



NEW YORK ACTOR

SCREEN ACTORS GUILD



NEW YORK DIVISION President's Message

Hopefully by now, we all know that the work done by unions is valuable to all workers. Ever since Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin started his effort to strip public sector workers of certain bargaining rights, I have been paying close attention.

One of the more important things to note is that it was these very unions that are responsible for the eight-hour day, the five-day work week, workers' compensation and unemployment benefits. And, of course, the overall safety of our working conditions is one of the major reasons that unions exist in the first place. Most significantly, it was the rise of the union movement that gave the United States its viable and prolific middle class.

So the attack on those workers is really an attack on all workers, because even if you are not a union member, you get the benefits of the work that unions have done.

That's why I am such a strong believer in the union movement. There is no way an individual can get those kinds of benefits on their own.

And seeing this whole political event spread across so many states brought home to me the importance of our strength as a union. So in that way (and I know we are making very significant strides in the process), the



New York SAG members join a rally at City Hall February 23 in support of Wisconsin union workers.

merger of SAG and AFTRA cannot happen soon enough. For that matter, the only thing that could really inoculate us is the merger of all unions that are paid by the producers, or at the very least all performers' unions.

The density of unions in the private sector is only 7 percent. In the public sector, it is 36 percent. It is the public sector that has been the balance against the consistent erosion of our protections by our elected officials.

What seems to be lost in this argument is the value that each of us brings to the table. Without the full, committed and connected participation of every person involved, the process cannot work.

If our children's teachers are not satisfied with their working conditions and if it is clear the teachers are not being valued, how can we expect them to inspire our children to be the best they can be? That is true of every worker who values their job but is not valued by their employer.

Anybody who works for, and gets paid by, someone else would do well to pay very close attention to what is happening with public sector workers. Soon, it could be you.

On another note, I would like to take the time to acknowledge four of your elected officers:

- Liz Zazzi, New York secretary and national

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CALLING ALL CANDIDATES

NEW YORK DIVISION ELECTIONS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN RUNNING for the position of **National Director, Alternate National Director or New York President** representing the New York Division (whose Directors also serve as New York Division Board members), you must meet all eligibility requirements (See box below). Candidates may request an interview with the New York Director Nominating Committee (“DNC”) to be considered for nomination for each office. To request an interview with the DNC, please send a letter listing qualifications to the attention of Ruth Baptiste, Screen Actors Guild, 360 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. The deadline for receipt of all letters is **5 p.m. EDT on Friday, May 6, 2011**. (Please be sure to include membership and phone numbers).

Or you may obtain a Nominating Petition from Ruth Baptiste at (212) 827-1522 in the Business Administration Department at the SAG New York office, or by mail. Petitions will be available on **Wednesday, June 1, 2011**. Your petition must be signed by no fewer than thirty-five (35) qualified members in good standing and returned to Ruth Baptiste in the Guild’s New York Office (360 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017) by **5 p.m. EDT on Thursday, July 21, 2011**. Additional requirements for the submission of nominating materials will be included in the SAG nominating petition instruction kit.

Five (5) candidate positions* for National Director and New York Division Board member will be seated for a three (3) year term and nine (9) candidate positions for Alternate Director and New York Division Board member will be seated for a one (1) year term. The candidate position for New York President will be seated for a two (2) year term.

Please direct all questions regarding the 2011 New York Division elections and/or candidate eligibility to Ruth Baptiste at (212) 827-1522, rbaptiste@sag.org.

**Please note that the number of candidate positions for National Director could increase if a vacancy occurs during the election process.*

2011 NEW YORK ELECTION CALENDAR (all times EDT)

MAY 6, 5:00 P.M.

Deadline for letters of interest to be submitted to Director Nominating Committee

JUNE 1

Nominating petitions available

JULY 21, 5:00 P.M.

Deadline for submission of petitions to New York office

JULY 22, 5:00 P.M.

Deadline for submission of headshots, bios and any other required documents.

JULY 25

Cutoff for voting eligibility. Members must be paid to 11/01/11 and in good standing by July 25 to vote.

AUGUST 23

Ballots mailed

SEPTEMBER 22, 9:30 A.M.

Deadline for receipt of voted ballot

SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS for NATIONAL DIRECTORS and ALTERNATE NATIONAL DIRECTORS

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be an active member of SAG in good standing for at least two consecutive years
- Must meet all other requirements as defined by SAG Constitution and By-Laws and Division Rules of Procedure
- Must be paid-up currently within 45 days from the beginning of the dues period as reflected in the adjacent schedule:

PERIOD ENDING	MUST BE PAID BY
05/01/11–11/01/11	06/15/11 (or date of nomination, whichever comes first)
11/01/10–05/01/11	12/16/10

For the **New York Division Board**, candidate **MUST** have been a New York Division member for at least one year.

INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE 2011 NEW YORK DIRECTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE?

The current New York Division Board of Directors is scheduled to elect a 13-member Director Nominating Committee (“DNC”) on **Monday, April 11, 2011**. The DNC’s responsibility is to nominate one candidate from among interested members to run for each New York National Director, Alternate National Director and New York President position that is to be filled by election this year.

Any member desiring to serve on the DNC should submit a written statement to the New York Division Board of Directors indicating the member’s willingness to serve **no later than 5 p.m. EDT on Friday, April 8, 2011**. Written statements should be submitted to the New York Division Board of Directors, c/o Ruth Baptiste, Screen Actors Guild, 360 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. For questions, call (212) 827-1522.

**REDUCE
WASTE
SAVE
TREES**

Sign up for paperless dues billing.

