

Philippe Tillkete



**MOTION
PICTURE
SCREEN
CARTOONISTS
&
AFFILIATED
OPTICAL
ELECTRONIC
&
GRAPHIC
ARTS**

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, MAY 2002

FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE, 1952-2002

VOL. 31, NO. 5

Discuss the state of the industry

Free seminars to talk about where we are, where we're going

On Thursday, July 20, Local 839 will be co-sponsoring with ASIFA Hollywood and Women In Animation the first of a series of seminars that will give us all a bead on where our industry is going. Admission for members of Local 839 will be free.

The first seminar will focus on feature animation, both digital and traditional, and will be hosted by Local 839 President **KEVIN KOCH**. Among the panelists will be **BILL DAMASCHKE**, head of production at DreamWorks, and director **ERIC GOLDBERG** (*Aladdin*, *Fantasia 2000*), currently directing *Where The Wild Things Are* at Universal. Other panelists are being selected, and will include key industry figures from the major studios involved in feature animation production.

The event will be held at the Burbank Board of Realty, 2006 W. Magnolia in Burbank. Networking at 6:30 pm, panel starts at 7 pm. We plan to offer these events quarterly with upcoming events to focus on television production, direct-to-video, commercials, and new media/games/interactive.

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T-shirt contest deadline June 30

June 30 is the entry deadline for our T-shirt design contest honoring Local 839's fiftieth anniversary. T-shirts with the winning design will be given out at the next holiday party in December 2002. **The winning designer will receive \$500, with \$250 for second place and \$100 for third.**

The contest is open to members in good standing (active or on honorable withdrawal). Submit your design (hard copy or computer .jpeg format) to Jeff Massie at the union office or at jeffm@mpsc839.org. Do not put your

name on the design, as all judging will be anonymous.

There are no limits on what the design should consist of except that each should contain the phrase "MPSC 839." The design does not have to be "artistic" and non-artist members are encouraged to submit entries based on text designs, etc.

Enter as many designs as you like. Contact Jeff Massie if you have any questions.

In the news

Davis signs UI extension

On May 6, California governor **GRAY DAVIS** signed Senate Bill 3X2, which extends the unemployment insurance benefit increase.

In October 2001, after an extensive campaign by Local 839 and other labor unions, Davis signed Senate Bill 40 which increased the state's UI benefits for the first time in nearly a decade. SB 40 had been written to apply only to claims filed in 2002 or later, but SB3X2 extends the 2002 increases to anyone filing claims since September 11.

Miramax, Sony to animate features

MIRAMAX FILMS, the Disney division that to date has not strayed into the animated theatrical feature field, has acquired Brent Goldberg and David T. Wagner's new screenplay *A Horse's Tale*, to be developed into an animated feature film.

The story is told from a circus horse's point of view. Goldberg and Wagner most recently penned *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*.

PENNEY FINKELMAN COX and **SANDRA RABINS**, who started DreamWorks SKG's animation division at the studio's inception in 1994 and was executive producer of its Oscar-winning hit *Shrek*, will head a new feature animation unit within Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment.

Disney and Pixar announce plans

Without addressing rumors of dissension between them, Disney and Pixar have officially announced plans for the next three features under their current agreement, following their string of smash successes including *Toy Story*, *A Bug's Life*, *Toy Story 2* and last November's *Monsters, Inc.*

First up will be *Finding Nemo*, an underwater adventure set for release next summer. It is being written and directed by Andrew Stanton, who was co-director and co-screenwriter of *A Bug's Life* and co-screenwriter on the *Toy Story* films.

In the 2004 holiday season, audiences will see *The Incredibles*, an action-adventure comedy from director Brad Bird (*The Iron Giant*). It centers on a family of superheroes who save the world while living a quiet suburban life.

Finally, for the holidays in 2005, John Lasseter will direct *Cars*, a comedy featuring an assortment of cars as characters who get their kicks on the famous old Route 66.

The announcement did not address the fate of a rumored *Toy Story 3*. Purportedly, the companies have disagreed as to whether Pixar is obligated to produce the movie in partnership with Disney, or whether they have the right to bring it out on their own.

CNS climbs Mission Hill

For the second time, an animated prime-time series cast aside by the WB has been picked up by cartoon Network. First it was *Baby Blues*, now it's *Mission Hill*, which premiered on CNS on May 5.

The cable network has picked up all thirteen episodes of the show, which originally aired on the WB in the 1999-2000 season. Seven of the episodes have never shown in the U.S.

SAVE YOUR PAY STUBS!

