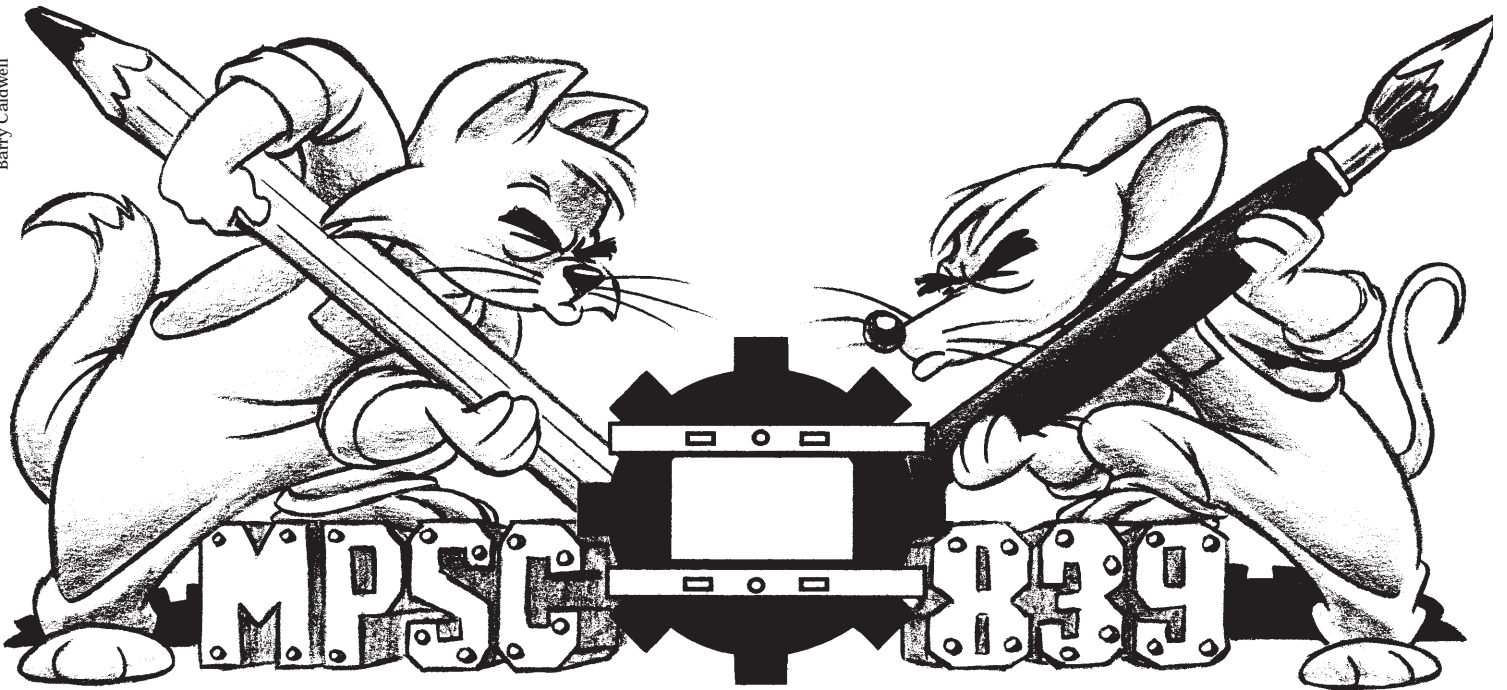


THE PEG-BOARD

Barry Caldwell



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 1996

VOL. 25, NO. 2

IA Basic Agreement settled in record time

After a marathon session that concluded at 4 am, agreement was reached February 1 on a new four-year agreement between the IATSE and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. The new IATSE Basic Agreement, which will be in effect August 4, 1996 through July 31, 2000, will contain changes in health and pension that affect Local 839 members.

As we go to press, the exact terms of the new agreement have not yet been released. The negotiations were the fastest and least rancorous Basic Agreement negotiations in years, thanks in large part to the success of the IATSE's national organizing efforts under the presidency of Thomas Short. The February 16 *Daily Variety* reports that President Short is in negotiations with producer Lawrence Bender, in pursuit of an industry-wide agreement for low-budget theatrical features.

Local 839's contract is set to expire on October 31; talks are expected to begin in late summer or early fall.