SAG.org/onlinebilling

Letter from the Editor

Your personal positive feedback on our *New York Actor* newsletter is gratifying. While budget constraints have reduced issues to two per year, we’ll keep you informed with e-blasts and our electronic SAGazine, so make sure the Guild has your updated e-mail address at SAG.org. This issue is special because it not only features content from staff and elected, but we also have three members-at-large contributing articles. Member involvement is what keeps the Guild strong, so I thank everyone who volunteered time, effort and creativity writing for this publication.

I am a New York actor, but like so many of us (4,000-plus) that call the NY Branch home, I live in the Garden State. I want to talk about member involvement in New Jersey, because SAG members stepped up big time. Last summer, the Film and Digital Media Tax Credit program was suspended by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. Many may recall *Law & Order: SVU* fled its North Bergen studio immediately following the loss of the credits, and NBC vacated a soundstage in Secaucus, home to the canceled *Mercy*, but still a useable space had the credits remained. In concert with industry and our sister union AFTRA, SAG reached out to

members via e-blasts and we told legislators tax credits bring more money back to the state than the state invests in tax credits. They create thousands of temporary and permanent jobs, and provide opportunities for our members to qualify for health care. Despite our best efforts, Gov. Christie froze the program. But voices in support of the credits would not be silenced. Pressure on the legislators continued.

In January, the New Jersey Senate and Assembly voted to pass The Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act by a substantial bipartisan majority. This new legislation increased the frozen Tax Credit Program on the books in New Jersey. It happened because staff, elected and you the members stepped up again. Many of you wrote e-mails, called your legislators or made your cases to the governor personally. Your response to the call to action was huge, and we hoped the new bill would be signed into law.

At press time, Gov. Christie had signed a stack of vetoes and the new tax credit legislation was one of the casualties. A setback to be sure, but not the end of the road. The frozen credits on the books are scheduled to return in July, and we’ll be counting on our members to tell legislators why these credits are so important once again.

In New York, tax credits attract a lot of production, and our members

reap the benefits. *Law & Order: SVU* relocated to New York, so many might think nothing was really lost. In fact, we should always be thinking of shoring up the entire tri-state area, and keeping all the credits in place. To that end, we owe a debt of thanks to Nancy Fox, our national director of policy and strategic planning, and Frank Traynor, our North Region executive from Philadelphia, who is a constant presence in Trenton as well as Pennsylvania.

To a healthy, active and productive spring, in solidarity,
Liz Zazzi
Editor



NEW YORK ACTOR
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Liz Zazzi – Editor in Chief
Sam Freed
Eileen Henry
Mike Hodge

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jae Je Simmons
Nancy Fox
Richard Baldwin
Bernadine Goldberg

Send us your comments at nymember@sag.org

SPANISH-LANGUAGE JOBS SHOULD BE UNION JOBS

By Gy Mirano

Recently, I read about a seminar that helps actors with work visas navigate the U.S. employment system. There is a continuous stream of foreign actors arriving to work on production sets from Miami to Manhattan for lower rates and unregulated conditions with non-union contracts. As an advocate for U.S. actors, Screen Actors Guild is paying attention.

Last year, SAG began a dialogue with several advertisers who tend to film English-language commercials under a SAG contract while doing the Spanish versions non-union. SAG also reached out to several studios and other entities on behalf of the dubbing community, whose work is being outsourced to our Latin-American counterparts.

In addition to reaching out directly to producers, the Guild hosts several events throughout the year, some in partnership with other organizations, to promote cultural and business integration. For three years, SAG has hosted a luncheon for filmmakers at the New York Latino International Film Festival. We have also had the opportunity to work with *Revolución Latina*, HOLA and the SAG Foundation to strengthen the union presence within our community. These events are a clever organizing tool that will bring positive results.

Using strategies to attract, rather than antagonize, is good business. The more filmmakers, producers and companies SAG can attract, the more jobs we will have access to. Actors need roles in independent films, but we also need those on-camera and voiceover spots that help make our salary for the year. We want to book guests spots on episodic TV, but we also want the dubbing job when these shows are targeted to the Hispanic market. Our community needs CBS as much as Telemundo, and shows like *Law & Order* as much as *Soy tu Dueña*, a telenovela that got the highest ratings of all television programs last year, driven by the U.S. Latin audience.

There are many work opportunities for Latin actors here at home, but if these work pools are not organized under union contracts, we will not be able to enjoy our rightfully earned slice of the Hispanic market boom — non-union actors with foreign work visas will. Now is the time for all Latin actors to unite and help organize our work. Bravo, SAG, for helping us move in the right direction.

Gy Mirano is a New York Division SAG member.

SAG AGENT of the Month

Hey, SAG performers! Are you represented by a terrific, franchised agent that you believe does not get the recognition that he or she deserves? Is your agent always there for you, guiding your career, advising you, watching your back and generally being a mensch without much fanfare or praise?

Let us know why your agent is the best agent out there and he or she may be the next SAG Agent of the Month. If chosen, we will run a picture of your agent — and you — on SAG's website celebrating your agent's star status as SAG Agent of the Month.

E-mail entries to agentquestion@sag.org, or by mail to SAG Agent of the Month, SAG Agency Department, 5757 Wilshire Blvd., 7th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036-3600.