THE PEG-BOARD is published monthly by the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists and Affiliated Optical Electronic and Graphic Arts, Local 839 IATSE, 4729 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA 91602-1864
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From the Business Representative

Le studio boutique

In the beginning, there were small studios run by budding entrepreneurs or artists who wanted to control their own destiny. Walt Disney, the Fleischer Brothers, Walter Lantz. We know their names because today they are animation icons, the pioneers who put the art form on the map and (in some cases) built empires that continue to this day.

And now, seventy-five years down the Great Highway, the process is starting all over again. After a fashion.

Today, the film companies that once were small family operations have merged and re-merged, been absorbed by sewage companies or newspaper companies, and are now sprawling multi-national conglomerates. They control production and distribution, sell DVDs and run amusement parks. They are in short, monster enterprises that own and control the American film industry's output from soup to nuts, from top to bottom.

Along the way, many of them have built animation studios to feed their voracious cable and broadcast networks, but a peculiar thing has started happening. The big companies have become less and less cost-effective, overheads have ballooned along with studio bureaucracies, and bright corporate minds have commenced casting about for ways to bring down the costs they've allowed to get out of control during the heady days of large profits and frenzied empire building.

Six years ago, studios sought to produce their own visual effects for their own live-action projects. They hired staff, they set up operations, and most of them ultimately lost their shirts. They found out that smaller entities outside the studios could do wire removal and create stunt doubles and exploding airplanes more inexpensively than they could. Most of them closed their studio facilities and "farmed the work out" to sub-contractors who could do it cheaper. Today, Sony ImageWorks is the only digital effects house owned and operated by a major studio. The others have melted away to nothing.

Which brings us back to the Screen Cartoonists' bailiwick, the art of animation. Most of the large studios, both union and non-union, are strangling on their own overhead and have taken to sub-

contracting out some of their production work. Sometimes it's storyboards, sometimes it's animation cleanup, sometimes it's the whole darn show. We all know about the sub-contracting that goes overseas, but a chunk of it is work that never leaves Los Angeles County. This is work that often goes to current or former 839 members, who now own and operate their own small studios.

These enterprises are small, but they have several attributes the big studios have lost: they don't occupy large, fancy digs, they don't have umpteen production executives, eight production managers and thirty-two production assistants, they're not encumbered by endless production meetings with four-color flow charts. All they're designed to do is get the work out as efficiently and smoothly as possible, and do it at a cost.

The Screen Cartoonists Union has developed contracts with some of these new, small studios, but it wants to develop more. The animation industry is morphing into new and different business forms at an ever-increasing rate. As I've said before, nobody works for one company for decades anymore, they work for months. It's "run of project" and ka-boom! You are gone.

The *only* way anybody will have quality medical benefits during their career and a livable pension afterwards is if they are working under a seamless umbrella of pension and health benefits. Otherwise, they will be enjoying a Social Security check and not much else in their sunset years.

So here's the deal. If you are an artist starting your own company to go out and produce a slate of shows for one of the monster conglomerates, or if you are only putting a direct-to-video project together that has a limited budget, call us. We can structure a contract that can work for both you and your employees. There are many ways to coax eggs out of a goose (golden or otherwise) and we'll be delighted to help you do it.

Just because you're now a budding employer doesn't mean you don't need a cloak of union wages and benefits around you and your employees. You needed it when you were a trainee at Disney's. You need it still.

So talk to us.

— Steve Hulett

Why learn 3D Studio Max?

by Daniel Manahan

3D STUDIO MAX, commonly known as 3ds max, is a software package program for character animation, games development and visual effects. Daniel Manahan, who teaches 3ds max at Friedman 3D in Los Angeles, discusses why he thinks it's a better learning tool than Maya for the novice 3D animator:

Are you struggling with complex computer animation tools in Maya, and haven't even put decent examples on your demo reel? Maybe you should try a program easier to learn, but every bit as powerful. I train artists that are learning beginning 3D Studio Max and Maya at the same time. However they spend twice as long per week learning Maya than 3ds max.

Too often I hear traditional cartoonists using Maya say "all I want to do is work as an animator for Pixar or PDI." But now a couple years have passed, and after forty hours per week training with Maya for that dream job they have no leads for employment. Many eventually drop out. But some artists who have an open mind, have investigated 3ds max and have found a program that lets them feel like they are in charge. They often ask "why doesn't Maya work as easily?" or "why does it take so many steps in Maya to do the same simple things in 3ds max?"

In my class, artists learn the concepts and principles of 3D. My knowledge of both 3ds max and Maya allows me to make comparisons with the interface and common controls, thus avoiding any confusion when artists make the switch from Maya to 3ds max.

