

Labor issues still grip movie, TV biz

Workers, including those seeking deals, face an uphill battle against Trump, AI and an industry slowdown.

By Christy Carras and Stacy Perman

Video game performers. Visual effects artists. Animation workers. Intimacy coordinators.

More than a year after overlapping strikes by Hollywood writers and actors that rattled the entertainment industry, many technicians and craftspeople who operate outside the spotlight are pressing their own demands for a better deal.

The sustained unrest among workers has added to the volatility that has gripped a film and TV business still recovering from the pandemic, prior labor disruptions and a persistent industry contraction.

The labor discord has been fueled by several forces, including the rising cost of living in Southern California, the outsourcing of jobs to other states and countries and the spread of artificial intelligence technology that many see as a threat to jobs.

It's unclear, however, how the major media and entertainment companies will respond to the demands. Studios and other firms are under intense pressure to cut costs in an uncertain market that's undergoing rapid change. And the election of Donald Trump, whose administration is expected to be generally pro-business, could give media executives latitude to take a harder line in bargaining.

"Clearly, there's going to be less protections for workers and less regulatory oversight for business practices going forward," said David Smith, a professor of economics at the Pepperdine Graziadio Business School.

"When that goes into effect and whether that is a priority for the new Trump administration are open questions."

[See Hollywood, A7]

Questions over bird flu data

Virus is found in a farm's raw milk but not in its cows, leaving experts puzzled.

CALIFORNIA, B1

Improvement in the trenches

USC's offensive line will face a big test against No. 5 Notre Dame's fearsome front.

SPORTS, B10

Is streaming up for live sports?

After tech glitches in Paul vs. Tyson boxing match, Netflix works to fix issues for future events.

BUSINESS, A6

Weather

Partly cloudy.

L.A. Basin: 77/54. B6

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SAKCHAI LALIT Associated Press

PYGMY HIPPO Moo Deng and her mother at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Chonburi province, Thailand, in September.

COLUMN ONE

Shiny new thing captivates world

By Stephanie Yang
Reporting from Chonburi Province, Thailand

Like most babies, Moo Deng spends a lot of her time sleeping.

But for a few hours a day, the 4-month-old pygmy hippo springs to life, gumming on leaves, zooming around the compound and tossing her head in a silent, open-mouthed roar.

These moments, captured by her zookeeper at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo, a two-hour drive south of Bangkok, and shared on social media, have turned her into a global phenomenon — an “It Girl” beloved for her sporadic fits of energy and proclivity for snapping toothlessly at hoses and knees.

Named for a Thai dish that means “bouncy pork,” Moo Deng has become the muse for cakes, clothing, tattoos and fireworks. Makeup tutorials demonstrate how to get her baby-pink cheeks and dewy skin. Partygoers this year dressed up as the pygmy hippo for Halloween. So did comedian Bowen Yang on “Saturday Night Live.”

Her remote home — struggling post-pandemic — has been transformed into a must-see attraction for international visitors and locals alike.

When Dong Kim, a 29-year-old travel blogger, visited in October, the excited hordes reminded him less of a zoo than a South American soccer game or a Black Friday door-buster sale.

“I’ve gone to the Great Wall, I’ve been to the Colosseum, I’ve been to Christ the [See Hippo, A4]

Moo Deng’s fame is not the result of mere cuteness. Even before the pygmy hippo’s birth, a zookeeper hatched a plan to make her a star.



LAUREN DeCicca Getty Images

FANS CHEER this month as they watch Moo Deng run around. The hippo’s economic impact has spread far beyond the confines of the zoo.

Trump’s shrinking lead casts doubt on his ‘mandate’ claim

He says Americans signed off on plans for major changes, but he may have won fewer than 50% of votes.

By Jenny Jarvie

In his victory speech on Nov. 6, President-elect Donald Trump claimed Americans had given him an “unprecedented and powerful mandate.”

It’s a message his transition team has echoed in the last three weeks, referring to his “MAGA Mandate” and a “historic mandate for his agenda.”

But given that Trump’s lead in the popular vote has dwindled as more votes have been counted in California and other states that lean blue, there is fierce disagreement over whether most Americans really endorse his plans to overhaul government and implement sweeping change.

The latest tally from the

Cook Political Report shows Trump winning 49.83% of the popular vote, with a margin of 1.55% over Vice President Kamala Harris.

The president-elect’s share of the popular vote now falls in the bottom half for American presidents — far below that of Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson, who won 61.1% of the popular vote in 1964, defeating Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater by nearly 23 percentage points.

In the last 75 years, only three presidents — John F. Kennedy in 1960, Richard Nixon in 1968 and George W. Bush in 2000 — had popular-vote margins smaller than Trump’s current lead.

“If there ever was a mandate, this isn’t it,” said Hans Noel, associate professor of government at Georgetown University.

Trump’s commanding electoral college victory of 312 votes to Harris’ 226 is clear. And unlike in 2016, when he beat former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, he won the popular vote and the needed support in the

[See Trump, A7]



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

JOAN VANDERMOLEN, sister of Kitty Menendez, speaks at a lectern in support of Erik and Lyle Menendez at a news conference Oct. 16 in L.A.

The Menendez brothers’ time in prison: Marriage, service, fame

By Salvador Hernandez

For all the attention focused on Erik and Lyle Menendez — the TikTok freedom campaign, the multiple documentaries and docudramas — one fact gets easily lost: While their lives and actions have been chronicled exhaustively up

to their trials for violently killing their parents, much less is known about their 34 years behind bars.

Now, with a judge mulling whether to resentence them, the two brothers could have a chance at being released. A jury sentenced them to life without the possibility of parole, and it is only in recent years that momentum has built up around the pos-

sibility that they could be freed.

Shortly before he lost his bid for reelection, Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. George Gascón filed a motion seeking resentencing for the brothers. He also supported their request for clemency from Gov. Gavin Newsom, highlighting what he said was the brothers’

[See Menendez, A10]



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