

# *Costumer's Quarterly*

Volume 2 Number 2



# From The Editors

Welcome to the second edition of Costumer's Quarterly!

We hope you enjoyed the first edition that came out a few months ago.

Yes, we know it is the dead of winter and this is only the "Fall" issue. We got a late start with the "Summer" issue coming out in September and haven't had a chance to catch up yet. Hopefully things will settle down to a dull roar after Costume Con and we can get back on track (if we have enough articles!) Speaking of articles...

We have received a few contributions, and some promises for a few more in the near future. THANK YOU! (You know who you are!) But, of course, we'd love to see more!

**THE COSTUMER'S QUARTERLY WILL NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!** The purpose of the International Costumer's Guild is to SHARE information on costuming, and this publication is one of the places to do it. WE NEED ARTICLES AND ARTWORK! "Articles" can be anything from a "handy household hint" that only takes a couple of lines up to a full-blown article on "how-to" make something. "How-to's" need not be limited to sewing; they might cover vacuforming, airbrushing, glues and adhesives, etc. We also welcome letters of comment (how are we doing?) or just suggestions! The sky's the limit! "Artwork" can be anything from specific illustrations (or black-and-white photos) to accompany an article to non-specific spot-illos or costume-related cartoons. We also desperately need COVERS for future issues!

We cannot promise you fortune, but we do promise you lots of GLORY. Contributors will receive a FREE copy of the 'zine in which their work appears, and your talent will be seen (and appreciated!) by roughly 300 costumers across the country. Send submissions to the address that appears on the right side of this page!

Thanks for your help, and we're looking forward to hearing from you soon!

*Kelly Karen*

## *Costumer's Quarterly*

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# *Costumer's Quarterly*

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Volume 2 Number 2

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Edited by Karen & Kelly Turner

Cover by Dianne Dorley-Dawe

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Fran Evans

Jay Hartlove      Debbie Jones

Kathi Reynolds      Don Sakers

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# HISTORICAL RESEARCH

by Kathi S. Reynolds

## "Do research? Who, me?"

Research can be like the hidden embers of a fire--they can remain quietly hidden, or they can be vigorously stirred and brought to life. As you read through this article and the following suggestions, you will begin to develop a picture in your mind of why period outfits look, drape, or hang the way they do.

Research is not like going to the dentist without an anaesthetic. It is intense work, but it can be fun when your vague ideas become more definite in your mind and on paper. It is very informative, and you can learn many things that are interesting.

What would you do if someone brought you a 1950's dress and told you they wanted to wear it correctly? Where would you start, other than laughing? Let's say that the person who wants to wear this is well-endowed and ever-so-slightly pudgy. How is that dress going to look on her? Are you even sure that it will fit? How does what is worn with it affect the hang, fit, and look of the dress?

Most people's reaction is to ask someone older. "Hey, Mom, what do you wear with this thing?" Your mother would tell you what she wore under her prom gown. This is a primary source. This person actually had experience wearing the garment in question.

You also could look through your mother's high school scrapbook, and see what teenagers wore in the 1950's. (For some of us, it might be another decade.) This is another primary source.

Remember, the key word is **PRIMARY SOURCE**. A primary source is the residue of a time gone by--

*You need to learn  
that most people  
did not look like  
fashion plates.*

what is left behind. What types of things do people leave behind? They leave letters to one another, diaries, journal accounts, drawings, photographs, sometimes even the "special" clothing in their life.

What other types of things are left? Often, they may have had a work of art commissioned, or you will find that there are certain artists who prefer to chronicle the common people. Some of the forms of art include sculpture, paintings, drawings, tapestries, frescoes, etc.

Now comes the fun--and sometimes the frustrating--part. What to do if you want to do an 1850's outfit instead of 1950's? You need primary sources, but no one is alive that wore those clothes!

People, especially women, have a habit of reporting what the new style is, what the style will be, and what was worn at such-and- such an affair. Primary sources, such as diaries, drawings, photographs, paintings, and often actual garments, are useful for this century. These talk about or show what people were actually wearing.

Things like fashion plates, and costume descriptions in novels and plays of the period, tend to be someone's idea of what was worn rather than things actually worn.