Union says "BOO" to new signator

The Screen Cartoonists signed yet another new animation studio at the end of December — BOX OFFICE ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS, formerly known as Invisible Crew, Inc. The company is producing a new animated series for HBO, and planning to produce more.

For more information, contact: Sheri Stringfellow, Box Office Original Productions, 2049 Century Park East, 42nd floor, Los Angeles, CA 90067; (310) 229-1107.

Thanks to BARRY CALDWELL of Warner Bros. Animation for the 1996 *Peg-Board* logo. What we can't quite figure out, though, is: are the cat and mouse pushing to keep the gears moving, or are they using the pencil and brush to try to get the gears to stop? Questions, questions ...

MOTION PICTURE SCREEN CARTOONISTS & AFFILIATED OPTICAL ELECTRONIC & GRAPHIC ARTS

From the Business Representative

Signing contracts, negotiating contracts

Elsewhere in this journal of fact and opinion, you'll read that the Screen Cartoonists have signed yet another contract with yet another animation studio. I would dearly like to tell you that it's entirely due to my inspired, energetic leadership, to my vigilant, steely-eyed gaze constantly scanning the animation horizon, constantly searching for new opportunities. I'd like to tell you that, but if I did, I would be lying through my teeth.

The reason that BOO Productions is now signed to an 839 contract is because the company's executives approached animation artists about coming to work on their new cartoon series for HBO, and most (if not all) of the artists they contacted said "Wonderful. Just as soon as you sign a contract with the Screen Cartoonists, I'll come running." The next thing the artists did was to call me, and I sprang into action. I called Box Office Originals, told them they were talking to a lot of our members and therefore we wanted a contract. After a short pause, the company told me they'd get back to me, and a day later they did. A week after that, we had a brief negotiation, and a contract was in force.

The moral of the story is that none of the above could have happened without union artists demanding it. If nobody had made an issue of the company signing a Screen Cartoonists contract, the company would have gone on its merry way without one. The company would have been foolish to do otherwise, for signing a contract with us puts more money in employees' pockets ... which puts less in the employers'. As a lawyer for Leon Schlesinger told union activist Chuck Jones long, long ago: companies are not charitable organizations.

(see FROM THE BUSINESS REP, page 3)

From the President

401(k) blues

Three years ago you told us you needed a 401(k) plan to supplement your pension and provide a tax sheltered investment. Financial experts from William S. Rukeyser to my Aunt Wanda trumpet the praises of belonging to a 401(k); they say in this age of financial uncertainty and dropping monetary value you gotta be nuts not to be in one. Most companies automatically enroll you in one to bind your loyalty to the firm.

So with the best of intentions we laid a multi-employer plan before our employers' negotiators at the 1993 contract talks. We got totally stonewalled. Giving up on that route, we worked internally and got a sympathetic hearing at Disney. They joined the plan and today 50% of their artists are covered, and the Walt Disney Company doesn't seem to be going to hell in a handbasket as a result.

We've done handstands adding amendments to make all the lawyers happy. And yet after three years, major players like Warner Bros., Turner and Dreamworks continue to say it's not in their interest. Turner was all gung-ho, then they changed their minds. Warner Bros. acts like we want a cut of the Tweety Bird t-shirt sales or something. After a year of negotiating amendments, Dreamworks was supposed to start enrolling the week of January 19. Suddenly their lawyer asked a colleague in New York if he could find anything and he came up with some more issues.

We're asking for the minimum of plans, no employer matching. They put no money in, we set up the plan with 839 funds, all they have to do is add a few more columns on their payroll tapes. We're using the most reputable maintenance company in the United States. It's not costing them a nickel.

(see FROM THE PRESIDENT, page 3)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from page 2)

What's the big damn deal? I just don't get it.

When the army of Alexander the Great was marching through the Gedrosian desert of Persia, the men were dropping of thirst. Alexander, their leader, poured his ration of water from his helmet out onto the sand, saying he would share the hardships of his men. When your execs at Warners and Turner babble about how dangerous and risky a 401(k) is for you, just remember they all have one. Fat, executive 401(k) plans, bulging with matching funds. Think of these last three years you lost to their artful dodging. Think of how much they must have made from theirs while saying you don't need one. They explain that their executive plan is in lieu of overtime, but come on ... They get nicely compensated with bonuses. When the production starts, they get a check. When an interim deadline is met, they get another check. If the production is on budget, another check. Is it a mystery that every new baby producer is driving a custom BMW or Lexus in six months, even when the film has barely started? And do they get carpal tunnel syndrome? Glaucoma? Is their marriage in danger because they have to work seven-day weeks? In fact, how many of them do you even see after seven p.m.?

