



May is Mental Health Care Month—an opportunity to emphasize the importance of caring for your mental well-being.

The last few years have been challenging with Covid isolation, political upheaval, and an industry downturn. It makes sense that people are feeling down and struggling with mental health issues. At the WOW2023 Mental Health Summit, Oprah Winfrey interviewed experts in the field, including Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. According to Murthy, disconnection and loneliness are key factors in what he considers the mental health crisis of our times.

For many TAG members, working remotely has been both a blessing and a curse, allowing for flexibility but increasing the feeling of isolation. As some return to the office while others remain at home, Murthy stresses the importance of connecting with one another, whether it's meeting for lunch or participating in volunteer work, in order to build community and support.

If you're feeling anxious or depressed, it's important to know that you're not alone—and that, as a TAG member, there are numerous free resources and services to help you and your loved ones.

The Importance of Mental Health Care (continued on page 3)

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Behind the Scenes (BTS)

<https://wp.behindthescenescharity.org>

Launched in 2019, BTS is a mental health and suicide prevention initiative with a focus on the entertainment industry: longer hours, stressful deadlines, etc. The program partners with numerous organizations, including the IATSE which considers mental health and emotional wellness a priority. Following are a few of the services offered:

- A therapist finder tool for therapists specializing in the needs of entertainment industry professionals.
- A skills-based Mental Health First Aid course that teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and distress.
- A Bystander Intervention webinar to help you safely intervene if you see a co-worker being bullied or harassed.
- Financial assistance for basic living or medical expenses to entertainment industry professionals and their immediate dependent family members who are seriously ill or injured.
- Grants for entertainment industry professionals for counseling and in-patient or out-patient recovery programs.

Read a summary of TAG's Lunch & Learn about BTS services here:

<https://animationguild.org/lunch-learn-recap-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention/>

Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF)

<https://mptf.com>

For more than 100 years, MPTF has supported working and retired members of the entertainment community with a safety net of health and social services. Following are a few of the services offered by MPTF:

- **Counseling Services:** MPTF social workers are available to help with stress management, work-life balance, coping with life transitions, aging challenges, caring for a loved one, the loss of a loved one, and more.
- **Supportive Services and Community Resources:** From financial counseling to caregiving resources, MPTF staff has the expertise to help you navigate services that are relevant to your situation.

- **Financial Assistance:** Temporary financial assistance is available to qualified industry members. This might include basic living expenses, mortgage or rent payments, utility bills, food, and other essentials.
- **Elder Connection:** For industry members 65 and older, as well as parents of qualified industry members, MPTF’s experienced social workers provide case management, supportive counseling, and assistance with resources in Southern California.
- **The Daily Call Sheet:** Volunteers call fellow industry members in need of social interaction. More than 600 industry members have participated, ranging in age from 20s to 90s. If you simply want to chat with someone in a low-stress setting, this is an easy way to make connections. Volunteers even report a 70% decrease in depression!

Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plans (MPI)

<https://www.mpiphp.org/home>

Along with facilitating your health care and pension benefits, MPI offers programs for mental wellness. Most of MPI’s health care plans (Anthem Blue Cross, Kaiser Permanente, etc.) include the following benefits:

