



IATSE Negotiations Update: The IATSE and AMPTP recently completed a third week of Basic Agreement General Negotiations, with bargaining topics that included retirement and health benefits, wages and working conditions, and AI, among other concerns for live-action crafts. Talks then shifted to the Area Standards Agreement (ASA) negotiations that started May 20. Meanwhile, Basic Agreement negotiations are expected to restart in early June. As our own Local 839 Negotiations Committee ramps up planning for bargaining in August, please watch for a TAG email asking you to complete the Negotiations Priorities Survey. We need to hear from EVERYONE!

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THE PEGBOARD is published monthly by The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839  
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*Several members of the DWA production Organizing Committee and bargaining unit from TV and Feature gather at the fountain on the DreamWorks campus to celebrate their victory in the recent election . . . and they brought the whiteboard they used to tally up the votes!*

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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/>.

# ANIMATION TAX CREDITS FOR CALIFORNIA

TAG Field Representative and Political Coordinator Leslie Simmons, as well as TAG President Jeanette Moreno King, have been actively involved over the last several years in advocating the need for a California animation tax incentive with local and state elected officials. They recently visited Sacramento for Arts Advocacy Day where they spoke with elected officials and their staff about runaway animation productions and member job loss.

In addition, after conversations with the Burbank mayor, the city is now looking at an incentive for animation studios in town. And Los Angeles County recently proposed a county tax incentive for film and TV productions, which includes animation. Meanwhile, TAG's work continues for a California statewide incentive.

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As of now, California has a film tax incentive, but it does not include animation, unlike a few other states such as Georgia, Texas, and New York, where successful efforts led to the [\*New York State Film Production Tax Credit\*](#). For TAG members who want to know more about what they can do to support TAG's California efforts, TAG member Susan Godfrey shares her experience working on the effort, along with hundreds of other entertainment union workers, to bring tax incentives for TV and film in New York.

While on the East Coast, Godfrey worked for numerous studios until opening The Productive, an animation studio and co-working space, in 2012. She moved to L.A. from New York in 2019 to work for Bento Box Entertainment and is currently a Production Manager on *Grimsburg*.

## **Why and how did you get involved in lobbying for tax incentives for film and TV in New York?**

Along with members of my studio, I used to go to festivals and markets and pitch animated show ideas for our animation peers and other studio members. The idea was that if we landed a show, the animation would be done at our collective studio. We quickly realized the financial disadvantage at play due to the lack of tax incentives in the U.S. compared to countries like Canada. We'd hear time and time again: "There is no advantage for us to work with American/New York City studios."

What did they mean by this? Well, other countries have tax credits. What's a tax credit? Canada has a breathtaking tax incentives program for animation and film production. The country itself gives 30% back on qualified cost for every dollar spent in a Canadian animation studio. British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario offer an additional 20%-30% back on productions within their provinces, and even individual cities like Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto have additional tax credit programs of 5%-10% percent back. Depending on where you hire in Canada, you can get up to 60% of your taxes back on every dollar spent in film and animation. If you go to markets in Europe, you'll find other countries doing the same. These realizations sparked our efforts to lobby for change, aiming to level the playing field for New York studios and the broader American animation industry.

### **How did your job skills working in production help with these efforts?**

If nothing else in production, you learn how to write an email. You also get quite handy with the spreadsheets and the tracking. Our success in getting tax credits for New York was a lot of luck and good timing, but it was also a lot of research, systematic inquiries, follow up, and polite persistence. It's making a plan of attack, executing it, regrouping, analyzing, replanning, and then executing some more. It's gauging when a phone call or a meeting will suffice and when to break out floods of emails, signs, and marches.

### **Please share some of the steps in your lobbying efforts?**

I had a book I'd gotten at the library; it outlined how to propose a bill and argue it, and all the different ways to promote a cause, including:

- Finding groups with common interests and teaming up
- Running effective letter campaigns (don't Xerox!)
- Organizing rallies
- Managing your keynote speakers (make sure they hit your talking points!)
- Knowing when it's best to march on Washington (May!)
- Handling yourself when meeting politicians

These were all things I'd never done before. Starting with that as a guide, I researched and wrote emails to policymakers. New York City had a defunct tax incentive program. I tried to get in touch with them. I wrote our congress-people, I wrote our governor, and I followed up with people until I got an "in" with the Empire State Development Group (ESD).

