

The Official Newsletter of the Nevada Branch



# NEVADA ACTOR



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## A Message for Nevada Branch Members

As indicated in his message, Hrair Messerlian tendered his resignation with the Guild, which was effective October 3. I want to assure you I am working diligently to seek candidates for the position of Nevada/San Diego executive director and look forward to discussing some exceptional candidates with the Branch leadership. I have been in touch with the council, the conservatory chair, and the agents and casting directors in the marketplace. They all know how to reach me for urgent needs as I am available to assist you during this transitional period. Your patience and cooperation is appreciated. For general questions on Guild matters, the SAG.org website is always a great resource for information. For more specific needs, feel free to contact me at (972) 361-8185 or ldowell@sag.org.

Linda Dowell  
Regional Branch Division  
Executive Director

## *A farewell message* from Hrair Messerlian

**There comes a time in every endeavor to say goodbye.**

Dear Nevada Members,

It has been tremendously fulfilling to represent you in the halls of the Guild's administrative offices and during countless meetings all across the country. I have stepped down from my position as your executive director and choose to address you because of the bond and respect we have forged together.

Although there remains a lot to do, I am tremendously proud of the accomplishments we made together. What at times seemed like we were an orphaned Branch without an office to call home, we overcame and created a sense of community and pride, through our highly successful conservatories that were restarted from scratch to the innovative approaches of our membership meetings, and most recently the celebration of the Guild's 75th anniversary. To be sure, we have had more than our share of adversity, controversy, debate and naysayers, to which I say to you, bravo! I applaud your leadership and you have always taken the high road.

Bravo to the core of the membership who believes and commits to what this organization stands for. You would be surprised how you rate in many quantifiable categories compared to other Branches with more resources. You would also be surprised on how you rate in areas where, for technical reasons, the type of information is not accurately documentable. Those include the amount of SAG work actually done in your Branch and the collective strength of the members you work with side by side. I do know, because I hear from all of you and know what goes on in your community.

You are represented by wonderful people, members who volunteer their time and resources. National Board Representative Art Lynch is a strong advocate for the Guild and for your Branch. He is an independent thinker who does what is right for you. Your Branch councilors volunteer their time and efforts to make your community a better place to be a SAG member and an acting professional. They meet, plan and create activities for you. So please support them. Critics are a dime a dozen, but workers make the world go around.

Finally, I want to thank you, the members, for the tremendous trust you put in me, and I'm humbled by your comments and sentiments. Please continue to respect each other as brothers and sisters because you are family, and that is the strongest and most treasured bond of all.

Best Regards,  
Hrair Messerlian

# NATIONAL BOARD REPORT

By Art Lynch

## Welcome and Farewell

*We all will miss our executive director Hrair Messerlian. I have had the honor of working closely with him on motion picture production incentives, communication, membership and other issues important to the Branch. We all respect him and wish him well in his future pursuits.*

*We will have a new executive in the near future, with the intent of basing our Nevada Branch right here in Las Vegas.*

*Join me in welcoming Richard Rockne and John Powers as members of your elected Nevada SAG Council and wishing Barbara Grant well as she moves from serving as secretary to the role of vice president.*

*With the results of the Nevada Elections now in, we are losing three of our hardest working long-term servants of the Nevada Branch, Vice President Lollo Sievert and council members Karen LaVonne and Bobbie Bernhardt.*

*I strongly suggest you all take the time to talk to and thank all three and perhaps learn more about why Nevada is so exceptional as an intricate Branch of Screen Actors Guild.*

*Lollo has worked with the council and me as president and national board member for over two decades. Her dedication over a span of over 17 years as an officer or council member includes helping to bring the SAG Conservatory to Nevada, fighting for freedom of communication and speech, serving on the local and national Communication and New Technologies Committees, Wages and Working Conditions and many other time consuming committees vital to how our union prepares for the future and protects us as talent.*

*Bobbie Bernhart worked tirelessly to fight for open communications, the health of and structure of the Nevada Conservatory and was a valued consultant in union affairs, due to his experience within IATSE and the AFL-CIO. He chose not to seek re-election, after five years of council service, due to another commitment within his union and entertainment industry activities.*

*Karen LaVonne. What can I say? She has been a mainstay of the Branch, hauling coffee and cookies to early conservatories, walking and helping to recruit members for picket lines, speaking her mind openly, serving as our expert on background actor experience and needs, and always putting members first. In her 26 years of council and officer experience, she shared her humor, Branch historian status, belief in all talent and her own brand of hospitality to all council and Nevada Branch meetings. Karen sought to "retire" from the council, but will still be there for members when assistance is needed.*