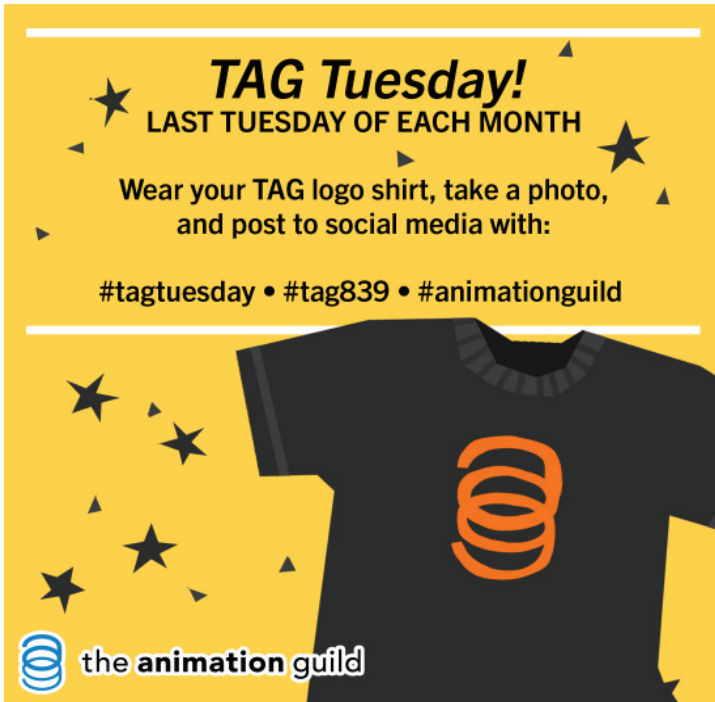
Optum Liveandworkwell.com: Use the code MPIPHP to browse this Behavioral Health Resources website. Resources include Talkspace for sessions with licensed therapists by phone, substance use support, caregiver education sessions, and eldercare support services, as well as other essential tools and resources. Of note is the free Self Care by AbleTo app (which has replaced the Sanvello app). You can use it to track your daily moods, habits, and sleep; learn relaxation methods created by experienced clinicians; and create personalized goals to promote mental wellness.

Wellness Classes: Every month Healthy MPI offers classes including yoga, meditation, and Tai Chi. A full calendar can be found on MPI’s Wellness Program page.

Our TAG Community

TAG offers many opportunities for you to connect with others.

- You can **join a committee**, where you will meet people who work in your field or have similar interests and concerns.
- Our TAG members-only **Discord channel** can keep you up to date on activities of interest, from informal get-togethers to solidarity events. To join TAG Discord, email membership@tag839.org.
- As we wrote about in last month's *Pegboard*, TAG hosts **a range of events** where you can meet with others in a welcoming, inclusive environment. These include Gallery 839 exhibition openings on the first Thursday of every month, social mixers, and professional panels that encourage audience interaction and mingling. Make sure you're on our mailing list to receive notices and invitations: <https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/email-list/>.
- Murthy calls "service the antidote to loneliness," so consider giving back by getting involved with the Guild or participating in volunteer opportunities. **Sign up to volunteer** at <https://animationguild.org/sign-up-to-volunteer/>.



FROM THE PRESIDENT JEANETTE MORENO KING



TAG'S AI TASK FORCE IS HERE TO HELP

AI (artificial intelligence) is on everyone's mind right now. But what is it exactly? We've heard from members who want to block any use of AI, while others see real potential in making our jobs easier. In response, The Animation Guild Executive Board has recently formed a task force to investigate the impact of AI on the animation industry. As the President of The Animation Guild, I recognize the importance of staying ahead of technological advancements and their impact on our industry.

AI is rapidly transforming various industries, including entertainment, and we must be prepared for the changes it brings. The task force will research and analyze how AI is currently being used in animation and how it may affect job roles and creative processes in the future. Our goal is to understand the opportunities and challenges that AI presents and develop strategies to best navigate them.

I am proud to announce that I have also joined the Television Academy's AI task force, which is researching how AI will impact the entertainment industry as a whole. This collaboration will allow us to broaden our understanding of the impact of AI and work with other industry leaders to ensure that the entertainment industry adapts in a responsible and sustainable way.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) has also formed an AI Commission on Artificial Intelligence to investigate the use of AI in our industry. This task force includes representatives from various locals in IATSE as well as subject matter experts from academia and the tech industry.

Quoting the press release: "The commission will engage in a comprehensive study of AI technologies, with a particular focus on how they may reshape the landscape of entertainment industry jobs under IATSE's jurisdiction. It will also consider how contract provisions, legislation, and training programs can be adapted to ensure the fruits of increased productivity through AI are shared equitably among all stakeholders."

The Commission will present its findings at the IATSE’s next General Executive Board, held at the end of July, which I am happily attending in Chicago.

As with any technological advancement, there is often anxiety and fear about the impact it will have on job roles and creative processes. It is our duty as industry leaders to alleviate those fears and ensure that we are prepared for the changes that lie ahead.

I want to reassure members of The Animation Guild that our leadership is on top of the impact of AI on our industry. We are committed to working collaboratively with other industry leaders to understand and adapt to the changing landscape of the entertainment industry.