You really need to study both the realistic and the idealistic sources to get a complete picture. You need to learn that most of the people did not look like fashion plates; and that, in fact, they could look as uncomfortable and rumpled in ill-fitting clothes as some of us do in mundanes. In your research, you will find accounts which say, in effect, "Boy, is that an awful style, but so-and-so wears it well." Keep these kinds of thoughts in mind. Don't be too romantic about the project, as disillusionment comes sooner or later.

As you read through diaries, journal accounts, and other articles, you will begin to get the flavor of the period you are studying. Nurture this and savor this, as it will help you pull the research and the presentation together.

Research operates in stages. The first stage is to identify the period and style you wish to do. Suppose someone wants "a Georgian period gown, a 1700's formal gown, you know what I mean --a gown worn to court functions." This doesn't tell me anything, except that you want a very fancy gown.

Do you have any idea how many King Georges there were? According to Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, in the Biographical Names section, there are six King Georges in the history of England listed.

"But only the 1700's one," you say.

There were three of them in the 1700's! There was a King George for most of the century.

The second stage is to define the idea you wish to convey. "I want to do a smashing gown out of this 1700's painting," is too broad. Be sure that the painting is really one from the 1700's, and not just in the style of the 1700's. On the other hand, don't limit yourself to a specific piece of clothing, as it may be an exception rather than an example of that period. To define your idea, you should be able to tell not only the dates in which the outfit would have been worn, but also the class and personality of the wearer. Be prepared to tell all willing listeners what was worn, how it was worn, and how it felt to wear stays, restricting gowns, paniers, etc.

Browse through costume books, photographs, and other visual sources for examples of what you are planning to do. Get a mental picture. Keep it there, so that when someone shows you a stage costume, or a 19th century print, as possible documentation, you can politely straighten them out.

By this point, you're asking, "Where do I find these sources of wisdom, etc.?" Well, in a book in a bookcase in a library. Ah, but what books? Well, you can refer to the first part of the article for some

suggestions, but a very good place to start is Janet Arnold, HANDBOOK OF COSTUME (New York, S. G. Phillips, 1973).

Here, in a user-friendly book with practical examples, Janet Arnold discusses how to study costume. She lists useful sources and explains how to make the best use of the sources available. At the end of each section, she suggests artists that are appropriate for the study of the costume, not for how they painted or sculpted. These are sources that give clothing historians the information we need to research a garment or a period. Just what you need for that Georgian gown you desire.

She covers many different sources, such as sculpture, tapestries, frescoes, paintings, etc., and discusses how to use visual sources correctly. Going back to that 1700's gown, in her book you will find a list of who painted in that period and, also, who is a better-than-average costume source.

Now that the fires are beginning to glow, let's blow some air on those embers and really get the fire roaring. You have learned some of the keys, and where to find the others. Make use of as many user-friendly books, people, and other tools as you can find.

There are many tools and resources out there. Don't let yourself get discouraged easily. Make use of friends' enthusiasm, and it will carry you through the rough spots.

It's not easy, but it is fun. So enjoy!



# WORKING WITH FRIENDLY PLASTIC

by Jay Hartlove

You've heard about it, you may have seen it, but I'm here to tell you how to work with Friendly Plastic.

## WHAT IS IT?

Friendly Plastic is a hard, resilient plastic with a texture somewhere between polyethylene impact plastic and polyester fiberglass resin. It is strong enough to use thin in most applications, which means you can use less and save both cost and weight. It is molded by simple melting, so it requires no catalysts or solvents. It melts at a low enough temperature (150 degrees F) that you won't need any special heat apparatus such as a kiln. It is REMELTABLE--this is probably its most useful quality, as will be seen when I discuss techniques. It doesn't emit any fumes, so you don't even need the ubiquitous "well-ventilated area." I don't mean to sound like a commercial, but the stuff really is a wonder. After years of fabricating jewelry, hardware, weapons, and armor out of materials that were too heavy or too flimsy, that ruined furniture and clothes or poisoned me, you can understand why I was happy to find an alternative.

Friendly Plastic comes in two formats: colored strips and off-white, rice-like beads. The strips only come in a few colors, all of which are very bright, and the per weight cost is outrageous. [Rumor has it that the company manufacturing Friendly Plastic is currently developing metallic gold and metallic silver strips, which can be used to make jewelry settings--Ed.] This packaging is geared only toward the children's craft market. For any serious, creative use, I recommend the rice pellets. Don't worry about the color--Friendly Plastic

colors very easily, as I'll discuss later. A canister of pellets that melts down to a solid quart of plastic retails for \$25 and can be found in most arts and crafts stores.

