

# GOPIIONEER

DECEMBER 2023

## Entertainment on **STRIKE**

*Your Breakdown of Hollywood's 2023 Strike*

Uncover the intricate details and compelling motivations that sparked the pivotal movement that was the 2023 writer's strike.

PG. 1-8

## FOCUS ON.

The Quilt  
Lady

PG. 9

# Letters from **LEADERS**

**Mike Baustert** - VP Operations & Engineering

This month, I would like to discuss change, that nasty, inconvenient, and persistent arch-enemy of normalcy. For some, it seems technology is constantly battling to complicate our lives and make us miserable, since nothing is simple or works like it used to. Today, the changes - or chaos - that technology can bring are happening at an ever-increasing pace. I'll admit I'm jaded because of my years in the technology field, not my age. But if we look back in history and review, I think you'll agree with the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, 500 BC: "The only constant in life is change." Harvard Business School professor and business consultant Clayton Christensen coined the term "disruptive innovation" in the magazine Harvard Business Review back in 1995.

"Disruptive innovation is defined as technology that is capable of disrupting an already established market by following a set of patterns. An innovation that is originally focused on a niche and with the passing of time achieves a good share of the market, overtaking the previous one."

Past technologies like the automobile, electricity, and refrigeration brought massive societal changes to our lives. In their infancy, they had naysayers and critics expound how detrimental and dangerous they were to society. But soon the adoption process began, and today we can't imagine our lives without them. Every technology has a cause and effect or ability to be used for good or evil. We as individuals comprising society must determine the value and worth of a technology. No technology survives by just being "technically best." As an example, I'll date myself with the Betamax vs. VHS debate. There was a time when it was believed that a personal computer was a niche market with little future potential. It's hard to believe that today we have more computing power in our smartphones than NASA had when they put a man on the moon. There is a tremendous number of future technologies that we will see developing. Just a few are: blockchain, advanced virtual reality, artificial intelligence, machine learning, nanotechnology, quantum computing, bioengineering, and the list goes on. The impact these technologies will have on our daily lives is yet to be seen. A future technology may again revolutionize society or achieve goals that have eluded mankind for centuries, like a cure for cancer.

I predict that if you do not like change, you're in for a bumpy ride. As for me, I confess that I also like to have constants in my life to anchor me during the chaos. Faith and family are my anchors, as they have been for generations before me. So, while change is constant, not everything must change.



## Welcome to GoPioneer!

Our mission is to help the communities of Pioneer learn, evolve and move forward in the ever-changing world of technology.

We welcome feedback, story ideas, or any questions relating to this magazine, previous articles, or even your personal inquiries.

Baffled by your teen's obsession with emojis? Confused about why you get WiFi in the garage but not in your bedroom? Let us know! This magazine is just as much yours as ours, and we are excited to help you become more adept in the tech world.

## Contact Us



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## Topic of December 2023:

### The World's a Stage...

In this edition of GoPioneer, we bring you stories that resonate from our local community to the national stage. Dive into the drama and impact of the 2023 writer's strike, understanding its causes, key players, and consequences in our detailed coverage.

Locally, meet Dawn Reitz, a standout figure in the quilting world, and join us in celebrating a Day of Kindness with Pioneer and the Western Oklahoma community. This issue is a compelling mix of local charm and significant national events – a journey we're excited to share with you.

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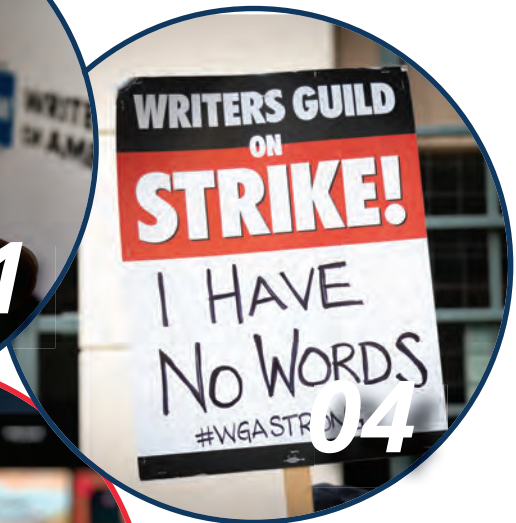
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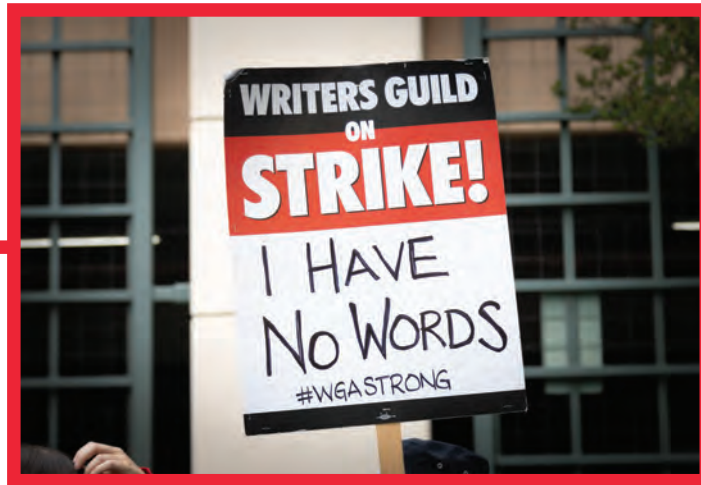
Anniversaries .....Back

Help us celebrate the 25+ year anniversaries in our communities.



# Entertainment on **STRIKE** S U N I N G L E

## Your Break Down of Hollywood's 2023 Strike



### Terms to know:

#### AMPTP

*The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers.* The AMPTP represents its member companies in negotiations for collective bargaining agreements with entertainment industry guilds and unions like the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), the Writers Guild of America (WGA), and the Directors Guild of America (DGA). The AMPTP is essentially the collective voice for the producers during negotiations, addressing issues related to compensation, working conditions, and other aspects of employment contracts for professionals in the film and television sectors.

#### WGA

*The Writers Guild of America.* The WGA is a labor union that represents around 20,000 writers in film, TV, documentaries, animation, video games, news, and more.