Yet the clock keeps ticking, and they keep stalling. Maybe their scheme is to stall until the new contract negotiations and then offer a 401(k) as a big golden plum, to exchange for your overtime or putting you on a computer and then saying you aren't in our jurisdiction anymore. Because in their version of reality, if you make an image with a computer instead of a pencil, you are no longer an artist but a TV repairman.

I dunno. There are lotsa good apples in the bunch, who are trying to pull a 401(k) off. But a corporation is a many-headed hydra. Disney understands the special relationship between artist and company. Maybe the others don't. Maybe they think we are all just key flicks on their laptops.

Should you be mad? Sure.

But we re not giving up and neither should you. We don't want to negotiate what we negotiated for three years ago. We deserve it and we re not going to trade for it or waste another year. Keep phoning, keep complaining. Let's do more petitions. The one thing they hope for is for you to forget about it. If ever you do, just think of their management 401(k)s, and stay mad!

— Tom Sito

FROM THE BUSINESS REP

(continued from page 2)

The one thing I find out over and over again, Spring or Summer, rain or shine, is the artists are the ones that employers listen to. When storyboarders, animators, background artists and affiliated technicians care less about the benefits our contract provides, when medical coverage or pensions bore them, then the Duck Soups, Cartoon Capers and Film Romans are delighted to save money by sidestepping a union contract. Pay the key people better if the market demands it, pay the beginners less. Scrimp on pension and health. Companies are not charitable organizations. But when the employees make it an issue, especially in the movie industry, contracts soon result.

And good contracts go on resulting. A case in point is the recent IA/AMPTP negotiations. The IA, for the first time in a decade, was bargaining from a position of strength. Angry film crews, tired of low wages and no medical benefits, were organizing their companies, and IA president Tom Short made it clear that he had the power and will to make a nationwide shutdown stick if the AMPTP demanded concessions. The result, after days of hard

bargaining, was a contract — for the first time in a decade — without major rollbacks.

The same dynamic going on in live-action is present in spades in the world of animation. Over the past two months, the office has gotten dozens of calls from artists bailing out of non-union shops and hiring on with union ones. Eight weeks ago, a production manager at a hard-core non-union facility called me to inquire about getting a contract. He told me that the company was offering exorbitant wages to hang on to key personnel, but the key personnel weren't biting. They kept talking about keeping their health and pension intact, and Disney was calling with multi-year contracts, so thanks but sayonara.

I suggested to the production manager (who I know) that maybe the non-union fortress for which he works might be better off with a Screen Cartoonists contract. He mulled over what I said, and promised to get back to me. He hasn't gotten back to me yet, but I'm thinking, the way things are going, maybe it's only a matter of time.

— Steve Hulett

At the water-cooler

Congratulations to DON JUDGE and wife Ricki on the birth of Kylie Noelle Judge on December 14 ...

Over a hundred artists at Turner Feature Animation have signed a petition asking the U.S. Post Office to issue stamps honoring Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney for their contributions to film. The signers are asking the Post Office to use the actors' likenesses as well as their pictures in their signature roles. If you're interested in seeing the Post Office Do The Right Thing, write: Terry McCaffery, Art Director/Stamp Development, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260-2435.

Help wanted: Edinboro University of Pennsylvania invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position in the School of Liberal Arts, beginning fall semester 1996. Responsibilities: Teach all levels and areas of production with particular emphasis on character animation. Share responsibilities for course development and the operation of the Cinema program including, but not limited to, providing services for students and the maintenance of equipment. Qualifications: MFA or equivalent degree. Demonstrated expertise to teach studio classes is also required. Preference will be given to candidates with character animation experience.

The application letter should indicate the position number [0700616]; a detailed résumé; a sample reel (NTSC/VHS format) of your animation work; thirty slides of your figure drawings, quick-gesture drawings and cartoon drawings; a sample reel (NTSC/VHS format) of your student work if available; a brief statement of your philosophy of teaching; and a SASE for the return of application materials. Contact Dr. Philip Ketstetter, Acting Dean of Liberal Arts, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA 16444; phone (814) 732-2477 or 2719; fax (814) 732-2629.