## BASIC TECHNIQUES

### Molding

Friendly Plastic works beautifully in molds since it picks up detail very nicely, shrinks a linear 1% when it cools, and doesn't stick to any common mold materials once hard. Free-sculpting is more difficult and requires techniques that are not obvious, so I will concentrate the remainder of my discussion on this topic.

### Free-Sculpting

Water boils at 212 degrees F, and it will burn your skin if it's over 140 degrees F. Friendly Plastic melts at 150 degrees F, but remains soft as it cools all the way down to 110 degrees F (warm to the touch). Therefore, boiling water is an excellent medium for melting whole quantities at a time.

The air surrounding the pellets increases any volume you pour by about one-fifth, so measure a quarter more to allow for shrinkage.

*I don't mean to sound like a commercial, but this stuff really is a wonder.*

Use a Pyrex bowl. Friendly adheres to very little when it's hard, but it sticks aggressively to plastic, wood, and metal when it's soft. One other thing it bonds to is nail polish--don't even try to work with this stuff if you're wearing any! (Yes, this means acetone will dissolve Friendly.) To keep the molten plastic from sticking to your skin, simply wet your hands. Any

stickiness is easily overcome by a thin layer of water. In fact, you'll notice it appears to stick to the glass bowl upon initial meltdown, but this is mostly suction. Once you pull it free and get the plastic surrounded by water, it won't stick anymore. Go ahead and use a metal spoon to scoop it out of the hot water. A small amount will stay on the spoon when you pull it off with your wet hands, but this residue will peel off easily once it cools.

No matter how big or small your project, the first step is to form the basic shape. Since this will be refined into your finished product, it's important to make it the correct size. Big pieces can be cumbersome, so try to divide large items into small parts that can be fused together after they're hard. I'll tell you how to do that in a minute.

The first thing you'll notice when you melt Friendly is it turns a translucent gold color. Therefore, as it cools, you can see what areas have hardened and where it is still soft. This added visual information makes this substance user-friendly indeed. When it's soft, it is VERY soft--too soft to hold a shape of its own. This means you'll have to support it with your wet hands while you're molding it to the right shape. This is a bit tricky if you want a complex shape. Fear not: if you mess up, you can always melt it down and try again. Its liquidity is why I suggested molding small pieces at a time.

When it's cool and hard, Friendly Plastic is so tough that a very thin layer is strong enough to hold a shape, even when that layer is surrounding a mass of molten Friendly. Therefore, along with your Pyrex bowl for the boiling water, you want to have a bowl of ice water ready.

To summarize the procedure: Wet your hands in the ice water. Scoop the molten plastic out with a spoon. Let it cool on the spoon until it isn't uncomfortable to handle. Mold it with your hands to the right size and approximate shape, then dunk it in the ice water. The skin that instantly develops is just flexible enough to allow some corrective shaping. When you're happy with the result, drop the piece into the cold water and let it solidify completely.

## **REMELTING**

The miracle of this substance is that it can be remelted over a dozen times before it starts to break down. The free sculpting process is therefore a sequence of more and more focused applications of heat in order to add more and more detail until the piece is finished.

## **TECHNIQUES**

If you want to remelt a large chunk of Friendly, microwave it in the Pyrex bowl in just enough water to cover the plastic. This works much faster than poured hot water, which only melts chunks from the outside. The water in the microwave prevents the plastic from getting too hot. Friendly does break down if you get it too hot (over 300 degrees F).

Hot water or microwaves apply heat to your whole piece at one time. For narrower-focus melting to start correcting shape and adding detail, I suggest an alcohol lamp. If you have to make a major change, like bending an arm, you'll have to melt all the way through the part to be bent. Any layer of plastic that remains opaque and hard will resist the bend. Again, the bowl of ice water is very helpful to freeze the bend once you make it. For most large surface changes, wet hands are all you'll need to effectively push the lamp-melted puddles around to where you want them.