#### SAG-AFTRA

*Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.* SAG-AFTRA is a labor union representing approximately 160,000 actors, announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, news writers, news editors, stunt performers, voice-over artists, and other media professionals. The union represents many entertainment-industry roles, but only film and television performers went on strike in 2023.

#### Residuals

*Residuals are the compensation earned from the reuse of material.* The methods for calculating residuals differ across theatrical releases, broadcast TV programs, basic cable shows, and other categories. Streaming residuals are not treated to the same level as broadcast or traditional TV and there is no reward for success.

# The Quest for Fair Compensation In A World of Tech

**H**ollywood has always beckoned Artists—from zealous writers to dedicated film crews to hopeful actors. LA's siren song has traditionally promised fame, fortune, and the magic of storytelling. However, in May 2023, a discordant note cut through the usual melody. The Writers Guild of America (WGA), standing for about 11,500 Hollywood writers, spearheaded an unprecedented strike, bringing numerous productions to a halt. While many viewed this as a financial tussle, the strike's core was far more meaningful; it was about safeguarding the very soul of the entertainment industry.

## Roots of the Discontent

The early 2000s saw a massive change in how content was consumed. Traditional media, including TV broadcasts and DVDs, were being gradually overshadowed by growing digital platforms like Netflix. As streaming services started gaining traction, writers were presented new opportunities and challenges.

Streaming platforms revolutionized audience behavior, ushering in an era of on-demand, ad-free binge-watching that blurred traditional broadcast boundaries and schedules. As these shifts became more pronounced, writers realized that their original contracts didn't reflect the complexities of a globally accessible, continuous viewing experience. Their call for revised terms in April 2023, ahead of the WGA contract expiration on May 1, was driven by a need for equity more than profit.

WGA made efforts to engage in constructive dialogue and agree to a more equitable contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), but the parties couldn't come to an agreement. With no resolutions in sight, the WGA saw no alternative but to strike, bringing an abrupt stop to various productions. The strike, which commenced in May, concluded on September 26, 2023,

after a resolute 148 days, aiming to secure contracts that would rightfully compensate writers in the digital era.

## Highlighting the Impact

The strike underscored critical compensation issues for writers in the streaming era. Despite high company profits and increased content spending, writers' conditions have worsened. In streaming, where half of series writers work, pay has declined. A significant number of writers, including experienced ones, are now working at minimum rates with shorter employment durations.

According to WGA, median weekly writer-producer pay has decreased by 4% over the last decade, amounting to a 23% decline when adjusted for inflation. The shift to streaming has led to reduced seasonal earnings for most writers due to shorter work periods. Additionally, for upper-level writers on streaming series, median weekly pay is significantly lower than their broadcast counterparts, with showrunners on streaming earning 46% less.

WGA sought to underscore the disparity between writers' compensation and the profits of digital platforms, as well as put in place protections from artificial intelligence (see page 7) and the ever-growing 'mini-rooms' (see page 3).

## Ripples Across the Entertainment Industry

The impact of the WGA strike were felt across the entertainment industry. Recognizing the shared concerns over fair compensation, SAG-AFTRA, representing actors, threw its weight behind the writers, joining the strike when their contracts ended in July. This union magnified the strike's impact, further emphasizing the need for a collective re-evaluation of compensation structures in the digital age.

The unrest didn't stop with films and TV. There were murmurs in the gaming industry as well. Video game

creators, witnessing the unfolding events in Hollywood, began to ponder the feasibility of their strike. They, too, sought better contracts and more transparent profit-sharing models, especially as gaming evolved with technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence. In September, SAG-AFTRA voted to expand their walkout to include video game actors, voice actors, and motion capture performers in the multi-billion-dollar video game industry. Though WGA's strike ended in September, writers would not go to work until November when the SAG-AFTRA actors strike ended with the ratification of their contract.

The WGA strike serves as a significant moment in Hollywood's history, reminding the industry of the continuous need for dialogue, understanding, and fair compensation. As digital platforms continue to redefine entertainment, the collective voice of creators is crucial in ensuring that the industry evolves while respecting the rights and contributions of its foundation: the writers.

The rest of this issue will delve into the core reasons behind the WGA's decision to strike, offering a deep dive into the quest for better residuals, the need for revised staffing requirements, the importance of shorter exclusivity deals, and the implications of AI restrictions. Through this exploration, we aim to shed light on the evolving landscape of Hollywood and the ongoing efforts to ensure a fair and just industry for all creatives.

# Breaking It Down: Why The Writers

## Staffing Requirements



*Credit to: Scott Myers. Posted by @GoIntoTheStory on X (Twitter) on 8.24.19. "With all the technology writers have at our disposal, perhaps the single most valuable tool is 3x5 inch index cards. An essential part of breaking story. Check out these shots from 'Breaking Bad' writers room. Cards on the wall = Story Structure."*

The entertainment industry has undergone massive changes due to the rise of streaming platforms, which not only put unnecessary pressure on writers but also hindered the creative process. When they demanded staffing requirements for their writers, the WGA aimed to safeguard the quality and diversity of content.

### Writing Rooms Pre-Streaming

Before streaming, writing rooms for television shows were typically bustling hubs of creativity, comprised of diverse writers thriving on collaboration. These rooms traditionally had 7-10 writers who would write and produce 10 episodes of TV for 12-22 weeks. Each episode resulted from intense brainstorming, with adequate time for refining scripts, character development, and plot intricacies. The emphasis was largely on quality, with networks operating on a schedule that allowed for breaks between seasons.

### Changes in the Streaming Era

The era of streaming dramatically changed writing room dynamics. Netflix's success with its first original production, "House of Cards," in 2013, introduced "binge-watch" culture. Many other platforms, like Amazon Prime and Hulu, quickly joined the race to satisfy subscribers' hunger for new, original content. This led to an increasing number of shows being produced at an unprecedented pace.

To adapt, some production houses began leaning towards 'mini-rooms'. These smaller writing rooms, tasked with producing content faster and sometimes with fewer resources, often meant writers faced heightened pressure and had fewer collaborative voices for idea generation, potentially compromising content depth and quality. Mini-rooms, typically lasting 8-10 weeks, had fewer writers than traditional writing rooms and often operated before a show was greenlit, meaning writers were often paid less for more work and faced the risk that their content might never be seen.

