



## ***International Costumers' Guild***

### **Report of the President for 1999-2000**

On October 3, 1994, the State of Maryland declared the ICG's Articles of Incorporation forfeit for failure to file a "Personal Property Return as of January 1, 1993," that had been due on April 15, 1993.

The ICG did not learn of that action until last fall, when our webmaster, John O'Halloran, decided to browse Maryland's web sites to see what they had to say about us. When John discovered this, he phoned me in Albany, New York, from California, on October 11, 1999, to let me know.

The reason we had not heard before last fall was that the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation still listed Kathryn Condon as our local contact at her old address in Fredericksburg, Maryland. Kathryn, of course, had moved out of the state long before then, and Jeannette Holloman has been the ICG's Vice-President, Maryland, since 1992. We failed to notify the Department of Assessment and Taxation at the time because none of the officers that year had any knowledge of such a requirement.

Still, ignorance of the law is no excuse. I was one of the Guild's officers that year, so I hold a share in the responsibility for this.

Fortunately, we did not owe any money to Maryland, so all we needed to do was file the delinquent returns and petition for revival of our Articles of Incorporation. I filled out the missing six years, worth of forms and notified the Department that Jeannette now was our local representative. Sharon co-signed the petition and enclosed a \$30,00 filing fee. On January 22, 2000, the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation notified me that it had accepted our petition and restored our status. We will remain in good standing with Maryland as a corporation so long as we file a Personal Property Return annually. It will be incumbent on the Officers each year to see to it that we do so.

That was the big news of 1999-2000. Beyond that, there is some good news, some interesting news, and bad news. The good news first.

### Good News.

The period from last year's Annual Meeting to this one saw the acceptance of two new chapters. At last year's meeting, the members approved recognition of the Greater Portland Area Costumers' Guild as an ICG chapter. In December, the Board of Directors voted to extend recognition to The Greater Sacramento Area Costumers' Guild, too. So, we now are 18 chapters in number.

### Interesting News.

I have continued my custom of sending a President's Message to all the chapters about once a month. They have provided informational updates as reminders of tasks to be accomplished. We have accomplished some of them. Some still need to be done.

On March 21, 2000, I accepted Pat Ritter's resignation from the position of Editor of *The Costumer's Quarterly* and gave the job to Carl Mami. As Carl will tell you in his report, an issue of the Quarterly will be ready at the printer on Thursday and he will mail it immediately. Carl also will, I believe, explain his plans to complete publication of the issues for both 1999 and 2000 by December 31.

A few weeks earlier, Janet Wilson-Anderson found and sent to me the ICG's missing financial records. These were from Betsy Delaney's years as Treasurer. They now are in the ICG Archives.

Also during the spring, John O'Halloran posted on our website ([www.costume.org](http://www.costume.org)) the ICG Guidelines for International-Level Masquerades and Competitions. Chapters and Costume-Con and Worldcon masquerade directors can access them there (as can anyone else who might be interested in them). The "Guild Guidelines" are NOT rules. They are guidelines intended to assist Worldcon and Costume-Con masquerade directors and entrants only. Directors of other masquerades use them at their own peril. We do not have masquerade rules; those are set by masquerade directors. "It's not a rule unless the director says it is."

### Bad News.

The good news aside, I have to characterize 1999-2000 as a debacle. At the time of last year's annual meeting, February 15, 1999, the ICG had 1,162 members. As of May 19, 2000, there were only 579 members, for a one-year decline of 583, or just over half the membership. As I expect that Sharon will explain in her Treasurer's report, virtually all the decline can be attributed to the failure of two large chapter to report their members. Nevertheless, this year's budget had been based on a membership of 1,000, not 579, and we have seriously over spent both the 1999 budget and the one for 2000. The budget for this year assumes a membership of 600.

I must take responsibility for a large piece of this disaster. Things went so very well last year that perhaps it was the effect of *hubris* on my part, but let me explain.

Last year, we adopted the first formal budget the Guild ever had in its 20-year history. Under the new Standing Rule the members adopted at last year's meeting, I was to appoint a Budget and Finance Committee that would oversee execution of the budget as well as plan a budget for each upcoming year. The committee is supposed to consist of four ICG members in good standing who are not chapter presidents, plus the Treasurer. I appointed Bruce MacDermott and Brenna Sharp to the committee but have never been able to find two other volunteers.

The Standing Rule calls for the Treasurer to make quarterly reports on ICG revenues and expenditures to the committee and the Board of Directors. As President, I failed to insist that the Treasurer make those reports. Had I made sure that the reports were made, we would have discovered the revenue shortfall much earlier than May 19th and could have taken steps to generate revenue and cut or delay expenditures. I am an experienced manager and I know better. I'm sorry; there simply is no excuse for my failure to insist that the Treasurer make the required reports.

However, the blame does not rest wholly with me. The chapters share it. The Standing Rules require every chapter to make annual reports of membership, with quarterly updates. The chapters' responsibility to do so is perfectly clear. Yet, getting such reports is always a struggle. Last year, Jana Keeler developed a standard report format for the chapters. I sent to all chapters. It is posted on the website and can be downloaded by any chapter. Nevertheless, chapters continue to fail to discharge their responsibility to the Guild, even as they complain that we're not doing our job.

After a similar mess just before the last Annual Meeting, John Syms made a motion to separate ICG membership from chapter membership, with ICG membership to be overseen directly by the Board of Directors. Later in this meeting we'll have a report by a special committee I appointed to consider that motion and you will have the opportunity to vote on it as the first item under Old Business. I don't want to prejudice the reception of the committee's report, so I am not going to say anything in this report about the Syms motion, but I intend to speak on the motion when it comes up under Old Business. The motion would fundamentally restructure the ICG but, if we decide not to adopt it, we may need some other means of making certain that the chapters do their job.

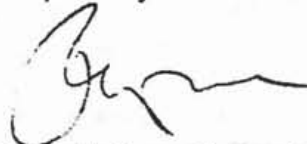
Reporting membership is not the only problem area. I have heard one *Quarterly* editor after another bemoan the failure of chapters to provide news and information about activities, let alone features. I'm sure that Carl will speak to this in his report at the *Quarterly's* new editor, but I have heard the same thing from Pat Ritter, Sally Norton, Cat Devereaux, Jim Kovalcin, and Kelly Turner! The single biggest reason you have not been receiving the *Quarterly* once each quarter is that there isn't anything to publish!

The members are the ONLY source of material for the *Quarterly* to publish. The ICG is a federation of chapters. It has no members of its own; costumers become ICG members by joining one of the chapters. Therefore, the responsibility to provide material for the editor to publish in *The Costumer's Quarterly* rests solidly on our chapters. But, what do we get? Do we get articles, reviews, news, or reports of chapter activities? No. Instead of receiving material to publish, so we could get the *Quarterly* out four times a year, we receive notices that chapters are withholding their subscription funds until issues are published. The best way for the members to kill *The Costumer's Quarterly* is to continue to withhold, not money, but the information we need in order to print something other than 32 blank pages.

In accordance with our By-laws, the Balance Sheet in the Treasurer's report is incorporated as an integral part of my report.

This concludes my report for 1999-2000. It was a very unsatisfactory year and I am very dissatisfied with my own performance as President, as well as with the cooperation we are receiving. As you know, I am standing for reelection at this meeting, for the third AND FINAL time. However, right now, I wouldn't vote for me again and, if any other member wants this job, I will be happy to step aside.

Respectfully submitted,



Byron P. Connell, President  
International Costumers' Guild, Inc.

May 26, 2000