



NEWSREEL

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 399

LEO T. REED, SECRETARY-TREASURER

January 2009



Holidays with the Stewards



Feature Rex Peterson trained Hightower



National Standards 2009

A Strong Sense of Purpose

By Leo T. Reed

This is the second message reporting on the progress of a national contract. In the May issue of this publication I reported to you that in a historic vote, Teamsters from all movie locals in America unanimously agreed to establish a national agreement.

At that time my message recounted a little of the history and how it took me two decades to lay the groundwork for this important event. As a Business Agent over 21 years ago, I could only stand by as producers played one out of state local against each other. A decade later, when I was a veteran



Secretary Treasurer and had been appointed by the General President the Director of the Motion Picture Division, I had the opportunity to do something about it.

"The big challenge has always been how to stop producers from playing one Teamster local against another. "

The big challenge has always been how to stop producers from playing one Teamster local against another. I always believed that a national contract would solve the problem. It would establish uniform wage rates and prevent producers from shopping around. It would reaffirm Teamster jurisdiction

and prevent other non-Teamster unions from attempting to take Teamster work on distant locations.

We have laid the groundwork. This issue reports that we have taken the next important step. At our December meeting of fifteen locals, we decided on a realistic step-by-step process. Instead of attempting to negotiate a contract with the AMPTP, our representatives agreed on an expedited plan.

We will unilaterally establish minimum pay and work standards and insist that the producers meet our requirements. There will be uniform rates and locals will refuse to sign a union contract unless these standards are met.

I am very proud of our progress. This effort has united the movie locals with a new sense of pride, solidarity and strength. Producers will come to understand that they are facing a unified Teamsters union with a strong sense of purpose.

"We will unilaterally establish minimum pay and work standards and insist that the producers meet our requirements. "

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 399

Studio Transportation Drivers
(818) 985-7374

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Secretary-Treasurer

Leo T. Reed

President

Tony Cousimano

Vice President

Randy Peterson

Recording Secretary

Rose Falcon

TRUSTEES

Jack Fisher

George Skinta

Ed Duffy

Feature: Rex Peterson

Trained Famous Horses

“Hightower had a heart as big as the great outdoors.”

Horse trainer and Local 399 member Rex Peterson has said this often about his remarkable trick quarter horse. Hightower passed away at the age of 26 on October 30, 2008 at Peterson's ranch in Tehachapi, California.

“I'm convinced he'll be remembered as one of the most intelligent and noble equine actors of our day.”

Hightower starred in dozens of films over his career, most notably as “Pilgrim” in *The Horse Whisperer*. He was also famously FedExed to the East Coast to wrap up shooting with Julia Roberts on *The Runaway Bride* and he retired to Peterson's ranch in 2004 soon after his role in *Princess Diaries II*.

Peterson, a Local 399 member for more than 30 years, grew up ranching and riding in rodeos and Wild West Shows before

he became a protege of fellow Nebraskan Glenn Randall, Sr. -- “the greatest horse trainer Hollywood has ever seen,” Peterson says.

He came to own the sorrel Hightower as a colt and first used him as a ranch horse. He realized he had a unique animal under him when they roped a “big, bad, bucking bull.” The horse was injured, literally picked up and carried by the bull, but he never panicked, Peterson recalls.

Horse and trainer seemed to come to an agreement that day: Quit roping bad bulls on his back, and Hightower would do anything for Peterson.

Three months later, in his debut film performance, they had to drag a stuntman for *Winter People* (1989).

“Other horses burned up but Hightower got better and better. I knew then that this horse would always give me his all.”

“Rex and Hightower had probably the closest human/animal relationship I have ever seen,” offers *Black Beauty* Director Caroline Thompson. “That horse would do anything for Rex — with joy, with energy, with humor. It was a beautiful thing to be around.”

“He was a very unusual animal,” Peterson explains. When Peterson was challenged on his choice of Hightower for a role, he'd release the horse and utter a command — from 30 feet away, Hightower would charge, rear up with ears back and feet pawing the air within inches of the doubting director's head.

"Rex and Hightower had probably the closest human/animal relationship I have ever seen."

— Black Beauty Director Caroline Thompson.

“I'd say ‘That's enough.’ He'd back off, instantly cooled down,” Peterson continues. “With his mouth snatching and those feet coming at your head, he'd make a believer out of you.”

It was after Hightower backed Robert Redford into a fence that Redford said, “This is the horse I want!” and Hightower was cast in *The Horse Whisperer*.

“He was a great horse. If you only have one great horse in your lifetime, you can consider yourself very lucky.”