On March 12, CAPS (THE CARTOON ARTISTS PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY), will be offering an evening with renowned author, director and screenwriter Nicholas Meyer. Mr. Meyer's talents are responsible for such films as Time After Time, Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country, and the controversial TV-movie The Day After. The talk will be held at CAPS's monthly meeting at the Burbank Board of Realtors building, 2006 West Magnolia Blvd. in Burbank; doors open at 7:30 pm. CAPS members admitted free; non-members \$2.00 admission. For further details, contact Steve Sakai at (818) 449-2445 or Hanna Strauss at (818) 352-1032.

Animation in the news

ABC, newly acquired by Disney, will be revamping its Saturday morning line-up. Gone will be *What A Mess*, *Free Willy*, *Madeline*, *Bump In the Night*, *Reboot*, *Dumb and Dumber*, and *Fudge*. New to the ABC Saturday A.M. lineup will be *The Jungle Book's Jungle Cubs*, *The Mighty Ducks*, and *Gargoyles: The Goliath Chronicles*. All these shows come from Disney TV. Other new shows will include *All New Doug* from the Nickelodeon series, *Bone Chillers*, and the sci-fi entry *Hypernavts* ... In its limited release, *The Lion King* became the biggest-selling video in Australian history, with 550,000 units sold ...

Paramount has asked NELVANA to stop development on three features for producers Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy. The plug has been pulled on *Sign of the Seahorse*, *The Trumpet and the Swan*, and Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always* ...

EURO DISNEY fired eighteen employees after a violent protest calling for better pay and working conditions ... Among the twenty-five films to be added to the Library of Congress' National Film Registry is the classic 1951 UPA short, *Gerald McBoing-Boing* ...

As related in recent trade papers, the *Los Angeles Times* and "The Kitty Letter," the speech-challenged cartoon character named DONALD DUCK found his classic cartoon "Clock Cleaners" pulled from the shelves of Wal-Mart because the Don was accused of muttering a word Grannie would not like to hear while going about his duties of brushing and scrubbing ...

Another Donald, the good reverend DONALD WILDMON of the American Family Association, has accused the Duckster of muttering the "F-word" (which is actually a vulgarity, not a profanity) and is asking the Disney company to pull the cartoon from circulation. At last report, Disney was still weighing its options. We wish Mr. Wildmon would stop looking for filth where there isn't any, but that is probably as fruitless an activity as asking him to stop searching for dirty words in cartoon dust clouds. In today's media-mad world, it's anything and everything for a snappy press release ...

As we go to press, salaries in animation continue to trend upward. Not only are animators, assistant animators, layout and background artists receiving higher salary offers, but sheet timers have now found their wages going higher. We attribute this phenomena to Adam Smith's Invisible Hand, wherein a limited number of qualified employees are confronted with a larger number of jobs.

Animation makes waves at the Oscars

A record number of Academy Award nominations have gone to animated films, including the first such nominations ever in screenwriting categories.

Babe, the talking-pig feature that combined live-action and computer-generated animation, won six nominations including best picture. Despite the Academy's questionable decision to exempt *Toy Story* from nomination in the visual effects category, the feature garnered three nominations plus a special Oscar for director John Lasseter. Both *Toy Story* and *Pocahontas* were nominated for Best Original Song and in the new category of Best Original Musical Or Comedy Score. For the first time since *Mickey's Christmas Carol* in 1983, a film produced under IATSE jurisdiction — Disney's *Runaway Brain* — was nominated for Best Animated Short.

Two animation pioneers will receive special Academy Awards at the Oscar ceremony on March 25. CHUCK JONES, the creator or animation director of classic cartoon characters Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Wile E. Coyote, Pepe LePew, the Road Runner, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig and Michigan J. Frog, has been voted an Honorary Award. The Oscar will be presented to the eighty-three-year-old animator for "the creation of classic cartoons and cartoon characters whose animated lives have brought joy to our real ones for more than half a century."

JOHN LASSETER, director and co-writer of *Toy Story*, has been voted a Special Achievement Award. Lasseter will receive the Oscar "for the development and inspired application of techniques that have made possible the first feature-length computer-animated film".

