

ENTERTAINMENT

HOLLYWOOD'S WORKING CLASS TURNS TO NONPROFIT FUNDS

By **THALIA BEATY**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Shawn Batey was sweating in the August sun on the 100th day of the writers strike, carrying her “IATSE Solidarity” sign on the picket line outside Netflix’s New York offices, but she was glad to be there.

A props assistant and documentary filmmaker, Batey is a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the union that represents many entertainment workers, in Hollywood and New York, but also around the country. She recently worked on “Pose” and “Russian Doll,” but since the writers strike began in May and the actors joined them on July 14, she’s had trouble covering her expenses. So she applied to the emergency fund from the Entertainment Community Fund for help.

“They say apply when you’re at a critical point,” said Batey, adding that she needed to show her union card, her wages and, in her case, that she’d worked as a member of the union for a certain number of years. The application is lengthy, but she said, “It is definitely worth for people to apply. Just be patient.”

Batey — who used her grant to pay her rent, phone bill and electric bill, and other expenses — is one of 2,600 film or television workers that the Entertainment Community Fund has helped during these strikes, granting \$5.4 million as of Aug. 25. The fund, formerly known as The Actors Fund, is one of several nonprofits that have long supported workers who make the entertainment industry run, but who were essentially gig workers long before the term was coined. That includes both unionized and nonunionized workers, and those on strike as well as those who’ve lost work because of it.

The fund has received the most requests for help from people in California, followed by Atlanta and New York. It’s raised \$7.6 million so far and is granting about \$500,000 a week. For now, it’s issuing one-time grants of up to \$2,000 for individuals or \$3,000 for families.

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Birthdays

Sept. 3: Suzanne Connelly, Rosie Cusack, Mark Frankmann, Scott Heidergott, Susan McCormack, Sandy Sucharski, James Tilton

Sept. 4: Jeff Brooks, Norma Dwight, Jacqueline Kennefick, Don Lundberg, John McKillop, Melanie Montoya

Sept. 5: Anna Adams, Lauren Johnson, Chris McCoach, Melissa Sanders, Howie Stern

If you’d like any additions, deletions or corrections to the birthday list, please contact editor@telluridenews.com. Ages 18 and over please.

TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

ORBIT

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE
SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

Sunday Focus: Business & Real Estate

1. The 50th Telluride Film Festival continues at venues downtown and in Mountain Village through Labor Day. Visit telluridefilmfestival.org to see a schedule.
2. The Town of Ridgway celebrates Labor Day Monday with a Main Street parade at 10 a.m. followed by a CPRA-sanctioned rodeo in the Ouray County Fairgrounds from 12-5 p.m.
3. Cribbage, Cocktails and Charcuterie: Enjoy all three at once on Tuesday at The Ride Lounge, from 5-6:30 p.m.



Aquatic surprise: Valley Symphony Orchestra members salute a passing kayaker at a photo op in Montrose just down river from Colorado Outdoors, the sponsor of next Saturday’s concert. (Photo by Marc Bergman)

MUSIC

‘From Sea to Shining Sea’

Pops in the Park, the Valley Symphony’s only outdoor concert of the season, is Saturday

By **LESLIE VREELAND**
Contributing Editor

Troy Raper, the Valley Symphony Orchestra’s new conductor and director, dubbed it an “absolutely spectacular” setting, visually and acoustically.

“It” is the venue for the Valley Symphony Association’s only outdoor concert of the year — the Montrose Rotary Amphitheater — where the VSA’s annual community concert, dubbed “Pops in the Park,” will be held next Saturday evening at 7 p.m. This year’s theme: “Sea to Shining Sea.”

It’s a fitting place for the event’s sponsor: “We’re excited to help the VSA bring classical music to life — outdoors,” said David Dragoo, president of Colorado Outdoors. The 52nd season of the symphony officially launches with a musical playlist that spans the continent — from

“The Star Spangled Banner” and “The Washington Post March” to “St. Louis Blues,” “Battle Hymn of the Republic” (performed with the Valley Symphony Chorus) and a medley of pieces dubbed The American Frontier, including “Chester,” “O Susanna,” and the stirring “Shenandoah,” a boatmen’s song that “found its way down the Mississippi River to American clipper ships — and thus around the world.”

