

# TAG DELEGATES TAKE ON DISTRICT 2



Last month, 21 members of The Animation Guild traveled to Honolulu, Hawai'i to take part as Delegates in the IATSE's District 2 Convention. District 2 is made up of IA Locals in the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, and Hawai'i, and once a year each Local sends a delegation to the convention. There, Union leaders and rank and file members learn about ongoing campaigns and upcoming initiatives within the IATSE, serve on committees, work on resolutions to take action and bring change within and beyond the District, and make connections with Union kin from other Locals.

TAG's Vice President, Teri Hendrich C. has been working with members from other IA Hollywood Locals who are focused on addressing the pay

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disparity experienced by members working in historically female-dominated crafts. She said, “It was great to finally meet some of these inspiring women I’ve been emailing for over a year now, in person.”

Juli Murphy arrived early and organized some local activities in Waikiki with fellow TAG members. “This was my second time at D2, and I’m starting to understand more about how the system works, and how to use it to effect change.” First-time Delegate and new TAG member Elianne Melendez was disappointed to find that resolutions are non-binding, but joined with the rest of the TAG delegation to do research and craft meaningful “resolutions on subjects such as supporting trans and queer rights and asserting the right for people to have safe space and time to pump breast milk at work, etc. I respect the level of work, love and collaboration between members of our Local, as well as other locals.”

Another new TAG member and first-time Delegate, Basil Larios wanted to connect with kin from other Locals who work in crafts similar to animation production: “It was very funny to express my desire to speak to Script Coordinators at Local 871 before leaving the convention and immediately have a member turn right around and say, ‘Hey I’m a Script Coordinator!’ and begin a dialogue right in front of the meeting hall.”

TAG brought more young Delegates than any of the other Locals, and many of them served on the Young Workers Committee, including



*TAG Delegates settle in for the first day of the convention. From left to right: Brad Rader, Paula Spence, Sydney Sharp, Court La Forest, Nora Meek, Crystal Kan, Andy Garner-Flexner, and Jake Hollander.*

Gracie May, who returned for her second convention. “I enjoyed hearing about different ways to engage people,” reported Gracie. “Screening older films and having a panel of members who worked on that film talk about techniques and crafts that were used (in the making of it), I think this is great way to have cross-generation conversations and keep knowledge of endangered crafts alive.”

Storyboard Artist Nicolette Ray said she thought “The Women’s Committee event on Friday night of D2 was incredible. It felt a bit like a group therapy session in that there was space for a lot of individual stories to be told. The table I sat at had a broad range of ages and races, and some of the stories that were shared were so powerful and so gut wrenching. It reminded me not to take for granted the privileges I have today as a woman of color but it also reminded me that we still have a long way to go.”

Returning Delegate Jake Hollander likes to see progress being made, but has been frustrated with what he sees as a philosophy of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” at District 2 Conventions. He’d like to see Convention procedure change with the times, as IA members’ needs change. Still, he says “TAG brought intensity to D2 and I think many were nervous about it, but to my delight, a handful of Locals brought that same intensity. I’ll continue to bring resolutions I think will improve these Conventions and our Union.” Crystal Kan is a returning Delegate, too, and she had this to say about effecting change over the long term: “My favorite part of this year’s D2 was the Education and DEI Committees’ presentation on the new IATSE Census coming up in July. The Census comes directly from a resolution TAG’s People of Color Committee brought to a previous Convention and it was really neat to see the positive change it created years later.” Technical Director Norman Joseph appreciated learning that the IATSE Census was born out of a previous convention: “The work that we do directly effects change, and I got to see that in person. I also saw the empathy and compassion that so many people brought to the Convention, to understand that the wants and needs of other Locals might sometimes conflict with each other, and it is very important to understand these needs and work together to find a solution.”

The resolution process does take time, and resolutions must be submitted to the District weeks before in order to be included in the Convention agenda. When Brad Rader’s wasn’t quite finished in time for consideration, he decided to bring copies of the draft resolution to the convention himself. “In retrospect, this turned out to be the best thing

that could have happened. If the resolution had passed the Resolutions Committee, it would have been voted up or down within 15 minutes, end of story,” Brad noted. Instead, he talked to as many of his Union kin as he could, and, “The consensus was we need to address this issue nationally, across Locals and society.” He’ll be back next year with a resolution to request that the IATSE form an Experienced Worker Committee, with the mission of addressing ageism in the entertainment industry.

