

Hello {firstName}

Introduction.

It's been a while since I have been in touch, so I have got an update on a few issues that I will share with you. This includes the recent BC Labour Relations Board decision on the Safe Harbour Agreement, the ongoing negotiations in the US and the recently concluded negotiations in Toronto, and some information relating to training.

Safe Harbour Agreement

I'm sure you are aware that the BC Film Council recently challenged the Safe Harbour Agreement at the BC Labour Relations Board (LRB). Unfortunately, the LRB did not rule in our favour and the Safe Harbour Agreement (SHA) is still in place.

To provide some context and background, the SHA restricts our ability to strike or take other job action such as overtime bans or work to rule against productions that are already in production. We can take job action against productions that have not started prep or shooting. This applies to the member unions of the BC Film Council (IATSE Local 891, IATSE Local 669, and Teamster Local 155), DGC BC, and UBCP / ACTRA.

The Film Council made the argument that this was an infringement of our right to take job action which is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unfortunately the Arbitrator took the position that as we can strike, albeit with restrictions, that our Charter Right has not been restricted to the point that the SHA should be revoked.

Whilst striking or taking any other type of job action is not a magic wand, it is still quite a disappointment to see this decision. One of the main impacts of the SHA is that the employer continually refers to it during our negotiations, particularly when an impasse is reached. Effectively they say, 'if you don't like what we're offering, what are you going to do?' What happens next with regards to this decision is up to the Executive Board and the Film Council to decide. If a decision is made to continue to pursue this as a Charter Right's issue, it will be a long process. In the meantime, if you feel strongly about this, I'd recommend raising the issue with your MLA, as we are a provincially regulated industry, and the Provincial Government set the tone for the LRB.

For those that are interested I have attached a copy of the LRB's decision.

Ongoing and Recent Negotiations.

The negotiating environment in the US is more complicated than ours with there being several phases of negotiations. Some aspects are negotiated together under the Area Basic negotiations and some are negotiated individually by each Local. From all accounts negotiations are progressing well in the US with many Locals having reached tentative agreements already, which ultimately is a good sign for the overall negotiating environment.

Local 873 in Toronto has already concluded their negotiations and secured some good gains. I haven't seen all of the details of their new agreement but my understanding is that they achieved a 9% gain for their TV rates and 5% for their feature rates. To put this into context, the gain they made on their TV rates closed the gap between us and them on those rates, but our TV rates are still ahead of theirs. The gain on their feature rates is equal to our rate increase for this year, which is now in effect. These increases are for the first year of their new contract and I have not seen the rates for subsequent years.

Another significant point on 873's negotiations is that they secured a four year deal which will put them 1 year behind the US negotiations next time and they will be on the same cycle as we will be on.

For our own negotiations, if we had been negotiating this year, our negotiations would almost certainly have been pushed back until September at the earliest. Local 873 were given one week by the employers to conclude their negotiations before they switched their attention to the US negotiations. Fortunately 873 were able to conclude their negotiations, but if we had been asking for time also, we wouldn't have got it. As it is, we chose to take the one year extension so we are now looking at negotiating early next year, when we will be looking to build on the gains that those Locals negotiating this year achieve. Our preparations for these negotiations have already started, the bargaining committee has already been formed and we will be receiving the results of the negotiations survey soon.

One final point to keep in mind with regards to our upcoming negotiations. Whilst discussion and discourse are typically good, this isn't always the case on Social Media. None of the Social Media groups for local film workers are endorsed by the our Local, and with an employer that lives and operates in a different and less labour friendly jurisdiction, we can be almost certain that they are present in those Social Media groups. So please exercise discretion if do participate in the discussion on Social Media. What might appear quite innocent can actually

provide quite a significant advantage to the employer, particularly if they can identify issues that can be used to create conflict and division amongst our membership.

Training.

Now that things are returning to some form of normalcy we can turn our minds to other matters, such as training, that have been held up for the last year or so. With that in mind we are currently developing a Basic Grip Course, and a Dolly Grip Course. The Dolly Grip Course is being developed in partnership with Local 873, as they have already developed a course. Both of these courses are the early stages and I'll have some more information in the coming weeks on these.

In Closing.

In closing, our next General Meeting is on Sunday 28th April. I know that time is precious, and these meetings can drag on, but the decisions made at the meeting will be made by the members present at the meeting. So if you want to be part of the decision making process, please attend. Our next department w]meeting will be on Monday 22nd April at 1622 Boundary Road and online via Zoom at 1930.

Yours in Solidarity
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A Rising Tide Floats All Boats

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