## OUR UNION & Our Guild



The most recognized union in the world, a guaranteed future for young performers and those who have not yet been born regardless of where they are from, their economic status or any other perceived limitation; that is what Screen Actors Guild means to me. We set the standard by which anyone with talent can afford to pursue their artistic dreams. Being paid a fair wage to do what you love to do is the hard fought lineage of a movement exemplified by those who sacrificed and even lost their lives for honest wages and working conditions. Seventy-five years ago actors stood up and joined a movement that benefits all Americans and many elsewhere in the world, making it possible to pursue their dreams.

*"We set the standard by which anyone with talent can afford to pursue their artistic dreams."*

It will not be easy, but with your help we can maintain and grow Nevada's proud history as an activist Branch of Screen Actors Guild and a buttress for the future well-being and careers of all talent, actors and workers well into twenty-first century.

Say thank you to those who work so hard for your benefit. Make a commitment to add your talents and energy to the growth of Screen Actors Guild in Nevada. Contact the president, our executive or myself. We will be glad to sit down and discuss how together we will make ours the strongest and most storied Branch in the union.

## THE ISSUES

For background talent, larger numbers on the set, increased pay and a much larger Nevada Branch zone are among the issues going into contract negotiations. For principal performers and background alike, the issue is protection of our talents.

Digital production and distribution has made possible the capture and manipulation of performers images, voice and talents down to the home computer level. It is vital we meet the challenges of new technology before technology overruns us.

In addition to the use of background images on a "cut and paste" basis, technological advances in both background talent and principal performer avatars are exceeding all previous generations in speed, quality and life-like qualities.

DVDs will remain a revenue source for many additional years, with the DVD/Blue-Ray model used in other forms of electronic distribution. Residuals and other issues are high on the priority list of SAG's negotiating team.

Internally, work on background eligibility, the rights of young performers, ethnic and disability equity and many other key issues continue, with progress being made in all areas.

# NATIONAL BOARD REPORT

## Spinning Silver Into Gold

As union actors we show our union pride in the Silver State, as I penned for the national magazine – by turning film into gold.

St. Patrick's Day, 1897: British challenger Bob Fitzsimmons and America's own "Gentleman Jim" Corbett square off in Nevada's first legally sanctioned prizefight. At stake is the heavyweight championship of the world... Captured on camera, Nevada's film history grew from that historic bare-knuckle bout. (Nevada Film Office)

A decade later, when the silent film *One Million Years BC* was shot in desert that is now under the waters of Lake Mead, Las Vegas was still a hot, dusty railroad town.

It was *James Bond and Diamonds are Forever* (1971) that eventually gave birth to the Nevada Branch as actors on the project banded together in solidarity to better their conditions. Working with the support of fellow actors, such as Bob Urich, our Branch took on and grew through films and series, such as *Vegas*. This rebellious union spirit reflected the expansion beyond Hollywood's borders of what is still the highest profile performers union in the world.

Many founding members assembled at our 75th birthday celebration for Screen Actors Guild. Others may have been out of sight, but not out of mind, due to geographic relocation or personal health.

Still, others have passed on from this world, leaving the strength that is the Nevada Branch as a part of their legacy.

Nevada's strong attendance at membership meetings and active conservatory speak to the rebellious roots of our Branch, with regular attendance figures ranging from one quarter to as many as half of dues paid members. In many other Branches, attendance ranges from a half dozen to maybe one-tenth of the active membership.

*The Branch is now home  
to more than 1,000  
proud SAG members...*

who carry their union cards in the barren world of a right-to-work state. As we all know, union members here face non-union competition, discrimination for being active in a union, and the pride and challenge of championing union professionalism through a SAG Branch.

Be proud of your commitment, your actions, current and historic actions of the Nevada Branch and of the overall union we all proudly proclaim our membership in Screen Actors Guild.

## Elections and Service

As the national political side shows continue, headed toward the general election, please take the time to begin to become familiar with candidates for local, state and federal offices, the real impact of any initiatives on the ballot, and the reality of your responsibilities as a citizen.

This includes citizenship in your union. While our Nevada Branch elections are over, your Nevada Branch still needs your talents, opinion, professionalism and passions.