### The WGA's Stance

The WGA's demand for staffing requirements was an attempt to strike a balance in the era of streaming. Their goal was to ensure that writing rooms remained adequately staffed, not just in numbers but in maintaining content quality, ensuring diverse perspectives, and preserving collaborative storytelling's essence.

While streaming platforms have transformed how we consume content, the WGA's demands remind us that the creation process should not be short-changed. The 2023 strike was a call to prioritize the heart and soul of storytelling — the writers and the environment in which they thrive.

### The Initial Ask:

Pre-greenlight rooms: Minimum staff of 6 writers (including 4 Writer-Producers)

Post-greenlight rooms:

1 writer per episode up to 6 episodes, then 1 additional writer required for each 2 episodes after 6 up to a max. of 12 writers

Example: 8 episodes requires 7 writers incl. 4 Writer-Producers; 10 episodes requires 8 writers incl. 5 Writer-Producers

### The Agreement:

Up to 6 episodes: 3 writers (3 Writer-Producers)

7 to 12 episodes: 5 writers (3 Writer-Producers)

13+ episodes: 6 writers (3 Writer-Producers)

## Shorter Exclusivity Deals

**T**raditionally, writers would work on longer seasons of broadcast TV for several months. However, with the industry evolving, the average season length has decreased notably. This change has two main implications:

**Impact on Pay:** The reduction in season length affects per-episode pay. With fewer episodes per season, writers end up earning less overall for a season's work compared to the longer seasons of the past.

**Restrictions on Working on Multiple Projects:** Longer exclusivity terms, which were more suitable for lengthier seasons, now restrict writers' ability to work on multiple projects. This limitation is HUGE in an environment where the number of episodes per season has been reduced, leading to potentially more downtime for writers between projects.

### The Initial Ask:

Increase span cap\* from \$400,000 to \$450,000 (basic cable to remain at \$375,000). Extend span protection\* to writers on limited series.

Increase earnings cap from \$325,000 to \$350,000.

*Span Cap: This is a threshold in TV and film contracts that determines which writers are eligible for span protection. Writers who earn more than this cap don't qualify for additional compensation under span protection rules.*

*Span Protection: This ensures writers get extra pay if they work longer than a set period (usually 24 weeks) on an episode. It's designed to fairly compensate writers for extended work periods and prevent them from being underpaid for the actual amount of work they do on a project.*

### The Agreement:

The studios agreed in full to the terms.

# SCRIPTWRITING EVOLUTION

## Classic Television vs. Streaming

### Episode Structure

**Classic Television:** Often follows a weekly release, episodic format.

**Streaming:** More flexible, may lean towards serialized storytelling.

### Season Length

**Classic Television:** Generally longer seasons, typically 20-24 episodes.

**Streaming:** Shorter seasons, often 6-12 episodes.

### Residuals

**Classic Television:** Earned from reruns, syndication, and international sales.

**Streaming:** Limited or no residuals due to continuous availability on the platform.

### Viewership Data

**Classic Television:** Ratings publicly available, clear indicators of success.

**Streaming:** Limited or no access to viewership data for writers.

### Creative Flexibility

**Classic Television:** Can be constrained by network standards and practices.

**Streaming:** Often more creative freedom and risk-taking.

### Production Schedules

**Classic Television:** Fixed production schedules aligned with TV seasons.

**Streaming:** More varied production timelines.

### Audience Reach

**Classic Television:** Domestic focus with international syndication.

**Streaming:** Immediate global reach via streaming platforms.

### Compensation Model

**Classic Television:** Traditional model with upfront payment and residuals.

**Streaming:** Shift towards more upfront payment, less reliance on residuals.

# Better Residuals

Residuals in traditional TV were payments made to writers each time their work was rebroadcast or sold to syndication and overseas markets. This model was established in 1960, the last time writers and actors went on strike together. The residual structure meant that popular shows could generate ongoing income for writers through reruns and international sales, often leading to substantial earnings.

Streaming has altered how residuals are paid. Shows and films on streaming platforms typically don't have reruns in the traditional sense; they're available continuously on the platform. This change means writers don't earn money each time their work is viewed, as they would have from reruns in syndication\*. While streaming companies technically pay residuals, they don't share detailed viewership data, making it difficult for writers to understand the true popularity and value of their work or know if they're receiving proper pay.


Disney CEO Bob Iger sparked outrage just a few days before SAG-AFTRA would join the writers on strike. Speaking to CNBC's David Faber, Iger commented on the writing strike and impending actor's strike. "There's a level of expectation that they have that is just not realistic. And they are adding to the set of the challenges that this business is already facing that is, quite frankly, very disruptive," Iger said.


Many actors took to social media to share their residuals in outrage. With amounts ranging from pennies to a few dollars, their unrealistic asks seemed far more practical... especially when compared to Iger's \$27 million annual income. Many individuals that work in the entertainment industry must work various jobs to make ends meet. Established writers shared online that much of the time, residuals were the only thing giving them the ability to continue in the entertainment industry.

## Isn't this just the rich getting richer?


While there are many writers, actresses, and actors with a huge net-worth, a majority of WGA and SAG-AFTRA members are working a job outside of their craft or barely making ends meet. The strike wasn't necessarily about Big Names like screenwriter James Cameron or actor Tom Hiddleston making more money, but rather protecting the average joes trying to use their talents to provide entertainment to the masses.

Check out some of the tweets from writers and actors during the strike [right] for some insight on what it's like in the world of Hollywood.


 **annie nishida** @nishidannie  
i teach fitness classes multiple times a week both when i'm in a room and when i'm in between jobs bc i never know when work is going to dry up

 **Alrinthea!** @Alrinthea · May 3  
I was applying (and was subsequently rejected) for a full time job at Target when I was nominated for an Emmy 🙄  
[businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...](https://www.businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...)


12:48 PM · May 4, 2023 · 1,850 Views

 **Maggie Cannan** @Magzstagram  
I was working at Madewell when I found out about my Emmy nomination. The cognitive dissonance of going to a fancy award show where you're recognized for your writing and waking up the next day to fold jeans because writing jobs are so few....boy howdy lemme tell ya it's rough




 **Alrinthea!** @Alrinthea · May 3  
I was applying (and was subsequently rejected) for a full time job at Target when I was nominated for an Emmy 🙄  
[businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...](https://www.businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...)