To add finishing details, you want to apply heat in an even more controlled fashion. I suggest using metal tools heated in the flame of the alcohol lamp. A favorite of mine is an old X-acto blade. Just remember any cutting you do with such tools is due to the heat applied, not the edge of the tool.

## **Fusing and Layering**

Another major advantage of remelting is fusing pieces together and layering on more plastic. Since Friendly is homogenous, pressing two melted surfaces together makes a seamless weld. There is no need for glues or solvents; however, both surfaces have to be hot enough to appear clear, or the weld will not be complete. To layer more plastic on, melt the surface where you want to add, then press on more molten plastic.

## Surface Finish

You never have to sand this stuff to get a smooth surface. In fact, sanding just pulls up frayed, hairy strands. Instead, melt the surface and smooth it down. I find wet hands are very good for this, not only because of the control, but also for finding surface irregularities.

## SPECIAL EFFECTS

### Texturing

Textural effects can be accomplished by melting small surface areas with the lamp and pressing in appropriately-shaped metal tools or forms. For best results, make the metal very cold before use so the plastic will solidify quickly, not stick, and retain more detail.

*Friendly plastic is a natural for fabricating jewelery.*

Mosaic or granular surface effects are simple: just push whatever you want into the melted surface. What doesn't stick can always be glued into its original depression.

### Painting

Since you use water to prevent Friendly from sticking to things, you can automatically forget about using water-based paints. Acetone and toluene derivatives dissolve Friendly, so lacquers and enamels work beautifully, usually in one coat. Close-inspection quality metalwork can be achieved by using enamels that actually contain metal. Zynolyte brand chrome spray paint and Plaid Enterprises' Liquid Leaf brand gold paint are especially rewarding, although I'm sure there are lots of others that work just as well.

For translucent or marbled effects, mix paint or pigment straight into the molten plastic before you model it. I've been told that Friendly is porous enough to pick up cold water dyes. It's supposed to take a long time soaking.

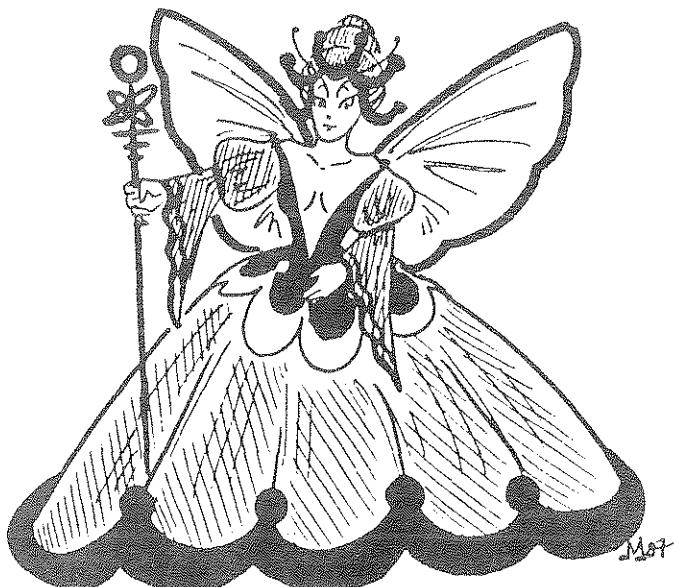
## OTHER APPLICATIONS

Friendly Plastic is a natural for fabricating jewelry. For example, you can make settings and findings

by just pushing the jewels into melted puddles. If you don't want any lip or prongs to show over the gem edges, wait until the melted spot has cooled enough to have a thin skin, then push the gem in to make a depression without having the gem stick. When this cools to hardness, you can glue the gem in with a cyanoacrylate (Crazy Glue) or other contact cement.

Friendly is very useful for making large, thin, strong, hollow shells. You have to work over molds or forms, but if you plan well and keep ice water handy to control runaway molten plastic, the results can be stunning. This plastic is more expensive than fiberglass (the usual material for this kind of application), but it is stronger per weight, and a lot less toxic. Keep this in mind the next time you want to make a wearable skull mask or durable, functional body armor.

The last application I'll discuss is hardware. Friendly is strong enough to repair chair legs and ladders. Why the company that produces it doesn't try to sell it as a hardware item, I'll never understand. Even though it is sold as an art material, you and I can still use it to make custom hinges, bearings, grips, mountings, and fixtures. It is naturally slick and wears as well as any nylon bearing material.