A sweet lady named Connie McFeeley (she's still there) told us Governor Cuomo would be interested in expanding his Live Action tax credit incentive program, which was housed with the ESD, into animation. Ms. McFeeley asked if our group could please hold a meeting to discuss what we had in mind.

For this first meeting with the ESD, I reached out for volunteers to join me and was accompanied by animator Alan Foreman and animator Mike Luzzi. When ESD called for more information and follow-up meetings, I went after different local animation Producers, including Heather Tilert (then at Nickelodeon), Shannon Pynowski from Titmouse, and Shabnam Rezaei, founder and creator at Big Bad Boo Studios—they all met with ESD to testify and advise.

In a follow-up campaign where we were asking to expand the new credit into smaller formats, the state met with Melanie Grisanti (then a Producer at *Sesame Street*), Alia Nakashima (then at 100 Chickens and now a Producer at *Sesame Street*), and Matchi Tantillo (from MTV Animation and *Pee-wees Playhouse*, and a Production Manager for me at the time).

In addition, when we started working with ESD, we promoted the surveys they did and provided budgets and whatever animation tax credit programs information we could find for ESD to look at/model after. Throughout emailing, I had a list of NYC animators, and we used Mailchimp to keep them informed of what was going on. Many people in the community would activate and write emails when we were targeting for attention or answer surveys when different parties would ask us to conduct them.

### **What successes were achieved?**

The ESD expanded their Live Action Tax Credit program into animation the summer of 2016. Eleven-minute and 23-minute animations get 30% back on qualified cost when produced in a New York state animation studio; they receive 35% if the production is outside New York City.

For me personally, my last job in New York was layout and compositing and then rigging on *Our Cartoon President* which used the ESD credit. Before that I produced a pilot, *Reggae Shark*, on YouTube Red for The Key of Awesome and got them the New York State tax credit. Most recently, I consulted for the independent filmmaker Signe Baumann and got her 30% back on her animated film *My Love Affair with Marriage*—what a champion for independent animation that lady is. Being able to help her accomplish what she does in film is probably the work I'm most proud of.

## **What incentives would you like to lobby for in California, and what advice would you offer to achieve them?**

California should have a TV and film tax credit program that includes animation. It surprises me that the animation industry had the success it's had for as long as it has without one. L.A. should have one, as well. This is an industry town; of course, this town should support that industry. I also believe there should be a federal incentive program. There are animation programs at colleges all over this country. Policymakers have to agree that there should be opportunities for the talented kids in their own families, in their communities, and in this country that don't require expatriating.

I'm hoping anyone reading this might remember when people on Facebook were replacing their profile pictures with a greenscreen in support of the Animation VFX crunch/death of Rhythm and Hues. It was an incredible moment for our industry's visibility, achieved by one person's efforts. It got Obama speaking at DreamWorks, talking about keeping movies and animated film in America, and how it was important for the identity of our country. Though that movement fizzled out, the circumstances that brought it about are as true now as they were then.

## **How can Animation Guild members work across crafts and studios to support these efforts here in California?**

My advice? Collaboration and persistence are key. We need to rally the community and use our collective voice to ask for and advocate for the support we need. People used to ask me at NYC events what they could do to help, and I would always say activate any way you can. If someone is asking for emails, write emails. If someone's calling a meeting, and you can, go to the meeting, learn about what's going on, and help.

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As TAG's efforts in California continue, additional future outreach is being planned, including a presentation to the California Film Commission. If you have a personal story about jobs leaving the state and the effect it's had on your career and livelihood, please contact Leslie at [leslie.simmons@tag839.org](mailto:leslie.simmons@tag839.org). As other opportunities arise to join the efforts, we will let members know.



## TAG REPS FROM COAST-TO-COAST

By **Leslie Simmons & Evangelina Nevarez**  
*TAG Field Representatives*

As a National Local of the IATSE, TAG is representing and organizing animation artists and workers across the country. With that organizing and securing of first contracts comes the representation side of the Local. And that's where the Field Representatives come into play.

Over the last several months, TAG Field Representatives Eva Nevarez and Leslie Simmons have traveled across the U.S. to meet with members and units bargaining their first contracts with TAG. It's important for members to know that no matter where they are, TAG is representing them in the workplace and enforcing their contracts.