I have seen TAG’s Delegation grow and change over the years since I’ve been attending District 2 Conventions, and I see the District and the Convention adapt and change as activist Locals like ours bring engaged Delegates with fire in their blood. And though Delegates pushing for movement on what they see as key issues for labor democracy may want that change to happen faster, Storyboard Artist Nora Meek concedes that, “It was also healing and uplifting to hear their hopes and aspirations for a more representative, fully participatory, and radically transparent Union.” She urges her fellow TAG members to see it first-hand and participate as a Delegate at a future District 2 Convention.

So maybe we’ll see you next June in Lake Tahoe!

— *Paula Spence, Pegboard Editor and TAG Delegate*



*Basil Larios, Nicolette Ray, Venetia Ellis, Court La Forest, Jake Hollander, Nora Meek, Crystal Kan, and Sydney Sharp arrived at the convention early so that they could enjoy some solidarity time in the water at Waikiki.*

# FROM THE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KAPLAN



As we have shared publicly and internally, The Animation Guild has made incredible progress in achieving our goal of representing all working people in the animation industry. Bringing two organizers on to our staff has pushed our organizing efforts into high gear, resulting in representation outside of California for the first time in the history of the Local. As well, it has brought almost 1,000 working animation production professionals under a TAG agreement and into membership. The Guild has also answered the call by the membership to increase support and representation. Our two Field Representatives are policing our contract and connecting members to our resources and support committees and groups. We have increased office staff by adding operations managers and administrative assistants that have streamlined operations and provided additional support to our committees and groups. We have also pushed forward in communications and member programs to increase awareness of our Local and value of membership.

We have done all this under an antiquated and now stressed revenue structure that was established a long time ago. TAG membership has some of the lowest dues and initiation fees for Locals of our size. This revenue supported the Guild's previous focus of maintaining a status quo and servicing existing contracts. As the industry grew around us, we grew in size and were able to create a comfortable savings cushion through the payment of initiation fees by new members. The risk of that revenue structure is showing itself now. Not only have we transformed ourselves from a service-based Local to one with an organizing and growth focus in order to build maximum leverage against the animation studios, but we are seeing a reduction in available jobs due to studios attempting to send work outside of California as a means to tap into cheaper labor markets. This has reduced our income while our spending has reached new heights due to our growth.

While it may seem counterintuitive at this time, we must look at how the Local is funded and what we can expect in the near future in order to continue our growth. As we have seen in the past, the attempt to send work outside California will not succeed in lowering the costs to the

employers, and work will return. Our organizing continues, and we can expect to add members through campaigns in the near future, but we are also seeing growing resistance from the employers which forces us into costly hearings at the National Labor Relations Board. As we add members to the Local, we will need to look at continuing to add staff to support them, and will have to look at opening regional offices to provide a space that members outside of California can call their Union Hall. We can no longer afford to count on initiation fees as a means of support, and must look to other IATSE locals with membership numbers at or greater than ours as a template for how a Local of our size can properly support and uplift its members, defending existing contracts while forging new ones in new areas.

We have started those discussions at the Executive Board, and will bring the matter to you for your review, discussion, and approval in the near future. Throughout my career at the Guild, members have been loud and clear about their desire to have a strong Union that can make meaningful changes to its agreements in negotiations with the studios, and further provide a strong and meaningful community to support each other. We are on that path, and I look forward to gaining your support in continuing those efforts.

In Solidarity,

**Steve Kaplan**

*Business Representative*

*The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839*

[steve.kaplan@tag839.org](mailto:steve.kaplan@tag839.org)



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>

Over the past few months, we have witnessed the rise of technology that has the potential to significantly affect the way we work. In response to these concerns, we have taken a proactive approach and we established a TAG AI Task Force in May 2023, consisting of 12 Animation Guild members from various crafts and backgrounds: Carl Beu (Background Painter), Craig Elliott (Production Designer), Amber Hardin (Model Designer), Jiny He (Color Designer), Brandon Jarratt (Technical Director), Gloria McAndrew (Story Artist), Ean McNamara (Art Director), Gary Montalbano (Visual Development Artist), Roma Murphy (Writer), Pablo Plaisted (Layout Supervisor), Sam Tung (Story Artist), and Tyler White (Technical Director). This group is separate from the IATSE AI Commission.

We are pleased to inform you that the task force has already held two meetings, during which we discussed the potential effects of automation on our membership and the steps we can take to protect and empower our community. For example, we had the privilege to meet with Karla Ortiz, an artist and one of three plaintiffs named in the Stable Diffusion lawsuit, and Matthew Butterick, one of the lawyers on the case, to learn more about battling copyright infringement on AI platforms.

The primary goal of the TAG task force is to thoroughly investigate these matters, compile a comprehensive report based on our findings, and make appropriate recommendations that align with the best interests of our membership as we negotiate our Collective Bargaining Agreements.