There is a new trend of traditional cartoonists taking advantage of 3ds max training. I had the opportunity to talk with **JOHN EDDINGS**, a Local 839 member:

I'm not going to get a job at PDI or Pixar no matter how many Maya classes I take. I just want something on my reel good enough to get me a decent job doing commercials at some little production house in Burbank. And I don't have a lot of time. I need something that's faster to work with and easier to learn than Maya. It just has to look good enough for TV. After all, it doesn't improve your portfolio to have it printed on really expensive paper. The tools and materials don't really matter as long as the art is good. Once I've got a job in 3D, then I can work on getting in at Pixar.

I think John's positive attitude, and his experience as a traditional cartoonist, will help him and others get work in the 3D field. I recently interviewed **DIANE WESTCOTT**, Production Coordinator at 3dBob Productions in Burbank www.3dbob.com. I asked

Diane why the traditional cartoonist should learn 3ds max instead of Maya, and why do they choose to use it exclusively for their upcoming CG photo realistic movie called "The GodMan"?

We're in need of great 3ds max artists who also have a background/understanding of traditional cartoons and illustration. We need good concept people who are strongly rooted in concept design and illustration. Projects we have for a children's market do require good cartoon-type concept artists.

Our President and Creative Director, Bob Arvin, has used 3ds max since its beginning. According to Bob, 3ds max is a superior animation program that can rival anything produced with Maya. He loves to push the envelope with Max and can always find a way to solve difficult animation problems using Max. Bob also feels that in a few short years Max will actually eclipse Maya as the strongest program — with more features and capabilities.

The future of game development is with 3d Studio Max! For whatever various reasons, most gamers are not using Maya. While it's true that most large studios use Maya, they are also laying off many of those Maya artists! Scary. From what I've seen during the past year, there has been an emergence of smaller production houses, like 3dBob Productions, using 3ds max exclusively. They are springing up more as the months go by. I can't say that much for the Maya houses.

PIXAR's employment policy is found at www.pixar.com:

In general, at Pixar we look for broad artistic and technical skills, rather than ability to run one package or another. We concentrate on finding people with breadth, depth, communication skills and the ability to collaborate. If you have those attributes, we can teach you the tools.

Pixar wants you to show them what you can do with whichever tool, and if you prove your skill and get hired, they will teach you their software. So all things being equal, why not learn 3ds max? Which compared to Maya is more intuitive, user friendly, visual, and will demonstrate your artistic talents sooner.

(see 3D STUDIO MAX, page 6)

BASIC MAYA SYSTEM (no monitor):

AMD Athlon T-Bird 1Ghz CPU (266Mhz FSB)
AZZA VIA KT-133A 4X AGP Motherboard
(266Mhz FSB)
AMD CPU Fan & Heatsink
512Mb SDRAM Memory (PC133)
40Gb 7200rpm UDMA 100 Hard Drive
nVIDIA GeForce-2 Titanium 64Mb DDR Video
Card (w. TV out)
32x12x40 EIDE CDRW Drive
Creative Lab Sound Blaster PCI 128 Sound Card
120 Watt Stereo Speakers
Creative Lab PCI 56k Fax Modem
Mitsumi 1.44Mb Floppy Drive
PCI 32-bit 10/100 Network Card
AMD Medium Tower Case
Keyboard
Mouse

approx. \$720

BETTER MAYA SYSTEM (no monitor):

AMD Athlon XP-2000+ CPU (266Mhz FSB)
MSI KT3 Ultra ARU KT333 Motherboard
(ATA RAID 133, USB 2.0, 5.1 audio)
AMD CPU Fan & Heatsink
1024Mb PC333 PC2700 DDR Memory(PC333)
80Gb 7200rpm UDMA 100 Hard Drive
nVIDIA GeForce-4 TI4600 128Mb DDR Video
Card(w. TV out & DVI)
32x12x40 EIDE CDRW Drive
Creative Lab Sound Blaster PCI 128 Sound Card
120 Watt Stereo Speakers
Creative Lab PCI 56k Fax Modem
Mitsumi 1.44Mb Floppy Drive
PCI 32-bit 10/100 Network Card
AMD Medium Tower Case
Keyboard
Mouse

approx. \$1,430

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Your first CGI system

Local 839 CGI shop steward KEVIN GEIGER gives advice on computer hardware for the budding 3D animator:

Above are a couple of sample PC configurations which you could use to run Maya. These days you can get something pretty fast for relatively little money (and of course pay as much as you want for even better performance). You'll find the best deals online from websites that allow you to "configure your own" system. Places like Dell and Compaq will charge a lot more.