There are no hidden golden eggs. The work of the Guild is repaid only in terms of the continued growth of the Nevada Branch and our membership. The concept of inside information is false. If that is your goal, you are better off going to work for an agent or casting director, as they get the breakdowns and deal with location managers and production casting.

There are committees that need you, and the reality is that your elected council and officers face an ever-increasing plate of issues and battles here and in Hollywood, meaning that the tradition of letting council members carry the weight has got to end. Whoever is elected will need you to step up to a committee leadership position and provide the voice, legs and heart of the membership.



## Nevada Branch President's REPORT

*By Steve Dressler, Nevada Branch President*

an asset to our branch by her constant service to committees, picket lines, and unionism. Karen has served this Branch for 26 years as a council member and secretary. She has also walked picket lines, served on committees and promoted the Guild. Bobby served on the council for five years as a council member, served on various committees, and is a staunch unionist. That makes a total of 48 years of knowledge and experience deeply appreciated by many. Thank you for your service.

I am sad to say this Branch is losing another valuable asset. A man who is adherent to serving his Branch, like a father who watches over and protects his children, who is loved

and respected, an executive who served this Branch like no other – my friend and yours, Hrair Messerlian. Hrair became our Nevada Branch executive in the summer of 2004 and after four years has brought back a sizable amount of respect to our

# September 20, 2008

I believe September 20, 2008, will be remembered by our members for a very long time. Never has there been such a great turnout of members and guests to a Nevada Branch event as when we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Guild. The event was a success with more than 400 in attendance where everyone enjoyed the 1930s theme and ambiance. The evening consisted of drama vignettes, look-a-like entertainers, the Arnie Webster Band, wax figures Judy Garland and Bob Hope, silent auctions, raffles, speakers Hrair Messerlian and former Lt. Governor Lorraine Hunt-Bono and me, and a special presenting of a proclamation to the Nevada Branch by State Sen. Joe Heck. Our MC for the evening was Cork Proctor.

I thank all of our Nevada SAG Gala sponsors, advertisers, in-kind gift donors, and the many, many volunteers. A special thanks to Susan Fraser and Phyllis Carreon-Taie of Women in Film (who graciously hosted the event) and Dream Vision Studio. This event could not have happened without the tireless efforts of the 75th Anniversary Gala Committee: Malinda Vo Brozowski, Yvonne Carreon, Phyllis Carreon-Taie, George Dare, Barbara Grant, Claudia Hartman, Mary Ann Hebinck, MaryJo Scott, Lollo Sievert, J.R. Thompson, me, and the coordinator of this whole event – Stephen Lizotte. Thank you.

We also had a nice turnout the following day at our annual membership meeting.

Congratulations to the newly elected; seated as National Board Director – Art Lynch, vice president – Barbara Grant, secretary – Adrienne Mann, treasurer – Kim Renee, council members at large – John Powers and Rick Rockne. I wish to thank all those who ran as candidates and thank you for allowing me to serve you again as president.

Lollo Sievert, Karen LaVonne, and Bobby Bernhardt will be leaving the council. They have been very valuable and will be missed. Lollo has been on the council for 17 years serving as a council member, secretary and vice president. She has been



**ABOVE LEFT: Nevada Branch President Steve Dressler accepts a proclamation from State Sen. Joe Heck.**

**BOTTOM RIGHT: A full house celebrates SAG's 75th.**

Branch since closure of the office. He came to a crossroad where he had to make a choice for the betterment and concern of his family. He will be greatly missed. Thank you, Hrair.

Since our April 20 meeting, we have had 50 transfers from other Branches and 15 new members (Eric Naroyan, Callan Paul Ream, Tina Marie Clifford, Maria Falgione, Johnny Cavano, Brenda Olivares, Glenn Bass, Jason Lockhart, Robert Michael Marrocco, William Patrick Johnson, Cade Canon Ball,

## Nevada Branch President's

## REPORT



**LEFT: Former Lt. Governor Lorraine Hunt-Bono congratulates SAG.**

**BOTTOM: Our guests enjoyed food, fun and a celebratory cake.**



Kelly Clinton, Christopher Connor, Giada Lazzeri, and Robert Keck). We welcome you to the Nevada Branch and hope to see you at the next membership meeting.

We have approximately 1,000 active members, and of those, slightly more than 800 are paid-up members. Nearly 30 members are at risk of termination. (It is important to keep your dues up to date.)