We strongly believe that education and awareness are key to addressing this issue effectively. It is crucial for everyone in our Guild to be well-informed about the implications of AI and machine learning in our industry. By understanding what our employers can do, and what actions we can take collectively, we can protect the membership proactively instead of reactively.

We understand that this undertaking is a serious endeavor, one that requires a coordinated effort from both labor and legislation. Our task force is committed to engaging with knowledgeable experts, legal professionals, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that our actions are well-informed and comprehensive.

As we move forward, we will be sharing updates with all Guild members. Your input, ideas, and suggestions are invaluable to us, and we are planning a membership-wide survey to address your key issues of concern.

We are grateful to you for your dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to the art of animation. Your voices matter, and we are committed to representing your concerns and interests to the best of our abilities. Please stay tuned for further updates, and do not hesitate to email the task force at [ai@tag839.org](mailto:ai@tag839.org) if you have any questions or suggestions.



# Open Enrollment

## PERIOD TO BE HELD JULY 1-21



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

### IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR HEALTH COVERAGE



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

You may also request open enrollment information and forms be sent to you by using the Contact Us feature at [www.mpiphp.org](http://www.mpiphp.org) or by calling (855) 275-4674.

Please complete and submit all of your open enrollment materials to MPIHP by July 21, 2023.

Your new plan selection will be effective August 1, 2023.

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



### IF YOU DO NOT NEED TO MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR HEALTH COVERAGE

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



# GRANTS FOR TRAINING AT STUDIO ARTS

If you are currently out of work and collecting unemployment in the State of California, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grants are available for training this summer. WIOA funds will help you upgrade your technical skills in our increasingly complex workplace.

WIOA funds would cover 100% of all tuition for those attending programs at Studio Arts. This includes training in Unreal Engine, MetaHuman, Blender, Virtual Production, Virtual Art Department, After Effects, Nuke, Stage Ops, Story Development, Photoshop, Illustrator and more.

Studio Arts classes are open to WIOA-funded students using this program. For more info, email [grants@studioarts.com](mailto:grants@studioarts.com). Please make sure you provide your name, phone number and your affiliation with Local 839 (e.g., Animator, Storyboard Artist). Studio Arts will then give you information about programs they offer and getting you started with a WIOA WorkSource Center.

## FAQs:

**Q:** What are the qualifications?

**A:** You must be a W-2 employee who has been dislocated from work and collecting UI (unemployment insurance.)

**Q:** If I haven't worked for a while, will I still qualify for WIOA?

**A:** Yes, it's likely - The primary stipulation for qualifying for WIOA is that you are not working and are collecting UI (or have recently exhausted your UI funds.)

**Q:** How much training can I receive through WIOA?

**A:** Through WIOA students can expect between 120 to 240 hours' worth of training. Classes at Studio Arts are conducted on evenings, weekends and are LIVE, online and in Zoom.

**Q:** What is the process for obtaining WIOA status for funded classes at Studio Arts?

**A:** First, contact Studio Arts at [grants@studioarts.com](mailto:grants@studioarts.com). Make sure you include your full name and phone number in the email. Studio Arts will

then help you decide on a training program. Studio Arts will then put you in contact with a WorkSource Center to get started.

**Q:** What happens if I become employed while taking classes through WIOA?

**A:** You can continue the training awarded through WIOA, even if you get a full-time job the day after you received your WIOA.

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## AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

**August 9, 2023**

at The Animation Guild office

1105 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank CA 91505

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=animation>



# LUNCH & LEARN SIDE HUSTLES: TEACHING

Wednesday, August 23, 2023  
12 p.m. via Zoom

Ever considered teaching? Join us as fellow TAG members share crucial considerations, tips, and experiences teaching at universities and online art schools.

**Panelists:** Mauricio Abril, Lindsey Pollard, and Angela Sung

**RSVP:** <https://tinyurl.com/tag-sidehustles-teaching>

## SIDE HUSTLES: TEACHING



  
the  
animation  
guild  
IATSE LOCAL 839

A PANEL DISCUSSION  
AUGUST 23  
12PM VIA ZOOM

# A CRISIS FOR SO MANY

With production shut down due to the current work stoppage, MPTF is experiencing a significant increase in inbound calls from industry members seeking some form of assistance. Speaking to Deadline, Jennifer Jorge, MPTF's Director of Community Social Services, explained, "Most of those who have contacted MPTF for assistance are our below-the line workforce, including IATSE and Teamsters." MPTF's broad range of social services have already been provided to thousands of industry members and their families this year; in addition, they have received around 1,000 requests from industry members in need of financial support and other social services due to the work stoppage. This is more than 3X the rate of inquiries they receive in a typical year for this timeframe. A very high percentage (89%) of these calls are from industry members who are assessed with high at-risk or crisis levels of need. The bottom line is people are struggling greatly, and they need our support. And in turn, MPTF needs support to help as many people as possible. MPTF is administering financial assistance funds for IATSE, Teamsters Local 399, the DGA Foundation, and TUSC (The Union Solidarity Coalition), and with that they are able not only to provide financial support and coverage for health care premiums, but also case management on other issues.

