



In My Opinion: Mike Hodge

2nd National Vice President

Having recently completed what I consider a very successful negotiation, which netted our members a 2 percent raise over each of the next three years under the TV/Theatrical contract, I was shocked to read that the president and CEO of Viacom went from a compensation package of \$34 million to \$84.5 million in just one year. His was not the only outsized raise in our industry, just the most outsized.

This feels unseemly to me, especially in light of the struggling economy and the union-busting efforts which have spread across the country. In addition to Wisconsin, some 20 states want to restrict or eliminate the right of workers to collectively bargain. Approximately seven states want to cut wages by rolling back prevailing wage laws. And it's important to note that those of you who choose to work off the card are assisting our employers in diminishing your earning power.

A report prepared by the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce notes that all workers benefit from strong labor laws, not just union members, because non-union employers pay union rates to stay competitive. Right-to-work laws result in lower wages for both union and non-union workers. Workers in right-to-work states earn 3.2 percent less and are less likely to have employer-sponsored health and pension benefits. I believe all workers deserve a pension plan and health care. If you work for a living, that should be part of the package.

So while I don't begrudge anybody anything, and I certainly don't believe life is a zero-sum game, I do mind not being able to earn a living because someone who believes just that decides they want it all. If we are making widgets, and we make those widgets under budget and ahead of schedule, I don't think just the boss should get the bonus. The team — the entire team who produced the results — should get the credit and the bonus, or in some cases simply a living wage and/or a raise.

In order to get out from under this crisis we are in, our employers need to stop hoarding and share. And we, all workers public and private, union and non-union, should stand together and demand what is rightfully ours: fair compensation, including benefits, for a fair day of work.

Otherwise, let them see if they can make the widgets by themselves.

In solidarity,
Mike Hodge

JOINT SAG/AFTRA SENIOR PERFORMERS COMMITTEE VISITS LILLIAN BOOTH ACTORS HOME

This past November, the Lillian Booth Actors Home of The Actors Fund in Englewood, N.J. was the proud host to 40 visitors from the National Joint SAG/AFTRA Senior Performers Committee, including committee co-chairs Elaine LeGaro and Tom Ligon, as well as SAG President Ken Howard and AFTRA National President Roberta Reardon. SAG New York Division Vice President and National Board member Rebecca Damon, SAG New York Division Secretary and National Board member Liz Zazzi, and New York Board member Kevin Scullin represented the New York Board at the tour and holiday luncheon, along with Actors Fund trustee and former New York Division President Joyce Gordon.

Everyone who attended the special event was impressed with the facility and the mission it performs.

"It is a pleasure to see this excellent facility with the Seniors Committee. The members and I enjoyed getting a chance to talk to the residents and staff," Howard commented.

Damon was equally impressed, adding, "This is one of the many important services the Actors Fund provides for our members. We're grateful to see it firsthand."

The Lillian Booth Actors Home of The Actors Fund is an assisted living and skilled nursing care facility that provides a comfortable living environment on 6 acres of property for 124 entertainment professionals. The facility serves 42 seniors who may still be active but can benefit from special assistance. It also provides 24-hour care to 82 residents who are no longer able to care for themselves. For additional information please visit actorsfund.org.

Standing, from left, Maura Walker, director, New York special projects and events; Connie Best,



AFTRA executive assistant; Adam Moore, SAG associate national director, affirmative action and diversity; Kevin Scullin, SAG N.Y. Division Board member; Joyce Gordon, former N.Y. Division president; Barbara Davis, LMSW, chief operating officer; Rebecca Damon, SAG N.Y. Division vice president and National Board member; Dale Olson, publicist and Actors Fund trustee; and Liz Zazzi, SAG N.Y. Division secretary and National Board member. Seated, from left, Elaine LeGaro, AFTRA chair, New York Local Joint SAG/AFTRA Senior Performers Committee; Ken Howard, SAG president; Roberta Reardon, AFTRA national president; Tom Ligon, SAG chair, New York Local Joint SAG/AFTRA Senior Performers.