There are many SAG-eligible actors in Nevada so please continue to encourage them to join Screen Actors Guild. The initiation fee is still at a low compared to some of the other Branches. Procrastination can be costly. Just like anything else, rates occasionally go up.

At this particular time, the contract negotiating process is still in play. During any negotiations, there needs to be compromise. Our National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator Doug Allen states, "SAG's negotiating committee has made significant moves in the AMPTP's direction on a number of proposals. The limited progress the AMPTP referred to in its recent statement is largely because management has not made an equally dedicated effort to achieving progress. Negotiations are about give and take and thus far it has primarily been SAG's negotiating committee giving."

There are molecules of wonderment in the atmosphere displacing a residue of the "s" word. Lauren A.E. Schuker of the Associated Press writes, "Still reeling from a long strike by screenwriters this past winter, Hollywood is bracing for the possibility that the entertainment industry will grind to a halt again – this time because of a dispute with actors." To the contrary of a possible strike, Allen believes that it is possible to complete negotiations and secure a fair deal. Our National President Alan Rosenberg has said, "Our negotiating team is prepared to work around the clock for as long as it takes to get a fair deal. We want to keep the town working."

The local W&W (Wages & Working Conditions Committee) has put in our request to expand our local background jurisdiction and studio zone. The National Contract Negotiating Committee knows of our jurisdictional dilemma and will fight hard to correct it. Whatever the outcome, know that sacrifices are made in negotiations in order to attain the best possible solution for all actors.

*The evening consisted of drama vignettes, look-a-like entertainers, the Arnie Webster Band, wax figures Judy Garland and Bob Hope, silent auctions, raffles, speakers Hrair Messerlian and former Lt. Governor Lorraine Hunt-Bono and me (Steve Dressler), and a special presenting of a proclamation to the Nevada Branch by State Sen. Joe Heck.*

# farewell messages by...

## Nevada Branch Vice President Lollo Sievert

My most sincere thanks to the membership for voting for me and trusting me to represent you for the past (wonderful and busy) 17 years on the Branch Council. I started out as your secretary, actually typing pages and pages of minutes for years. Then, I was elected as your vice president, working to fulfill the goals of the Guild and that I set for myself. I feel I did attain my goals and I will always continue to support and do my best for the betterment of my Guild.

Looking back, Karen LaVonne and I were founding members (I was the Secretary) of the Nevada SAG Conservatory in 1993.

I have the official minutes from the first Conservatory Committee, October 28, 1993, and I would like for these to be in the record and will turn these over to the Guild to preserve.

In attendance on that day: Dean Casper presided as the Branch president, Vito Di Barone as conservatory chair, Lollo Sievert as secretary for both the Nevada Branch and the conservatory, Dyanne Thorne as National Board representative to the conservatory, Karen LaVonne and Kim Renee as members.

### **This was the official start.**

I arranged for and donated the fee for the first official conservatory seminar that was held at Reed Whipple Cultural Art Center on October 31, 1993.

Lev Mailer, national chair of the SAG Conservatory was in attendance and helped in the success of our first official conservatory seminar.

It was a great success with a full house. Dyanne Thorne and Kim Renee spent many hours planning. Karen LaVonne brought her large coffee urn and served coffee at this and many of the following seminars.

Vito De Barone did not stay with the conservatory for long and in 1994, Art Lynch stepped in as chair and with his leadership the conservatory prospered, and I feel that Art Lynch actually

made the conservatory what is today. Adrienne Mann continued in Art's footsteps and kept building on the Conservatory. Then, Barbara Grant stepped in and is continuing to build and take good care of our growing program.



With the help of the Nevada SAG Conservatory, Women in Film and Dream Vision Studio, the Nevada Branch celebration of the SAG 75th Anniversary Gala took place September 20, 2008. It was a very special, unique and successful gala and something long to remember. The 75th Anniversary Committee putting this all together was so very creative, worked many long hours, and I am so proud to say I was able to be part of this.

It is with some sadness that I look back on the life of this Branch, from working to finally getting a brick and mortar office, which saw a great increase in local contracts and also new memberships, to back again to being a Branch without an office.

Working and walking picket lines as strike captain, chairing and attending committees and meeting both in Las Vegas and Hollywood will always bring back memories of good camaraderie and willingness of the members to participate and help.

Without the help and diligent work of Executive Director Hrair Messerlian, this Branch would not be where it is today. With his guidance, this Branch has continued to thrive, even to prosper and gain new members. It has been an honor to work with and get to know you, Hrair.