**If you are in need of assistance due to the work stoppage,  
please call MPTF at (323) 634-3888.**

"Help begins the instant an industry professional contacts us," Jorge explains. "Our Social Services Department specializes in providing practical help and support around life issues by utilizing a person-centered, consciously inclusive approach to service delivery. Although the majority of community industry members are coming to the MPTF expressing a need for financial assistance due to the strike, our 100+-year history of providing charitable assistance has taught us that if you are concerned or experiencing distress about your financial wellness, you are likely experiencing stress in other areas of your life such as your relationships, your physical and mental health... The hard reality is that life doesn't stop just because there is a work stoppage."



*Caring is Infinite*

# SUPPORT TAG MEMBER ACTIVISTS

Did you know that the picket event at Warner Bros. in support of the WGA workers on strike was organized by member activists and not the Guild?

Engaged members Janis Robertson, Alex Anderson Kenney, and Joey Clift led the effort along with several TAG ME members to organize the successful picket at Warner Bros. where more than 200 animation workers showed their support of striking WGA members.

You made a big difference! Members and leaders of the WGA were incredibly grateful to those who attended the event. The show of support ignited spirits, and garnered attention from both the press and the studios. To capitalize on this success, TAG ME is planning future solidarity events. Learn more by emailing [839TAGME@gmail.com](mailto:839TAGME@gmail.com). Interested in volunteering to help TAG ME? Visit <http://tinyurl.TAG-ME>.

*TAG is not on strike, and we are not calling you to strike. TAG appreciates member activists who are working to support WGA workers in their efforts to get the strongest agreement possible. Learn about how the WGA strike impacts TAG members at <https://animationguild.org/wga-strike-qa/>.*



*TAG members showed their support for striking WGA workers by joining them on the picket line outside the Warner Bros. studios in June.*



*TAG members at DreamWorks got T-shirted up with a couple of mermaids for TAG Tuesday in June. Send your TAG Tuesday pix to [editor@tag839.org](mailto:editor@tag839.org) for inclusion in *The Pegboard!**

## ***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**



# HOLLYWOOD

**SAVE THE DATE!**

## THE “ALL-IN” IATSE LOCALS MIXER

*(Adults and Members Only)*

**MUSIC, FOOD, CASH BAR, GAMES,  
RAFFLE and PAC FUNDRAISER**

**OCTOBER 7, 2023 @ 6PM - 11PM  
IATSE LOCAL 80**

2520 W Olive Ave, Burbank, CA 91505

**RSVP: [CDGIA@CDGIA.COM](mailto:CDGIA@CDGIA.COM)**

IATSE SOLIDARITY



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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/>.





Learn the basic rules of thumb to improve your finances and help ensure you're headed in the right financial direction.

DATE	TIME
August 4, 2023	9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m.
August 7, 2023	2 p.m., 5 p.m., and 8 p.m.

*All times shown are Eastern time.*



**Register now**

Scan this code or register at [webinars.on24.com/Vanguard\\_IIG/VES2023](https://webinars.on24.com/Vanguard_IIG/VES2023).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Times listed above are Eastern time zone. Follow the link to register and choose the time that works for your location. Some seminars available in Spanish.

Gallery 839 Opening: Thursday, August 3, 2023 from 5 to 8 p.m.

# THE ART OF DENNIS VENIZELOS



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

# UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

## July

**July 25th**

**TAG Tuesday**

*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

**July 25th, 6:30 p.m.**

**General Membership Meeting**

*In-person at Hulett Hall, or register ahead of time to receive a meeting link for remote attendance; check your email account for details and instructions.*

## August

**August 3rd, 5 to 8 p.m.**

**New Show Opening at Gallery 839**

*Featured Artist: Dennis Venizelos*

**August 29th**

**TAG Tuesday**

*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

## September

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

**New Show Opening at Gallery 839**

*Featured Artist: Veronica Valencia*

**September 26th**

**TAG Tuesday**

*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

**September 26th, 6:30 p.m.**

**General Membership Meeting**

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**  
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