After TAG kicked off negotiations for a first contract with Gladius Studios in February, Eva traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico to visit incoming TAG members at the studio to gather as a team for the second joint session in early March. The Gladius Negotiating Committee and Eva met at IATSE Local 494's hall to attend the remote joint bargaining session. Backed by a large and prominently-placed IATSE logo, this joint session demonstrated to the employer the interlocal solidarity and IATSE's presence on the island. The company presented its counter to the TAG's opening proposals, and the committee reviewed the counters and began formulating a response.

During the brainstorm and counter preparation, Local 494's staff graciously and generously hosted the Gladius committee with a delicious spread of fruit, pan de Mallorca, and fresh espresso. While Locals 494 and 600 prepared for a court hearing during our visit, our hosts didn't skip a beat in making the group feel welcomed and at-home.

The following day, the incoming Gladius members got together at Los Trailers in Bayamon – a trendy outdoor food truck court with a music stage and picnic tables for a TAG-hosted get-to-know-you session between Eva and the unit. Conversation topics ranged from moving forward in negotiations, becoming union members, and personal anecdotes with great laughter and connection-building between Eva and the already-solid unit. Eva said goodbye to the Gladius group with the promise to return when an agreement

is reached and ratified to mark the occasion, and to hold a meet-and-greet with company-side leadership, with whom TAG will be working to ensure proper application of the new contract. Several of these incoming members expressed their gratitude to TAG, stating they've felt well-supported by and have enjoyed working with everyone they've met through TAG.

TAG is grateful to Local 494 Business Agent Neftaly Nieves and Administrator Cecilia Soto for opening their union hall to our folks, their continued support of TAG as we work to better understand Puerto Rican labor law and especially for their solidarity with the Gladius crew. TAG is also very appreciative to Local 600 Assistant Eastern Region Director Anna Nowlan for giving us a primer to representing members in Puerto Rico and for her ongoing support as well.

In early April, Leslie visited the East Coast and held meetings with members and future members in New York City and Richmond, Virginia.

On April 2, she visited Titmouse New York studio to check in with members. The next evening, Leslie held a TAG Member Meeting and Viewing Party at the New York City Central Labor Council. This meeting was open to any TAG member in the region who wanted to travel into the city to attend. The meeting included not only members from Titmouse New York, but also members working on shows and projects covered under the Master Agreement.

The meeting was hybrid and members heard not only from Leslie, but from TAG leadership who Zoomed in, including President Jeanette Moreno King, Vice President Teri Hendrich Cusumano, and Titmouse Los Angeles Shop Steward Alex Quintas. Given the heavy rains in the city that day, there were a few members who opted to jump on the Zoom rather than battle the elements!



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>

Leslie also invited some special in-person guests. IATSE Trustee Patricia White, who heads up the Training and Education Department and also sits on the Central Labor Council's board, welcomed members and shared valuable training resources for members, including the free LinkedIn Learning subscriptions.

Several students from New York's School of Visual Arts also attended the meeting with their teacher and TAG member, Devon Manney. The students were enthusiastic about TAG's organizing on the East Coast and all were excited to someday become members of the Union.

Following the meeting, and with pizza, popcorn and snacks in hand, the Viewing Party portion of the evening took place with a screening of the Off-Broadway stage play *Burbank*. Streaming on the ThirdWing online platform, the play, written by Cameron Darwin Bossert, focuses on the battle between Walt Disney and animator/strike leader Art Babbitt, which led to the Disney artists' strike in 1941.

Kudos to the members and students who showed up - even with bad weather. And a huge thank you to the NYC-CLC and its staff for hosting TAG for this meeting!

Leslie then traveled to Richmond, Virginia to meet with some of the crew members working at Whiteboard Geeks. The crew started negotiations with their employer on March 28. Although a small group, they are mighty!

TAG hosted a lunch meeting for those who were able to attend and Leslie was able to answer many questions - and also learn more about the members of the unit and the unique company they work for, which is based in nearby Chesterfield. The Whiteboard Geeks contract, once negotiated and ratified, will be a first for TAG as it's outside of the usual TV/film studio contracts and just one of many companies our TAG organizers look to unionize in the future!

