the end of June, and they have set negotiation dates in May and June respectively. This means the IATSE, and eventually TAG negotiations, are on the horizon. Our craft committees have continued to meet, and will once again be the backbone of our Negotiations Committee that will be called for soon.



*Guild Business Representative Steve Kaplan speaks to the crowd at Walt Disney Studios before their solidarity walk. The group urged the company to recognize production workers as a part of IATSE Local 839, The Animation Guild.*

We also have to take a look at when our membership meetings are held. Once the agreements at Titmouse and Late Night Cartoons in New York are ratified, those members will have the right to participate in our General Membership Meetings. Right now, those meetings are scheduled for the last Tuesday of every other month, starting at 6:30 p.m. PST, which is 9:30 p.m. EST. We need to move those meetings to a time that is more accommodating for members on the east coast. I hope to have a discussion about this matter, including possibly changing the frequency of the meetings, at the May General Membership Meeting. Please be sure to attend and share your thoughts!

What isn't changing is our focus on growing our membership and footprint. We are busy negotiating contracts for animation production workers across Los Angeles. Currently, we are involved in four different negotiations for L.A.-based workers alone, with another two for studios based in New York City. TAG Organizers Ben Speight and Allison Smartt continue to engage with animation workers not yet represented, keeping the prospect of more negotiations coming ever-present. That assignment will never end, and their work has been exemplary.

While we are in a period of contraction in the animation and entertainment industry, I believe that also will change. I hope the changing of the season is bringing positive and productive changes for you. Please answer our call to be engaged and involved with our membership and community activities! It is through our focused and collective efforts that we will make positive changes in the animation industry.

In Solidarity,

**Steve Kaplan**

***Business Representative***

*The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839*

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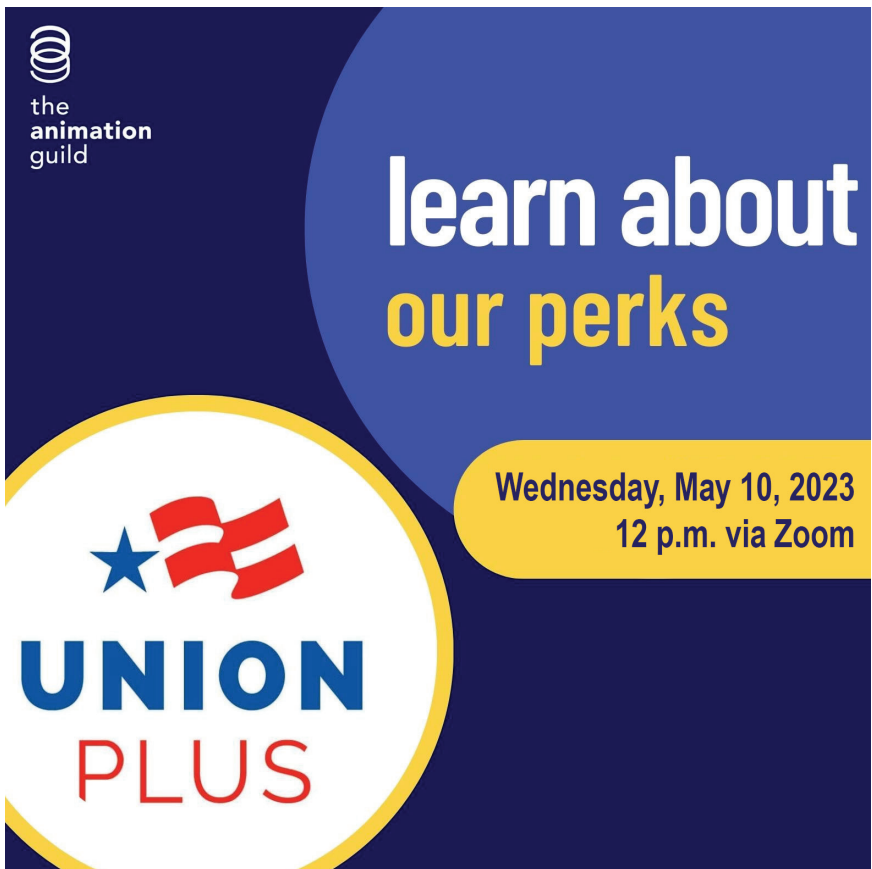
# LUNCH & LEARN

## LEARN ABOUT PERKS WITH UNION PLUS

Do you know about Union plus perks? They range from discounts on car rentals to free college. Join us for this informational session about all the additional benefits TAG members can access through Union Plus!