HOLA AWARDS

The house was packed with Latino and Spanish-speaking performers when the Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors (HOLA) celebrated its 11th annual HOLA awards at The Players. Each year, HOLA presents this prestigious honor to deserving Latinos, showcasing their phenomenal talent in theater, television, film and music. SAG New York Board member and Executive Director of HOLA Manny Alfaro was joined by National Spanish Language Media Task Force members Gy Mirano and Martin



Tony Plana (left), Lauren Velez and Lin-Manuel Miranda celebrate at the annual HOLA awards.

Kalwill, as well as SAG Manager of Organizing Marlena Fitzpatrick-García, who reached out to the honorees and to several Spanish-speaking performers in attendance. SAG New York President Mike Hodge presented legendary actress Rita Moreno with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Although Moreno was not present to accept the award, Lin-Manuel Miranda (*House*) accepted the award on her behalf. Other SAG members who received awards were Tony Plana, who received the HOLA Founders Award, Lauren Vélez, who received the Award for Excellence, Robin De Jesús, who received the José Ferrer Tespis Award, and José Yenque, who received the Ilka Award for his humanitarian efforts.

The Screen Actors Guild has partnered with HOLA in their Spanish Language Media outreach and organizing efforts.

NEW YORK DIVISION CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



From left, Lisa Collins, Sharon Washington, Warrington Hudlin, Ellyn Long Marshall, Maria E. Nelson, Mike Hodge and Nancy Giles.

On February 23, New York area SAG members packed the house in celebration of Black History Month when the SAG National Ethnic Employment Opportunities Committee presented “African Americans On-Screen: Our History...Our Future.” Held concurrently with a panel discussion in Los Angeles, the panel in New York boasted industry insiders and trailblazers, including Warrington Hudlin (film/TV/Internet producer; founder, cast and crew of Color.org), Ellyn Long Marshall and Maria E. Nelson (founders, Orpheus Group Casting), Sharon Washington (*Michael Clayton*, Broadway: *The Scottsboro Boys*), Mike Hodge (SAG New York Division President, *Law & Order*, upcoming *Arthur*, Broadway: *King Hedley, Fences*).

This candid dialogue was led by moderator Nancy Giles (actor, writer and contributor on CBS News’ *Sunday Morning*) and reflected upon the history of African-American images on the screen and through the lens of the panelists’ own experiences and insights, while grappling with the realities of an ever more diverse 21st century. Hudlin, perhaps best known as the producer of popular feature films *House Party*, *Boomerang* and *Bebe’s Kids*, and the president of the Black Filmmaker Foundation, stressed the importance of being proactive and forward thinking.

“There is no reason for anyone to feel as if they can’t go out and make their way in this business,” he said. “No one gave hip-hop permission to become a billion-

dollar-plus-a-year industry; you don’t need permission to tell your story through acting, writing, directing, producing: Just go do it.”

As a dynamic point of entry to this conversation, the evening began with a screening of the feature documentary film-in-progress, *Oscar’s Comeback*, an unfiltered look at the unique town of Gregory, S.D. and its unlikely native son, the early-1900s controversial black film pioneer, Oscar Micheaux. Melodrama and culture collision abound in this account of an annual mom-and-pop film festival held in the struggling, all-white small town. Panelist Lisa Collins, director and producer of the film, has been shooting this project with her co-director and co-producer, Mark Schwartzburt, over the past seven summers. She encouraged those in attendance to take advantage of technological advances in filmmaking and distribution, utilizing digital and social media.

New York Division EEOC Chair Sharon Washington echoed the sentiments of other panelists in her belief in the power of “images that reflect who we are, who I am,” in shaping the way we relate to and understand each other. Put another way by Ellyn Long Marshall of Orpheus Group Casting, “Maria (Nelson) and I have made a commitment to do only those projects that we believe in. And we believe in ensuring a true representation of the diversity in our society with the diversity in New York City and its independent films.”

Orpheus Group Casting is responsible for films such as *Girl Fight*, featuring Michelle Rodriguez, and *Real Women Have Curves*, starring America Ferrara.

Participants and attendees were left with a feeling of hope for the new century, after one of incremental progress towards greater inclusion that has been rife with unresolved racial tension, despite a historic U.S. presidential election.

Hudlin articulated this optimism. “When talking about ‘mainstream,’ we must understand that the game has changed and that our world of movies and television and commercials and new media is getting browner all the time. Whether anyone else knows it or not, our time is already here,” he said.

Notice to SAG Background Performers Dismissed From Work At 9:30 P.M. or Later:

Beginning July 1 it will become mandatory for production companies who must provide transportation after 9:30 p.m. to one of three Manhattan drop-off locations, Grand Central Station, Penn Station or Port Authority Bus Terminal, to additionally stop at the day’s original pick-up spot.

The work day for performers who are still on compensable travel time will end upon arrival at the first drop-off location.



I AM A NEW YORK ACTOR

RICHARD MASUR INTERVIEWS

SAMANTHA MATHIS

Samantha Mathis is a New York actor. She always has been.

When New York actor Bibi Besch resumed auditioning after giving birth to her daughter Samantha, she couldn't find a sitter. So she took her new baby with her. As Samantha tells it, "When the folks casting the spot saw me they said, 'We want her, she's perfect.' So my mom said, 'You can't have her unless you cast me too.' So, they cast us both."

She is a third-generation New York actor. Her grandmother, Gusti Huber, was a star of the Austrian stage and screen, "A grande dame of the Vienna theater," as Samantha puts it. She moved to New York with her new husband, U.S. Army Capt. Joe Besch, and young daughter Bibi a couple of years after the war. Gusti worked extensively on TV and the New York stage, but is best known for her role as Edith Frank, Anne Frank's mother, in both the original Broadway run and the film of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Samantha's mom, Bibi, was the quintessential New York actor — working commercials, TV and film. She appeared in countless TV shows, first in New York and then Los Angeles. She is probably best known for her performance as Dr. Carol Marcus, scientist and mother of Admiral

James T. Kirk's son in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

It was in 1976 that Samantha and her mom moved to Los Angeles. "I lived a relatively normal life, for the daughter of a single, working-actor L.A. mom," she says.