While there is no doubt that AI will bring changes to the animation industry, it is important to note that it is not a replacement for human creativity and skill.

Our focus is to understand the opportunities and challenges presented by AI and develop strategies to navigate them in a responsible and sustainable way. Together, we will ensure that the animation industry continues to thrive in the years ahead.

In human solidarity,

Jeanette Moreno King

President

The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

jeanette.king@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/>.



POLITICAL UPDATE: TAG IN SACRAMENTO!

By **Leslie Simmons**

TAG Field Representative/Political Coordinator

leslie.simmons@tag839.org

This past month, the IATSE and The Animation Guild have been in Sacramento to lobby for worker-friendly legislation, including renewing the state's Film and TV Tax Credit and supporting a set safety bill.

In April, TAG member Crystal Kan and I went to Sacramento as part of a delegation of entertainment union members to lobby for renewal of the Film and TV Tax Credit. Other unions represented during this lobby day included LIUNA and the Teamsters as well as several IATSE locals. Although animation studios do not participate in the tax credit, we can indirectly be affected by union live-action film and TV jobs that leave the state due to our participation in the Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plans (MPI).

MPI is like a pot of money that the studios contribute to. As contributions increase, the pot grows. If contributions decrease, the pot shrinks. So if IATSE and Teamsters' jobs for TV and film are leaving the area, it can mean less contributions to MPI by the employers. Though some IATSE Locals, like 600 and 700, will continue contributing to MPIPHP, other workers like makeup artists are covered under the Area and Standards Agreement and will contribute to other plans. But it's also important to support tax credits so our California union kin can continue to work locally, pay their bills, and support their families.

Crystal and I also attended the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee hearing on SB 735. This bill is a set safety bill authored by Sen. Dave Cortese (D-15) and establishes important protocols and a set safety supervisor for productions where firearms are present. It would require an employer that receives a specified motion picture tax credit to hire or assign a qualified safety advisor to perform a risk assessment. The bill was drafted following the tragic killing of IATSE Local 600 member and cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of *Rust* in New Mexico last year. You can read the bill at <https://trackbill.com/bill/california-senate-bill-735-motion-picture-productions-safety-firearms-ammunition/2373763/>.

In May, I returned to Sacramento for the California Labor Federation's Unionize California Joint Legislative Conference (<https://calaborconference.org/>). This annual conference brings together unions from across the state for two days to attend workshops, hear from labor leaders and workers about organizing victories and issues, and lobby for worker-friendly bills. The conference kicked off with a Sunday evening salon featuring U.S. Senate candidates Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA 12th District), Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA 47th District) and Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA 30th District). The candidates were joined in conversation by California Labor Federation Executive Secretary-Treasurer Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher.

The California IATSE Council has come out early in support of Schiff, who has worked closely with and supported entertainment unions throughout his political career.

The conference portion ended Monday night with a dinner at which Gov. Gavin Newsom welcomed labor to Sacramento. The event also honored those in the Assembly and Senate who have a 100% labor voting record for the previous year. You can see who these lawmakers are here: <https://calaborconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/A-Force-for-Progress-2022.pdf>

The following day, attendees lobbied their local lawmakers on bills that various unions supported, as well as bills highlighted in the California Labor Federation's Legislative Agenda (<https://calaborconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-CLF-Legislative-Agenda-5-4-2023.pdf>). Some of the bills that would help TAG members include SB 399 "Ban Captive Audience Meetings," which would prevent employers from holding mandatory meetings used to intimidate employees during union drives. I met with Assemblymembers Tina McKinnor, who represents the 61st in Los Angeles, and Isaac Bryan, who represents Los Angeles' 55th District, to discuss this bill and others.

Also on the legislative agenda is an important amendment to the California Constitution, which will eventually go to voters. SCA 7 enshrines in the state Constitution the right for workers to join a union and collectively bargain with their employer for better wages and working conditions. Although Americans have these protections under the National Labor Relations Act, this right is constantly under attack in states and at the federal level. We have seen what the U.S. Supreme Court has done in reducing the rights of public sector workers, we cannot have SCOTUS decide on our right to be union members!