“Oh Shenandoah,” the song goes,

“I long to hear you,
Far away, you rolling river...
Far away, far away.
Across the wide Missouri.”

Not only is the song itself emotional to listen to, “this arrangement is,” said the symphony’s bass clarinetist and publicist Stacey Ryan, who hasn’t missed a concert since joining the VSA 13 years ago. “This is moving music, and it’s moving for us to play it,” Ryan added.

It can be especially emotional when audience members become, in effect, impromptu performers themselves — which is exactly what will happen when the symphony performs the “Armed Forces Salute” next Saturday and the conductor asks service members to rise and be recognized as the official songs of the U.S. Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force and Navy are performed.

“My husband and I attended a concert with a friend who was in the U.S. Coast Guard a few years ago,” Ryan recalled. “When the orchestra performed the coast guard’s song, our friend rose — and so did the woman seated directly in front of us. We had no idea! This is stirring stuff to perform, and when people stand up, and you suddenly realize they’ve served our country... it gives me chills, thinking about it.”

Ryan called such communal See **SYMPHONY**, Page 48

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

NATIONAL FORESTS ARE HOSTING MEETINGS THIS WEEK

A public Zoom meeting takes place on Tuesday

NEWS RELEASE

On Friday, September 1, San Miguel County announced the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests released the draft record of decision for the revised land management plan and final environmental impact statement. This will begin a 60-day objection filing period.

GMUG is hosting three public meetings to share information and provide orientation about the plan and the next steps on Tuesday, September 5, at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. via Zoom, and an in-person meeting on Wednesday, September 6, at 5 p.m. at Montrose County Events Center 1036 N. 7th Street in Montrose. Zoom information can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/gmug/forestplan>.

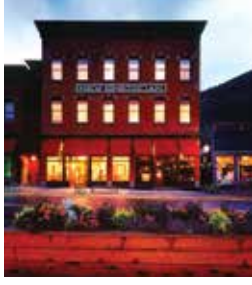
San Miguel County Natural Resources and Special Projects Director Starr Jamison said it’s important for users of public lands to weigh in on the revised plan.

“The revised plan is a foundational document that will guide future management decisions for the next decade or more,” Jamison said. “Those who have commented on the previous draft are eligible to do so again.”

In the works since 2018, the revised forest plan received significant public input, comments and

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Pops in the Park

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exchanges between players and the audience “rousing, upbeat, very inclusive.”

Raper agreed: “The moments, or series of moments, that lead to an emotional release for everyone, you’re not going to have that” in a concert all the time, he said. “But when it happens, it’s real, it’s truly internal, and it’s something we as human beings need.”

The conductor recently retired from his career teaching middle and high school students in the Grand Valley. “I feel like it’s been a long time coming,” said the insatiable musician of his new position, who in the past has played everything “from mouth harp to string bass, sang in choirs, performed in jazz bands and trios, performed chamber music,” and has been involved in the Crested Butte Music Festival for more

than two decades.

“The joy is in making music, always,” Raper said. “The administration and all the things that go with being the director and music director are part and parcel of the job, but when it comes down to it, getting on stage and making music, you want to put something out there that people can learn from and enjoy without stress.”

“Not everyone wants to go hear Shostakovich 5” — the composer’s fifth symphony — “or a series of Mozart symphonies,” Raper added. “They want to go to a concert, be entertained, and learn something along the way.”

That’s the beauty of a community of listeners coming together with a community symphony — an all-volunteer group of players, “former professionals, classically-trained musicians, gigging musicians, teachers and students,

the whole range,” he said. “My job was not to teach students to be professionals,” Raper said of his previous career. “It was to appreciate and value art, and sound, and the ability to consume music in all its forms.”

On Saturday, he’ll help a rapt audience do the same thing, in the symphony’s first (and only free) concert of its 52nd season.

“We can present music that enlightens and touches everybody,” the conductor said.

The Valley Symphony Orchestra & Chorus opens its 52nd season with “Pops in the Park: From Sea to Shining Sea,” next Saturday, Sept. 9 in the Montrose Rotary Amphitheater. The Montrose Community Band plays at 6 p.m., and the orchestra and chorus will take the stage at 7 p.m. Admission is free. Learn more at valleysymphony.net.