Sam wanted to be an actor from the age of 12, "But my mom felt that would be a mistake. She insisted I wait...until I finally wore her down." Sam was 16 and a student at University Senior High School in Westwood when she booked a commercial, and then, shortly after, her first TV pilot. She joined the Guild and has been a working member ever since.

"As I was getting started, my mom's career was slowing down a bit. She was amazing through that time, supporting and counseling me, but always letting me make my own mistakes. She was my idea of the perfect parent of a young actor — never overprotective or trying to manage what I was doing. I booked that first commercial at 16, and with the money I made, I bought a car. My mom got me a Thomas Bros. Guide — the pre-GPS best way to get around L.A. — and said, 'Good Luck.' And that was it...off I went."

Though her first series, *Aaron's Way*, would shoot in Los Angeles, the pilot was shot in Australia in 1986. "Since I was only 16, and my mom was working in

L.A., a family friend agreed to go with me as my 'official' guardian." The show lasted only one season. She followed that with another short-lived series, *Knightwatch*, and a couple of TV movies.

Then, in 1989, she was cast in the break-out indie hit, *Pump Up the Volume*, opposite Christian Slater. "I fell in love with the character," she said. "I was backpacking in Europe, and as soon as I got home I went to the audition. I walked in and the casting director said, 'Samantha, this is your part, but you're exhausted. So go home, sleep and come back tomorrow and you'll get it.' And that's exactly what happened."

The success of the film and her astonishing performance kicked her up several notches on the Hollywood food chain.

"I felt incredibly lucky about everything that was happening. But, at the same time, it was overwhelming being one of the 'it' girls in town. Suddenly everyone wants to see you, invite you over and talk to you about their projects. It was crazy, but also flattering. It was a very exciting time."

Things continued to go well. Her next film was Nora Efron's *This is My Life*. A few more features followed, culminating a couple of years later in *Little Women*, in which she starred with Winona Ryder,

Claire Danes, Trini Alvarado, Kirsten Dunst, Christian Bale, Eric Stoltz and veterans Gabriel Byrne and Susan Sarandon. She was cooking.

“Even though my mom made it clear that this kind of thing never lasts, when you’re in your early 20s, it’s hard to get that. You think you can do anything you decide to do. It’s not that I didn’t listen to her. It’s just that you can’t really hear that stuff when it’s all happening so young and so fast.”

She made several more features, and then her life took an extraordinary turn. On Halloween 1993, her colleague and friend, River Phoenix, collapsed and died on the sidewalk in front of her. The emotional trauma and the ensuing press feeding frenzy stopped things cold for a while. Her mother camped out in her house for weeks, and they and the Phoenix family took care of each other.

A couple of months later, she was offered a film in London — *Jack and Sarah*. She jumped at the chance to get out of Los Angeles, away from all the paparazzi and insanity of that moment. And she was excited to play opposite Richard E. Grant, Judi Dench and Eileen Atkins. “It turned out to be one of the best moments of my life, working with these amazing actors. It helped me focus on my craft and not on the sadness I was feeling.”

Sam’s career continued to move quickly. She made several films in quick

And that’s what she’s done.

After a long, hard fight, Bibi Besch, actor, mother and SAG Board member, died in September 1996. All of us who knew her felt a great emptiness at her passing.

“My mother was very strong. A survivor. She had a powerful moral compass,” Sam said.

“She encouraged me to be like her. To be independent. To look out for myself and those around me. She instilled in me a sense of reality. To pay attention to my finances — to plan to be out of work. To have respect for the work and the people who I do it with. To be a worker among workers.”

Sam has made many feature films, TV movies and done a lot of episodic television. She has done much of her work in Los Angeles. But a couple of years ago she realized that she needed to go back to where she came from — New York.

She did her first play in New York almost 20 years ago, and moving back allowed her to concentrate on theater once again. She was cast in a Broadway show within days of her return — *33 Variations*, with Jane Fonda. She has since done several plays, both in New York and Los Angeles.

She’s been doing voiceovers for about four years. “I like the work a lot. I like creating with just that one element — my voice. And I like that I have that additional arrow in my quiver.”

As we all know, commercial work is a vital part of making a career in this town, especially if your goal is to do a lot more theater. Since she moved back to New York two years ago, she has enjoyed being part of the New York acting community, both voiceover and theater.

“I wanted to live in New York but was afraid to leave L.A.,” Sam said. “L.A.’s what I’d known for years, and where I still have many friends. But I really wanted to aggressively pursue theater and the challenge it represents. It always seemed to me that in L.A. people tend to do theater to fill time between film and TV jobs, whereas in N.Y. it’s a vital part of what actors need and love to do.”

And so she is, once again, what she was born to be — a New York actor. We’re glad she is.

Richard Masur is a National Board member from New York and former SAG national president.

THE BEST DEAL IN TOWN FOR \$20

By Kimberly Flynn,
N.Y. Conservatory chair

One year ago, I moved back to New York. I went to Madison Avenue to pay my SAG dues and change my address and then walked through the SAG lounge to read the information posted on each of the bulletin boards. That same day, I joined the SAG Conservatory. The next week I was in my first class and have continued to attend weekly on-camera classes, as well as monthly classes and seminars.