Here is a complete list of 1995 Academy Award nominations for films featuring animation:

Best picture of the year:

Babe (Universal), A Kennedy Miller Pictures Production — George Miller, Doug Mitchell and Bill Miller, Producers

Best achievement in directing:

Chris Noonan, *Babe* (Universal)

Best achievement in art direction:

Babe (Universal) — Art direction, Roger Ford; Set decoration, Kerrie Brown

Best achievement in film editing:

Marcus D'Arcy, *Babe* (Universal)

Best achievement in music (original musical or comedy score):

Pocahontas (Buena Vista) — Music by Alan Menken; Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz; Orchestral Score by Alan Menken
Toy Story (Buena Vista), Randy Newman

Best achievement in music (original song):

"Colors of the Wind" from *Pocahontas* (Buena Vista) — Music by Alan Menken; Lyric by Stephen Schwartz
"You've Got a Friend" from *Toy Story* (Buena Vista) — Music and Lyric by Randy Newman

Best achievement in animated short films:

The Chicken from Outerspace, A Stretch Films, Inc. Production — John R. Dilworth
A Close Shave, An Aardman Animations Production — Nick Park
The End, An Alias/Wavefront Production — Chris Landreth and Robin Bargar
Gagarin, A Second Frog Animation Group Production — Alexij Kharitidi
Runaway Brain, A Walt Disney Pictures Production — Chris Bailey

Best screenplay written directly for the screen:

Toy Story (Buena Vista) Screenplay by Joss Whedon, Andrew Stanton, Joel Cohen and Alec Sokolow; Story by John Lasseter, Peter Docter, Andrew Stanton, Joe Ranft

Best screenplay based on material previously produced or published:

Babe (Universal) Screenplay by George Miller & Chris Noonan

Honorary Academy Award:

Chuck Jones

Special Achievement Award:

John Lasseter

In memoriam

Animation pioneer, producer and author SHAMUS (JIMMY) CULHANE died on February 2 after a long battle with diabetes and circulatory problems. He was eighty-eight.

Starting in 1924 as an errand boy at J.R. Bray's studio, becoming an animator with the advent of sound (he could read music), his career spanned sixty years. Fleischer, Iwerks, Van Beuren, Disney, Warner Bros., Walter Lantz, Shamus Culhane Productions, Hal Seegar, Storyboard, Famous, Steve Krantz, Gamma, M.G. Films and Westfall. He taught animation and his two books, *Talking Animals and Other Funny People* and *Animation From Script to Screen* are two of the more popular volumes on animation around today.

Shamus was one of animation's great personalities. He lived life in broad strokes with a gusto worthy of Rabelais or Falstaff. Inspiring, maddening, irreverent, tender, he never failed to elicit opinions wherever he went, and never paid them notice.

In 1977, I was his assistant on one of his final films, a nuclear civil-defense film (Mea culpa! a non-union project). Shamus taught me X-sheets, assist and production techniques; using the old fashioned way of instruction: regularly delivered butt-kicking. When he saw I would not wither under his tough tutelage, we became fast friends.

Marc Davis said Grim Natwick didn't just teach him about animation, he taught him about life. Shamus had the same effect on me. He taught me that you could love the art of animation and not have to be a cartoon geek, you could parallel your tastes towards fine art and music (During an argument with Max Fleischer, Max growled at him: "You know what's your problem, Culhane? You are an artist!")

As an employer he had locked horns with unions in the past, yet he was proud of my union leadership, calling me "El Presidente!" and predicting to me that the future of the animation

employer-employee relationship will evolve eventually into employee-owned studios.

Farewell, my teacher and friend. My second father. I think his epitaph can be found in his reminiscence on the Gala Premiere night of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. He recalled as he was walking the red carpet towards the theater he heard two onlookers say: "Who's that? Nahh, that's nobody!", and that after the triumph of the film he thought to himself: "Screw you s.o.b.'s. I've worked on a picture that will be around long after you're dead. *I am somebody!*"

— Tom Sito



Cartoonist and teacher BURNE HOGARTH died on January 28 at the age of eighty-five. Hogarth was the author of the famous *Dynamic Anatomy* books, did the *Tarzan* comic strip and co-founded the School of Visual Arts in New York. He was a longtime president of the National Cartoonists Society.



Sound editor SAM HORTA died on January 8. He started at Disney as an inbetweener in 1952, then transferred to the editorial department. He worked for UPA and Filmation before starting Horta Editorial and Sound in 1977. In addition to his Emmy-award winning work on *Hill Street Blues*, Horta edited the soundtracks for innumerable TV series, both animated and live-action. (A trivia note: as sound editor for the original *Star Trek* series, Horta's last name was used for the rock creatures in the "Devil In The Dark" episode.)