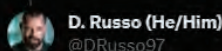
12:17 AM · May 4, 2023 · 292K Views

 **Jake Goldman** @TheDragoEffect  
When the studio called me to say my work was going to be featured at the Annecy Film Festival, I was at a Burger King in Compton, working for GrubHub, hustling for a delivery that would pay me a total of \$5.

The studio asked if I would pay for my own flight to go to France.

 **Alrinthea!** @Alrinthea · May 3  
I was applying (and was subsequently rejected) for a full time job at Target when I was nominated for an Emmy 🙄  
[businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...](https://www.businessinsider.com/the-bear-write...)

12:57 PM · May 4, 2023 · 5,778 Views



D. Russo (He/Him)

@DRusso97

You make \$27,000,000 PER YEAR.

I was #6 on the callsheet for #Loki 🦋, and have grossed less than \$1K in residuals.

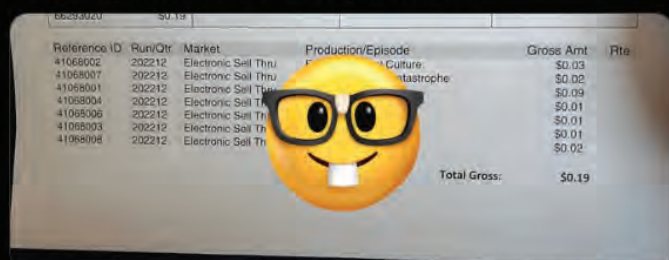
8:40 AM · Jul 13, 2023 · 259.5K Views



Jack Bensinger

@JackBensinger

I feel like i got OVERpaid for these 7 eps of tv residuals



Reference ID	Run/Qt	Market	Production/Episode	Gross Amt	Rte
41068002	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.03	
41068007	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.02	
41068001	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.02	
41068004	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.09	
41068006	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.01	
41068003	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.01	
41068008	202212	Electronic Sell Thru	Culture	\$0.02	
Total Gross:				\$0.19	



@Variety · Jul 13

Disney CEO Bob Iger says the writers and actors going on strike in Hollywood are not being "realistic" with their expectations: "It's very disturbing to me." [variety.com/2023/tv/news/b...](https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/b...)

10:44 AM · Jul 14, 2023 · 51.7K Views



Stephen Glickman

@StephenGlickman

For those of you trying to understand the SAG strike...here is a little info for you. BIG TIME RUSH played on Netflix for two years and then got moved to Paramount +.

Any guesses on how much I was paid by Netflix and Paramount + in residuals?

I'll give you a hint.

It's \$0

6:36 PM · Jul 13, 2023 from Los Angeles, CA · 48.4K Views

# The Pay Isn't What You Think

Writers and actors alike took to social media and shared what pay and residuals look like for them.

## The Initial Ask:

### Viewership-based streaming residuals:

Establish a viewership-based residual—in addition to existing fixed residual—to reward programs with greater viewership. Require transparency regarding program views.

### Foreign streaming residuals:

New high-budget subscription video on demand (HBSVOD) residual based on streaming service's foreign subscriber count.

### Ad-supported free streaming services:

High-budget programs made-for advertising-based video on demand get TV weeklies and script fees and improved residuals.

## The Agreement:

### Viewership-based streaming residuals:

Viewership-based streaming bonus: HBSVOD series and movies that are viewed by 20% or more of the service's domestic subscribers in the first 90 days of release, or the first 90 days of any subsequent exhibition year, get a bonus equal to 50% of the fixed domestic and foreign residual. For example, for a project written under the 2023 MBA, the bonus would be equal to:  
\$9,031 for a half-hour episode  
\$16,415 for a one-hour episode  
\$40,500 for a streaming feature over \$30 million in budget

Streaming data transparency: Companies agree to provide the Guild, subject to a confidentiality agreement, the total number of hours streamed, both domestically and internationally, of self-produced high-budget streaming programs. Aggregated information can be shared.

### Foreign streaming residuals:

HBSVOD residual based on foreign subscriber count for largest global streaming services. The percent of residual base payments agreed upon were lower than WGA initially asked for.

### Ad-supported free streaming services:

High-budget made-for AVOD programs get same initial compensation as HBSVOD programs. 2% residual for AVOD reuse.

# AI Restrictions

**A**I was one of the largest topics in the 2023 strike. The Writer's Guild of America (WGA) asked for AI restrictions for several reasons. Here are just a few:

**Concern Over AI Writing:** Writers were worried about AI technologies being used to write new material or rewrite existing material. This raised concerns about diminishing the credit and residuals of human writers. The WGA argued that AI-produced materials should not be considered "source material" or "literary material" to prevent AI from being credited as actual writers on scripts, which could undermine human writers' contributions.

**Protection of Writers' Rights:** The Agreement stipulates that AI cannot write or rewrite literary material, and AI-generated material will not be considered source material. This ensures that AI-generated material cannot undermine a writer's credit or separated rights. While writers can choose to use AI, the company cannot mandate its use. Additionally, the company must disclose if any materials given to the writer have been generated by AI or incorporate AI-generated material. This rule aims to preserve the role of human writers and their compensation.

**Impact on Actors and Their Compensation:** The use of AI scans of actors' likenesses was also a significant issue. It remained a final sticking point in negotiations between the AMPTP and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) until a tentative deal was reached. This reflects a broader concern about the role of AI in the media and entertainment industries and its impact on creative professionals, including actors.

These reasons reflect a broader apprehension about the increasing role of AI in creative industries and the need to safeguard human creativity and rights in the face of rapidly advancing technologies.

## The Initial Ask:

Regulate use of artificial intelligence on MBA-covered projects: AI can't write or rewrite literary material; can't be used as source material; and MBA-covered material can't be used to train AI.

## The Agreement:

Regulate use of artificial intelligence on MBA-covered projects: AI-generated written material is not considered literary material, source material or assigned material under the MBA. AI is not a writer under the MBA.

Writer can elect to use AI when performing writing services, if Company consents and provided writer follows applicable company policies. Company cannot require writer to use AI software (e.g., ChatGPT) when performing writing services.

