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Arthur Cohn
“If I had listened to advice, perhaps two or three of my films would have been made, and the rest for sure not.”

In this issue:
Blair Brehard hits the streets
Marco Polo opens up new territory
2015 Producers Guild Awards
"THE IMITATION GAME' SUMMONS UP THE DRAMA AND TRAGEDY OF A LIFE THAT CHANGED MODERN HISTORY. A MARVELOUS STORY ABOUT SCIENCE AND HUMANITY. FIRST-RATE FILMMAKING."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"A SUPERHERO MOVIE OF THE MIND. ONE OF THE MOST SMARTLY JUDGED, TRULY FEELING MOVIES OF THE YEAR."

RICHARD CORLISS

TIME

"THE KIND OF CRACKERJACK CINEMATIC PRESENTATION THAT'S PURE PLEASURE TO EXPERIENCE."

SCHOOL STANDARDS

Los Angeles Times

"THE IMITATION GAME' IS AN EXCITING TRUE STORY THAT LACES DIZZYING TENSION WITH RAW EMOTION. IT'S A MESMERIZING MIND-BENDER THAT VIBRATES WITH ENERGY AND SUSPENSE."

PETER TRAVERS

ROLLING STONE

★★★★


BEN HEID
NEW YORK OBSERVER

For Your Consideration
PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA NOMINEE
THE DARRYL F. ZANUCK AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER
OF THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES
NORA GROSSMAN, p.g.a., IDO OSTROWSKY, p.g.a., TEDDY SCHWARZMAN, p.g.a.

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Check yourself!

Cover photo: Lillian Birnbaum
“FEW FILMMAKERS SHARE EASTWOOD’S CONFIDENCE WITH LARGE-SCALE ACTION, MUCH LESS HIS INCLINATION TO INVESTIGATE THE BRUTALITY OF WHAT HE SHOWS US – TO ACKNOWLEDGE BOTH THE POINTLESSNESS AND THE NECESSITY OF VIOLENCE WHILE SEARCHING FOR MORE HONEST, AMBIGUOUS DEFINITIONS OF HEROISM THAN THOSE TO WHICH WE’RE ACCUSTOMED.”

JUSTIN CHANG, VARIETY
It’s a phrase we’ve been tossing around the office a lot lately. One Guild. You hear it in the Board meetings and on the committee conference calls.

What does that mean? It means that when you get right down to it, we’re all connected. Just because I’ve said this before doesn’t make it any less true: Producing can be a lonely business. The independence of the independent producer is the job’s blessing and its curse.

At this point in history, our industry has generated an almost undreamed-of diversity of formats and platforms — an evident symptom of our business’ health and growth, it’s worth noting. But an unfortunate consequence of that success has been a subdivision into discrete communities that have much in common, but barely ever talk to each other. Producers are particularly ill-served by this tendency of our industry to pigeonhole and subdivide. Producers, by nature, tend to be creative omnivores. No one signed up for this job because she wanted to tell just one story, or just one type of story. And it’s probably for exactly that reason that you found the Producers Guild. Nearly 7,000 producers and team members have joined the Producers Guild, because the Producers Guild is the entry point into the wider community of this profession. It’s the common ground on which we can find each other, and help each other, and stick up for each other.

We may work in different subgenres, but ultimately, members of the producing team want the same things: expanded career opportunities, better health coverage, proper recognition for their hard work and the satisfaction of being part of a wider professional community — One Guild.

One Guild means that digital producers in San Francisco have a stake in the fair treatment of non-fiction team members in New York. One Guild means that television producers have a stake in the Producers Mark. One Guild means that every producer, wherever she or he lives, has a stake in the health of every state tax incentive program. One Guild means that our veteran Producers Council members have a stake in the nurturing of the next generation of producing talent.

Our business is so competitive that it does nothing better than obscure the ways that we’re all on the same team. The all-consuming daily grind of producing — pushing a dozen boulders up a dozen different and increasingly steep hills — can fool you into thinking you’re alone. It isn’t so. There are thousands of colleagues who share your struggle, and who are ready to support you, inspire you, and remind you of why you do this crazy job. It’s One Guild — and you’re part of it.
“A WORK OF HUGE AMBITION THAT NEVER FOR A SECOND FEELS ANYTHING LESS THAN INTIMATE. ‘Boyhood’ is Richard Linklater’s greatest and most humane film.”
CHRIS NASHAWATY, Entertainment

“RICHARD LINKLATER CHANGES THE GAME. People will be writing about this film for years.”
MICK LASALLE, San Francisco Chronicle

“BOYHOOD’ STANDS ALONE AND APART. I cannot remember when a film has moved me more or captured so well all the colors and shadings of the personal, yet universal process of becoming.”
BETSY SHARKEY, Los Angeles Times

“A LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT AND EASILY THE YEAR’S MOST EMOTIONALLY ARRESTING FILM, channeling real life with seamless authenticity in a way that movies rarely do. It’s bound to be talked about for years to come.”
CLAUDIA PUIG, USA TODAY

“A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME FILM. A heartstring-pulling masterpiece that reaffirms what cinema can do, and what it is to be alive.”
LIZ BEARDSWORTH, EMPIRE

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

3 GOLDEN BEST MOTION PICTURE

WINNER GLOBE AWARDS

BEST DIRECTOR
RICHARD LINKLATER
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
PATRICIA ARQUETTE

“A WORK OF HUGE AMBITION THAT NEVER FOR A SECOND FEELS ANYTHING LESS THAN INTIMATE. ‘Boyhood’ is Richard Linklater’s greatest and most humane film.”
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BETSY SHARKEY, Los Angeles Times

“The Best Movie of the Year on over 150 Top Ten Lists

8 CRITICS’ CHOICE AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST DIRECTOR - RICHARD LINKLATER
BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY - RICHARD LINKLATER
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR - ETHAN HAWKE
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS - PATRICIA ARQUETTE
BEST ACTING ENSEMBLE

5 BAFTA AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST FILM

3 SAG AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST ENSEMBLE

Produced, Written and Directed by
Richard Linklater

For screening info, please visit IFCFilms.com/awards
Within the American film community — and the predominantly American readership of this magazine — Arthur Cohn does not carry the instant name recognition that some of our previous Case Studies have. He may not be a familiar face to you. Arthur Cohn, we suspect, will forgive you if that is the case. With the gentle deference characteristic of his native Switzerland, he will suggest that it’s not so very important that you know who he is; it would be more valuable to know a little of his work.

In fact, the chances are that you do know a little of his work, and very possibly a good deal more than a little of it. Over the course of a long and distinguished career, Cohn has produced more than 20 feature films, among them a half-dozen Academy Award winners, including a handful of titles that number among the most influential ever made.


Though he is arguably one of a handful of links to the golden era of European film in the middle decades of the 20th century, Arthur Cohn is decidedly not one to rest on his laurels. Well aware of his status as the carrier of an essential cinematic legacy, he is more likely to be found today discovering and training young filmmakers in the lessons he learned from his mentors, De Sica chief among them.

This is the 70th in *Produced by*’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. While editor Chris Green would have been more than happy to fly to Basel to speak with his subject in person, the Producers Guild Finance Committee, alas, had other ideas. Thus, over the course of several transoceanic telephone conversations, Arthur Cohn offered up a lifetime’s worth of producing wisdom, including his counsel from De Sica, reflections on the passion and patience required to develop a strong script, and the virtues of never, ever listening to anyone else’s advice.
To whatever degree possible, listen to your own intuition and disallow yourself to listen to anybody else’s advice. Because if you ask for others’ views — “should I do it this way or should I do it another way?” — then sometimes you unconsciously make a film which is, in a way, not your own.

Nobody is born to be a producer; it’s a career that a person has to choose. What led you to that choice? How did you fall in love with the medium to the point you decided to make your life’s work?

Before I became a film producer, I was a journalist and a reporter on the Swiss radio. I wrote a script on my own, it just interested me, it made me realize that he only lives once, and that he has to do everything every day to make his life special. The title was “Past Life.”

In Rome I met Myron Karlin, then with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and later with Warner Bros., a lovely human being who became a personal friend of mine. I told him I had tried to write a script, and asked for a blunt evaluation. It came back a week later. He had crossed out the words “Past Life” and written over it “Past Film.” So I learned that to write a good film takes a very long time, and it was more in my interest to become a supervisor of other scriptwriters. That is how I started.

The first film which I was involved in was based on a very simple idea: that material luxuries and consumer culture play too significant a role in our daily lives; certainly when it comes to birthdays, weddings…they so often seem to be about material luxuries. And I felt that there should be a film that showed that luxury is not the true gimmick of being happy, that it’s an illusion. As a result I found, together with René LaFestate, who was a producer in France and a good friend of mine, an adventure-explorer named Pierre-Dominique Gaisseau, with whom we discussed the matter. With a small film crew, he went to uncharted territories of what was then Netherlands New Guinea, to a place where nobody had ever been before. In this film, you saw for the first time these people on this faraway island, who had nothing. They had never seen a car, never seen a plane. They never cooked with hot water. They were all naked, which had no sexual aspect. They may have been considered primitive. But you could see they were all happy people. And the essence of the film was that you don’t have to be like them, absolutely not, but you have to disabuse yourself of the idea that luxuries make you happy. You can see in this film how people are happy with nothing. The film was called Sky Above and Mud Below. Subject-wise it was very simple, but ultimately the Academy honored it as Best Documentary Feature because it was a very unusual theme which they felt would fascinate people worldwide.

Even so, the film had no distributor, even after it won the Oscar. Joseph E. Levine took pity on me and said, “I’m ready to take the film in distribution. However, I won’t give you money, I will only give you a percentage.” I thought, better a percentage than nothing! I took it.

A very close friend of my family was Bernie Myron of Loews Theatres. He agreed to show my film in one of his theatres on 45th Street for one week. He said to me that I should come to New York. I had never been in America before — and he would take me to the cinema where he showed my film. He told me, “Don’t expect anything, but at least you’ll see your name in front of it, and if it be something that came from nothing together with your French partner and your director.”

The strange thing about New York at that time was that when a film was coming out, even early in the afternoon, after the first screening, you could already have some sense of whether it would be a success or not. There’s nowhere else I know that this is true. But in New York, this had been a rule. And when we came on that evening, we could not even take the car to the cinema because the crowds to see it were so big. For a film which was totally unknown! There were not even reviews, just word of mouth from people at 11:00, 1:00 and 3:00 shows. It was unbelievable! In any event, the film turned out to be a surprisingly big success commercially.

When you undertake a project today, where do you start? Is it a story you want to see told? A director or performer you want to work with?