In mid-April, Eva traveled to Austin, Texas for a TAG-hosted relationship-building gathering with incoming Powerhouse members at Easy Tiger. A couple of members of the Powerhouse Negotiations Committee led the charge in choosing the venue and ensuring a great turn out. Around 13 powerful Powerhouse folks attended, including a new Local 700 editor. The group became large enough to spill onto a second large outdoor picnic table. This meet-up under the Texas sky gave Eva the opportunity to get a primer on Powerhouse Animation and life in Austin. Folks were able to get answers to their TAG questions, mostly having to do with what it means to be a union member and next steps post-contract ratification.

Discussions for a first contract with Powerhouse Animation began in the Fall of 2023 and are well underway. A follow-up visit will occur with this group to commemorate a new agreement, once achieved and ratified, and TAG will also connect with the studio-side leadership to begin our new contractual connection with the goal of developing a solution-based and productive relationship.

TAG Field Reps are spreading their wings to travel and represent new and existing members in the U.S. It’s important that every member knows they are represented and that TAG is on their side. We’re not just a Los Angeles Local of the IATSE - we’re National!

TAG members with work issues can contact the Field Reps by filling out the Member Help Form: <https://tinyurl.com/MemberHelpForm>.

### Who’s Your TAG Field Rep?

Late last year, TAG Field Reps went through the list of studios and “split” the list to ensure better representation of the membership. That means, if a member is working at a studio and needs to reach out for a question or issue, there is a designated Field Rep to work with for that studio. While some of the smaller studios signed to TAG agreements are not part of this list at the moment, the larger studios and those regularly employing our members are.

EVANGELINA NEVAREZ	
6 Point 2	Skybound
A24	Skydance
Cartoon Network	Warner Bros. Animation
DreamWorks	Animation
Gladius	WAG (Warner Bros. Pictures Animation)
Illumination/NBCU	Zamodo (OddBot)
Netflix	Zoms Productions (Universal)
Powerhouse - Austin	
Powerhaus - LA	

LESLIE SIMMONS	
Atomic	Paramount/Viacom
Bento Box	/CBS
Disney TVA	Rough Draft Studios
Flying Bark Studios	ShadowMachine
Fox TV Animation	Sony Pictures Animation
Gaumont	Animation
Green Portal (Rick and Morty)	Titmouse LA & NY
Marvel	WDAS/TTL Remote Workers
Nickelodeon	Wild Canary
	Whiteboard Geeks



You're invited to a webinar:

# Target-Date Investments

Learn how target-date investments work, how to choose one, and what happens as you approach the target date.

DATE	TIME
June 7, 2024	9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m.
June 10, 2024	2 p.m., 5 p.m., and 8 p.m.

*All times shown are Eastern time.*



### Register now

Scan this code to sign up or access a recording (available for 60 days)—or visit [webinars.on24.com/Vanguard\\_IIG/VES2024](https://webinars.on24.com/Vanguard_IIG/VES2024).