Wednesday, May 10 at 12 p.m. via Zoom

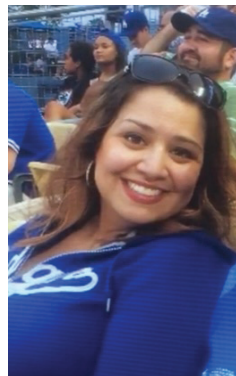
Register to attend at <https://tinyurl.com/tag-lunchlearn-may2023>



The graphic features a dark blue background with a large light blue circle on the right. In the top left corner is the Animation Guild logo, consisting of three stacked white circles and the text "the animation guild" below it. The main text "learn about our perks" is centered in the light blue circle, with "learn about" in white and "our perks" in yellow. A yellow rounded rectangle at the bottom right contains the date and time: "Wednesday, May 10, 2023" and "12 p.m. via Zoom". On the left side, a white circle with a yellow border contains the Union Plus logo, which includes a blue star and a red and white flag, with the words "UNION PLUS" in blue and red below it.

# MEET TAG'S NEW FIELD REP EVA NEVAREZ

Over the past few years, TAG has grown rapidly. To keep up with that growth, our staff has expanded as well. We're excited to introduce the newest addition to our team: Field Representative Eva Nevarez who joins Field Representative Leslie Simmons to expand our reach in representing our members at TAG studios and production companies. Here, Eva shares a bit about her background and experience.



## **Tell us about your professional journey.**

I began my 20-year union career as an Organizer for the United Farm Workers of America in California's grape and strawberry fields. I have since worked with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters as a Lead Organizer, managing new organizing drives all over the U.S. in various industries. I entered the entertainment realm with AFTRA, as the National Special Project Manager, where I managed the year-long merger discussions between SAG and AFTRA. This effort created the largest entertainment union in the world.

After the new union—SAG-AFTRA—was approved by the members, I stayed on board as National Manager of Labor Community Relations to help integrate and introduce the new organization to the larger labor movement. I later worked as Business Representative at the Cinematographers Guild, IATSE Local 600, where I represented camera department members that work on commercials, TV, and film. Most recently, I served as Manager of Labor Relations for Warner Bros. Studio Operations. At WB, I was the second chair to a Senior Vice President for contract negotiations, and I coordinated solutions for union representatives and their members—which, of course, was my favorite part of the job.



## **Tell us how you connected with the Guild.**

Having previously been part of the IATSE family, I had heard great things about TAG's Business Representative, Steve Kaplan—and I had worked with Field Representative, Leslie Simmons, at AFTRA and later SAG-AFTRA. Naturally, I was excited to explore the possibility of joining the team.

## **What is your role at TAG and what do you hope to accomplish?**

As a TAG Field Representative, I am partnering with Field Representative Leslie Simmons under the guidance of Business Representative Steve Kaplan to represent members in matters relating to Collective Bargaining Agreement enforcement, as well as facilitating engagement and supporting Union initiatives and negotiations.

I'm excited to get acquainted and work with groups such as the Shop Stewards, and I look forward to collaborating with the team to engage members and grow the Union.

## **How can TAG members support your work?**

The work that the Guild does on behalf of its members is in response to worker needs and ever-changing industry standards. Unions are unique organizations that require member engagement. While there is a brick-and-mortar building on Hollywood Way with a professional staff, all gains and worker protections achieved by unions are not possible without member participation.

You are the Union. Please read your Union's communications and attend events. Communicate with Union staff to voice your opinions and call out contract violations as well as other workplace issues. Get to know your fellow Union kin and act in solidarity when situations call for it. The employers are watching, and I'm honored to be on the team that has your back.

## **Can you share a little bit about yourself personally?**

I grew up in a large union family in Northern California's Bay Area. In high school, while kids were wearing NFL team jackets, my cousins and I, instead, chose to don our dads' Laborers, Local 270 jackets. We didn't know much about unions then, but one thing we knew is that unions somehow took care of our family.

I later moved south to L.A. proper, where I lived for 14 years. I recently relocated to Valencia with my 11-year-old poodle/chihuahua mix Pixie.

My love of the Dodgers stems from my grandfather’s admiration of Fernando Valenzuela in the ‘80s. Much to the chagrin of some of my family members in NoCal, I fully enjoy attending games and cheering on the Boys in Blue—I’m excited to see everyone at Dodger Stadium’s Union Night this year.

### What is one fun fact about yourself?

I live with a magical, bilingual dog that exhibits human behavior.