Participating in the conservatory, I’ve been refining technique, working with incredible teachers, learning new aspects of this multifaceted industry and making great friends.

I confess I love to get a great price on a hidden treasure. And that is exactly how I feel about the New York Conservatory. Why do so few SAG members participate in this offering? Why pay for class elsewhere when we have our very own conservatory right here? Why complain about not booking work when we can come in and develop under professional guidance?

Towards the end of my first year, Darlene Bejnar, our teleprompter teacher and former conservatory chair, said she had an inspired proposition for me: Would I be interested in serving as chair? A meeting soon followed with Mike Hodge and Rebecca Damon, our SAG New York Division president and vice president, along with key SAG staff. I shared my ideas for the future of the conservatory, particularly plans to increase membership, go green, develop a greater Web presence (including online class sign-up) and update studio equipment. Our goals were all in synch.

The following week, I was voted into this voluntary position by the New York Board of Directors. I am supported by a great team, which includes vice chairs, co-chairs, conservatory founders, support staff and enthusiastic conservatory members. Together we are moving forward on all our goals.

Yes, I am still in class every week. It’s the best \$20 I’ve ever spent!

The “it” girl thing is fleeting.
“They’re always looking
for the next thing that’s
new and shiny and bright.”

succession: *How to Make an American Quilt*, *The American President* and *Broken Arrow*.

Then Bibi got cancer. Sam spent a lot of time with her mom during her illness, and during that time she started to understand what her mom had told her years before: The “it” girl thing is fleeting. “They’re always looking for the next thing that’s new and shiny and bright,” Sam said. “So one day it’s you. And then it’s not. The trick is to recognize how lucky you’ve been, and then regroup and keep going.”

LITERACY DAY CELEBRATES BILINGUAL COMMUNITY



The nonprofit Screen Actors Guild Foundation teamed up with artistic collective R.Evolución Latina to present “Dare to Go Beyond: Read and You WILL Achieve,” a January 26 event that brought stars, music and gifted storytellers to more than 350 students at New York’s P.S. 111 school in celebration of literature and bilingual awareness.

Featured bilingual talents included 10-year-old actress Fátima Ptacek (appearing soon in *The Rebound* with Catherine Zeta-Jones) and celebrity storyteller Adrian Martinez (*Law & Order, Morning Glory*).

Ptacek read Arthur Dorros’s *Abuela* and Judy Schachner’s *Skippyjon Jones*. Martinez played Skippyjon Jones in a read-aloud ensemble piece. R.Evolución Latina founders and hit Broadway performers Luis Salgado (*In the Heights, Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*) and Gabriela Garcia (*Chicago*) added interactive musical elements and movement to *Abuela* and Marianne Williamson’s poem *Our Deepest Fear*, presented in both English and Spanish.

Also contributing their storytelling skills were more than 30 volunteers from R.Evolución Latina, the SAG Spanish Language Media Task Force and the SAG Foundation BookPALS (Performing Artists for Literacy in Schools). BookPALS volunteers have been reading to P.S. 111 students for the past six years.

“It was breathtaking to observe the second-graders at P.S. 111 take in the

bilingual storytelling talents of 10 year-old Fátima Ptacek,” said Director of New York BookPALS Programs Maria Cabezas. “I envied the students, as I’m half Costa Rican and having a role model such as Fátima would have been quite a gift.”

BOOKPALS NEEDS READERS

The core program of the SAG Foundation’s Children’s Literacy Initiative, BookPALS reaches more than 100,000 preschool to fifth-grade students weekly by placing more than 2,000 actors in schools, hospitals and cultural institutions across the nation to volunteer their talents as skilled, engaging readers. BookPALS answers the question, “Who better to inspire students with the written word than a performer?”

Learn about volunteering for BookPALS, visit our website at bookpals.net, or e-mail nybookpals@aol.com.

COMMERCIALS TIPS AND TOOLS When Are Payments Due?

TYPE OF PAYMENT	DUE DATE (POSTMARKED DATE)
Audition (1st or 2nd audition overtime and 3rd and 4th auditions)	12th business day from date of audition
Session (includes fitting, wardrobe, travel, etc.)	12th business day from last date of session
Holding Fee	1st day of the new holding fee cycle
Class A Uses from Monday through Sunday	15th business day from the end of the week
Local Program Class B/Class C, Wild Spot, Cable, Spanish Language Networks/Wild Spot	15th business day from first use in a 13-week cycle
Dealer Commercials	15th business day after the first delivery to any dealer/retailer
Internet and/or New Media Use	15th business day from first use
Foreign Use	15th business day from first use in any foreign market
Industrial & Theatrical Use	15th business day from first use

New Work Rules for New York Child Performers?

Not just yet. The New York State Department of Labor issued a set of draft regulations meant to carry out the mandates of the Child Performer Education and Trust Act of 2003. Unfortunately, the proposed regulations, which set forth work hours and conditions, as well as specific medical exams for child performers, were unacceptable to Screen Actors Guild, AFTRA and Actors’ Equity. The industry, parents, agents and managers joined in opposition to the draft. Three hearings were held and comments were received. The good news is that the Department of Labor has agreed take our comments into consideration and issue a new set of draft regulations for additional hearings and comments. While we have no guarantee that the next draft will be acceptable, we believe that the agency has heard our concerns and will revise the proposed rules accordingly. It is a difficult balance to protect children working under unusual conditions, while trying not to drive those very work opportunities out of New York.