Turning to nonprofits

WORKERS, from page 56

“It’s a lot of the crafts people, the wardrobe people, the makeup people, the carpenters that build the sets, the painters, the electricians,” said Tom Exton, chief advancement officer for the Entertainment Community Fund. He said the fund has supported industry members through many previous crises, including the AIDS epidemic and financial crisis, and would continue to fund-raise to provide help as needed.

Another charity created more than 100 years ago to help entertainment workers get through tough periods, the Motion Picture & Television Fund, helps administer funds from some of the unions to provide emergency assistance specifically for their members. It declined to disclose the amount of financial support its received from those unions. The fund also provides financial and counseling support to unaffiliated workers and offers housing to industry veterans over the age of 70.

Bob Beitcher, its president and CEO, said many of the lowest-paid entertainment workers have little savings or reserves coming out of the pandemic. The federal programs and protections, like eviction moratoriums that helped keep entertainment workers and many others afloat during COVID-19 shutdowns, also aren’t around now.

“They are losing their homes. They’re losing their cars and

trucks. They’re losing their health insurance,” Beitcher said. “And it’s pretty awful.”

Striking actors and writers have accused the studios of purposefully prolonging the strike so that they lose their homes.

MPTF has been getting 200 calls a day as opposed to 20 a day before the strike. Over 80% of callers are “below-the-line” workers, meaning not the actors, writers, directors or producers. They’ve processed 1,000 requests for financial assistance through the end of July, the fund said, with applicants waiting an average of two weeks for the money to be dispersed.

Beitcher called for greater support from industry members, in an open letter on Aug. 17, saying, “As a community, we are not doing enough to support the tens of thousands of crew members and others who live paycheck to paycheck and depend on this industry for their livelihood. They have become the forgotten casualties during these strikes, overlooked by the media.”

MPTF said it has raised \$1.5 million since the letter was published.

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation, a nonprofit with a mission to support the members of the actors union, quickly raised \$15 million with initial donations of \$1 million or more from Dwayne Johnson, Meryl Streep, and George and Amal Clooney in the first three weeks of the actors strike. Other \$1 million

donations came from Luciana and Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Debralee Furness and Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck, Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively, Julia Roberts, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Oprah Winfrey.

Cyd Wilson, the foundation’s executive director, said her pitch to the top talent is that even the biggest stars need the army of smaller actors, many of whom live paycheck to paycheck, to make their movies and television shows.

“Those are the people that we’re going to be helping the most, because those are the people that are going to be hurting the most,” she said.

The foundation exclusively supports the 160,000 members of the union and 86% of those performers don’t make enough work in a year to qualify for health insurance, Wilson said.

“They waitress, they bartend, they work catering, they drive Uber, they babysit, they dog walk, they housesit. They have all these secondary jobs in order to be able to survive,” she said.

As the strike goes on, the funds expect more and more union members will lose their health insurance because they will not have worked enough hours to remain eligible. A small group of mostly showrunners decided they wanted to specifically fundraise to cover health care for crew members, and set up a fund with the MPTF.

Three public meetings

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observations that forest service officials then integrated into the version released this week.

GMUG said the revised plan addresses drought, tree mortality and wildfire risk while amplifying forest restoration and resiliency through local and state partnerships. Forest service officials estimate the plan will support 3,900 jobs and provide \$125 million in labor income, add 46,000 acres of recommended wilderness and in-

crease fuel treatment objectives by 60%.

For draft record of decision, revised plan, environmental impact statement and other documents associated with this release, including interactive maps, webinar recordings and instructions for how to object or file as an interested person, as well as all past publications and other helpful resources, please visit the planning website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/gmug/forestplan>.

The objection process not only provides an opportunity for those who have participated in a prior formal public comment period, but also includes an interested persons format for those interested in how objections are resolved. Interested persons includes any party not named in the objection and individuals who submitted substantive formal comments demonstrating their participation in the planning process.



SAN MIGUEL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

GRANT APPLICATIONS OPEN

The Behavioral Health Solutions Panel is currently accepting proposals to fund programs that impact the behavioral health landscape of San Miguel County.

2024 Grant applications are due September 15.

For more information:
sanmiguelbehavioralhealth.org/funding-areas
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