My main concern with any film is the script. I had one significant teacher, with whom I made six films together, and from whom I learned the most: I mean Vittorio De Sica. He taught me that the script is the most important aspect of a film — not the actors and not the directors, not the editing and not what the public thinks and what they don’t think. The main thing is to have a good script. There are people in the industry who think that I’m exotic because many of my films took two years until the script was ready. Typically in Europe, you have a script after, let’s say, generically speaking, three months. To me, they say, “Why is it not the actors? What are we doing?”

So often, there isn’t enough effort to make a script better, even if it is already good, which is often not the case. But I’ve learned that even the best director in the world has absolutely no chance to save a bad script, whereas a mediocre director can still spoil an excellent script. It still will come out as a playable film. Maybe no more than that, but it will function. Based on my experience, I am convinced that a bad script is as much as 60 percent of a good film. This was my first lesson from De Sica.

De Sica gave me two other counsels, which I have taken to heart very seriously. He was like a father to me, and he wanted me to be aware of ways of creative thinking even after he was no longer there — a very rare and unusual gift. De Sica thought it was extremely important that films should be shot where the story actually takes place. Authenticity is not something you can simulate, if it isn’t there. If the film is shot at the authentic place where the story takes place, then you have a very good chance to have a film which is recognized not only as creative but also because it is believable.

The third one is perhaps less central, but still important. He felt that it is wrong to believe that a film needs popular actors in order to succeed. A film needs actors who are right for the part, and that’s the only thing that should count in casting.

We followed these mantras in our films The Garden of the Finzi-Continis and A Brief Vacation. In Finzi-Continis, largely unknown Dominique Sanda became a star by playing the main character. The audience was captured by her vulnerability and her human and authentic personality. I’m convinced no established Hollywood star of that time could have interpreted this challenging role more touchingly. In A Brief Vacation, Elizabeth Taylor and various other stars were anxious to play the female lead, but Vittorio and I decided to cast an unknown actress from Brazil, Florinda Bolkan. She was it who made the part of an Italian working, woman dreaming of a “briet vacation” utterly believable. De Sicas rules worked brilliantly. De Sica’s advice has also helped me tremendously with my documentary features, especially with One Day in September. Even after 25 years, there had been not one significant film done on the terrorist attack at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, where 11 Israeli athletes were murdered by a group of Palestinian terrorists. When I discussed the idea with the director, Kevin Macdonald, we agreed that the story we told would have to be absolutely authentic. It would have to be told by the people who were there, during those terrible days.

So far a half a year I went to Germany, Scandinavia, Israel and other countries and succeeded in getting the head of the police of Germany, the head of the Olympic movement and the German Minister of Interior at that time to take part in the film. During the production, everybody recalled the events the way they had lived through them personally. I also succeeded in getting, for the first time, the head of the Israeli Secret Service, who came to Munich in 1972, advising the Germans what to do as the crisis unfolded. With the full assistance and approval of Kevin
to work with a director who is very artistic and very sensitive, but is not likely to be influenced by me, anyway. I’m almost happier well known and successful, has very strong ideas of his own. He try to get them to take my advice, but usually a director, if he is film is a collaborative medium. Consider your own direc-
I have to say, that’s a pretty unusual perspective. I mean, They may have meant well with their advice, but it diverted you it this way or should I do it another way?—then sometimes to your own intuition and disallow yourself to listen to anybody to your own degree possible, when you are a filmmaker, to listen fourth one, the one he was the most proud of. And that is to besides the three mentioned principles of De Sica regarding stunned that it was able to incorporate the terrorists’ point I can remember watching the film, and being almost innec-
But if I had listened to the people who gave me advice—and and me, anyway. I’m almost happier to work with a director who is very artistic and very sensitive, but Macdonald, I had everybody who was significantly involved at the Olympic Games.
However, the truth is that I am often very unsatisfied with whatever I do, because I always think I maybe could have done it better or more believably. So after surveying everything in regard to this film, I was very concerned that we had everybody from the German side, we had the head from the Israeli side, but we had nobody from the terrorist side. Most of the terrorists were killed at the airport when the whole thing came to a climax, and two more were killed afterward by the Israeli Secret Service. But one surviving terrorist was hunted by the Israeli Secret Service for a very successful is really interested in a creative producer beyond the initial steps. Admittedly, there are established direc-
I was obviously appalled by the terrorist’s actions and ideol-ogy, but I was very pleased to have him included in the movie, because now we could tell the story with utmost authenticity. However, I was concerned that when this terrorist got in front of our camera, he would say: “I am terribly sorry that these 11 innocent people have been killed and I apologize to the families,” or something like that. Because it he had said that, the audience would have felt more sympathetic to his regret than to the victims. Nevertheless, I felt we had to take that chance, even though it was very risky. Surprisingly, the terrorist said nothing of the sort. In the interview with Kevin Macdonald he stated: “I am happy that I was one of the leaders of this operation which killed the Israelis. Thanks to this operation, millions in the world heard about our political aims. We had to kill some people, this would be necessary for the purpose of making everybody aware of our cause.” In the end, the terrorist’s fundamentalist worldview con-
And that was only possible because we had a terrorist in the film. I can remember watching the film, and being almost stunned that it was able to incorporate the terrorists’ point of view. Besides the three mentioned principles of De Sica regarding script, location and casting choices, I have tried to carry on a fourth one, the one he was the most proud of. And that is to whatever degree possible, when you are a filmmaker, to listen to your own intuition and disallow yourself to listen to anybody else’s advice. Because if you ask for other’s views —“should I do it this way or should I do it another way?”—then sometimes you unconsciously make a film which is, in a way, not your own. They may have meant well with their advice, but it diverted you from your own concept.
I have to say, that’s a pretty unusual perspective. I mean, film is a collaborative medium. Consider your own direc-
tors with whom I believe I would get along well, such as Peter Weir. However, to be frank, I believe I should be modest and continue trying to make the films based on the originality and quality of the script, rather than trying to get a top director. An established and experienced director, honestly, doesn’t need me. I prefer to have a creative input in my films, and this is easier if the director is open to bear my point of view.
But if I had listened to the people who gave me advice—and and they meaning well, there’s no objection about it—they then of my 24 films, perhaps two or three would have been made, and the rest for sure not. The Garden of the Finzi-Continis was turned down by 31 distributors worldwide.
Even with De Sica’s name attached to it? You would think that it would be enough. The fact that I had everybody who was significantly involved at the Olympic Games.
The script is the most important aspect of a film — not the actors and not the directors, not the editing and not what the public thinks and what they don’t think. I am convinced that a truly good script is as much as 60 percent of a good film.

student. ‘I’m very sorry, but I cannot allow you to come back tomorrow. It is not possible.’ He explains how sorry it makes him feel, but that these were the orders from his government and that he had to follow them.

These are only two very small examples, but there are so many other examples, in which human beings have to follow an order they did not make and that they didn’t believe it would go any further.

Then the premiere happened, and the screening was attended by the President of Israel, Shazar, and by Golda Meir, the Prime Minister. As everywhere in the world, when the high dignitaries of the country are present, the public is supposed to remain seated until the leaders rise to leave the cinema. That was supposed to be the case here, too. But Golda Meir and President Shazar wept so much at the end of the film that it took them 10 full minutes to get up.

But they finally got up and left, and De Sica came to me and said, ‘Arthur, you are the only one who believed in the success of this film after so many turnarounds. But I agree with you now, there will come a time when the film will be appreciated. Tears don’t lie.’ That was before the film won the Oscar. De Sica believed it would become a success, not necessarily in terms of money, but in terms of appreciation and respect. And this indeed happened. When Finzi-Contini later got included in a critics’ list of the 100 best films of all time, CNN sent a team to Switzerland to talk to me and said, ‘Fantastic. You produced this film and it has now been honored in a truly impressive manner.’ So I told them, ‘You are very kind to come here, and I hope you have a good time in Switzerland. But I want you to know that you are at the wrong address. You have to go to Wilshire Boulevard and you have to thank the Academy, because without them, nobody would have seen this film.’

A journalist can’t look at your filmography without noticing your extraordinary success with the Motion Picture Academy. Six of your films have been awarded with an Oscar. You seem to have the gift of making films that resonate with them.

It is very unusual that somebody who doesn’t live in Hollywood has been embraced in this way by people in the Academy. People in Europe have a misguided idea about the Academy. They think Academy members get a piece of paper in late November or maybe December, when they check the boxes next to the names of their friends or sentimental favorites. And this in my opinion is absolute nonsense. Those 6,000 members of the Academy, at least the majority of them, are extremely anxious to prove time and again that they are worthy of the honor of voting, because they so
“A TRULY GREAT AMERICAN FILM.

‘Selma’ isn’t just a biopic – it celebrates community action. By seeing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through the prism of one crucial event, the film offers a rousing portrait of a born preacher not without sin. It’s in the quiet moments of humor, heartbreak, and stabbing self-doubt that we see a man in full.”

PETER TRAVERS, Rolling Stone

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PETER TRAVERS, Rolling Stone


A reminder of what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did for this country. David Oyelowo is magnificent. Director Ava DuVernay brilliantly uses a micro event as a way into a larger, more compelling macro story. ‘Selma’ arrives with a raw nerve urgency and timeliness that no one could have anticipated.”

CHRIS NASHAWATY, Entertainment Weekly


ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR

5 INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARD NOMINATIONS

5 CRITICS’ CHOICE AWARD NOMINATIONS

BEST PICTURE

BEST DIRECTOR • BEST ACTOR • BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS • BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

5 INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARD NOMINATIONS

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BEST DIRECTOR • BEST ACTOR • BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS • BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Produced by

Christian Colson | Oprah Winfrey | DeDe Gardner | Jeremy Kleiner


“Selma” frequently gives Oscars and awards to people and to films which otherwise could not find a home or an audience. The seriousness with which the Academy members take that decision has never been fully appreciated internationally, certainly not in Europe. If the Academy has responded favourably to my films, it has had nothing to do with me personally, rather it was because my films tried to address unusual subject matters and had stories which stay with you beyond next day’s breakfast, being fondly remembered for a long time.

You’ve achieved success both in narrative features and in documentary. How is it different when you’re developing an idea for a fiction film versus developing the process of developing a documentary? Do you approach the process differently for each format?

Roughly a quarter of my film productions were documentaries. However, I have experienced enough to realize a documentary feature takes more time and more toughness than is required for a fiction film. And the financial return usually is far smaller. So since One Day in September, I haven’t made a documentary, and frankly I don’t plan to. I respect everybody who does it; because I know how much work it is, and I know that very often the box-office results are modest. But, on the other hand, I’ve learned that I am better at developing scripts for feature films and then getting them made in a way that they can become memorable. I have the highest regard for any creative filmmaker who does feature documentaries. But it is a very, very tough and sometimes thankless job. I appreciate how hard the Academy works to acknowledge this genre, because they know how difficult it is.