Thank you, the members of the Nevada Branch. It was my pleasure to serve with you and I now look forward to seeing you and working with you on the set.

## Nevada Council Member Karen LaVonne

I want to bid a fond farewell to my fellow SAG members who have voted for me all these years. I really appreciated your loyalty and support. My term on the Nevada SAG Council concluded in September and I have decided to step aside. As a proud and dedicated union person, I truly enjoyed serving since 1980 in SEG, SAG and IATSE Local #720 Wardrobe. I

relish in the many accomplishments I was involved in to make our Branch a stronger and growing state to film in through our victorious picket lines, improved wages and working conditions and contracts, opening an office and bonding in solidarity with our sister unions who refused to cross our picket lines. I had the honor of serving under six presidents, the privilege of being a protégé of several great influential leaders in our Nevada Branch who were the pioneers that developed SEG and SAG in this beautiful neon paradise. During my positions as secretary, treasurer, on many committees (Nominating, Elections, W&W, parties, making picket signs) to organizing, protesting and calling you for help, it has been an exciting and sometimes bumpy ride, but a dream come true. Ever since I was a little girl when I went to the movies for a dime, I always wished I could be in the movies. Who knew I would end up on the council of the Nevada Screen Actors Guild Branch! What an ego trip it has been. I love showbiz, I have film running through my body instead of veins, and I love being on the set with all the actors, extras and crew. It's an atmosphere like no other. Just being a blur in the background is even a pleasure. But the sad part of the business is the blacklisting and age discrimination, which we must change. There should be a place in this town and in the casinos for all types of people, regardless of their age, size or color, whether eating, walking down the street or shopping when filming is done in Las Vegas.

I have met and lost so many dear friends and fellow members and will always treasure the wonderful memories. Thank you all for your continued support all these years. I look forward to seeing you at our SAG membership meetings and hope to see you on the set. That's a wrap!



Simple, functional, convenient and free, iActor – SAG’s revolutionary online casting directory – is an essential career and production tool. iActor is the only online casting directory that exclusively features SAG members and automated Station 12 cast clearance.

Available to all casting directors working on signatory productions, iActor allows casting professionals to search through members’ headshots, resumes and media by any combination of terms, such as gender, ethnicity, special skills or credits.

By creating their resumes and adding their headshots, SAG members will be at the fingertips of the industry’s top casting professionals. Members can even use the service to email resumes to casting directors directly, any time of the day or night. To sign up, simply log on to SAG.org. It could change your career.

**PRINT NEWSLETTER**

You will be receiving a print newsletter four times a year, as originally promised by the Guild. The Regional Branch Division leadership, made up of the president and national board members elected by the Branches, is very active in pursuing answers to why elected officers and committee chairs have been stifled in their efforts to communicate with membership in a frequent and timely manner. Nevada has not had a print newsletter since March, and went almost as long without an electronic newsletter. The Conservatory has the only list of membership for private contact, and that is only if you voluntarily give them your contact information. Your council has no such list, and are denied most methods of reaching you through your union.

Yours in solidarity,  
 Art Lynch  
 National Board of Directors, Nevada

**Commercials Contract Extended**

On August 27, Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the advertising industry’s ANA/AAAA Joint Policy Committee on Broadcast Talent Union Relations (JPC) jointly announced an agreement to extend, through March 31, 2009, the terms of their commercials contracts.

The extension adds five months to the previous two-year extension the parties agreed to, which covered the period from 2006 to 2008. That extension was set to expire on October 29, 2008.

## Your 2008-2009 Council

Steve Dressler, President

Barbara Grant, Vice President

Adrienne Garcia Mann, Secretary

Kim Renee, Treasurer

Charlie DiPinto, At Large

John Powers, At Large

Richard Rockne, At Large

Leonard Turner, At Large

Arttours Weeden, At Large

Art Lynch, National Board

## DUES REMINDER

If you haven't done so already, please pay your dues today. If you are not an active, paid-up member in good standing, you may not be able to vote in Guild elections or be eligible to serve on the council or committees. You also must be paid to date to register on iActor, the Guild's online casting program, which is now being used by casting directors nationwide. If you have any questions regarding your dues, please contact the Membership Department at (800) SAG-0767, prompt 2.

This newsletter is published quarterly as a service to Nevada Branch members. Any comments or questions may be directed to Regional Branch Division Executive Director Linda Dowell at [ldowell@sag.org](mailto:ldowell@sag.org).



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