Animation checker GRACE McCURDY died on December 12, 1995. From 1932 until her retirement in 1979, she worked for Disney, Sketchbook Films, Mary Cain, UPA and Hanna-Barbera.

Observe how transient and trivial is all mortal life; yesterday a drop of semen, tomorrow a handful of ashes. Spend, therefore, these fleeting moments on earth as Nature would have you spend them, and then go to your rest with a good grace, as an olive falls in its season, with a blessing for the earth that bore it and a thanksgiving to the tree that bore it life...

— Marcus Aurelius, quoted in the program for
“An Afternoon of Remembrance”



An afternoon of remembrance

Over two hundred people gathered at the Hollywood United Methodist Church on the afternoon of February 3, to honor the memory of twenty-three members of the animation community who passed away in 1995. The event, cosponsored by Local 839, ASIFA/Hollywood and Women In Animation, turned out to be both moving and affirmative, in its celebration of the lives of our friends and fellow employees and employers.

The Memorial Committee, consisting of Bronwen Barry, Joe Campana, Kellie-Bea Rainey, Tom Sito, George Sukara and Dave Zaboski, outdid themselves in their preparation of the service and the reception that followed. We hope to make this an annual event; if you're interested in being involved in future celebrations, contact the Local 839 office at (818) 766-7151.

Thanks to the following, whose reminiscences of departed members were the highlight of the Memorial Service:

JACKIE BANKS *Vicki Casper*, read by Pat Sito
PRESTON BLAIR *Jeff Massie*
BOB BROWN *Pat Duran*
JACK BUCKLEY
..... *Dorse Lanpher*, read by Steve Hulett
LARS CALONIUS . *Erik Calonius and Jack Zander*,
read by Carla Fallberg
CHRIS CHU *Curtis Cim*
MARGARET COOK
..... *Keith Baldwin*, read by Kellie-Bea Rainey
BUD CRABE *Herb Klynn*, read by Tom Sito
JIM DAVIS *Clair Weeks*
FRIZ FRELENG *Chuck Jones*
JOHN HALAS *June Foray*
ALEX IGNATIEV ... *Norm McCabe*, read by Tom Ray

LEONARD JOHNSON
..... *Joanna Romersa*, read by Bronwen Barry
PAUL JULIAN *Eric Semones*
HAL KRAMER *Bill Stout*
MICHAEL LAH *Paul Carlson*
BOB McCREA *Kelly Asbury*
DORIS POLLACK
..... *Alison Leopold*, read by Tracy Wells
NESTOR REDONDO *Jan Nagel*
LARRY SILVERMAN
..... *Rich Trueblood*, read by George Sukara
IRV SPENCE *Bill Hanna*, read by Bronwen Barry
JOHN WHITNEY, SR. *Michael Whitney and*
Ellen Wolff, read by George Sukara
GINA WOOTTEN *Tammy Terusa*

We're pleased to report that FEODOR KHITRUK, longtime head of the Russian animators' union, is still alive, contrary to reports that had led us to include him in our January Peg-Board listing of memorial honorees.

Q&A

Q: I've applied for dismissal pay from my former employer, but they said I have to use the form provided by the union. Is this true?

A: No. As a reminder and courtesy, once a month we mail a form to members who appear on our records as eligible for dismissal pay. However, you don't need to wait to get this form from us — you can apply for it in writing as soon as your ninety days' layoff is up.

Working TV writer developing comic panel/strip for potential newspaper syndication. I'm looking for a collaborator who's as funny/hip visually as I am verbally. Terry Ross, 6361 W. 6th St., Los Angeles 90048; call/fax (213) 934-1223.

*Upcoming contract holidays:
Good Friday (April 5)
Memorial Day (May 27)*



Animation newsletters

In 1940 and 1941, during the First Golden Age of Animation, a few stalwarts of the Disney animation crew — freshly settled in their new digs in Burbank — published a small, gag-filled publication called *Under the Gold Rotunda*. The paper was four pages long, filled with inside jokes, and named after the gold-leafed dome in the middle of the Animation Building’s first-floor hallway. It lasted about a year.