It is extremely difficult to have a worldwide success with a feature documentary, while it is not as difficult with a well-done scripted feature film. However, it has become more and more difficult to privately finance feature films which cost under $20 million. So many films by the major studios now cost $100 million, $150 million or even $200 million. The films of this magnitude are taking away the lion’s share of the cinemas worldwide, because they have famous actors and extraordinary special effects, which are the reasons why they are so expensive.

But these very expensive films, in fact, have little drama and little artistic development script-wise, at least when compared to “smaller” feature films I believe in. And the special effects in these films are certainly fabulous and unusual, especially when seen in cinemas.

It is a fact that video-on-demand is now becoming more and more popular. These people at home want to see films on demand, but they don’t want to see a film in which the effects are the main attraction. Rather they want to experience something which challenges them, moves them, fascinates them. I don’t believe they are interested to a large extent in effects-driven films, as wonderful as those effects are. I must add: Not all special effects films are equal. I thought Avatar was a fabulous movie, but many other films are extremely expensive and do not give the public what they want in terms of a meaningful story.

If you guessed “All of the above” You’re correct

In Night at the Museum III WE ARE EGYPT, in The A-Team WE ARE MEXICO, in The Whispers WE ARE AFRICA, in Traffic minders WE ARE AFGHANISTAN, in 2012 WE ARE TIBET AND YELLOWSTONE, in Pianists WE ARE INDIA, in The S词hoo of the Travelling Pains WE ARE THE BAJA, WE ARE THE THOMPSON-NICOLA REGION IN KAMLOOPS, BC, CANADA.

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In January – February 2015 / 9
Many of those films feel like they’re more about the sensation of viewing them than about the story onscreen. At the same time, these big films in a way have helped my style of films, by contrasting them. I believe that my films have more dramatic and human depth and therefore, more lasting power. I guarantee you that I have a greater chance to get significant video-on-demand viewings with my type of stories than with a very expensive film which is based on special effects.

In order to craft those stories, when you’re working with writers, how do you know when you have a script that is finished, that’s good enough to sustain the kind of engagement with an audience that you’re seeking? For me, there has never been a feature film made without approximately two years of working until the script was finished. Usually, I have two writers, but they don’t work together. My experience is that it is usually better to have one writer complete a draft, and then the second writer should work on trying to make the existing version better. This way I’m supervising the development of the script until I can truly identify myself with it.

I take a long time with the script because I want to be absolutely sure that when I look back, I have no regrets. A very helpful piece of advice that I learned from my father is that when I make a decision in my life, whatever it is, I always imagine — this may sound a bit childish, but it works, at least for me — how I would view the decision I made today two years from now. If I think about it this way, I have much more critical distance and a more significant possibility of making a decision which is worthwhile. I’m always trying to make decisions that avoid regrets later, and this is one concrete way I approach it.

Here is another way: My mother was a poet in Europe. Among other things, she wrote lyrics for chansons to be sung in cabarets. One of the songs she wrote which became very famous was called “Light and Shadow.” The idea is that everybody in life has to go through periods of disappointment, of bad timing, of being in bad shape or experiencing that things which were expected to happen, don’t happen. And in these times of darkness it is extremely important that you don’t get depressed but you take your time and you think, “This is a period of shadow, but after the shadow, a period of light will come.” And the period of light will be full of success and optimism, meaningful endeavors and charming happenings. If you believe in this idea of shadow and light in your life, then you have a big advantage. When you have times of shadow, you’ll think of the light to come, and when you have times of light, then you’ll remember the period of shadow which preceded it and you’ll be very grateful that you are out of it, and that success has returned. My mother’s wisdom has helped me throughout my life to overcome shadows. I carry this song in my heart forever.
Blair Breard keeps Louie focused on the essentials

by Cecelia Lederer

PGA member Blair Breard is accustomed to making something out of nothing. "I was doing lots of other things in my life," she tells me. "I was managing restaurants, after seventeen thousand other jobs, and I just thought: What am I doing? I can't do this anymore. I'm too smart. What's going on?" We were talking the day after the Muze Awards luncheon for women in television, where she sat on the other side of the food service table. But it was will and necessity that brought Breard to the sparse but cozy offices of Pig Newton, where she is the executive producer for FX's hit show Louie.

Breard's first job was logging timecode for free on a friend's documentary. "It was so boring I thought I would just shoot myself," she laughs. "This is way pre-digital, so I'm sitting there putting in timecode based on what was happening in the frame." But Breard pushed through that suicidal ideation to donate her time once again, this time traveling to Louisiana as an intern on John Sayles' Passion Fish. "I quit my job, sublet my apartment and said goodbye to my boyfriend," she recalls. Giving up money's security for the sake of art is a theme that comes up in her career again and again, and the work benefits. Breard continued to cut her teeth in New York as a field producer and production coordinator, this time for a wage. "I think because I was older when I started that it just clicked," she observes. "There were so many problems to solve and so much to do." Her first time as production manager was for $600 a week on the low-budget feature Where the Rivers Flow North, with Treat Williams and Michael J. Fox. "It was out of the frying pan into the fire," she recalls. "I learned how to do the job on my feet. The producer had never done it before. She was very pregnant and married to the director. They were Vermont farmers." Those penny-pinching experiences gave her the chops to executive produce and develop one of the defining comedies of the past five years.

Though Breard found success producing features like Kenneth Lonergan's Margaret and Noah Baumbach's Margot at the Wedding, in TV she has come into her own as executive. She met her fellow EP Louis CK working as a line producer on his film Pootie Tang. They remained "friends, but their plans to work together again sat on the back burner until 2010. "When I first met Louis," she tells me, "he handed me a stack of films that he'd been making forever. (On Louie), he's allowed to make the short films and tie it together with stand-up. The show feels like the most realized expression of his creative impulse. That's a unique situation to be in."

Unique definitely describes it. When I ask her about FX, Breard is definitive. "They don't see the script; they don't get cast approval, they don't know nothing. They just sit around in a dark room, the lights go down and they watch the episode." That isn't standard for FX. "That isn't standard for anyone. Louis said, 'I'll only do it if you give me full creative control, I don't want to be developed. I don't want notes. I don't want casting.' And that's why our budget is so low. They said 'okay, but this is a risk, so we will give you a very, very, very, very small amount of money.' We had so little money it was ridiculous, but I knew that if there was anyone I could figure it out with, it would be Louis." Her experience working with the burset ofホーム let her turn the low budget into a creative asset. "We have no trailers," she half-boasts. "We have no catering. We barely have craft service. You throw all that stuff away and you get back to the basics of what it is you need. You need a story, you need somewhere to shoot and you need something to shoot it with. Everything else is gravy."

"If I'd stuck with those kinds of projects, I never would've stripped everything away and figured out what it really means to produce."

Shooting on the streets of New York adds another layer of challenge to Breard's task. Shaping the circumstances to fit their needs, Breard uses the city to her advantage. "One of the things that Louis loves and I love about working in New York is really incorporating the city. We're not trying to create a situation in which we shut out anything. Part of what I think makes the show feel really alive is that it's got some random elements. Going without the luxuries most episodic television shows have, the Louie crew compensates by being quick on its feet. "The smaller we are, the more we can react to what's going on and we can move around. If you have a giant crew with 15 trailers and trucks and 100 people on the crew, you can't move the company quickly... But we can decide we'll go to a different location or simply adjust to what's going off. The small crew was a budget necessity, but it grew into an important element of the show's personal energy. Louie doesn't feel manufactured because lives in the moment. "New York is challenging," she admits, "but it's fantastic because it's exciting. You just don't know what's going to happen and so you get everything in place and then you deal with the circumstances."
Before Louis, Breard had been working on projects with larger budgets. “The last feature I did before I started Louis was a studio film called Just Wright, with Queen Latifah and Common... If I’d stuck with those kinds of projects, I never would’ve stripped everything away and figured out what it really means to produce.” Producing Louis requires a reinvented wheel. They don’t schedule, budget or shoot like a regular TV show. “I can’t have two AD teams. I can’t do it like regular episodic TV. I had to completely just throw it up in the air and start over again, and it was super liberating. The most valuable thing in the world.” The shoestring budget means the creative team is essentially just Breard and CK. “The trust that he places in me allows me to do a better job,” she confirms.

What her experience in TV has lacked in budget it has made up for with something less tangible and more valuable: time. Four 13-episode seasons have given the artists a lot of room to grow. “Features are more short term,” she observes. “Whether it’s a three-month film or a six-month film, from prep to shooting and wrap: it’s a self-contained thing. And then it’s gone and you have to let go of it.” Working on a long-term project has given Breard the chance to fully sink into the creative vision. “I really start to be able to understand on a very deep level what he needs creatively in order to make the best show that he can make.” Each season has brought a new stage in the show’s development. The longer it’s on the air, the more finely the point is shaped. “If you watch the pilot of season one and the finale of season four, the artistic growth and development that Louis as an artist has gone through is really evident,” she testifies. The first season owed a tremendous amount to CK’s past as a short-filmmaker as well as his present status as one of the English-speaking world’s most successful stand-up comedians. The episodes had no arcs; they were simply sketches given narrative structure by interstitial stand-up. But CK’s vision and Breard’s management have become parents to a growing and maturing show.
The second season featured episode-long arcs and the series' first hour-long episode. "Season three, he started to write even longer arcs," Breard continues. "We did a two-part two-episode arc with Parker Posey called 'Daddy's Girlfriend.' I remember in the beginning of season three, we were writing the episodes and he said, 'I'm trying to make it one episode, but it's just a longer story.' And I said, you know, let's do it. Let's do it in two episodes. If it works, it works. It doesn't matter if it's one or if it's two. This is your voice and this is the story you want to tell."

The show matures still. Narrative drove season four much more forcefully than stand-up, which for the first time wasn't featured in every episode. The absence of stand-up was a debate. "We talked about it extensively," says Breard. "Did he need it for the rhythm? Did he need it for the story? Did it take away from the story by not having the stand-up in there, or did it pull you out of the narrative that was happening over this bigger arc that we've never done before?"

For the duo, the creative growth is far from over. Producing the recent feature The Drop was a moment of realization for Breard… A demarcation point: before and after the asceticism of Louie. Working without external comforts had launched Breard into a higher level of creativity, and her return to features benefited from her television experience. CK also continues to expand his artistic horizons. Despite his character's frustration at acting in a film in a season one episode of Louie, the real Louis has recently brought his inimitable sensibility and timing to films like American Hustle and Blue Jasmine. "All the talents that he gets to use on the show: the lead actor, director, writer, editor… All those muscles are really getting stronger and stronger," Breard asserts. "His acting and his directing really developed craft, because he has to do it every single day on the show. So I feel he'll continue to develop in that direction as time goes by. I mean, I don't know how long one person can make a 13-episode show every year. It's a lot." Breard confesses that she would be surprised if CK didn't make more features in the years to come, having already made Pootie Tang and Tomorrow Night, which is available on CK's website.