Once the Department of Labor issues a new set of draft regulations for public comment, SAG will hold a meeting with parents and child performers to discuss the proposal and gather feedback and suggestions prior to a public hearing. Stay tuned.



VITA OFFICE RECEIVES WELCOME UPGRADE

SAG Foundation, Actors' Equity Foundation and AFTRA Foundation Contribute to New York Site Renovation

At the February 4, 2011 VITA office ribbon-cutting ceremony (from left): Rebecca Damon, Sandra Karas, Arne Gundersen and Janette Gautier.

David Laiz

New York's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance office re-opened on February 4, 2011 following a thorough renovation, made possible through contributions from the Screen Actors Guild Foundation, Actors' Equity Foundation and AFTRA Foundation. After more than 30 years in the current space at AEA headquarters, the refreshed and upgraded office now provides a comfortable, safe and confidential environment for the all-volunteer VITA staff and the performing artists they serve with free, year-round, critical assistance in preparing tax returns.

The SAG Foundation joined the Actors' Equity Foundation and AFTRA Foundation in contributing \$13,000 each toward renovating the site at 165 West 46th Street, a space which has been continuously provided to VITA free of charge by Actors' Equity. Additionally, the SAG Foundation will contribute \$3,000 annually toward ongoing operating expenses. A grant from the Edith Meiser Foundation helps to cover additional costs.

"After more than 30 years in its current space, VITA was determined to get some new furniture, replace torn carpeting and dingy ceiling tiles, upgrade electrics and get a fresh coat of paint before February's 35th anniversary," said Sandra Karas, director of the VITA program and secretary-treasurer of Actors' Equity. "The new colors, service plaques, and framed photos of the founders and volunteers have made it a real home to the volunteers as well."

"The SAG Foundation is proud to support such an incredible program," said SAG Foundation Board Member, SAG National Board Member and New York Division Vice President Rebecca Damon. "VITA provides a great benefit to performers, and we are grateful for the many volunteers who work hard on behalf of the members. If you haven't taken advantage of this program, it is well worth checking out."

Among those attending the February 4 ribbon-cutting along with Karas and Damon were AFTRA Foundation Board Member, AFTRA Board Member and New York Vice President Janette Gautier; Actors' Equity Foundation President Arne Gundersen; Actors Fund Director of Planned Giving and Secretary of the Edith Meiser Foundation Wallace Munro; and Actors' Equity Association Executive Director Mary McColl. Executives, staff and board members from Screen Actors Guild, Actors' Equity Association and AFTRA, and members from the three foundation boards were also present.

SAG Ratifies Basic Cable Live Action Agreement

In national voting completed February 22, members of Screen Actors Guild cast their ballots to approve a new, three-year contract covering basic cable live action programming.

The new pact goes into effect July 1, 2011, and will remain in force until June 30, 2014.

SAG and Basic Cable Live Action Television Producers reached tentative agreement in November on the deal, which provides a 6-percent increase for members over the course of the contract and a 10-percent increase in pension and health, which is in keeping with the TV/Theatrical Contract ratified in January.

Overall, the membership of SAG voted 96 percent to 4 percent in favor of the new agreement. The vote count in New York was 97 percent to 3 percent in favor. In Hollywood, the vote count was 94 percent to 6 percent in favor. And in the Regional Branches, the vote count was 97 percent to 3 percent in favor.

Ballots were mailed to 98,704 SAG members, of which 25 percent returned them. The final vote was certified by Integrity Voting Systems of Everett, Wash.

Leading the negotiations for the unions were SAG President Ken Howard and chief negotiator David White, the national executive director of SAG.

The National Board of Directors ratified the smaller Basic Cable Animation and Television Animation contracts directly, effective upon member approval of the TV/Theatrical Contract, which covers network television and theatrical-release motion pictures. For further information on the new contract, including a summary presentation of the TV/Theatrical Contract, visit SAG.org.

NEW ONLINE RESOURCES FOR SAG PRODUCERS



SAG's signatory process will be made easier than ever for producers with the upcoming Screen Actors Guild Production Center located at SAG.org. And that will get our members to work faster. The online resource will offer step-by-step instructions, FAQs and forms that can be downloaded and returned. But even more importantly, it will be possible to complete signatory agreements completely online for New Media, Student, Short, Ultra Low and Industrial-Educational projects. Coming soon to SAG.org!

WHY THE MOVIES WENT WEST

By Bill Timoney

“The movie business began in New Jersey, but moved to Southern California because the weather was better there....”

Most people consider the preceding statement an accurate description of the birth of the American cinema, but it’s not. The wrong part is the “because” part.

Did movies begin in New Jersey? Yes. Inventor Thomas Edison — working in his West Orange, N.J. lab between 1891 and 1893 — took out patents on his Kinetoscope and Kinetograph inventions that he claimed made him the father of the motion picture.

Does Southern California have “better” weather than the Garden State? It undeniably has more days of sunshine, which early filmmakers relied upon to light their scenes.

Edison’s motion pictures were shown in coin-operated machines that preceded the nickelodeons. His invention became so popular that other businessmen entered the booming market seeking to profit from a public’s insatiable hunger for this new form of entertainment. But Edison fought these new film companies, most of which were based across the Hudson River in Manhattan and adjoining towns. He claimed anybody who made, sold or showed a film owed him money. If you picked up a camera and exposed a frame of film, you had to pay Thomas Edison.