Additionally, being in Sacramento discussing the tax credit provided an opportunity for TAG to speak with elected officials – particularly those whose districts include TAG-covered studios including Sen. Anthony Portantino – about the growing number of animated productions where local crews are shrinking and more jobs are being shipped out of the area, overseas, to Canada, or to other states. Animation in Los Angeles needs a similar incentive to keep jobs local. Portantino, whose district includes DreamWorks and Warner Bros., agreed. Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, whose 52nd Assembly District also includes DreamWorks, was supportive as well of finding ways to keep animation jobs local. It will take some relationship-building and work with the IATSE and California IATSE Council, but know that providing some kind of incentive for studios to hire TAG members locally is a goal of this union and its Executive Board leadership.



Field Representative and Political Coordinator Leslie Simmons and TAG Member Crystal Kan visited Sacramento in April as part of a delegation of entertainment union members to lobby for renewal of the Film and TV Tax Credit.

A NEW LOOK FOR YOUR TAG BILL

Yes, it's true! As we transition to a new billing system, for the first time in about 30 years, your billing notice is going to look different.

In June we will mail out your 3rd quarter notice through our new eMembership/WinMill system, and you will be able to pay your bill online.

At this point you will still receive a printed paper notice. This notice will now arrive in a standard envelope with the TAG logo.

At a future date, you will have the option to choose personal delivery settings: email only, mail only, or both. We will notify you as soon as that option is available.

In the meantime, you can pay your bill online or by mailing in a check. A return envelope is provided if you choose to mail a check.

Questions? Contact us at membership@tag839.org



Do you have a contract question or work-place 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>

LUNCH & LEARN FREELANCING A UNION STUDIOS

Wednesday, June 14, 2023
12 p.m. via Zoom

Ever been offered a “freelance” gig for one of the studios signed under our contract? Make sure you’re fully aware of how taking on “freelance” work affects your benefits, overtime, pay, and more by coming to this Lunch & Learn discussion.

RSVP at tinyurl.com/TAG-lunchandlearn-Freelancing

“FREELANCING” at Union Studios

June
Lunch &
Learn



BURBANK ARTS BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Burbank Arts Beautification Program Phase 7 has a call for artists!

The Burbank Arts Beautification Program is an initiative of the City of Burbank’s Cultural Arts Commission in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works Department. As part of the Burbank Arts Beautification Program the goal of this project is to bring visual art out of museums and galleries, so everyone can enjoy it. Furthermore, the painting of these boxes is designed to encourage community pride and beautify the neighborhood. To that end, sixty (60) utility boxes have been painted by talented artists who were inspired by previous themes: “Just Imagine,” “A World of Possibilities,” “A World of Entertainment,” “Celebrate Community,” “Memorable Moments,” and “New Art on the Block.”

Applications Due:

June 9, 2023

Phase 7 Theme:

“Soaring”

Stipend:

\$1250



Electrical Box located at Buena Vista and Magnolia painted by Laishan Mui Ito and sponsored by Blast From The Past. (Photo by Ross A Benson)

For more information, please visit the Burbank Arts Projects Archive here:

https://issuu.com/burbankparksandrecreation/docs/phase_7_beautification_program_call_for_artists



ROYBAL
FILM AND TELEVISION MAGNET

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

POWERED BY



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters®**
OF GREATER LOS
ANGELES

Interested in volunteering with youth to help shape the future of our industry?

Roybal Film and Television Magnet School is looking for individuals with at least five years of experience in the field to be paired up with an 11th or 12th grader for their mentorship program. The goal is to accelerate and expand students' industry knowledge, networks, and professional development. The program is powered by Big Brothers & Sisters LA.

Apply here: <https://bit.ly/roybalmentor23>

IATSE DAY AT DODGERS STADIUM

Dodgers vs. Astros

Sunday, June 26, 2023 at 1:10 p.m.

Seats are reserved in Sections 303PL & 305PL
\$20/seat

Tickets are limited so orders will be first come, first serve. Friends and family are welcome to attend with TAG members.