Hightower on the set of "The Horse Whisperer" (1998)
Photo courtesy of Ken Regan/Camera Five

Goal For Motion Picture Locals

National Standards In 2009

Fifteen Teamster driver locals – representing 99 percent of the movie industry work – gathered to take the next important step towards a national agreement.

The December meeting in Santa Barbara was the second national gathering in a united effort to establish uniform rates and working conditions throughout the country. It is crucial to prevent producers from playing Teamster locals against each other and negotiating substandard agreements.

The ultimate goal is a national contract with the AMPTP – the umbrella group for the six major producers. However, after lengthy discussions, the Teamster representatives agreed to begin by unilaterally establishing basic guidelines first before negotiating with the producers.

In his position as the IBT Director of the Motion Picture and Theatrical Trade Division, Secretary-Treasurer Leo T. Reed arranged the meeting and established the agenda. “The key ingredient is that all Teamsters unite for the common good,” he said.

Reed noted that the Screen Actors Guild, the Writers Guild and IATSE all have national contracts and “a national contract would give us tremendous clout in negotiations.” He told the gathering “the studios have successfully kept us separated for too long.”

Establishing Standards

Establishing Teamster Motion Picture Standards was the recurring theme of the three-day meeting. In one important session the attendees

reviewed a tentative list of standards. They unanimously agreed to establish a subcommittee to finalize the standards. The subcommittee will meet in Los Angeles in the next 60 days.

Imposing nationwide standards can be achieved through each local’s refusal to sign a union contract unless these standards are met. The standards would be developed by using the Hollywood “Black Book” contract as a guide, with some geographical considerations.

National standards are considered to be in the best interest of both the Teamsters and the studios. Teamsters would receive appropriate pay and benefits and producers would be able to identify their costs. Location managers would be able to select locations for creative reasons, not reasons dictated by the labor costs. Both sides would be spared the lengthy process of negotiating individual contracts.

There would be nothing in the proposed agreement that would interfere with what is sacred in Hollywood — the right of Local 399 drivers to follow their equipment.

The distinguished group of attendees underlined the significance of the meeting. The IBT was represented by Edward Keyser, Executive Administrator to General President Hoffa, IBT Vice President John Coli, Brian Rainville, Administrative Assistant to Vice President Coli, Brad Raymond, head of the IBT legal department, Thomas Schatz of the IBT legal department, and International Representative Ron Schwab. The locals represented were from New York, Massachusetts, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Canada, New Mexico, South

Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, Florida, and Mississippi.

Attending from throughout the country were: Sean O’Brian, Boston Local 25; Anthony Frasco, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Local 107; Patrick Dougherty, Detroit, Michigan, Local 337; Al Porter, Calgary, Canada, Local 362; Walter Maestas and Moises Ortega, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Local 492; Landol Fletcher, Cayce, South Carolina, Local 509; Robert Watts, Shreveport, Louisiana Local 568; Pablo Cruz, San Antonio, Texas, Local 657, Vice President Joseph Coli and Becky Strzechowski, Chicago, Illinois, Local 727; Jerry Carter, Atlanta, Georgia, Local 728, Jose Lopez and Mike Scott, Miami, Florida, Local 769, William Smith, Jackson, Mississippi, Local 891; Tom O’Donnell, Lake Success, New York, Local 817; and Jeanne Ishikawa, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Local 399 members attending were President Tony Cousimano, who also serves as Assistant to the IBT Director of Motion Picture and Theatrical Trade Division, Business Agents Randy Peters, Ed Duffy and Steve Dyan at attorneys Bob Cantore and Joseph Kaplon.



NATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sean O'Brien – President - Local 25 – Boston

Tom O'Donnell, Jr. – President Local 817 – New York

Bill Hamilton – President – Local 107 – Philadelphia – JC 53 Presidents (Philadelphia) – International Vice President (Eastern Region)

Jack Cipriani – President – Local 391 – North Carolina – International Vice President (Eastern Region) JC President (North and South Carolina)

Jerry Carter – Teamsters Local 728 - Georgia

L.D. Fletcher – President – Local 509 – South Carolina

Mike Scott – President – Local 769 – Miami

W.C. Smith – President - Local 891 – Mississippi – JC 87 Secretary-Treasurer (Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama)

Robert Watts – Secretary-Treasurer - Local 568 – Shreveport, LA – JC 80, Secretary-Treasurer for Northern Texas

Frank Perkins – President – Local 657 – San Antonio and Austin, Texas

Brent Taylor – Secretary-Treasurer – Local 745 – Dallas, Texas

Larry Brennan – Local 337 – Detroit – JC 43 President (Michigan)