Breard is building her professional future on a strong foundation. "It's not that easy to just be a producer," she states. "There are things you can't know by reading a book. You just have to do them over and over. I feel like I was doing that for 20 years. Just building. Every project I did is some other kind of experience. It ended up being really helpful. It doesn't matter what it was. Just a different experience with different people in different circumstances. That made me stronger and better at my job."

The starving artist is a truthful cliché. Most of us do what we do because we can't do anything else. Money is not the goal (though for the lucky it is sometimes a byproduct). Breard presses on with meager capital and produces innovative and provocative entertainment. Her show achieved financial success because it had the creative freedom brought on by scarcity. In an age of big-budget spectacles in IMAX 3D, Breard cuts to the core of what matters in narrative: a unique voice, telling a compelling story.
The first 25 years of the Producers Guild Awards opened with former President Ronald Reagan as the inaugural host, and ended with the Awards’ first-ever tie for the Darryl F. Zanuck Award, a photo finish between 12 Years a Slave and Gravity.

What will the next 25 years bring? We don’t know, but you’d better believe we’re going to be on hand to see it.

Returning to the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel after an absence of 11 years, the 26th Annual Producers Guild Awards guarantees a bevy of celebrity presenters, a handful of the most renowned honorees in our industry, unique interviews with and insights from some of the greatest producers working today, and at the very end (we promise this time), just one winner.

One thing we guarantee that you won’t see at this year’s Producers Guild Awards: television cameras broadcasting the event live. Unlike most major industry awards events, the Producers Guild Awards have never been licensed to television — if you’re not in the room, you’re not going to see the proceedings. It’s for that reason that the Producers Guild Awards are among the warmest, loosest, liveliest events of the season, a night when creative visionaries, top executives and producing team members come together to relax, laugh and celebrate the finest work of the year.

This year, Awards Chairs Ryan Murphy and Todd Black pick up the producing baton from the team of Michael De Luca and Lori McCreary, and the result is an evening that promises to bring a fresh energy and a new chapter to the distinguished history of the event, while carrying on the legacy of elegance, collegiality and showmanship that have become the Awards’ trademark.

The 26th Annual Producers Guild Awards take place on January 24, 2015. We’ll see you there.
JON FELTHEIMER

During his 30-year entertainment industry career, Jon Feltheimer has held leadership positions at Lionsgate, Sony Pictures Entertainment and New World Entertainment, and has been responsible for tens of thousands of hours of television programming and hundreds of films, including the global blockbuster Hunger Games franchise, the launch of the Over the Garden franchise and Academy Award winners Urash, Monster’s Ball and Precious.

Mr. Feltheimer was named Chief Executive Officer of Lionsgate in March 2000. During his 14-year tenure as CEO, Lionsgate has grown from an independent studio roots into a leading next-generation global content leader with a reputation for innovation.

During Mr. Feltheimer’s tenure as CEO, Lionsgate has established a reputation for leadership in films, television programming and digital content. Its success has been driven by a prestigious 16,000-title library, innovative partnerships with digital platforms, a feature film slate led by the Hunger Games franchise, and a vibrant television business encompassing over 30 shows on more than 20 different networks. The studio’s successful series include multiple Emmy Award and Producers Guild Award winner Mad Men, as well as hits such as Weeds, Anger Management, Nashville Nurse Jackie and the critically-acclaimed breakout Orange Is the New Black.

Mr. Feltheimer was NATPE’s keynote speaker in January 2009, received MIPCOM’s prestigious “Personality of the Year” Award in October 2010, was inducted into Broadcasting & Cable’s Hall of Fame in October 2012 and received NATPE’s coveted 2014 Brandon Tartikoff Legacy Award, reflecting 30 years of leadership in the global television business. He has been named to Variety’s “The New Establishment” list as well as being named one of “America’s Most Inspiring CEOs” by Esquire magazine.

For his historic contributions to our entertainment industry, the Producers Guild is proud to honor Jon Feltheimer with the Milestone Award.

GALE ANNE HURD

Gale Anne Hurd is one of the entertainment industry’s most esteemed producers of Academy Award-winning films and Emmy Award-winning programs that shatter box-office and ratings records. Hurd’s production career launched when she produced and co-wrote the smash hit The Terminator. This success was quickly followed by Aliens, which received seven nominations and two Academy Awards, and the Academy Award-winning films The Abyss, Terminator 2: Judgment Day and The Ghost and the Darkness. Additional feature credits include the Academy Award-nominated Armageddon, The Incredible Hulk, Aliens, The Punisher, Dick and The Waterdance, which won the Spirit Award for Best First Feature and the Audience and Screenplay Awards at the Sundance Film Festival.

When Hurd decided to enter the television business, she did so with a bang as executive producer of The Walking Dead, which currently reigns as the most-watched scripted drama, beating all broadcast and cable series among adults 18-49. The American Film Institute honored the show in both 2010 and 2012 as a “Top 10” TV program.

Hurd’s company, Valhalla Entertainment, has an overall deal with Universal Cable Productions to develop television and digital series, including the recently announced series, Hunters, set to premiere on SyFy in 2016.

For her seminal work in expanding the possibilities of cinema and her consistent support of visionary filmmakers, Gale Anne Hurd is the PAG’s 2015 Selznick Achievement Award honoree.
MARK GORDON

Mark Gordon is an award-winning producer with more than 75 motion picture and television projects to his credit.

In television, Gordon’s company’s latest project, Benched, a court room comedy for USA network, premiered on October 28. Currently, Gordon serves as an executive producer on ABC’s Grey’s Anatomy, CBS’ Criminal Minds and Showtime’s Ray Donovan. He is a five-time Emmy nominee and two-time winner, as well as a Golden Globe and Producers Guild Award winner for his work on Grey’s Anatomy. Some of his further television credits include Private Practice, Army Wives and Nip/Tuck.

Gordon’s film credits include Saving Private Ryan (earning him Academy Award and BAFTA nominations for Best Picture, and winning the top honors for Best Picture and for Best Director—Steven Spielberg), Primary Colors, to name a few.

As the former President (today President Emeritus) of the Producers Guild of America, Gordon spearheaded the establishment of the Producers Mark. He currently serves on the Board of The Archer School for Girls, and has served on the Boards of The Virginia Film Festival, Chrysalis, The Motion Picture and Television Fund and The UCLA Lab School. He is the former chairman of Teach for America Los Angeles and the founder of Citizens of the World Charter Schools, which currently serves over 1,500 students in five schools in Los Angeles and New York.

For his continued embrace of new creative voices in television and his passion for great stories, the Producers Guild is thrilled to name Mark Gordon as its 2015 Lear Award honoree.

PLAN B ENTERTAINMENT

Headed by Brad Pitt and co-presidents Dede Gardner and Jeremy Kleiner, Plan B entertainment has attained a unique stature among highly respected production companies. Founded in 2002, the company has been responsible for producing numerous award-winning and critically-acclaimed films. From The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford, to the Palme d’Or-winning The Tree of Life, to the Academy Award- and Golden Globe-winning 12 Years a Slave and the Emmy Award-winning The Normal Heart, Plan B has consistently given top filmmakers the freedom to take creative risks. The result has been an extraordinarily rich run of memorable characters, surrounded by stories that are emotionally and socially compelling.

Most recently, the company once again demonstrated its gift for putting a human face on the forces of history with 12 Years a Slave — the first feature-length narrative film chronicling the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. But first and foremost, Plan B has been a champion of singular and visionary creative voices, including such distinctive storytellers as Andrew Dominik, Terrence Malick, Steve McQueen, James Gray, Luke Davies and Ava DuVernay. In the coming years, Plan B will continue to deliver its characteristically unique and uplifting work not only to theatrical screens, but through small-screen collaborations with outlets such as ABC, Hulu, HBO and Showtime, and AMC.

For its rigorous pursuit of the human stories within the broad sweep of history, the Producers Guild is proud to honor Plan B with the Visionary Award.
THE NORMAL HEART

Kramer versus Kramer, anyone? This award’s namesake, Stanley Kramer, was one of our entertainment industry’s most passionate and committed voices, unafraid to bring controversial stories to a national audience while pursuing his vision with relentless tenacity. His example was no doubt an inspiration for playwright Larry Kramer (no relation), whose searing drama about the terrifying early days of the AIDS epidemic remains one of the cornerstones of both late 20th-century American theater and the rich tradition of onstage activism. But it took the combined efforts of producer-director Ryan Murphy, a top-notch cast, the producing heft of Brad Pitt and Dede Gardner’s Plan B Entertainment, and the cachet of premium cable titan HBO to bring this landmark story to a new audience and a new generation. Even as the social and scientific forces marshaled against AIDS have made their greatest strides, the necessity of our collective ownership of and confrontation with the epidemic’s legacy of ignorance, prejudice and fear has never been greater. In The Normal Heart, Murphy and his collaborators have taken the lessons of both Kramers to heart, rooting the progress of a broader cultural awareness in the profound anguish and hard-fought perseverance of men who could have been (or in fact were) our sons, our brothers or ourselves.

For their profound devotion to their characters’ humanity in the cause of a larger struggle that continues to animate our politics and society, the PGA is proud to honor the producers of The Normal Heart with the Stanley Kramer Award.
THE DARRYL F. ZANUCK AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES

Where has the time gone? It doesn’t feel like it’s already been a year since the Zanuck Award shocked us all by producing a tie victory between 12 Years a Slave and Gravity, but a year later those wins seem almost inevitable, recognizing a pair of films for their emotional urgency and flawless craft. It’s just as easy to imagine a roster of nominees headlined by Interstellar, Selma, Unbroken, Mr. Turner, A Most Violent Year and Inherent Vice… none of which made the PGA’s cut in this fiercely competitive season. But the 10 nominees recognized this year include a range of titles that fully demonstrate that challenging storytelling is alive and thriving in today’s changing marketplace.

A common theme this year is characters finding their destinies, for better or worse. And so our titles range from Boyhood, in which we watch as a six-year-old transforms before our eyes into a young man, to The Theory of Everything, in which young Stephen Hawking copes with the simultaneous rise of his career and the loss of his physical capabilities. Andrew Neiman in Whiplash struggles between his aspirations as a drummer and the obsessive dedication such a career inspires, while the darker ambitions of Nightcrawler’s Lou Bloom drive another young man determined to find his calling at whatever the cost.

American Sniper’s Chris Kyle, at the pinnacle of his deadly profession, still agonizes over all the soldiers he can’t save, while Michael Keaton’s Riggan Thompson, a washed-up actor trying to revive his career in Birdman, suffers this year’s ultimate career crisis.

Another theme this year involves the lies people tell just to get by, from the insular world of wealth and power depicted in Foxcatcher to the deceptive marital games of Gone Girl. Benedict Cumberbatch as Alan Turing in The Imitation Game becomes a war hero for cracking Nazi codes, but has to hide his very identity from a repressive social system. And in another time and place, the heroes of The Grand Budapest Hotel seek to maintain an outdated system of manners and elegance in the face of a world inevitably changing around them.