Company must disclose to writer if any material given to writer has been generated by AI or incorporates AI-generated material.

Guild reserves right to assert that exploitation of writers' material to train AI is prohibited by MBA or other law.

## Why should I care?

The entertainment landscape is already adjusting to the impact of the new contract. Key changes are obvious in the release schedules of major franchises and TV shows. Marvel fans, for example, will now only have one Marvel movie (*Deadpool 3*) slated for 2024 as opposed to the initial three.

Popular TV series across networks and streaming platforms have also experienced scheduling shifts, with some facing postponed premieres or shortened seasons. While these changes may temporarily affect viewing choices, the new contract ensures better working conditions and fairer compensation for writers. These setbacks highlight the essential role of writers in creating quality content and marks a significant step towards a more equitable and sustainable entertainment industry, which is good for you as a viewer! These small trade-offs and delays will hopefully lead to better environments, writing, collaborations, and entertainment as a whole.

# THE CONTRACT COST:

## THE INITIAL ASK

The table below offers a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the **initial** contract proposals presented by the WGA, following the contract expiration on May 1. The WGA's proposals, had they been accepted, would have entailed a yearly cost of **approximately \$429 million** for the industry as a whole.

A significant portion of this sum, around \$343 million, is linked **directly to just eight of the industry's major players.**

COMPANY	ANNUAL COST	ANNUAL REVENUES	COST % OF REVENUES
Disney	\$75M	\$82.7B	0.091%
Netflix	\$68 M	\$31.6B	0.214%
Warner Bros. Discovery	\$47 M	\$43.1B*	0.108%
Paramount Global	\$45M	\$30.2B	0.148%
NBC Universal	\$34M	\$121.4B	0.028%
Amazon	\$32M	\$514B	0.006%
Sony	\$25M	\$88.8B	0.028%
Apple	\$17M	\$394.3B	0.004%

**TOTAL COST: TOTAL COST: \$343 M**

## THE AGREEMENT

With the ratification of the contract on Oct. 9, 2023, the total cost of the contract proposals is:

# 233 MILLION/YEAR



You can view the WGA Summary that compares their initial asks and the agreement with the studios here!

# From Blocks to Bonds

'The Quilt Lady' and her journey to being a staple in the quilting community.

## A Spontaneous Beginning

Dawn Reitz, better known as 'The Quilt Lady,' transformed a spontaneous interest of quilting into a cornerstone of the Kingfisher, Oklahoma community.

Starting with a single quilt block in 1986, her journey has led to a thriving business that's more than just a quilt shop.

"My mom went to a quilt class in Enid. She was there all day and made a block and brought it home," Dawn said. "She calls me, and she says 'oh, you've got to come up and look at this,' so when I got off work, I went up to her house and I was like 'oh my gosh, I love this.'"

That night, Dawn went home with her mother's block in hand and measured each piece of it before using the pattern to make her own block. That weekend, she made her own quilt.

For anyone that knows Dawn, this was no surprise.

"I've always done crafts. I've done stained glass, crochet, knitting, duplicate stitch, and painting—I think I've done everything but tatting," Dawn said. "I used to be in all the craft malls, and I liked to stay busy doing something."

Though Dawn was used to picking up hobbies, quilting was something she quickly fell in love with.

"At that time, I was into painting and Tim Gaiser, from the vo-tech, had called

me earlier and asked if I would teach painting for the adult-ed classes. I'd said 'sure,' because I loved to teach," Dawn said. "After I made that quilt, I called Tim the next week and said, 'Can I change from teaching painting to teaching quilting?'"

And with that, Dawn's quilting journey began, though it would take almost twenty years before she'd be known as the Quilt Lady.

Dawn was working at Pioneer while she taught at the vo-tech, and continued this until she retired in 2009.

"I started teaching quilting at the school. I had all these ladies from Lomega—we had Kingfisher people, Okeene people, and Lomega people and those ladies—they had quilted for years, and they were taking my class!" Dawn laughed. "I did one that was a little harder and they did it, but they really just came to visit, sew, and have it be a no-brainer."

The location of the vo-tech class would move several times over the years—she would teach in the High School's home-economics building, her mother's building located south of Kingfisher, and finally, under the pseudonym 'Quilt Lady' on Main Street in August of 2019.

It wouldn't take long for Dawn to outgrow the building. In April 2023, Dawn opened her current location at 223 N. 6th St., in Kingfisher, OK.



at a glance

# Q&A

*If you had to live in a different state, where would it be?*

Colorado. I like the cool weather. We went up there for a quilt show once and everybody's in sweaters and I'm in my t-shirt saying 'man, I like this weather.'  
- Dawn

*When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?*

I think I wanted to be a teacher, actually. And, well, I suppose I am kind of a teacher, just not a school teacher.  
- Dawn

*What is one meal you could eat every single day and never get bored?*

Oh, boy. Well, I like nachos pretty well... but I also really like fish. So probably fish or nachos. - Dawn

*What is something you think everyone should experience at least once in their life?*

I think everybody should at least try church. You don't have to go to church to be a Christian, but it's like taking a walk to heaven or taking the train; it's just easier. - Dawn

A wall of example quilts that customers can order. The kits come with pre-cut pieces to make their own quilt.



# FOCUS ON.

The Quilt Lady

Dawn and two of her employees at work!



with *The Quilt Lady*

### Events Dawn wants you to know about!

#### *Central Oklahoma - Bible Belt Shop Tour*

The Central Oklahoma Bible Belt Shop Tour is a three-day event near Oklahoma City, where participants visit various quilt fabric shops to receive discounts and collect stamps for prize drawings. Prizes can include things like sewing machines, gift cards, and quilt kits. **This annual event, typically held in October**, combines shopping with quilting classes and community engagement.

#### *Road to Oklahoma Shop Hop*

The Road to Oklahoma Shop Hop is an annual event held from June 1 to July 31, featuring 28 quilt shops across four regions in Oklahoma. Participants collect unique quilt block patterns and stamps in a free passport at each shop, with each location offering a distinct finishing kit. This statewide event, combining quilting and travel, culminates in prize giveaways and fosters community engagement among quilting enthusiasts.

## A Community Haven

From machine repairs to quilting classes, the store is a one-stop shop open to everyone. There's something for the novice sewer, someone looking for a hobby, and even the quilting enthusiast.