John Coli – Secretary-Treasurer – Local 727 – Chicago – Intl. Vice President (Central Region) JC President (Chicago)

Randy Peterson – Business Agent – Local 399 - Hollywood

Walter Maestas – Secretary-Treasurer – Local 492 – New Mexico

Ron Schwab – International Rep – IBT

Leo T. Reed – IBT Director – Motion Picture and Theatrical Trade Division

Tony Cousimano – President Local 399, Assistant to the IBT Director of Motion Picture and Theatrical Trade Division

Ron Kozuma – President - Local 996 – Hawaii



Holiday with Stewards

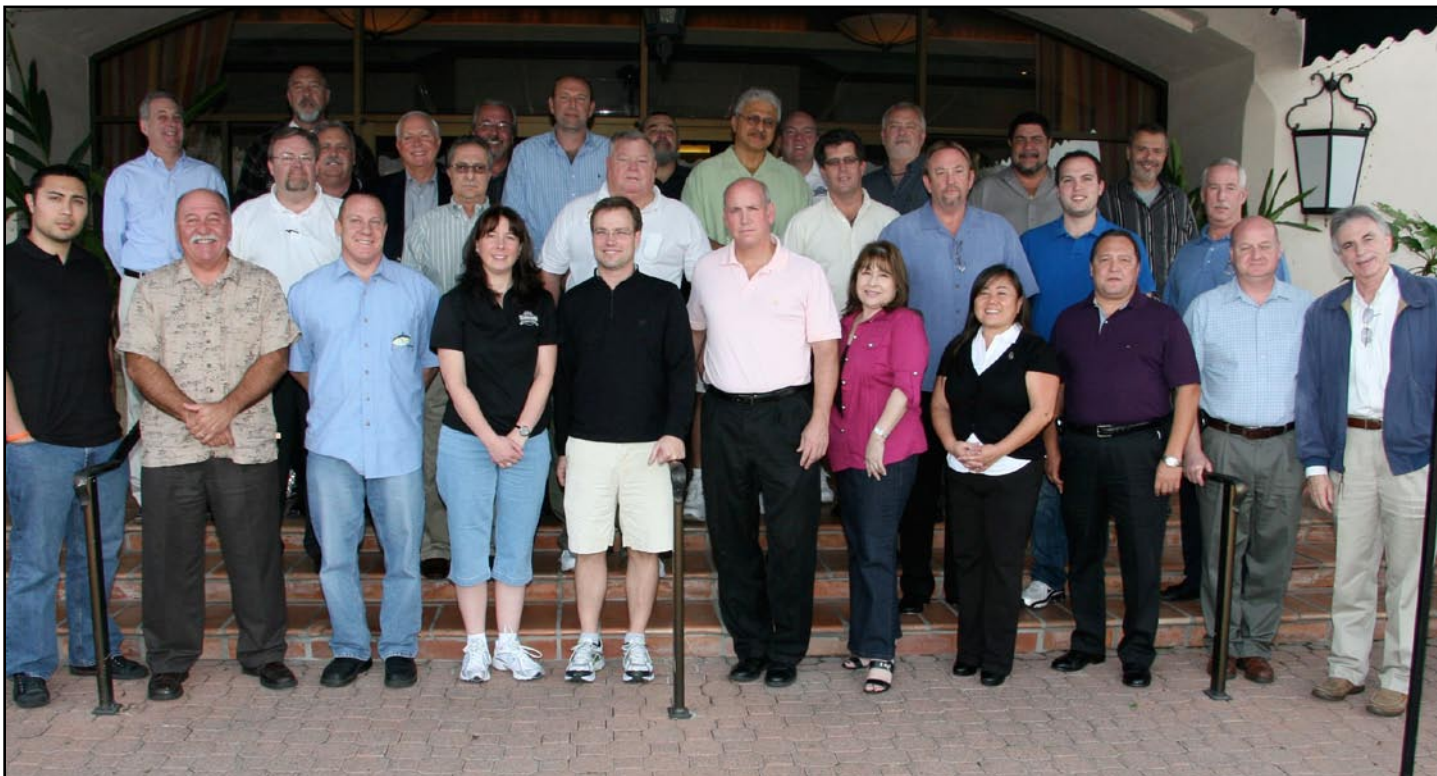




Holiday Tradition Honors Shop Stewards

Each year Local honors its Shop Stewards at a holiday dinner. Secretary-Treasurer Leo T. Reed called them the "backbone of the union" and says every members owes them a debt of gratitude.





Teamsters Local 399
Studio Transportation Drivers
4747 Vineland Avenue, Suite E
North Hollywood, CA 91602

PRESORT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LOS ANGELES, CA
PERMIT NO. 34694