It’s a tough call, as always, but somebody’s gotta do it, and this year we believe that the compelling and universal truths of Richard Linklater’s Boyhood — not to mention the unique production challenges of a 12-year shoot — will make it the deserving winner of this year’s Zanuck Award.
DREAMWORKS ANIMATION THANKS THE PGA AND CONGRATULATES BONNIE ARNOLD ON HER WELL-DESERVED NOMINATION!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING

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PRODUCED BY | BONNIE ARNOLD, p.g.a. WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY | DEAN DEBLOIS
“A MESMERIZING MASTERWORK. HYPNOTIC AND HAUNTING. ONE OF THE YEAR’S VERY BEST FILMS. STEVE CARELL, CHANNING TATUM AND MARK RUFFALO GIVE THE PERFORMANCES OF THEIR LIVES. BENNETT MILLER HITS A NEW PEAK AS HE TAKES A SCALPEL TO THE PRIVILEGED WORLDS OF OLYMPIC SPORTS AND INHERITED WEALTH. A UNIQUE AND UNFORGETTABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER THAT KNOCKS THE GROUND OUT FROM UNDER YOU.”

-Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF ANIMATED THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES

Let it go. That’s what we were all hearing, over and over again, a year ago at this time, thanks to Disney’s animated juggernaut that can remain nameless. This year’s nominees don’t include a title with the same ubiquitous reach, but each of these five titles is a special achievement nonetheless.

Winner for the last two years, Disney keeps its in-house division humming with the help of a little Marvel cross-promotion in Big Hero 6, a super-powered tale of a boy overcoming the loss of his brother with the help of the robotic (and adorable) Baymax. Fox’s How to Train Your Dragon 2 picks up the continuing adventures of Hiccup and his pet dragon Toothless, following a nomination for the original film in 2010. Focus Features and Laika, previously nominated for the stop-motion Coraline and ParaNorman, take another nomination for The Boxtrolls. Fox picks up a south-of-the-border nomination for The Book of Life, co-produced by fantasy savant Guillermo Del Toro. Warner Bros. racks up a nomination for The Lego Movie, which drew audiences of all ages to a surprisingly profound story of creativity with the famous Danish toy bricks. Notably missing from this year’s nominees? The Tale of the Princess Kaguya, one of the last films from Japan’s Studio Ghibli, which didn’t make much of a splash with American audiences.

While this year’s award doesn’t have the same aura of inevitability as last year’s, it always helps to have one of the year’s most beloved hits. Which is why we think that The Lego Movie, which included everything from an evil Will Ferrell to cinema’s greatest-ever rendition of Batman, will take this year’s Animation award.
As digital cameras and editing software proliferate, more and more documentary filmmakers are finding ways to tell the meaningful stories that otherwise might go untold. This year’s five nominees include stories about science, politics, nature and terrorism, and how all are interconnected.

Made over a span of seven years, Particle Fever tells the story of the first experiments at Switzerland’s Large Hadron Collider, which could open the doors to revolutionary discoveries about the basic secrets of physics and the possibilities of a universe that adheres to the rational principles of supersymmetry.

Life Itself is the story of the life and death of film critic Roger Ebert, ranging from his battle with alcoholism, to his years as one of the most influential film critics in America alongside Gene Siskel, to his final battle with cancer that rendered him speechless, but still as opinionated as ever.

Set in an environmentally fragile part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Virunga tells of the people trying to protect that country’s Virunga National Park, a refuge for mountain gorillas threatened by war and oil exploration. Also on the political front lines is Merchants of Doubt, based on the bestselling book about the web of misinformation produced by the tobacco and energy industries to allow them to promote their agendas in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence.

Finally, The Green Prince is the story of Mosab Hassan Yousef, a Palestinian activist who turned away from the brutality of Hamas to become a prized informant for the Israeli security services, and of the complex tangle of issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Each of these films tells its story with urgency and passion, and each would be a worthy winner of the Documentary award. This year’s winner is a tight call, but we believe that the emotional underpinnings of Life Itself, accompanied by Ebert’s courage in the face of his own illness and frailty, will carry the day.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BEST PICTURE

THE DARRYL F. ZANUCK AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURES

Producers: Jason Blum  Helen Estabrook  David Lancaster

WHIPLASH

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS®
With a wealth of programming options, we don’t know where to start with the nominees for this year’s David L. Wolper Award, which range from a typically comprehensive Ken Burns documentary about one of America’s premier political dynasties, to a pair of wildly popular mystery series, to a long-in-the-making adaptation of a classic play about the AIDS crisis, to a double whammy of the American Horror Story franchise of grand guignol storytelling. No matter what flavor of television you might be looking for, one of this year’s Wolper nominees has it.

PBS’s updated Sherlock, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman, picks up a second Wolper nomination, having swept across the Atlantic and made a generation of fresh fans for the detective at 221B Baker Street. Freeman returns in a very different role in FX’s Fargo as shifty insurance salesman Lester Nygaard, alongside Colin Hanks, Alison Tolman and Billy Bob Thornton in the reimagining of the classic Coen brothers film.

The Normal Heart, writer Larry Kramer’s landmark play about the early years of the AIDS epidemic, received the all-star HBO treatment this year from director-producer Ryan Murphy. And Murphy also picks up a nomination for the combined third and fourth seasons of FX’s American Horror Story series, Coven and Freak Show, featuring a wealth of delirious storytelling and an over-the-top assortment of actors. Finally, Ken Burns’ PBS film about the Roosevelt dynasty, from the birth of Theodore to the death of Eleanor, garners a nomination as well.

For several years, the winner of this award has been a dramatically weighty, socially aware program made by filmmakers at the top of their craft: see last year’s winner Behind the Candelabra for an example. This year, we predict that the equally heart-rending The Normal Heart will find its way to the winner’s circle.
Our modern television renaissance continues to blossom, with five brilliant shows nominated for this year’s Felton Award. Four of them repeat from last year. Though it’s been over a year since Breaking Bad’s finale blew viewers away, the AMC hit picks up its fifth nomination after last year’s win in this category. Netflix’s House of Cards continues to strut its southern-accented stuff, picking up its second nomination. HBO’s hit Game of Thrones continues to wow viewers with its blend of high fantasy and low politics, picking up its fourth consecutive nomination. And what can we say about Downton Abbey, which has maintained its excellence and status as one of the world’s most popular dramas.

This year’s newcomer is HBO’s True Detective, which wowed viewers last year in only eight brief episodes of existential, southern Gothic dread. Placing Matthew McConaughey in the show at the height of his popularity was surely a stroke of casting genius, but it remains to be seen if the show’s second season will rise to the same heights of twisted popularity. Missing from this year’s nominees is Showtime’s Homeland, after a tumultuous up-and-down season, and FX’s The Americans, which has picked up a devoted audience.

This year’s award seems to be a battle between the settled hit against the newcomer: has enough time passed since viewers last saw Walter White and Jesse Pinkman that voters choose to reward True Detective over Breaking Bad? It’s a possibility, but we believe that given their last opportunity, the voters will award one last hurrah to the AMC meth-lab hit.

**THE NORMAN FELTON AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF EPISODIC TELEVISION, DRAMA**

**Breaking Bad** (AMC)
Melissa Bernstein
Sam Catlin
Bryan Cranston
Vince Gilligan
Peter Gould
Mark Johnson
Stewart Lyons
Michelle MacLaren
George Mastras
Diane Mercer
Thomas Schnauz
Moira Walley-Beckett

**Downton Abbey** (PBS)
Julian Fellowes
Nigel Marchant
Gareth Neame
Liz Trubridge

**Game of Thrones** (HBO)
David Benioff
Bernadette Caulfield
Frank Doelger
Chris Newman
Greg Spence
Carolyn Strauss
D.B. Weiss

**House of Cards** (Netflix)
Dana Brunetti
Joshua Donen
David Fincher
David Manson
Iain Paterson
Eric Roth
Kevin Spacey
Beau Willimon

**True Detective** (HBO)
Richard Brown
Carol Cuddy
Steve Golin
Woody Harrelson
Cary Joji Fukunaga
Matthew McConaughey
Nic Pizzolatto
Scott Stephens
It might seem strange to find a show about shankings, solitary confinement and heroin stashes in the Comedy category, but following its second season, Netflix’s *Orange Is the New Black* finds itself a Thomas Award nominee for Best Episodic Comedy. And why not? As harrowing as it is, the show has proven itself to be an important outlet for under-told stories in modern society, some of which happen to be hilarious.

All of the other four nominees in the category repeat from previous years: CBS’s *The Big Bang Theory* takes its fourth straight nomination. HBO’s *Veep* takes two in a row, after a hilarious season that may require the show to be renamed in its fourth season. (A show called *Veep* starring President Selina Meyer?) ABC’s four-time winner *Modern Family* returns for a fifth nomination. And FX’s previous nominee *Louie* returns, after last year’s absence.

This year’s nominees represent television comedy at its most varied, from mainstream hits to highly respected critical darlings. While it’s tempting for us to predict a fifth win for *Modern Family,* we believe that the brashness of *Orange Is the New Black* will give Netflix its first-ever PGA win.

**THE DANNY THOMAS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF EPISODIC TELEVISION, COMEDY**

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**The Big Bang Theory**
Faye Oshima Belyeu
Chuck Lorre
Steve Molaro
Bill Prady

**Louie** (FX)
Pamela Adlon
Dave Becky
M. Blair Breard
Louis C.K.
Vernon Chatman
Adam Escott
Steven Wright

**Modern Family** (ABC)
Paul Corrigan
Megan Ganz
Abraham Higginbotham
Ben Karlin
Elaine Ko
Steven Levitan
Christopher Lloyd
Jeff Morton
Dan O’Shannon
Jeffrey Richman
Chris Smolnoff
Brad Walsh
Bill Wrubel
Sally Young
Danny Zuker

**Orange Is the New Black** (Netflix)
Mark A. Burley
Sara Hess
Jenji Kohan
Gary Lennon
Neri Tannenbaum
Michael Trim
Lisa I. Vinnecour

**Veep** (HBO)
Chris Addison
Simon Blackwell
Christopher Godsick
Armando Iannucci
Stephanie Laing
Julia Louis-Dreyfus
Frank Rich
Tony Roche

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Motion Picture & Television Fund and UCLA — working together for better health

MPTF focuses solely on the unique needs of the entertainment community. Recently, the health centers became part of UCLA Health, and you can rest assured you’ll still find them in the same convenient locations close to where you work and on the studio lot with the Health Wheels mobile clinic.