Cyberpower (<http://www.cyberpowersystem.com/index.htm>) is a pretty decent place to get a system, and they're over in Baldwin Hills so you can pick up yourself and save shipping costs. Following are a couple of systems which I've spec'd out for running Maya (one "basic" version which is still pretty fast, and one "better" version). This advice won't have a long shelf life since hardware keeps improving and prices keep dropping. ;-) Also keep in mind that this is not the gospel as far as components go. Either of these will work for you, but other combinations are just as valid.

You can do just fine with the "basic" system, which is equivalent to what my wife and I have been using to make our short film. The "better" system will run and render even faster, has double the memory (of the faster "DDR" variety) and is expandable for such things as RAID arrays (hard drive combinations which allow real-time playback of large video sequences). Again, my suggestion to you would be

to start out with the basic model. You'll be just fine with that, and can migrate to the higher end of the price & performance range as time goes on.

The prices listed do not include operating system, software, or monitor. I personally think a 21" monitor is worth the cost, but you can get a 19" if you want. Sony and Viewsonic are good companies for monitors.

Also keep in mind that the prices quoted are from Cyberpower. If you're willing to build your own system (not too hard, but intimidating at first) you can find the individual components listed even cheaper at online sites such as Pricewatch. If you don't want to deal with that however, Cyberpower's prices are fine and save you some hassle.

Word of encouragement: as recently as two years ago, I knew very little about the inner workings of computer hardware even though I had been using computers for years. Now the component specs don't look like gobbledygook to me, and I'm reasonably comfortable building and servicing my own systems (the cheapest way to go). Took a couple of years of reading articles, talking to colleagues and getting myself out of trouble to get to this point, but it's possible. :-)

Good luck!

— Kevin Geiger

NOTE: Local 839 IATSE does not endorse or recommend any computer hardware vendors.

FREE grant classes still available!

As this issue goes to press, there are still grants available for Local 839 members to get **MAYA** training at Glendale Community College and Video Symphony in Burbank, and for **MAYA, 3D STUDIO MAX** and **PHOTOSHOP** training at Video Symphony.

For a list of classes for which funding is still available, look in the members' section of our website at <http://www.mpsc839.org>. You can download applications from the website or you can request them from the union office by calling (818) 766-7151 or by e-mail to jeffm@mpsc839.org.

If you applied for and were accepted for a grant that you have since found you cannot use, please get in touch with the grant providers so that the grant can go to the next person on the waiting list.

If you applied for a grant and have not received approval, contact Celinda Lemus at the CSATTF, (818) 995-0900 ext. 152, or Jeff Henderson at the Verdugo Jobs Center, (818) 409-0486 ext. 7319.

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3D STUDIO MAX

(continued from page 4)

3ds max and all of Discreet's high-end feature film software will be around for a long time. Over the last six years I have seen 3D software packages vanish like the flavor of the month. What were established programs like Houdini, SoftImage, and Lightwave, I don't see taught in the schools anymore. I had always predicted that 3ds max would prevail through this tough competition the last few years. Today 3ds max is the most widely used animation software on the PC. I teach over 200 students a week at several schools with a variety of animation needs since 1996. My students have gone to work in all aspects of 3D Animation. It seems that as the competition gets stronger, so does the variety and availability of jobs with 3ds max.

With a little research you can find beautiful examples from artists that use 3ds max, Maya, and the other mentioned animation packages:

Look at the fur on "Santa Clave" by Dmitriy Kuznetsov at:

<http://www.raph.com/3dartists/artgallery/ag-ii1.html>

I especially like the "Cowboy", by Asier Hernaez Laviña. A 3D perfect likeness of Ronald Reagan:

<http://www.raph.com/3dartists/artgallery/ag-ap253.html>

Traditional cartoonists who want to focus on character animation learn a program integrated within 3ds max called Character Studio. Building and animating a character rig from bones is tedious in Maya. However with Character Studio, the work flow is visual and efficient. And versatile enough to simply link traditional Bones to create any type of character with as many legs and arms as you like!

Character Studio allows for motion blending and layered animation. Combining motion capture with hand-keyed animation gives the actor more artistic license. Save, paste poses, and reuse motions, while smoothly blending layered movements atop animations that can be deleted them if they don't work. Blending Inverse Kinematics with Forward Kinematics is unmatched by any other tool. Even without Character Studio, traditional bones can be assigned interchangeable animation controllers, which let me tweak the underlying algorithms of motion. This works around common rotational limitations found in all other animation programs called gimbal lock.