# LIVING WITH A COSTUMER

or

"DARTS in a costume? Won't that HURT?!"

---

by Don Sakers

Face it folks, y'all do have some peculiarities that set you aside from the rest of humanity. Or whatever. How many other people do you know who have thirty-nine different types of mauve material -- and none of them the correct shade for the costume you have in mind?

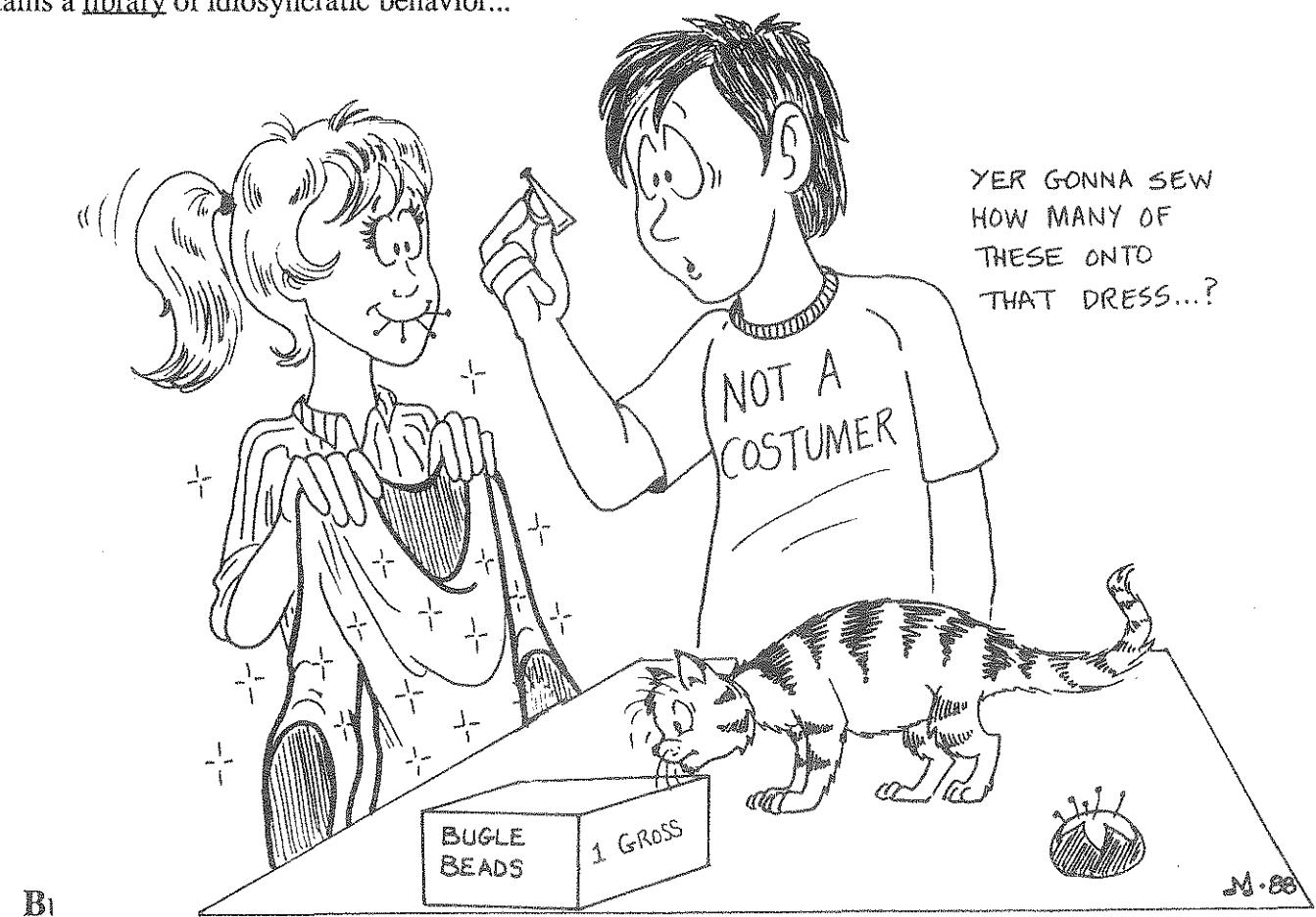
When Thomas moved in, I was a little apprehensive. After all, as an SF writer I have quite a catalog of idiosyncrasies, and I wasn't sure it was fair to ask him to put up with all of them. Ha! Little did I realize that he'd spent three years under the tutelage of the Costumer's Guild, which maintains a library of idiosyncratic behavior...