Edison attacked the competing film companies, such as Vitagraph, Kalem, Selig and others, with lawsuits, which cost them time and money to battle. So, in 1908, the heads of these companies met to determine if they could pool enough of their own filmmaking patents to challenge

Edison’s annoying legal threats. But they were surprised when an uninvited guest showed up at their meeting — Thomas Edison.

Edison offered his competitors a deal: He’d stop beating them with lawsuits if they’d join him. In September 1908, Edison’s Motion Picture Patents Company was born. The member companies agreed to make motion pictures the Edison way — single-reel running time only, with no artistic aspirations. They also agreed to

trust still wanted to make films. So they declared themselves independent of the trust in open defiance of Edison.

Indie exhibitors like Adolph Zukor and William Fox bought films from Europe, where works of multi-reeled artistic achievement had been made and distributed to great acclaim. Indie film producers like Carl Laemmle bought film stock and camera equipment from Europe and made their own product to sell to independent exhibitors.

Laemmle took particular delight in defying Edison’s trust. He named his company IMP, which he claimed stood for Independent Motion Pictures. But the company’s logo revealed the true intention behind the company name: it showed an impish creature bedeviling what looked suspiciously like the Edison Trust logo!

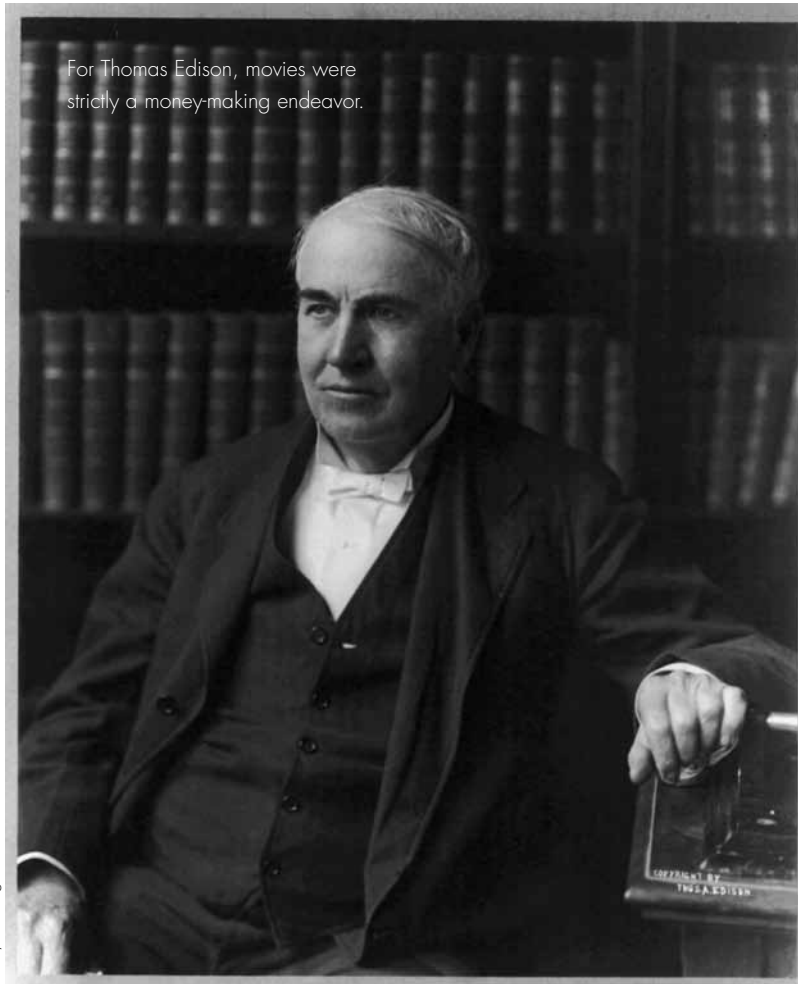
Edison attempted to drive the independent filmmakers out of business by forming the General Film Company. GFC lawyers attacked the indie filmmakers and exhibitors with lawsuits. The GFC also employed thugs who enforced Edison’s trust through intimidation. GFC enforcers confiscated unlicensed films arriving at the East Coast docks from Europe. They destroyed equipment and threatened actors. They assaulted exhibitors and burned down exhibition halls. They terrorized every independent they could find.

But they had to find them first.

The determined independents stayed in business by staying one step ahead of the GFC. Since Edison was based in New Jersey, the independents made films elsewhere. They forced Edison to hire more lawyers and more thugs as they kept moving beyond his reach.

The independents became adept at quickly setting up, shooting and striking a location before trust goons could be

For Thomas Edison, movies were strictly a money-making endeavor.



Library of Congress

pay Edison a piece of their earnings. In return, Edison gave trust members — and only trust members — permission to make and distribute films. The trust would not permit new members to join, and only licensed exhibitors would be allowed to show motion pictures — trust motion pictures.

But many exhibitors objected to the trust’s licensing terms, and many fledgling filmmakers banned from ever joining the

tipped off to their presence. They moved so fast that it might be argued that the nickname “movies” was coined for them. In fact, audiences began to refer to films as “movies” as early as 1906, and by 1912 it was in popular use, although discouraged as vulgar by the industry.

The independents finally settled in Southern California because, well, the Pacific Ocean stopped them from going any farther. Proximity to the Mexican border came in handy when they got advance word that GFC thugs were approaching. When a young director named Cecil B. DeMille wore a holstered six-gun while making *The Squaw Man* in Los Angeles, he wore it in case he had to defend his cast and crew from the GFC.