So whether you’ve already counted on MPTF healthcare or haven’t yet experienced it, there’s never been a better time to explore the healthcare options available to you — now with the expertise of UCLA Health.
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF NON-FICTION TELEVISION

The nominees in this year’s Non-Fiction category cover a huge wealth of territory, from the world of sports to global cuisine to the mysteries of the universe itself. Three of this year’s nominees repeat from last year. With its third nomination in four years, ESPN’s 30 for 30 remains a high-water mark in the world of the sports documentary, this season covering everything from the Harlem Globetrotters to the 1996 Atlanta Olympic bombing. ABC’s Shark Tank continues to ruffle feathers in the fast-paced world of entrepreneurial capital, with its second nomination. Last year’s winner, CNN’s Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown, returns with its own second nomination. And American Masters returns to the nominees after a year off, following two wins in previous years.

It’s the newcomer to the category that is likeliest to take this year’s award home, however. Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey, jointly produced by Fox and National Geographic, was a modern television phenomenon, bringing the spirit of Carl Sagan’s original show to a new audience with state-of-the-art visual effects and Neil deGrasse Tyson’s flair for intellectual inquiry. It’s the rare show that can explain such academic topics as the theory of plate tectonics, the history of mass extinctions, and the problems of climate change, and show how they’re all interconnected. For making science both urgent and entertaining, Cosmos is your likely winner.
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF COMPETITION TELEVISION

We said this last year, but: here we go again! For the third year in a row, the lineup for this category remains stable, demonstrating the extreme quality of these five hit shows, which have mastered the art of rising above the fray to deliver the thrills and heartbreaks that only a competition show can.

Last year’s winner, NBC’s The Voice, returns for its third nomination, rising above the various other musical performance shows thanks to a phenomenal lineup of coaches and competitors. CBS’s three-time winner The Amazing Race continues its global reach with its 12th nomination, this time for its nail-biting All-Star season. ABC’s Dancing with the Stars twists and shouts its way to a sixth nomination in seven years. And Lifetime’s Project Runway is up to its eighth nomination, while having never been a winner. Will this be its year?

As ever, this is an extremely tight contest between shows that are experts in the art of winning. While the juggernaut that is The Amazing Race can never be discounted, our bet is that The Voice repeats for a second straight year, coming into its own at the top of the field.
THE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCER OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND TALK TELEVISION

Here’s this year’s most airtight, lock-solid, take-it-to-the-bank prediction: The Colbert Report will win its eighth consecutive PGA award, confirming its status as the winningest show in PGA history and making it a winner every time it has been nominated. Surely, the PGA won’t break the streak in the wake of the show’s final, hilarious (and surprisingly emotional) season, which saw host Stephen Colbert send his trademark character off on a high note.

Of the other four nominees, three are multiple-year nominees, showing the PGA’s recognition of their consistently strong work. HBO’s Real Time with Bill Maher picks up its ninth nomination as it continues to court controversy. NBC’s The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon and ABC’s Jimmy Kimmel Live each pick up their third nomination, while HBO’s newcomer Last Week Tonight with John Oliver springs into the big leagues with a nomination in its first hilarious season.

With The Colbert Report ending, surely each of these four shows is looking forward to future awards to finally bring home the gold, although there may be some new program, perhaps on CBS, that might draw the voters’ attention...

To provide a more efficient way to approach production, Clairmont Camera has teamed with world-leading post production house Deluxe, Encore by Deluxe, Level 3 and William F. White International. This strategic alliance will offer productions the ability to package grip, lighting, camera and post services, providing clients with financial savings and added convenience. One of the best benefits is the ability to test your workflow all the way through final color at Clairmont’s facilities before or during the camera prep. Feel free to contact us to arrange for a hands-on demonstration.

THE Colbert Report (Comedy Central)
Meredith Bennett
Tanya Michnevich Bracco
Stephen T. Colbert
Richard Dahm
Paul Dinello
Barry Julian
Matt Lapin
Emily Lazar
Tom Purcell
Jon Stewart

Jimmy Kimmel Live (ABC)
David Craig
Ken Crisby
Doug DeLuca
Gary Greenberg
Elin Irwin
Jimmy Kimmel
Jill Leiderman
Molly McNearney
Tony Romero
Jason Schrift
Jennifer Sharron
Seth Weintraub

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)
Tim Carvell
John Oliver
Liz Stanton

Real Time with Bill Maher (HBO)
Scott Carter
Sheila Griffiths
Marc Gurvitz
Dean Johnsen
Bill Maher
Billy Martin
Matt Wood

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon (NBC)
Rob Crabbe
Jamie Granet Bederman
Katie Hockmeyer
Jim Juvonen
Josh Lieb
Brian McDonald
Lorne Michaels
Gavin Purcell

January – February 2015
ANNOUNCED CATEGORIES

We look forward to the day when the Guild’s collective membership is broad, deep and diverse enough for us to be able to vet accurately the credits of nominees in these categories and welcome the winning producers on stage. Faced with the prospect of potentially presenting an award to a producer who didn’t perform a majority of the producing functions on the project, our Guild opts to play it safe, and simply honor the work as a whole.

So who’s gonna win? These categories don’t have quite the same track record that our others do, but a lack of insight has never stopped us (or many other awards prognosticators) before.

In the Sports category, last year’s more-or-less even dogfight between HBO and ESPN (eventually won by ESPN’s SportsCenter) has turned into an HBO rout, with only ESPN’s World Cup edition of Inside standing tall against a bevy of HBO programs. We think the premium cabler’s 24/7 will take it this year.

Sesame Street remains a favorite to repeat in the Children’s Program category. The Digital Series category is typically the wildest of the Guild’s wild cards, but traditionally (and sort of unfortunately), digital series attached to a pre-existing brand or title prevail over content that’s 100% native to the Web. So we’ll grudgingly predict Cosmos’ Deeper Dive over our sentimental favorite, Freddie Wong’s Kickstarter success story Video Game High School. In future years, we hope that the Guild sees fit to distinguish these two different strains of online series with distinct categories, as it has done so successfully with its non-fiction television awards.

...
When I was first called upon by an old friend, Michael Hearrd, to help build the budget of Netflix’s series Marco Polo, I was excited about sinking my proverbial teeth into a hearty, high-budget project. Working with Michael and the show’s producer Richard Sherkey, I toiled for weeks over every line of detail. As a UPM, I base all decisions for a project on the needs of that project, because there is no cookie-cutter method of making films. However, knowing what to do and how to approach challenges only comes with experience from which to draw comparable resolutions. Having production experience over the past 25 years in 16 countries gave me a lot of confidence as the team and I approached the sizable and numerous challenges of Marco Polo. This project demanded being on top of everything, and I confess, I enjoyed every sleepless moment. When it came time to actually fly to Malaysia and begin prep, we had a solid foundation budget from which to work.

The creator of the Marco Polo series, John Fusco, has a long-standing fascination with the young explorer. While on a trip to Mongolia with his son in 2007, the idea first struck him to tell the grand story of Marco. Over the next few years, the project was envisioned as a long-form project and was for a short time at the Starz network. When Starz dropped it, the project was picked up by The Weinstein Company. Fusco worked with the Weinsteins to find a home for it, which lead them to Netflix. Once that relationship was in place, it was a fairly quick start-up process.

Our prep for the series started in mid-August 2013. After my work with Richard and Michael reviewing details and creating the overall production plan, first AD Sean Guest was hired to begin the lengthy task of scheduling all 10 episodes. With an ultimate delivery date in October 2014, there was very little time to waste.

Where to shoot the project was a paramount concern. After a few options were considered, the team settled on Malaysia, and the new Pinewood Studios facility there which had recently opened. Located in the southernmost tip of mainland Malaysia, about four hours south of Kuala Lumpur, the studio would serve as our base of operations. The studio boasted five soundstages as well as two blank backlot areas.

Figuring out how to bring the scripts to life took hundreds of crew working tirelessly for more than five months of prep and another five months of shooting, in three countries with hundreds of crew from around the world. Richard, John and the creative team worked on the scripts to fit them into time and adjust for location allowances. Meanwhile, Sean Guest and I focused on creating a cohesive budget and plotting out the shooting of the episodes.

With so much material, it was soon decided to cross-board multiple episodes to maximize sets and cast, but that wasn’t the biggest leap of faith. Given our compacted delivery deadline, it was clear that we’d have to shoot two episodes at a time — two full units working on the same studio lot, utilizing the same cast and production resources. The two crews were aptly referred to as the “Marco” and “Polo” units. Overall, after Rebates, the 800+ page production budget settled at a number much higher than any previous television drama to date. While doing cost reports and the budget in general, we kept thinking of the project as a massive 10-hour-long film, as opposed to discrete episodes, a mindset that helped us better track the use of items and their associated costs.

From the extreme weather and heat to production logistics, there were constant and daily challenges which tested the crew. With so much material, it was soon decided to cross-board multiple episodes to maximize sets and cast, but that wasn’t the biggest leap of faith. Given our compacted delivery deadline, it was clear that we’d have to shoot two episodes at a time — two full units working on the same studio lot, utilizing the same cast and production resources. The two crews were aptly referred to as the “Marco” and “Polo” units. Overall, after Rebates, the 800+ page production budget settled at a number much higher than any previous television drama to date. While doing cost reports and the budget in general, we kept thinking of the project as a massive 10-hour-long film, as opposed to discrete episodes, a mindset that helped us better track the use of items and their associated costs.

The extreme weather and heat to production logistics, there were constant and daily challenges which tested the crew. On a typical project, we would rent various gear and move it to and from each location were daunting, requiring the produc-
tion to utilize three travel coordinators in three different parts of the world to move the crew where they needed to be. Over a 10-month period, there was not one day when production personnel were not tiring somewhere.

Originally, the Italy shoot was to involve only a handful of key crew to shoot some establishing shots and background plates in Venice. “One day,” they said. Eventually, the scope and desire of all the creative producers required production to expand that plan to tour full days of shooting. Production brought roughly eight key cast and 75 crew from Malaysia. One of the principal challenges in Italy was crew movement. Because the city has no roads, all set dressing, wardrobe and other shooting gear needed to be ported by hand in carts, or loaded onto numerous small boats. Using boats also caused some issues with sound problems, cast overlap or other logistical issues. Working aware of where the other was working to ensure there were no complications and working with the film office to get clarification on how the incentive really worked. In time, Malaysia may have a more effective program with no history, production often found it necessary to work with the film office to get clarification on how the incentive really worked. In time, Malaysia may have a more effective program.

As for the Pinewood facility, every inch of each stage and dressing. The scope and scale of the production were gigantic. Whether utilizing the 32 pre-rigging crew members to work off-hours to turn a set around for alternate lighting, or shifting the production to utilize three travel coordinators in three different parts of the world to move the crew where they needed to be. Over a 10-month period, there was not one day when production personnel were not tiring somewhere.