Visit The Animation Guild online store for tickets:

<https://animationguild.org/store/>



IATSE DAY
AT DODGERS STADIUM
SUNDAY JUNE 25 | 1:10PM

HOUSTON ASTROS VS.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Affected by the current work stoppage?
MPTF is here to help.



MPTF offers a variety of services that can provide emotional and financial relief to individuals and their families who are experiencing hardship. These services include:

- Confidential help and supportive counseling
- Referrals to community resources
- Temporary emergency financial assistance for eligible industry members

For more information please visit mptf.com
If you need help today, give us a call at **323.634.3888**

MPTF | Motion Picture & Television Fund
The Wasserman Campus | 23388 Mulholland Drive | Woodland Hills, CA 91364
Toll Free: 855 760 MPTF | Email: info@mptf.com

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

Nicholas “Nick” Levenduski — 04/12/1981 – 04/06/2023 — Nick Levenduski worked as a Production Technical Director, Digital Effect Lead, and Crowds Artist for DreamWorks and Walt Disney Animation Studios. His credits include *Encanto*, *Black Panther*, *Penguins of Madagascar*, *How to Train Your Dragon 2*, and *Ruby Gillman, Teenage Kraken*, which he was working on at the time of his death. He was 41.

Gerald “Jerry” Loveland — 06/16/1964 – 04/21/2023 — Visual Development and Background Artist Jerry Loveland worked at Sony Pictures Animation, Walt Disney Animation Studios, Warner Bros., Filmation, and Hanna-Barbera. His television credits include *BraveStarr*, *The Adventures of Don Coyote and Sancho Panda*, and *Tom & Jerry Kids Show*. *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, *The Princess and the Frog*, *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* are among his film credits. He was 58.

Tony Klück — 08/16/1947 – 04/24/2023 — Two-time Emmy nominee Tony Klück was a Storyboard Artist and Director at studios including Film Roman and Bento Box. His TV credits include *Beavis and Butt-Head*, *Daria*, *Bob’s Burgers*, *Maya & Miguel*, and *King of the Hill*. He also worked on films such as *Ice Age* and *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*. He was 75.

Vahe Haytaian — 08/21/1982 - 04/27/2023 — Technical Director Vahe Haytaian worked for Bento Box and Walt Disney TVA. His many credits include *Jake and the Neverland Pirates*, *Big Hero 6: The Series*, *Amphibia*, *The Owl House*, *The Ghost and Molly McGee*, *Bob’s Burgers*, *Central Park*, and *The Great North*. He was 40.

Allen Stovall — 08/25/1935 – 05/08/2023 — Animation industry veteran Allen Stovall was an Effects Assistant and Animator who worked at Duck Soup, Filmation, Turner Feature Animation, and Walt Disney Feature Animation. His TV credits include *Ghostbusters*, *She-Ra: Princess of Power*, and *BraveStarr*. His film credits range from *The Little Mermaid*, *Rescuers Down Under*, and *Beauty and the Beast* to *Rugrats in Paris* and *Rugrats Go Wild*. He was 87.

Gallery 839 Opening: Thursday, June 1, 2023 from 5 to 8 p.m.



Mo McMasters is a storyboard artist and illustrator living in Los Angeles. Their work is informed by horror films, tarot cards, and growing up queer in Arkansas.

Just as the map is not the territory, neither is art reflective of reality. But art can expose reality's malleability. This has been the central theme for Mo McMasters' creative practice over the course of the last 3 years, a period of cosmic ego upheaval coinciding with a global pandemic. During this time, and in the course of making most of the art in this show, the artist legally acquired a new name and gender designation. These pieces speak to the liminality of that transformation.

With reality's threshold at its thinnest, McMasters has explored the relationship between their internal domain and methods of externalizing it through comics, illustrations, and tarot cards. You can witness this change through their work. Maybe you'll even change too.

Regular Gallery Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

May

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](#).

June

June 1st, 5 to 8 p.m.
New Show Opening at Gallery 839
Featured Artist: Mo McMasters

June 9-11th
2023 IATSE District 2 Convention
Honolulu, Hawai'i

June 25th, 1:10 p.m.
IATSE Day at Dodger Stadium

June 27th
TAG Tuesday
Wear your TAG T-shirt!

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



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