If you're interested in learning 3ds max, I encourage you to get in touch with us at Friedman 3D. You may enroll and attend at your convenience and pick up where you leave off each session. I work around your busy schedule, not the other way around. Audit for one week, and make an informed decision before registering. As soon as possible, please speak with me and my students any time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 9:00 pm, 570 West Avenue 26 in Los Angeles at the LA River Center - Friedman Occupational Center 323-223-0604 x23; e-mail: 3dman@charter.net.

For more information about 3ds max, check out their website at <http://www.discreet.com/products/3dsmax>.

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Upcoming contract holidays:
Memorial Day (Monday, May 27)
Independence Day (Thursday, July 4)
Labor Day (Monday, September 2)
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Attention all golfers!

Don't miss the upcoming **SCREEN CARTOONISTS GOLF CLASSIC**. Join us June 29 at Elkins Ranch Golf Course. Everyone welcome!!! Good golfers, bad golfers, occasional golfers, union members, students, relatives and friends ... come on out and have a good time. Lots of prizes!!

For sign-up info, call Lyn Mantta at (818) 766-7151.

ATTENTION, UCLA ANIMATION WORKSHOP GRADUATES (and those who attended but didn't graduate): We are forming an alumni association to network with past grads, meet the current students, share our skills and show our work. If you are interested in participating or want more information, email Dori (UCLA Animation Workshop '72-75) at dori@marinamotion.com. (For those with no e-mail, call Jeff at the Union office, 818-766-7151. Please call only if you don't have e-mail.)

In memoriam

RYAN ANTHONY, who worked as a storyboard artist for Disney and Warners from 1989 until 2001, died in early May.



Animator, Executive Board member and 1984 Golden Award winner **BILL CARNEY** died on April 16 at the age of ninety-three. From 1933 until his retirement in 1985 he worked for Van Beuren, Fleischer, Terrytoons, Disney, Hanna-Barbera, DePatie-Freleng and Filmation.



Storyboard artist **BOB ONORATO** died on May 6. Since 1979 he had worked for Hanna-Barbera, MGM, Disney, Universal, DreamWorks, Adelaide, Cartoon Network and Warner Bros.

Need Help with Health Insurance Premiums?
The Motion Picture & Television Fund
offers a program that provides temporary financial assistance for insurance premiums.

If you have:

- ❖ worked in the California Motion Picture or Television industry for three (3) of the last six (6) years,
- ❖ lost (or will soon lose) your health coverage, and
- ❖ have limited financial resources,

you may be eligible for assistance.

The MPTF recently lowered eligibility requirements for industry workers to qualify for this assistance. Applicants must have proof of having earned at least \$7,500 each year for three out of six years of employment. Once eligibility is established, aid is disbursed within three days. MPTF's social workers can also provide counseling and referrals to a wide range of insurance programs, both private and public, to ensure that program participants are directed to services which best meet their individualized needs.

For more information, attend the next Local 839 membership meeting on May 28 (see back page) or call MPTF Social Services at (818) 876-1265



**Motion Picture
& Television
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Supported by a grant from the UniHealth Foundation.

M. P. S. C. LOCAL 839 IATSE
**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2002

PIZZA & REFRESHMENTS, 6:30 PM · MEETING, 7 PM

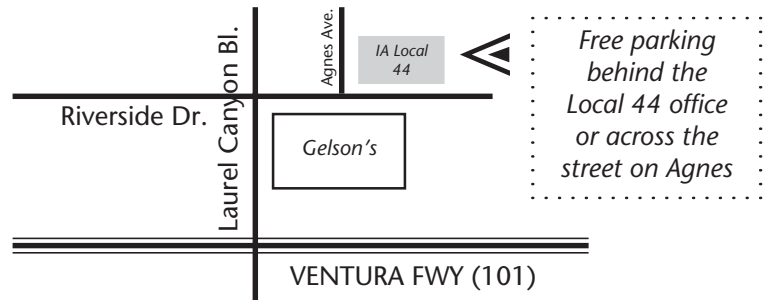
IATSE LOCAL 44 MEETING HALL

12021 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NORTH HOLLYWOOD

(CORNER AGNES, 1 BLOCK EAST OF LAUREL CANYON · PLEASE NOTE NEW LOCATION)

AGENDA:

REPORT OF DISTRICT TWO DELEGATES
PRESENTATION BY THE MOTION PICTURE
AND TELEVISION FUND
(SEE PAGE 7)



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