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At Your Service

Finding the Right PGA Committee for You.
by Steve Pesce

We say it often, but still not enough: PGA committees are the heart of the Producers Guild. The PGA office maintains a lean (but never mean) staff — all of 12 people between Los Angeles and New York. How do 12 people meet the needs of nearly 7,000 members? With a little help — okay, make that a lot of help — from the volunteers of the PGA committees.

Volunteering to serve on a PGA committee isn’t just a great way to help the Guild... it’s a great way to help your own career. Networking at screenings and parties is all well and good, but everyone knows that real professional connections come with working together on a project with others who are as passionate as you are. The PGA committees are filled with exactly those kinds of passionate storytellers and team members, and they’re waiting for you to step up and join them.

THE EMLOYMENT COMMITTEE brings PGA members together with companies in the industry looking to hire producers, production managers, production coordinators and all the other categories that the Guild represents. The committee does this primarily through its Job Forums: One hundred PGA members sit at tables while employers rotate through, giving every member a chance to present their resume and pitch themselves. The next Job Forum will focus on Non-Fiction and will take place in late February or March.

Chairs: Beverly Ward
Richard MacDonald (West)
Rhonda Vinson, Cathy Neukum (East)

THE DOCUMENTARY & NON-FICTION COMMITTEE is a vibrant forum which plans seminars, workshops and screenings throughout the year, providing PGA members with a network to discuss the ever-changing television and digital landscape. The committee looks at new technology and distribution options, and promotes and encourages filmmakers and producers to hold rough-cut screenings in front of their supportive peers. (See Rough Cuts, opposite page.) All interested members are invited to meetings where you can come and share a drink and ideas with your fellow committee members.

Chairs: Lesley Chilcott (West)
Shirley Escott, Lynn Hughes (East)

THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE actively seeks to create opportunities for diverse projects and producers through cutting-edge information, mentorship and networking. The committee runs workshops, seminars and networking events throughout the year. In 2015, the Diversity Committee will be conducting the 11th year of its Producers Workshop: the Power of Diversity, one of the most valuable producing workshops available to emerging producers.

Chairs: Deborah Callis (West)
Rachel Watanabe-Batton (East)

THE MENTORING COMMITTEE describes itself as the match.com of mentoring. Even though they’ve grown, they keep a boutique feel when they make their matches, having short interviews with mentees to get a feel for the person and their goals. Once the pairing takes place, the mentor/mentor form a plan to achieve the desired results. It could be three long lunches, a day on the set, phone calls or whatever they mutually decide. It’s a great opportunity both for PGA mentors and mentees.

Chairs: Jill Demby Guest (West)
Wendy Neuss, Volga Calderon (East)

THE EVENTS COMMITTEE produces the annual PGA Holiday Party, which has become one of the most sought-after events on the Guild Calendar. The Committee shattered attendance records in 2014 with the first ever SOLD OUT party — collecting hundreds of pounds of food for SOVA and giving out more than $30,000 in drawing prizes. In previous years, they have also produced the PGA Poker Tournament, Golf Tournament, Dodger Day, Operation Gratitude, Stand Up to Cancer Walk-A-Thon and Day at the Races.

Chairs: Vicente Williams (West)
Stacy Hope Herman, Jamie Schutz (East)
Larry Schlessinger (Northwest)

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE oversees initiatives beyond our American borders, including working with our over 16 affiliated organizations overseas, hosting delegations from abroad, facilitating events at festivals and markets, and encouraging collaboration between PGA members and our counterparts worldwide. This coming year they will be recruiting global producers to join the PGA for the new International Membership category. Think of the International Committee as your gateway to the globe!

Chairs: Stu Levy, Bill Stuart

THE SEMINAR COMMITTEE oversees the development and presentation of all informational workshops and programs for the Guild membership, providing members with the latest cutting-edge tools and techniques in film, television and new media. The seminars cover a range of topics like budgeting & scheduling, finance, marketing, distribution, sales, sizzle reels, social networking, post-production, development, production tools and visual effects.

Chairs: Justin Hochberg, John Kaiser (West)
Jeff Ginsberg, Diane Houslin
Jamie Schutz (East)

THE MOTION PICTURE TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE educates the industry on opportunities for implementing digital technology into film and television projects. Their projects have included the 2009 camera assessment series and 2012 image control assessment series.

Chair: Charles Howard

THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE (East) is the liaison between the PGA East and civic leadership and community organizations. This committee expands the PGA’s agenda in the political arena and provides a forum for producers to express their collective voices on the local, national and international levels. This past year, CAC has served as panelists for discussing career opportunities in film and TV, and has testified in front of the City Council Environmental Impact Committee on the use of biodiesel fuels, while also being developing a new program with the Governor’s Office of Economic Development on “giving back” to local communities.

Chairs: Dana Kuznetzkoff, Missy Givry
Barbara DeFina
Rosemary Lombard

THE PGA GREEN INITIATIVE is not only a committee, it’s a Guild-wide initiative. PGA Green’s cornerstone project, GreenProductionGuide.com, is a free portal for green production, created in conjunction with all of the major studios. At GreenProductionGuide.com production professionals can access the international, interactive green vendor database, green best practices, carbon calculators, our cost benefit analysis, and other news and information to help productions Go Green!

Chairs: Amanda Scarano Carter
Rachael Joy (West)
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Chairs: Amanda Scarano Carter
Rachael Joy (West)
Lynne Dean Pilcher
Mari-Jo Winkler (East)
THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE vets membership applications and researches each applicant to ensure only qualified professionals are accepted into the Guild. Committee members also speak with potential applicants at recruitment events to demystify the application process and to encourage qualified colleagues to join the Guild.

Chairs: Tim Gibbons (West) Kay Rothman (East)

THE FILM USA COMMITTEE is an industry advocate and authority on media production infrastructure and incentive programs in the United States and its territories. Their mission is to promote and inform America’s production industry by sharing members’ on-the-ground production experience and insights.

Chair: Meryl Emmerton

THE INDEPENDENT FILM PRODUCERS COMMITTEE advocates, supports and protects the interests of independent film producers, leverages credits for casting and financial participation on independent films, and hosts panel discussions focusing on the various steps toward getting independent film projects into the marketplace.

Chairs: Dan Lupovitz (West) Marshall Persinger, Sarah Green Peter Saraf (East)

THE RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE (EAST, NORTHWEST) organizes the periodic New Member Breakfasts that welcome and introduces new members to the PGA and its opportunities, as well as hosts various recruitment events throughout the year and runs recruitment tables at many Guild events throughout the year. The Recruitment Committee also sets up membership cores in other cities, which are encouraged to grow into full chapters. The National Capital Chapter (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia & Washington, DC) and Atlanta Chapter are already up and running, while Boston and Chicago are on the future agenda.

Chairs: Nelle Nugent, Jeffrey Hayes Bill Siegler (East) Larry Schlessinger (Northwest) Lynn Hughes (National Capital) Tom Capello, Scott Thigpen (Atlanta)

THE WOMEN’S IMPACT NETWORK is a place to coordinate support for women in the realms of studio motion pictures, television, new media and independent film. The committee is focused on mentoring, finance education and access; and outreach with industry decision makers.

Chairs: Deborah Calla (West) Lydia Dean Pilcher (East)

THE BENEFITS COMMITTEE (EAST) has been ever vigilant in trying to bring health insurance to PGA members. With the implementation of the ACA, the committee has added as a priority education for both individuals and production companies. The committee hopes to present more seminars on the topic in the coming year. The committee retains the ability to obtain exclusive discounts such as production software, rental cars, hotel rentals, theater tickets, movie tickets and discounts at the Apple store, Tiffany’s & Co. and Bloomingdales 57th Street among others.

Chair: Harvey Wilson

THE ONLINE VIDEO COMMITTEE is spearheading the PGA’s transition to the future via online video, including our YouTube channel, members-only video website and live streaming. Their mission is to represent our Guild’s collective expertise online, ultimately becoming the go-to destination for producing, including online video-based distance learning and educational programs. Always wanted to run a channel? Here’s your chance!

Chair: Matthew Skurow, Stu Levy

THE SCREENING COMMITTEE (EAST, NORTHWEST) focuses on providing film and television screening events for Guild members, including hosting post-screening Q&A sessions with producers, directors, actors and writers. The committee works to provide pre-release screenings for the membership by creating and maintaining relationships with both large and small studios, networks, distributors and filmmakers.

Chairs: Mitzie Rothzeid Patrick Gerety (East) Chris Kaminski (Northwest)

PGA MEMBERS MAY SIGN UP FOR COMMITTEES OR REACH OUT TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS VIA PRODUCERSGUILD.ORG.

There it is! So if you’re wondering how you can get more out of your PGA membership, the answer is simple: Put more into the Guild! Volunteer for a committee and get busy. See you there!
FOOD DONATION: It’s a good thing, and it’s a green thing, too

I recall working in Vancouver in the ’90s, where our caterer occasionally gave the leftovers to local homeless people in the area. But how often have we thought about this on a larger scale? Are we really aware of the scope of how many people in America go hungry each and every day? And what can producers do about it?

In 2013, 45.3 million people in America lived in poverty, including 14.7 million children under the age of 18 and 4.2 million seniors over the age of 65. At the same time, 49.1 million Americans lived in food-insecure households, essentially, homes that had no idea where their next meal was coming from. Sadly, the households with children reported a significantly higher rate of food insecurity than those without.

And yet 40% of the food in the United States goes uneaten. That amounts to 20 pounds of food per person every month, and enough food to fill an entire college stadium every day. Almost all of that uneaten food winds up rotting in landfills, where it accounts for nearly 25% of America’s methane emissions.

To address this issue, the EPA has instituted the Food Recovery Challenge, raising awareness of the environmental health and nutrition issues created by wasted food. FRC members receive help in planning, implementing and tracking wasted food prevention and diversion activities. In 2013, FRC participants diverted 375,307 tons of food scraps from landfills, including 98,793 tons of donated food.

Our own PGA Green includes a food donation section in its Green Production Guide, with two pages of pertinent information on food donation and an agreement template for your production’s use, should you have food to donate.

Some entertainment industry organizations have expressed concerns over putting themselves at legal risk with food donation programs. Fortunately, legislation signed in 1996, the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, provides uniform national protection to citizens, businesses and non-profit organizations that act in good faith to donate, recover and distribute excess food.

The Act is designed to encourage donations to non-profits such as homeless shelters, soup kitchens and churches, for distribution to needy individuals. It states that absent gross negligence or intentional misconduct, volunteers, non-profits and businesses shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability from the nature, age, packaging or condition of apparently wholesome food and fit grocery products received as donations.

Several studios have food donation programs in place for both their commissary operations and production catering on their films and television shows. Sony, NBC Universal and Warner Bros. are all participants.

