

Thanks From Your New President

Thank you to the 6522 of you who voted in this last election, especially to the 2630 who voted for me, but even to the 3628 of you who (no doubt due to the confusing layout of the ballot) voted for someone else. 6522 is about 15.6% (!) of eligible voters, about the same as the last four years and down from a high of 28.4% in 1988 (coincidentally the first year I ran for Council.) What about the 34,383 eligible AEA members who didn't vote? How come? I'd like to hear from you. Did you forget? Lose your ballot? Hate all the candidates? Not care who won? Feel as if your vote didn't matter? Feel not represented and/or not understood by the candidates? I'd like to know, so please drop me a line at president@actorsequity.org.

For those who have not yet registered to vote online, please follow these instructions: go to the "members only" section of the AEA website and click on "Election Registration" in the "Find Out More About" drop-down menu. This has two green consequences: fewer trees killed and more money in the Equity coffers (it costs a bunch to send out those ballots and candidate statements.)

If there was a common thread (a common plank?) in the platforms of my fellow candidates and myself, it was better communication, particularly better communication between membership and the elected leadership. I will do my damndest to clean up my side of this street by working hard to give you thorough and timely access to the information you need to run your acting or stage management business. But I need your help: I need to hear from you. I particularly want to hear from those of you who are not

residents of the office cities, since the latter types (particularly the NYC metropolitan area residents, of whom I am one) tend to be thoroughly represented on Council and in Council discussions and debates. I want to hear from the Dallas actors, the Twin Cities actors, the Seattle actors – you get the idea. What are your concerns? What are your particular needs? How can we better serve you?

In your wallet is a little plastic-coated piece of robin's-egg blue (if you are up to date with your dues) pasteboard. It is your Equity card. Whether you are a newbie who sleeps with your card under your pillow or a jaded old-timer who slaps it in your wallet every six months without a second look, it is a badge of honor that says -- just like Barney but with a little more evidence -- that You are Special.

How special? There are 49,138 of you – which seems like a lot (particularly when 11,000 seems to have signed up ahead of you for that summer stock EPA), but consider these figures: If for simplicity's sake, we limited the age range of Equity members to the fifty years between 20 and 70, there would be an average of 1,000 members per birth year cohort. But Equity's membership skews young, so let's assume that those between 25 and 40 have twice that number of coevals or 2,000 per birth year. So if you graduated high school between 1988 and 2003, there are about 2000 members of your graduating class year in AEA. There are 91,957 high schools in the U.S., and each high school class has its best actor and actress. That's 184,000 potential professional actors. Let's eliminate 24,000 for the single sex high schools. That leaves 160,000. Let's assume only one in five, no, one in ten convince themselves and their parents that this is a vocation worth pursuing. That's 16,000 actor wannabes per year,

and you with your robin's-egg blue card – even if you haven't worked in two years – have already beaten out at least 14,000 of them. You are Special -- and if you voted in this last election, you are Very Special.