"We take care of people's alterations here, we fix machines, so if you have a machine that needs cleaning or repairing, we can fix those," Dawn said. "We also do sharpening, and polishing of scissors, offer classes, alterations, and much more. Then, of course, quilt making. I do a lot of memory quilts."

A memory quilt is a handmade quilt that incorporates pieces of fabric from clothing, blankets, or other textiles that hold sentimental value, often to commemorate special events or loved ones.

"We offer classes for memory quilts, but a lot of people just can't cut the clothes when they've lost a loved one," Dawn said. "So, they bring it in and we might make five or six quilts, depending on how many kids they had. Most recently, we had a wife and four kids, so we made five quilts out of what they brought in."

For Dawn, this is a very special project.

"Whatever they want, we can make it happen," Dawn said. "It's special... it's touching because we will have our customers coming in and they'll just be in tears because they love it. They're happy to have it and it's not just hanging in the closet or given away. It's something they have forever."

In May of this year, Dawn added another unique addition to The Quilt Lady offerings: P31 retreats.

"Women come together for a long weekend and they bring their machine to work on their projects. It's a great place for them to share ideas or learn something new. We also do a mystery project and they have no idea what it is. We've done neck roll rice bags, project bags, water bottle holders... we just do a class on something new," Dawn said. "After dinner, we do a Proverbs 31 devotional and, usually I say 15 minutes, but it's always an hour and a half and usually has a lot of tears."

For Dawn, quilting is an expression of love.

"It's going to sound crazy, but they always tell you in the commandments,

'love God, love people', right? This is how I love people. I love God and I love people. I love to love on people," Dawn said. "This is how I see them, and I get to spread the word through quilting, through my talent. He tells us to use our talents, so I am."

## Looking Forward

The Quilt Lady's influence extends beyond rural Oklahoma, attracting people from states away and even international visitors.

"When we had our grand opening, a lady came up and when I was ringing her up, she said 'I'm so and so,' and I recognized her from my Facebook lives I do every Wednesday morning at 9 a.m.," Dawn said. "She said, 'I came from Maine' and I said, 'Maine where?', 'Maine the state!' She'd came for the grand opening. I was so tickled."

Dawn said she's seen people from all over: Australia, Canada, and, Scotland were just a few she mentioned. She believes that the quilting world is getting bigger than ever.

"They say it's a dying trade, but it's not. There are a lot of younger people wanting to learn how to do quilts or make stuff out of their scraps," Dawn said. "There was one lady I listened to that had gone to thrift stores and bought bags of fabric and got started that way, because she didn't have the money to start. Now, she's an international teacher."

Dawn knows that this isn't a cheap industry, but she thinks quilting is special.

"This will last you forever. It's something you can pass on, and I think that's the biggest thing. It's something you can make and pass on to your kids and their kids and their kids," Dawn said. "My mom and I... we try to send people quilts because this is something they can wrap up in and know they're loved."

Dawn's vision for the future is inclusive and welcoming.

"Come in and hang out with us. You'll love us. Everyone that comes in here, they're so kind, and if someone needs something, word spreads and we make things happen," Dawn said. "This is a very friendly, sharing, loving community."

You can shop online, explore classes, and much more at [quilt-lady.com](http://quilt-lady.com).

# Kindness Connects

Communities Across Northwestern OK Come Together for the Day of Kindness

World Kindness Day is observed each year on Nov. 13, but the United Way of Northwestern Oklahoma and Enid chose Nov. 10 (the Friday before) as a day to celebrate in Northwest Oklahoma. The Day of Kindness initiative has one simple goal: to spread acts of kindness and compassion to people throughout NW OK and this year, United Way had over 750 volunteers spreading Kindness!

The Day of Kindness is more than just a date on the calendar; it's a movement that galvanizes individuals, businesses, and organizations across Northwestern Oklahoma to engage in acts of generosity and compassion. From offering free beverages to essential workers to distributing supplies to those in need, the day encapsulates a spirit of giving that resonates deeply with our values at Pioneer Telephone Cooperative. We were privileged to be a part of this event for the third year in a row, and we want to give a HUGE shout out to all our employees that participated in this event!

This year, our team collected hygiene products from November 1 to November 9. The items were distributed between Kingfisher County Food Pantry and Kingfisher High School Jacket Pantry.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and dedication shown by our team and are equally grateful to all the volunteers and organizations who made this day a success.

As we look back on this Day of Kindness, we are reminded of the impact that collective action can have. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who gave their time, resources, and energy, not just within our organization but across Northwestern Oklahoma. It's through these acts of kindness that we build a stronger, more compassionate community.

Check out some of the photos captured on Day of Kindness from many organizations and business across the state! These images capture the essence of what the Day of Kindness is all about—people coming together to make a difference in the lives of others. Let's continue to spread this kindness every day and make our corner of the state a better place.



*[Left to right] Madison McCollum, Donna Gore, Ronna Foley, Lauren Rempe, Blair Hedrick, Cindy Harris, and a sweet little visitor. The Kingfisher retail and marketing team and their donation haul for Day of Kindness. Boxes were spread across Pioneer's Campus and several teams helped donate to the drive!*



**Photo Credit: CoMark Equity Alliance, LLC.** CoMark Equity Alliance employees delivering supplies to Youth and Family Services of North Central Oklahoma and Hedges Regional Speech & Hearing



**Photo Credit: NWOSU Department of Social Work.** NWOSU Department of Social Work team members posting kindness notes to the cars of social service professionals at WPYFS & of Woodward campus students.



**Photo Credit: Northwestern Oklahoma State University Division of Business.** The Ranger Business Club members passed out chocolate covered popcorn to students, faculty and professors. The individual bags were embellished with a sweet note saying "We hope that today is as poppin' as you are!"



**Photo Credit: Cimarron Electric Cooperative.** Cimarron Electric and their employees donated turkeys and food to the Kingfisher Food Bank to help families have a better Thanksgiving.



**Photo Credit: Paula Leffingwell.** [Left to right] Glenda Gatz and Paula Leffingwell enjoying a free drink from Medic Pharmacy and Gifts in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. Medic Pharmacy gave out free drinks to teachers and staff in celebration of Day of Kindness.