**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.

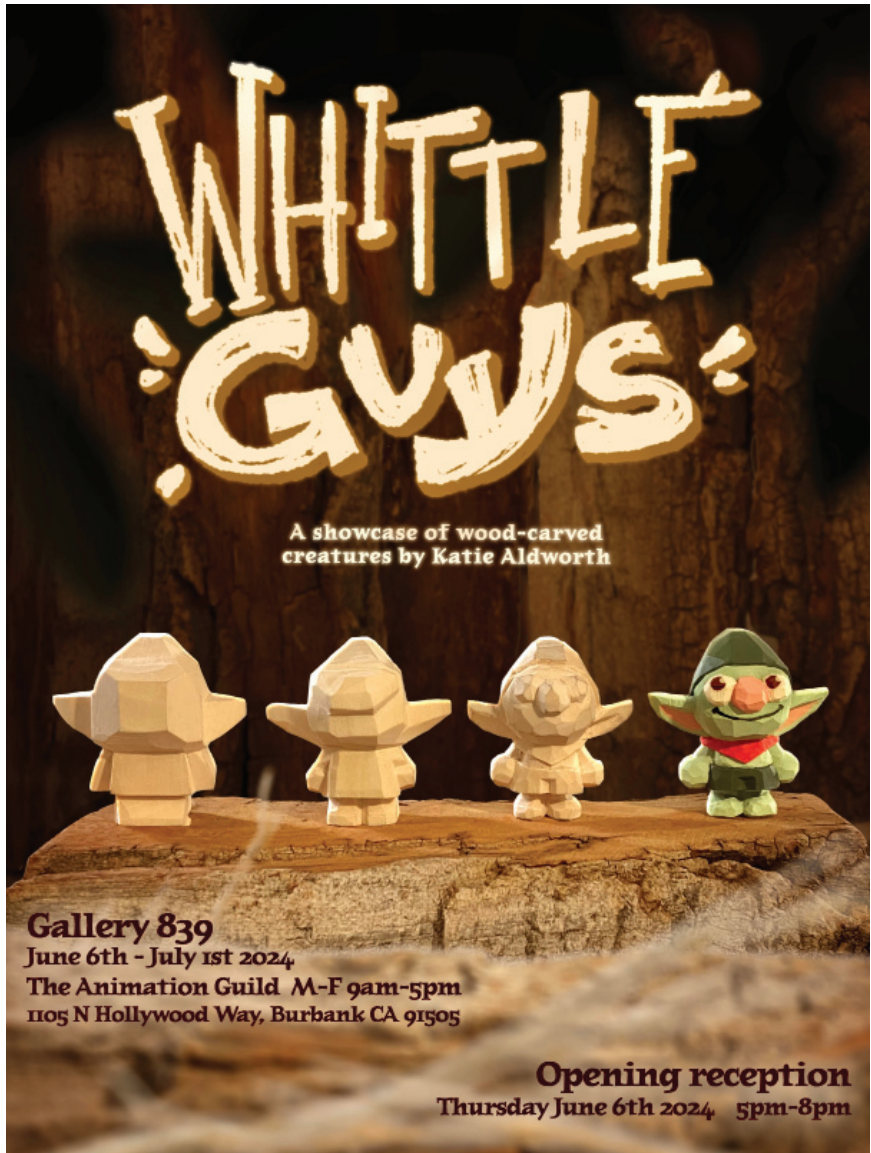
# IN MEMORIAM

***Gloria Palter*** — 6/30/1930 – 3/8/2024 — Animation Checker  
Gloria Palter worked at Adelaide Productions, Nickelodeon, and Film Roman. Among her TV credits are *Extreme Ghostbusters*, *Godzilla: The Series*, *Men in Black: The Series*, *Skunk Fu!*, and *King of the Hill*. She was 93.

***Harry Sabin*** — 7/15/1956 – 4/15/2024 — Harry Sabin was an Animator, Designer, Visual Development Artist, and Storyboard Artist for Warner Bros., Disney TVA, Filmation, and other studios. His film credits include *The Iron Giant*, *Osmosis Jones*, and *Space Jam*, while his many TV credits range from *BraveStarr* to *American Dad!* He was 67.



*Regular Gallery Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.*



Katie Aldworth is a director, storyboard artist, and all-around cartoon goblin. For the past 11 years, Katie has worked for animation studios including: Cartoon Network, Netflix, Disney, Warner Brothers, Tiltmouse, and Nickelodeon. Outside of work, you can find Katie playing dungeons and dragons, camping in the woods, and whittling - ideally, all at the same time. Katie lives with her wife and two cats (Snap and Toby) in Burbank, California, and usually has wood shavings stuck to her socks. I bet you \$20 there's some in her shoe right now.

# UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ANIMATION GUILD

## June

**June 6th, 5 to 8 p.m.**  
**New Show Opening at Gallery 839**  
*Katie Aldworth: Whittle Guys*

**June 25th**  
**TAG Tuesday**  
*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

## July

**July 4th**  
**Contract Holiday: Independence Day**

**July 5th, 5 to 8 p.m.**  
**New Show Opening at Gallery 839**

**July 30th**  
**TAG Tuesday**  
*Wear your TAG T-shirt!*

**July 30th, 6:30 p.m.**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
In-person at Hulett Hall, or attend online via Zoom.  
*Only members who are Active and in Good Standing may attend;*  
*check your status by emailing [membership@tag839.org](mailto:membership@tag839.org).*  
*Watch for a TAG email to register ahead of time and receive a Zoom link to attend online, or come in person and enjoy refreshments starting at 6 p.m.*

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



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