Mike Slavich, Director of Sustainability at Warner Bros., notes that the studio has had a recycling program in place since 1989 and is currently working on a composting program. Locally, their cafeteria operation donates to New Way Foundation, including 23,000 meals last year. The studio also donates all surplus materials through the WB Encore Program. The Mentalist, filming in New York, uses the company Rock and Wrap It Up! to pick up and distribute their donated food.

Rock and Wrap It Up! is a NY-based anti-poverty organization founded in 1991. Through their efforts, more than one billion meals have been recovered from concert caterers, sports arena concessions, high school and college cafeterias, hotel kitchens and now, TV and film productions. Recently, Sony, NBC Universal and Warner Bros. have authorized Rock and Wrap It Up! to recover food from all their New York productions.

Abby Kaish at Rock and Wrap It Up! states: “We keep track of all our recoveries and present the totals to each production when they wrap. I was in Los Angeles in August and met with sustainability reps from Warner Bros., NBC...”
In 2013, twenty NBC Universal productions donated roughly 28,000 meals (representing more than 36,000 pounds of food) to local charitable organizations. While we are still compiling numbers for 2014, The Nest, Trainwreck, Straight Outta Compton and Jurassic World are film productions that donated food this summer," observes Bart. "Our television productions donating food include Parenthood, About a Boy, Covert Affairs, Suits and Grimm — as well as our new productions of Peter Pan, The Slap, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Odyssey and Allegiance."

Bart also adds that the studio's newly-renovated commissary is operated by Wolfgang Puck Catering, which donates leftover food regularly through the Chefs to End Hunger program.

Bart introduced me to Yoav Getzler, the Founder and Executive Director of The Entertainment Industry Hunger Project (TEIHP), which serves the same function here in Los Angeles as Rock and Wrap It Up! does in New York. Yoav, like many of his green colleagues, is passionate about feeding hungry people while diverting food from the landfills, collecting 3,000 pounds of food from NBC Universal's Straight Outta Compton. Other productions he has serviced include Charlie Wilson's War, House of Lies, Hangover 3, the Entourage movie and State of Affairs.

These programs throughout the country and certainly in our industry are going a long way not only to feed people who need a helping hand, but also preventing methane-creating waste from reaching our landfills. Thankfully, more and more people are thinking green these days. Hopefully, you’re one of them. Let’s keep it up.

—BRUCE POBJOY
Your PGA Health Benefits

PGA members have a variety of healthcare options available to them. While none of them represents a “perfect plan,” many members will be able to improve their coverage or the cost of their coverage through their PGA membership. Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.

Qualifying for Employer-Paid Coverage Through the Motion Picture Industry Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Am I eligible?</th>
<th>To be eligible for the program, you must:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be credited as an executive producer, producer, associate producer or post-production supervisor;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work for a company that is an AMPTP signatory, or signatory to Motion Picture Industry Health Plan;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work on a theatrical motion picture or primetime network television program;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Some primetime cable and syndicated series also qualify, as do productions for which an AMPTP member agrees to make contributions; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work on a production that utilizes a West Coast IA Crew.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many hours do I have to work to qualify for coverage?

To qualify for the Industry Health Plan, a producer must be credited with 600 hours (automatically computed at 60 hours per week) within a six-month qualifying period.1 To maintain coverage, he or she must be credited with at least 400 hours for each subsequent six-month period. If a member becomes ineligible, his or her eligibility for benefits will be reviewed every month until he or she accumulates enough contribution hours within a six-month span to re-qualify for benefits.

I've determined that I qualify; how do I get my coverage to start?

Contributions are not automatic; they must be directly requested by the producer. Producers request contributions by signing and submitting a participation form within 60 days of starting eligible employment. If the producer does not submit a signed participation form, he or she will be deemed to have waived his or her right to contributions with respect to the job. Participation forms should be provided by the employer upon request. If you have difficulty obtaining a form, contact PGA National Executive Director Van Petten at (310) 358-9020 x104.

My company isn’t an AMPTP signatory. Am I out of luck?

Not necessarily. If you are employed by a company that is a signatory to both the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health & Welfare and Pension Plans, you can request that they make voluntary contributions, even if they are not members of the AMPTP. This request has been granted many times, but can be difficult to secure. A good way to know if your production has signed on to the IATSE Basic Agreement is to check if the camera, grips, or sound providers are union.

If I qualify, is my employer required to approve my coverage?

Unfortunately, no. However, the cost to the employer is reasonable enough that many employers will approve the coverage.

Additionally, standard practice has dictated (though again, not required) that once a production begins making contributions to the Health Plan for one producer, it will make those same contributions for any eligible producer on the show, provided coverage is requested in a timely fashion.

1 If the producer is also an owner of the signatory company, qualifying hours are computed at 60 hours per week.

Self-Pay Plans: Producers Health

In a perfect world, every PGA member would qualify for employer-paid coverage. For those who do not qualify, the PGA offers self-pay options which, because of our group status, are likely to offer better rates than what members can find on the open market.

The Producers Health Plans are available nationally. If you’re currently without health insurance, we encourage you to call immediately to see if you qualify for a plan that suits you. Even if you currently have coverage (particularly other self-pay coverage), it would be worth your while to investigate the options you may have through the PGA self-pay plans.

Questions? Contact: Scott Brandt (888) 700-7725

PGA HEALTH BENEFITS: STEP BY STEP

START

1. Do you have health insurance? (yes/no)

   - **yes**
     - Is it employer-paid? (yes/no)
       - **yes**
         - Congratulations. You’re one of the lucky ones.
       - **no**
         - Are you typically credited as Executive Producer, Executive Producer, Associate Producer or Post-Production Supervisor? (yes/no)
           - **yes**
             - Go back to START
           - **no**
             - Go back to START

2. Do you work for an AMPTP signatory? (yes/no)

   - **yes**
     - Work on a theatrical motion picture, primetime network television program, or primetime-dramatic first-run syndicated program? (yes/no)
       - **yes**
         - Go back to START
       - **no**
         - Does your production utilize a West Coast IA crew? (yes/no)
           - **yes**
             - Go back to START
           - **no**
             - Have you been credited with 600 hours or such work over the past six months, assuming a 40-hour workweek? (yes/no)
               - **yes**
                 - Request that your employer make contributions into the Motion Picture Industry Plan on your behalf.
               - **no**
                 - Did your employer make the contributions? (yes/no)
                   - **yes**
                     - Congratulations, you’ve got employer-paid health coverage. You must work 400 hours over the next six months (assuming a 40-hour workweek) to maintain your coverage.
                   - **no**
                     - Did your employer know? (yes/no)
                       - **yes**
                         - Contact your payroll or labor relations department. Request the MPIH participation form to give to your employer.
                       - **no**
                         - Employee didn’t know? Now?
                           - **yes**
                             - Call Scott Brandt at (888) 700-7725. Request a quote for Producers Health Insurance.
                           - **no**
                             - Is the coverage equal to or better than your current coverage? (yes/no)
                               - **yes**
                                 - Stick with your current plan, but consider getting another quote next year, or if your current coverage changes.
                               - **no**
                                 - You should sign up for the PGA plan. The more members sign up, the lower the average costs, and the better the benefits.
                                 - Request that your employer make contributions into the Motion Picture Industry Plan on your behalf.

1. Is it employer-paid? (yes/no)

   - **yes**
     - Congratulations. You’re one of the lucky ones.
   - **no**
     - Go back to START

Call Scott Brandt at (888) 700-7725.
Holiday Party 2014

As 2015 starts to kick into gear, take a second to look back at what an amazing year it has been at the Producers Guild! The Producers Mark is a regular feature of motion picture credits, another fantastic PGA Awards started off 2014, two Produced By conferences — making it bicoastal, and everyone’s favorite, the Holiday Party, which SOLD OUT in advance for the first time in the Guild’s history!

Once again hosted at the beautiful Luxe Hotel off Sunset Boulevard, the West Coast PGA Holiday Party could have easily gone until sunrise. Being welcomed at the door by holiday greeters, everyone immediately got into the winter spirit. With decadent food prepared in-house, this event is always the best way to catch up with friends in and of the Guild, have some fun at the casino tables and leave your worries at the door. As always, the noblest aspect of the event is its dedication to raising significant amounts of non-perishable food donations for those less fortunate during the holidays, through the SCWA Community Food & Resource Program. The proceeds from all drawing tickets went to benefit the PGA Foundation.

Whether you donned reindeer antlers in the Snap Yourself photo booth or you were (as I was) baffled by the tricks of amazing Magician Matt Masters, everyone lived the evening to the fullest. The party’s atmosphere was enhanced by the work of Swagg Daculous Sweets, as well as three-year party veterans Almost Christmas Prop Shoppe and PRS, who provided a fantastic visual vibe. One of my favorite parts of the evening was enjoying fantastic singers Wesley Allvin and Cody Morgan delivering their renditions of seasonal classics...very Holiday Hollywood.

As the night went on, PGA National Executive Director Vance Van Petten and PGA Events Committee Chair Vicente Williams made everyone envious of our drawing winners by giving out more than $30,000 worth of prizes from Alternative Rentals, Kappa Studios, Ignited Studios, Delta, Studio Wings, Silver Dream Factory, Jungle Software, The Macallan, Tory Burch, Les Deglingos, JamCasa, Titan Khakis, Ballroom With Kristin, Final Cycle, Prop Store, and PRS, who provided a fantastic visual vibe. One of my favorite parts of the evening was enjoying fantastic singers Wesley Allvin and Cody Morgan delivering their renditions of seasonal classics...very Holiday Hollywood.

All this is what the PGA Holiday Party is about: celebrating the close of a successful year with hopes of next year being even better. I invite you to raise a glass to another PGA Holiday and to an incredible new year in producing.

—Ry AN WILLIS

Member Benefits

• Vote on Producers Guild Awards and receive discount tickets to the event, as well as DVD screeners for awards consideration
• Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events
• Discounted registration for Produced By Conference
• Full access to PGA website including events, calendar, social networking tools
• Access to PGA Job Board, online résumé search, employment tools and job forums
• Eligibility for PGA Mentoring Program

• Participation in the Motion Picture Industry Health, Welfare & Pension Plan
• Listing of contact and credit information in searchable online roster
• Eligibility for individual, family and small business healthcare options through Producers Health Insurance Agency
• Free attendance at PGA seminars
• Arbitration of credit disputes
• Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel
• Complimentary subscription to Produced by

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Congratulations! If you’re reading this you’ve obviously MADE IT IN SHOW BUSINESS!! You have scratched and clawed your way to a place where millions know your work and dozens know your name. You may even be holding a shiny award tonight but is that the true measure of success for a producer?

Take this SIMPLE TEST to find out if you’re a producer who’s won! Good luck!!

1) Was there a moment during production when you thought ‘This project is so risky it’s going to be the last thing they ever let me do... and I don’t fucking care.’

Yes □ No □

(Score: If you checked yes, you won. Congratulations!)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF TONIGHT’S WINNERS.

complaints - www.wendymiller.tv