Today, of course, we are in the midst of animation’s new Golden Age (should we call it the “Platinum Age?”) and animation department newsletters have proliferated. With one notable exception, none are in the smart-aleck, employee generated mode of “Under the Gold Rotunda. Most are sponsored by the companies running the animation divisions.

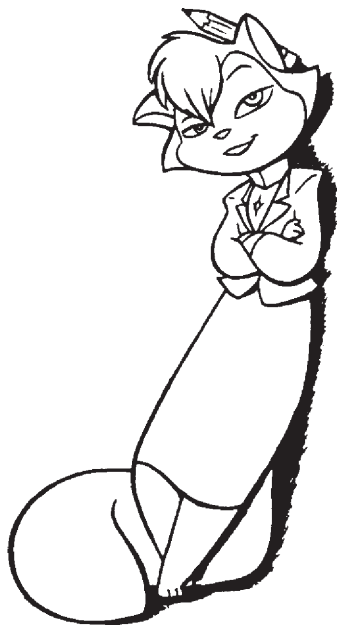
The longest-lived Department newsletter that we know about is Disney Feature Animation’s *Twilight Bark*, which began life in the summer of 1989 as a four-page informational sheet. Since original editor and Local 839 member MIKE PALUMBO, a succession of p.a.s and administrators have found that it’s “a lot of work” to assemble the text, graphics and photographs into a weekly publication that has grown steadily over the years. (Prior to *Bark*, the old employee publication *The Disney Newsreel*, now in its twenty-fifth volume, was where animation employees got their information.)

Since 1992, when Disney’s Orlando, Florida studio found itself expanding from a small animation outpost entertaining Disney World visitors with animation artists working behind glass while Walter Cronkite (on

film) explained the animation process to tourists, *Bark’s* sister publication *Rabbit Rabbit* has been publishing. Today the

small satellite studio has grown to a full-blown production facility employing over two hundred artists and technicians. And *Rabbit* has grown along with it.

(see NEWSLETTERS, page 9)



the Kitty Letter

ISSUE # 80



Volume II
Issue 5

The Animated Times

WARNER BROS. FEATURE ANIMATION NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTERS

(continued from page 8)

Like the other company newsletters, *Rabbit* relies on computer desktop publishing programs. It offers cartoons, general information, and production updates. *Rabbit's* centerpiece is its weekly interview with an animation artist, generally someone who is relatively new to the Orlando facility.

Warner Bros. Features' *The Animated Times* started in February of 1995, shortly after the studios began. *The Animated Times* began life as a monthly, and initially was shunted around to several different editors. Tim Jones, a p.a. in special effects, was one of the early editors, and says he "had a good time with it," adding more graphics and more pages. Today *The Animated Times* is a ten-page newsletter with photos, cartoons and a column entitled "Questy's Update" by Questy the Wonder Puppet as told to SUE KROYER.

DreamWorks, the newest animation studio, has just launched its own in-house newsletter called *In The Works*. To date, they have published two four-page compendiums, and hope to get *Works* out on a monthly basis. As one of DreamWorks production execs related, "it's kind of tough getting out a newsletter when you're still working to get a studio off the ground."

Over at Turner Feature Animation, there is no company animation newsletter. What they do have, however, is a cheeky underground newsletter called *The Kitty Letter*. The *Letter* was started by JOHN EDDINGS. "I started it due to popular demand ... well, actually due to a woman I had worked with at

Bluth, who remembered the paper I put out there, and thought we should have another."

John has a long history of "underground" publishing. While at Bluth in Ireland, he published what was mostly a graphics publication called *The Fourth Floor Funnies* which ran the visual scribbling of various artists in the company. Some, John says, were not overly flattering, and Don Bluth called him in to tell him to get permission from the various victims before running their caricatures. Don also told him that no permission was needed for cartoons featuring Don, Gary Goldman or John Pomeroy.

When John returned to the states, he continued publishing a paper at Bluth's Burbank facility. John tells us that these earlier papers were heavy on graphics and light on written material, but that *The Kitty Letter* evolved into a paper that was just the reverse — more writing and fewer visuals. Apparently artists like to take an occasional break from drawing and belly up to their word processors to turn out pieces on everything from the evils of Richard Nixon to the joys of jury duty. And every once in a while, something is run that ticks off management — but this is the risk of publishing an elbows-out, no-holds-off-limits underground newsletter.

