

Weathering the Storm

It is somewhat of an understatement to say that the global economic times in which we live are difficult and challenging. We are witnessing major companies laying off thousands of workers and reports of a continual rise in unemployment. Our pension funds have suffered, and we have been facing a health care crisis for some time.

As we endure these trials I ask that we stand together, assist one another and, if necessary, take advantage of the many resources available to us in the entertainment industry and as union members. Some of the programs offering union member assistance are: the Motion Picture and Television Fund which maintains an entertainment industry presence and offers health care clinics, child care and social services; the AFL-CIO's Union Plus Benefits offers credit counseling, insurance, financial hardship assistance, scholarships, and online tax preparation services, among its many benefits. The Actors Fund, in both the United States and Canada, offers invaluable programs such as social services and financial assistance, as well as housing and health care assistance. In Canada, we have the Union Savings Programs offering assistance with insurance, real estate and other helpful services. There are links to these and a number of other organizations on the IATSE Web site (www.iatse-intl.org). They are there for you.

Even though the United States now has a more labor-friendly administration in Washington, President Obama warned us that we would continue to face challenging times. I am confident that in time we will reap the benefits of changes to come. In the meantime, we look to the future with hope that employment opportunities will increase as some of the challenges in our industry settle down.

Our local unions must represent their memberships, not only at the negotiating table, but in communicating with them to be sure they are availing themselves of the assistance they may need and helping them obtain it if need be. We must reach out to our brothers and sisters, from local to local and member to member, in an effort to help protect ourselves and each other.

Perhaps the silver lining in these trying times is that they serve to bring us closer together, to become more aware and active in protecting our mutual interests. We are lucky that we entered the economic crisis with a foundation of support, our union, when so many must go it alone. I implore each of you to help your sisters and brothers in some way. There are a great many things each of us can do to make it a little easier to weather this storm. We have survived difficult times before and we will face more in the future, but united we are better equipped to do so. We must never lose sight of the fact that it is the solidarity of IATSE membership that is the foundation for this endurance.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

This is to advise that the regular Mid-Summer Meeting of the General Executive Board is scheduled to be held at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort, 1500 Epcot Resorts Blvd., Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830 at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, July 20, 2009, and will remain in session through and including Friday, July 24, 2009. All business to come before the Board must be submitted to the General Office no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.

You are reminded that in accordance with Article Eleven, Section 8 of the International Constitution, the General Executive Board shall act as the Credentials Committee of the 66th Quadrennial Convention which will convene the week immediately following the Board meeting.

You are further advised that in order to be considered for a Committee appointment, delegate credentials must be received in the General Office by July 24, 2009.