**United Way**



**United Way  
of Northwest Oklahoma**

A portrait of a young woman with blonde, wavy hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a black, short-sleeved top with ruffled shoulders and blue jeans. The background is a lush green hedge.

MEET OUR PIONEER SCHOLAR  
**Rhett Glazier**

District 7: Loyal Oklahoma State University Major: Agribusiness

# Q&A

Senior Rhett Glaizer enrolled in college with every intention of becoming a nurse, but after finding that healthcare was not the route for her, she decided to shift her academic focus closer to home.

“I chose agribusiness because I’ve always been in the agricultural sector,” Rhett said. “It was an easy decision for me to have a broad business degree in a sector I wanted to be a part of. It would help me to communicate with people who are going to be in the same profession I am, in the industry I was raised in.”

Rhett is a fifth-generation farmer and rancher. She currently helps her father run a cow-calf operation back home.

“I’m the only child of my dad’s who really wants to return to our family farm. My sister has some cattle, but I’m the only one who wants to return and manage our cow-calf operation,” Rhett said. “Recently, I’ve been going home almost every weekend because there’s not too much to do on campus, and we’ve had a lot going on with the farm, so it’s been an all-hands-on-deck situation.”

Though she may spend time at home, Rhett is also involved on campus. She has served on the Oklahoma AgCredit Student Board of Directors and is a member of the Oklahoma State Collegiate Cattlemen’s Association and the Oklahoma State Aggie X Clubs.

“My uncle told me that I needed to get involved in clubs if I wasn’t going to be part of a sorority, so that’s what I did,” Rhett said. “It’s helped me a lot.”

Her involvement has helped her discover her passions.

“The opportunities they give you are amazing. The AgCredit Student Board of Directors—it gave me my summer internship last year. It allowed me to learn about the lending aspect of how farmers and ranchers get their money and everything, and then the Aggie-X Club is just a good way to meet people,” Rhett said.

Rhett interned for Oklahoma AgCredit as a lending intern this summer.

“I really liked the aspect of seeing how funding was transferred to the farmers and ranchers and how that funding impacted the agricultural industry,” Rhett said.

Due to her internship, Rhett believes she would like to go into agricultural lending after graduation.

“I would like to see how we can further improve the lending services to farmers and ranchers—how much more support we can provide them. I want to learn more about the customers I’m assisting and explore any programs that can help give back,” Rhett said. “I’d also like to determine if any of our proceeds could benefit the industry.”

It’s no surprise that Rhett wants to contribute to the world of agriculture. She describes her connection to agriculture as “special” and “sentimental.”

“It’s just what I was raised in. I grew up riding around in pickups with my grandpa and my dad, and for my ninth birthday, I received a heifer to start my own cattle herd,” Rhett said. “Preserving our family traditions is something I hope to do if I have children.”

Between her extracurriculars and assisting her dad on the farm, Rhett has little spare time. This is why she is thankful for the Pioneer Scholarship.

“This scholarship is funding my college education. It’s covering my tuition and fees,” Rhett said. “It’s an excellent opportunity because I don’t have to use as much of my own money for college. The scholarship is significantly aiding me in my final year.”

Rhett will graduate next May, a year ahead of schedule. She doesn’t have a job lined up yet, but she’s eager to see what post-graduation life holds.

The future brims with opportunities, and I’m not confined to the career path I’m currently considering. With the breadth of my degree, I can pursue a wide array of roles, and there are few positions that I’m not qualified for,” Rhett said. “I’ve always been taught that with determination, anything is possible.”

## **What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?**

My family has always told me I can achieve whatever I want to achieve as long as I just put my mind to it and work hard. If you work hard and put your mind to something and set goals, you’ll always get somewhere.

## **What has been the most beautiful place you’ve ever been?**

Rome, Italy. I went there this summer on a study abroad trip. It was gorgeous. The trip was to Thailand, but me and a few friends went ahead of time of the trip, and we met up with the other kids in Milan.

## **When you’re having a bad day, what do you do to make yourself feel better?**

I go on a walk. Walking clears my mind, and it makes me feel better.

## **If you could ask your cattle three questions, what would they be?**

Why don’t they always want to go into pins when we want them to? Why don’t they have bull calves instead of just some heifers because we don’t keep our heifers for replacements, we just sell all of our calves in the fall and bull calves bring more. And then, do they like us as owner?

## **You are the only human left on earth. What would you do?**

I probably cry. I’m a people person and I wouldn’t be happy. Then, well, I suppose if I was the only person on earth I could kind of just do whatever... I would probably just travel. I would go see everything, and it would be sad, but it would be beautiful too.

## **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I enjoy cooking or baking, going on walks, but mostly I like going home and being able to check cattle with my grandpa.

# Zucchini and Tomato Pizza

*"I wasn't wanting to take pain medicine and would much rather watch what I eat to manage my symptoms."*

## ingredients

1 med.	zucchini
4 oz.	grape tomatoes
1	lemon
2	garlic cloves
2	slices of flat bread
1/2 c. (4 oz.)	ricotta cheese
1/4 c.	mozzarella cheese
1 tsp.	red pepper flakes
2 tsp.	honey
2 1/2 tsp.	olive oil
	sea salt
	black pepper



Credit: HelloFresh... Cassey's source!

Drafter Cassey Gray originally submitted this recipe to the Pioneer Family Cookbook because she saw a need.

"There weren't a lot of vegetarian options in the cookbook and, since I had to do a dietary change, I had a lot of vegetarian recipes I could add," Cassey said.

Cassey's switch to a more "holistic" diet was due to discoveries about her health.

"I had to adjust my diet because I have endometriosis. There's really nothing they can do to help with the symptoms. I'd had a surgery on it to clear everything out, only for it to come back and keep coming back," Cassey said. "I read an article where it said that you could actually manage some symptoms of it if you watch what you eat."

'Watching what you eat' meant eliminating processed foods, processed sugar, and limiting meat.

"I tried it and it actually worked. I wasn't wanting to take pain medicine and would much rather watch what I eat to manage my symptoms. I was so surprised that something actually worked," Cassey said.

Cassey and her partner turned to "HelloFresh" for ideas and recipes to fit the need of such a major diet change.