The Squaw Man was made and released early in 1914, around the time the Panama Canal opened. A large harbor was dug in Long Beach, Calif., just south of Los Angeles, to accommodate large ships arriving from Europe through the canal. Now independents could get equipment

shipped directly, avoiding the East Coast harbors guarded by Edison’s enforcers. Edison would need to spend even more time and money expanding his GFC across the entire country.

Then a San Francisco court declared Edison’s MPPC to be an illegal monopoly. That ruling, combined with the independents’ five-year war of attrition, prompted Edison’s surrender. He disbanded his MPPC trust and gave up his claim to a motion picture monopoly.

The independents chose to remain in Southern California, where the name Zukor became synonymous with the pre-existing Paramount Pictures, the original William Fox Corporation gave birth in the 1930s to 20th Century-Fox, and Laemmle built his theme park-like Universal Studios.

By 1915, when the new Universal Studios formally opened, the war was over. Edison retained his claim to the title “father of the motion picture,” and the independents now had an unrestricted

right to make movies. They also had a new base of operations, a place that offered more varied and exotic filming locations than the East Coast — a place that would soon come to be known as Hollywood, no matter whether it really was Culver City or Burbank.

So yes, the American Cinema began in New Jersey and relocated to Southern California. But as to why it went west, sunshine had nothing to do with it.

A SAG member since 1978, Bill Timoney recommends that those interested in this topic read the essential work “Early American Cinema” by the great film historian Anthony Slide (Scarecrow Press). Also recommended is the multi-volume “The History of The American Cinema” (University of California Press), particularly the first two volumes — “The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907” by Charles Musser; and “The Transformation of Cinema 1907-1915” by Eileen Bowser.

NEW MEMBER LOUNGE COMPUTER KIOSKS FEATURE IMPROVEMENTS FOR MEMBERS

The digital age is officially here, and members are increasingly handling the business of their acting careers online. In February, the New York Division unveiled new and improved kiosks in the office’s 12th-floor member lounge.

Many of the improvements make it easier for members to create and update their iActor profiles. The old computers were replaced with newer, faster models and the updated scanners work faster and produce clearer images of scanned photos. The web access has expanded to include the Internet Movie Database, so members can look up any missing information on their resumes and create links to their own IMDB pages.

While iActor is a great tool, it is not the only online service our members use regularly. Therefore, the Web access at the kiosks has been widened to allow SAG members to conduct more of their business as union members. In addition to SAG.org, members are now able to access Web content for SAG P&H, SAG Foundation, SAG Awards, Actors Fund and the Actors Federal Credit Union.

New York Division Executive Director Jae Je Simmons commented, “I am delighted that we are able to offer New York SAG members these expanded online services. Members will now have easier and more efficient access to information about their health benefits, credit union account, award screeners and other valued resources.”

The kiosks are not full-service computers, but the expanded access is meant to assist members with the administration of their careers that is associated with their SAG membership. While members will not be able to access their Web-based e-mail or personal websites, they will be able to get more business done online, making the SAG lounge more useful to the many members who make use of it every day.

Let us know how the new kiosks are working for you. Send comments or questions to nymember@sag.org. Please write “Member Kiosks” in the subject line.

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chair of communications. Liz is responsible for you having two New York publications, and consistently fights for all our publications, local and national, so that all members can be better informed.

- Rebecca Damon, New York vice president and board member of the SAG Foundation. Rebecca has done yeoman’s work in seeing to it that the number of Foundation projects in New York increases.
- Richard Masur, current National Board member, former national president and current national legislative chair, has done incredible work in helping to shape and shepherd the tax incentive program that continues to grow our work in the state.
- Sharon Washington, current National Board member and New York chair of the EEOC who, with the support of staff, on very short notice and a limited budget, pulled off an amazing Black History Month event.

Of course, we work best when we work together.

In solidarity,
Mike Hodge

PEOPLE OF A CERTAIN AGE

The American Scene is largely incomplete. Senior actors are underrepresented and, therefore, grossly underemployed. The New York Local Joint SAG/AFTRA Senior Performers Committee is launching a

letter-writing campaign called "People of a Certain Age." This expanding demographic is not being fairly represented in the media. Union members are requested to ask their nontheatrical family members and friends (40 and over) who watch — or don't watch — television shows and movies to send in written statements that will be collected by the Committee for review and possible action.

Content guidelines for these letters can be picked up at the SAG Committee

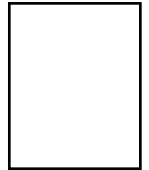
Office or found on the SAG website, SAG.org/diversity. The completed letters may be sent by e-mail to amoore@sag.org, or by snail mail to: Adam Moore, Associate National Director, Affirmative Action & Diversity, Screen Actors Guild, 360 Madison Ave., 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

Your participation is greatly appreciated by all underemployed senior actors. Due to the burgeoning senior population, the time is now!



NEW YORK ACTOR

360 Madison Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10017



SAG NEW YORK SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: Monday, May 9, 2011

TIME: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. meeting

PLACE: Directors Guild of America

110 West 57th Street

(Between 6th & 7th Avenues)

AGENDA

1. Introductory Remarks
2. President's Report
3. NY Executive Director's Report
4. Joseph C. Riley Award
5. New Business

The membership meeting is only open to paid-up SAG members in good standing. Unfortunately, no guests allowed. Parents/guardians of younger performers under 18 years old are welcome. PLEASE BRING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD FOR ADMITTANCE (paid thru April 30, 2011). No RSVP necessary.

SAVE THE DATE

SAG New York Fall Membership Meeting

WHEN:

Monday, November 7, 2011

WHERE:

Directors Guild of America,

110 West 57th Street

(between 6th and 7th avenues)