*Production workers at Walt Disney Animation Studios gathered in solidarity to show their determination to be recognized as part of IATSE Local 839, The Animation Guild.*



Each quarter the Writers Staffing Grid is distributed via email to industry professionals at major studios including Disney, Nickelodeon, WB Animation, and DreamWorks, as well as smaller studios such as Shadow-Machine, PBS Kids, Fred Rogers Productions, Moonbug, Baobab, and Sony. The value of this resource is undeniable. If you are a showrunner, or you know a showrunner or executive who might be hiring writers at some point, access to the Writers Staffing Grid can be obtained by emailing us at [wccstaffing839@gmail.com](mailto:wccstaffing839@gmail.com).

If you're a TAG writer who is available for work and interested in being included on the Writers Staffing Grid for this quarter, you can email us to request a link to the submission form. NOTE: A new Writers Staffing Grid is generated each quarter — to be featured on future ones, look out for instructions via the WCC mailing list. Subscribe here:

<https://animationguild.org/writers-committee-form>

The Writers Staffing Grid is managed and distributed by the Writers Craft Committee. It is open to all TAG members and former members. Big shoutout to Amanda De Lany, who is now helping verify members and manage updates!



Do you have a contract question or workplace issue and need to speak with a TAG representative about it? Scan this QR code to link to a form, answer a few questions, and get assistance.

You can also use this link to connect to the same form:

<https://tinyurl.com/MemberHelpForm>

## ***TAG Tuesday!*** LAST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

**Wear your TAG logo shirt, take a photo,  
and post to social media with:**

**#tagtuesday • #tag839 • #animationguild**



**the animation guild**



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/>.

# IN MEMORIAM

**William “Bike” Kinzle** — 01/09/1954 to 03/06/2023 — Bike Kinzle worked as a Color Designer at Film Roman and Fox Animation. Among his credits are *The Wild Thornberries*, *Rocket Power*, *Rugrats*, and more than 100 episodes of *Family Guy*. He was 69.

**James Michael Reaves** — 11/14/1950 to 3/20/2023 — Writer J. Michael Reaves spent his multi-decade career at Hanna-Barbera, Warner Bros. TV, and DreamWorks TVA. He won an Emmy for Outstanding Writing for *Batman: The Animated Series*, and additional credits include *The Smurfs*, *Centurions*, *My Little Pony*, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. He was 72.

**Jessie Romero** — 05/08/1970 to 03/21/2023 — As a Layout, Storyboard, and Production Board Artist, Jessie Romero worked at Bento Box and Robin Red Breast/Titmouse. His credits include the *Bob’s Burgers* TV series and movie, the *Beavis and Butt-Head* original and reboot TV series and movie, *King of the Hill*, and *American Dad!* He was 52.

**Leo Sullivan** — 09/10/1940 to 03/25/2023 — Leo Sullivan’s extensive career as an Animator, Animation Director, and Timing Director encompassed Hanna-Barbara, Warner Bros. TV, Filmation, Marvel, Ruby-Spears Productions, and numerous other studios. Co-founder of Hollywood’s first Black-owned animation studio, his credits include *Jabberjaw*, *Flash Gordon*, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, *The Transformers*, *BraveStarr*, and *The Incredible Hulk*. He was 82.



**Gallery 839 Opening: Thursday, May 4, 2023 from 5 to 8 p.m.**

# CURIOUS CREATURES

ARTWORKS BY JINY HE



GALLERY 839

THE ANIMATION GUILD M-F 9AM - 5PM  
1105 N. HOLLYWOOD WAY, BURBANK CA 91505

OPENING RECEPTION: MAY 4 5-8PM  
ARTWORK ON DISPLAY UNIL MAY 29

***Regular Gallery Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.***  
*Please call ahead to make a reservation to visit Gallery 839, as COVID safety protocols are still in effect and access may not be available: (818) 845-7500.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

## May

**May 1st, 4 p.m.**

**Annual May Day March & Rally**

*Downtown L.A. — Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

**May 4th, 5 to 8 p.m.**

**New Show Opening at Gallery 839**

*Featured Artist: Jiny He*

**May 10th, 12 p.m. via Zoom**

**Lunch & Learn: Union Plus**

*Register to attend at <https://tinyurl.com/tag-lunchlearn-may2023>*

**May 29th**

**CONTRACT HOLIDAY: Memorial Day**

**May 30th**

**TAG Tuesday**

*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

**May 30th, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom**

**Virtual General Membership Meeting**

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

**May 31st, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**

*Make an appointment [HERE](#).*

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



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