All of these "in-house" newsletters offer cartoons, articles and information of varying quality and usefulness to their respective readers. Which makes them nearer or more distant cousins of *The Peg-Board*. As it enters its twenty-fifth year of continuous publication, and the thirty-fifth anniversary of its first issue, *The Peg-Board* may well lay claim to being the longest-running animation newsletter.

For sale

Animation light board, 14" by 16" by 5" high, with pegs and light source. Portable, made of heavy translucent plastic. \$50.00. Call Ken Southworth, (714) 533-1958.

Animation company selling specialized furniture and equipment. For further details, please contact Bekah at Hearst Animated Productions, 1640 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025; (310) 475-1700 ext. 170.

Help wanted

HANNA-BARBERA CARTOONS is looking for artists to join the crew of our "What A Cartoon!" miniseries, Dexter's Laboratory. We need BG layout artists with strong draftsmanship and design abilities. We're also looking for background artists that are able to adapt to the show's color style. Start dates mid- to late February. Please contact Debby Hindman at (213) 969-4117 or Donna Castricone at (213) 969-4168.

Sample reels and the “catch-22”

Last year, President Sito appointed a committee to look into the problems faced by members needing to compile “sample reels” of animation for their portfolios. Here’s a report from committee member Ray Pointer.

As I enter my fifth year in the Hollywood animation arena, I continue to be overwhelmed at the rate that the industry has grown. The demand for animation artists is apparent. Along with this demand comes certain requirements for applying for these jobs — particularly for animators.

In addition to the standard portfolio requirements, some employers require a “professionally edited” sample reel of scenes animated by the applicant. This presents an interesting and challenging situation for a number of reasons. Many studios are protective of scenes in their films, and do not, as a rule, make them available to the artists that worked on them. The studios are particularly protective of scenes in their films and do not, as a rule, make them available to the artists who worked on them. The studios are particularly protective if the film has not yet been released.

The recourse would be to wait for the home video release, and copy the scene onto a “sample reel”. This presents many problems, beginning with copy protection and copyright infringement, to the possibility misrepresentation on a number of levels. Did the applicant actually animate the scene? And the appearance of finished scenes in a sample reel opens another Pandora’s box. In representing not only the animator’s initial statement, but also the work of the assistants whose interpretation gave definition and style to the animation. Finished scenes also represent the work of art directors, color stylists, background painters, effects animators, cameramen ... and so on ...

As other studios follow Disney’s lead, it should be noted that their requirements for an animator’s application call for “pencil test” scenes. Since every studio has pencil test equipment, the solution seems to lie within reach. Almost every animator I know makes his or her own VHS pencil test for portfolio presentations. But after a while, these favorite scenes become spread out over several tapes, or scattered among other choice scenes on the same tape.

Rough attempts at edit assemblies made with home VCRs usually result in tape roll glitches and image degradation. Many portfolio reviewers are inclined to view such tapes with suspicion, and may pass on a qualified applicant due to poor reel presentation. Professional edit jobs would make a more effective impression. But the question is — “Where do you go for the best deal?”

Unfortunately, all of the IA editorial houses we contacted, such as Editel and Deluxe Video, are large-volume post-production houses, for whom individual customized jobs can be complicated and expensive. This led us to investigate small independent editing houses, such as:

Canyon Video Productions
13733 Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks 91403
Contact: Michael

Copy Right Video Duplicating
6666 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles 90028
(213) 461-4151
Contact: Paul

Film & Video Transfers
8519 Reseda Blvd.
Northridge 91324
(818) 885-6501
Contact: Joe

Moonlight Bay
4400 Coldwater Canyon, Suite 201
Studio City 91604
(818) 506-1505
Contact: Samantha

Costs run roughly from \$70 to \$155, depending on quality and extras. Some facilities can character-generate ID boards at the head of the tape, or CG your name and initials over scenes. Some, such as Moonlight Bay, offer price reductions at night. They can all handle VHS format, and most recommend assembly on U-Matic (3/4") for a master tape with VHS copies. The master provides a backup in case the VHS copies are lost or damaged. Multiple copies are recommended for application to more than one studio, and for your own reference shelf.

These facilities are listed for general information and are not recommended by myself or Local 839. As in hiring any service, the best advice is to shop around, since you are the best judge of your particular needs. Professionally edited and duplicated sample reels are definitely worth the time, effort and expense when you consider the final result — a job!

— Ray Pointer

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