"I was trying to figure out my diet and we'd gotten this recipe from HelloFresh, and I've just adapted it over time to fit how I like it," Cassey said.

Cassey has recently started adding more meat to her diet, but this is still one of her go-to recipes.

Preheat oven to 450°.

Prepare a baking sheet with aluminum foil and place to the side. Wash and dry all produce. Trim off both ends of the zucchini and cut lengthwise; thinly slice into half-moons. Halve and slice tomatoes into half-moons. Mince garlic. Zest and quarter the lemon.

Gather a small bowl to combine tomatoes, garlic, and 1 teaspoon of olive oil in. Season with sea salt and black pepper to taste and set aside.

Drizzle 1 teaspoon of olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add zucchini and cook, stirring, until lightly browned and softened (5-6 minutes). Season with sea salt and black pepper to taste. Turn heat to low and add the previously mixed tomatoes, garlic, and olive oil to the pan and cook an additional 2 minutes. Turn off heat and set aside.

Gather an additional small bowl to combine all of the ricotta cheese, half of the lemon zest, lemon juice to taste, and 1/2 teaspoon olive oil. Season with sea salt and black pepper to taste.

Place flat breads on prepared sheet and evenly spread with ricotta cheese on the flat breads. Top with the cooked zucchini and tomatoes. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and bake until flat breads are golden brown (10-12 minutes).

Once flat breads are done, remove from oven and top with remaining lemon zest and chili flakes to taste. Drizzle with honey, then slice into squares. Serve with remaining lemon wedges on the side.

You don't have to be vegetarian to enjoy this simple recipe!

"My coworkers and I were talking about recipes we'd submitted because I was hounding them like 'you guys have to submit your recipes; I can't keep making up for all of you,'" Cassey said. "And I told them one recipe I submitted was a vegetable pizza. My coworker, Mike Chlouber, said that he and Rhonda tried it and they liked it."

Cassey notes that you could substitute ricotta cheese with cottage cheese or adapt the recipe to your needs.

"I found that I like to toast the flatbread. I like to cover it with olive oil, then add a little bit of salt and lemon juice on top of that. Then I toast it for a little bit before I put on the ricotta cheese and mozzarella cheese on it," Cassey said. "This just adds flavor. Instead of just eating a plain piece of bread and cheese, you get a layer of flavoring in between."



Cassey Gray

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## March 23

Chuck Wagon Gathering  
Chisholm Trail Museum  
605 Zellers Ave.  
Kingfisher, OK

Join us at the Chisholm Trail Museum for a day filled with cowboy fun at our family-friendly event. Drop in and see a variety of working chuck wagons from across the region as they prepare some of their favorite dishes. Activities include live music, cooking demonstrations and food samples, gunfights, Wild West Show performers, and more. Activities run from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m..

Event Hours:

Saturday, March 23

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



Pictured left to right: The Kingfisher Santa Call-In team: Brian Long, Jeff Palmer, Mike Sanders, Judith Sanders, Mike Brown, Johnny McAlexander, Kennt Brady.

### PIC OF THE MONTH **Santa Call-In**

Our Annual Santa Call-In on Tuesday, December 5. We had a team of 24 employees from all across Western Oklahoma connect children to Santa, Mrs. Claus, and their hard working elves! Thanks to teams in Blanchard, Frederick, Hennessey and Kingfisher, Pioneer was able to connect 326 to the North Pole so they could talk to the Christmas team!

Thank you to everyone who participated and made this night special for several kids!

## Are you missing out on an internet and telephone discount?

### Do you qualify for:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- WIC
- Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits
- Lifeline

### If so, you should apply for these programs:

**1. AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP).**



[fcc.gov/acp](https://fcc.gov/acp)

**2. Lifeline.**



[checklifeline.org](https://checklifeline.org)

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** is an FCC program that helps connect families and households when they are struggling to afford internet service.

*Provides up to  
\$75/month on  
qualifying Tribal lands.*

— OR —

*A \$30/month discount  
for qualifying  
households that aren't  
on qualifying tribal  
lands.*

———— **AND** ————

**Lifeline** is a federal government benefit program and only qualified persons may participate. Applicants must present documentation of household income or participation in qualifying programs. Lifeline is only available for one service per household whether landline, wireless, or internet.

*You could qualify for discounts on basic service ranging  
from \$5.25 to \$34.25 per month!*



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## 25+ YEARS ANNIVERSARIES

**Butch & Virginia Edsall** - Watonga

Celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary August 7th. They have two children and four granddaughters.

**David & Rae-Jean Burke** - Buffalo

Celebrated their 47th Wedding Anniversary August 14th. They have two children and four grandchildren.

**Dennis & Rosa Lee Whipple** - Waynoka

Celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary August 16th. They have two sons, five grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

**Steve & Rebecca Dennis** - Comanche

Celebrated their 26th Wedding Anniversary August 30th. They have two children.

**Jerry & Mary Hawkins** - Weatherford

Celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary September 14th. They have four children, six grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

**William Brown Jr & Martenia Tontz** - Crescent

Celebrated their 67th Wedding Anniversary September 22nd. They have three daughters, two sons-in-law, and five grandchildren.

**Gary & Melodee Moser** - Hunter

Celebrated their 45th Wedding Anniversary September 23rd. They have three children and four grandchildren.

**Ray & Virginia Walker** - Frederick

Celebrated their 67th Wedding Anniversary September 23rd. They have a child and two grandchildren.

**Pat & Verlaine Clark** - Mooreland

Celebrated their 64th Wedding Anniversary November 28th. They have two children, five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

**Dennis & Joreta Martin** - Kingfisher

Celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary November 16th. They have two daughters, two son-in-laws, five grandsons, and two great-grandchildren.

**Lester & Melissa Hamil** - Kingfisher

Celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary December 17th. They have three children and five grandchildren.

**Greg & Vickie Cook** - Woodward

Will Celebrate their 34th Wedding Anniversary July 29th. They have a son and daughter.

**Happy Anniversary from all of us at Pioneer!**

**Want your Anniversary published?**

To have wedding anniversary announcements of 25 years or more, simply submit your anniversary information including town, wedding date, and number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to GoPioneer Magazine at any of the following addresses:

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