For the sake of others considering having a costumer in residence, I'd like to offer the following observations that might affect your decision:

## TERMINOLOGY:

---

Every specialized field has its own vocabulary -- but costumers have spent years defining and re-defining their terms, solely for the purpose of confusing the rest of us. If you doubt this, try to get someone to explain exactly what is meant by "Craftsman Class."



Here are some terms that you want to watch out for, along with easy-to-understand definitions:

**Bugle Beads:** Musical glitz for that truly unique effect.

**Darts:** Things to throw at the judges when your costume doesn't get an award.

**Dritz:** Ancient bugle beads, decrepit trim, or any other type of outdated glitz.

**Hot-Melt Glue:** A mixture of 1/2 Elmer's and 1/2 jalapeno on toast, covered with cheese. Pop under grill for about 1 minute. Serves six.

**Mercerized cotton:** A special type of cotton manufactured only in Mercer Island, WA.

**Overlock:** A special stitch that keeps anyone from stealing your costume. Those who use overlock are usually "keyed up".

**Serger:** 1. A machine which sews lots of fabric quickly by "surging" ahead. 2. A rank in the Costumer's Guild, i.e. "Serger York."

**Sizing:** The process of trying on an uncompleted costume to see where it doesn't fit.

**Sobo:** A bohemian neighborhood in London.

**Spandex:** Breaded Spam served on index cards. Quite tasty during those all-night costuming sessions right before the con.

**Tack Store:** A place to get purple polyester, heavily beaded flamingo appliques, and other such merchandise.

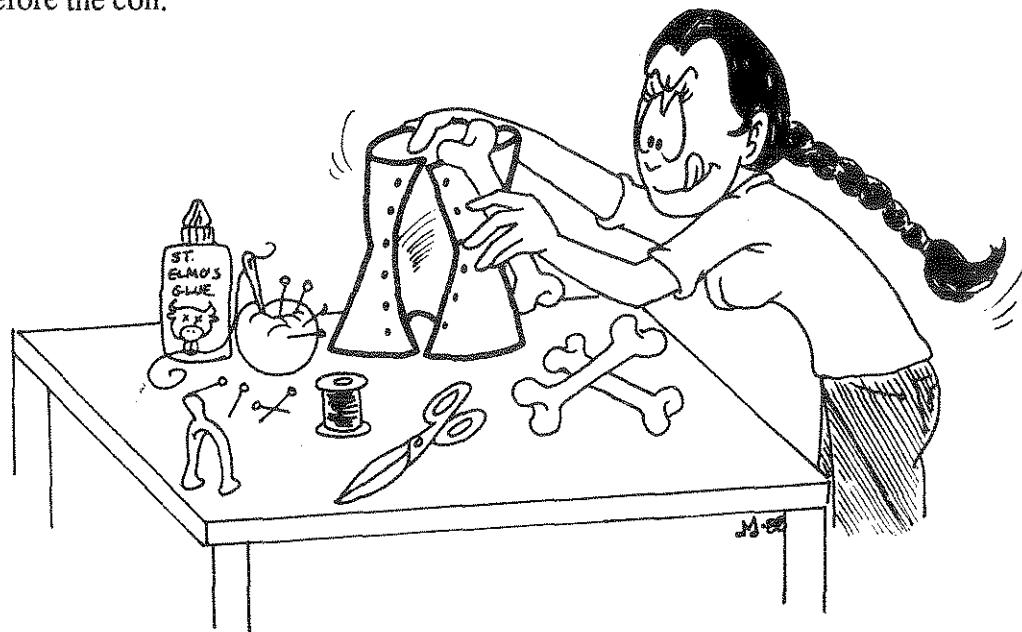
**Whip stitch:** Not in a family magazine, please.

## Costumer's Problems:

Your costumer has a number of problems that are unique to his/her breed. If you run into these situations, do your best to be understanding, and follow the recommended behavior outlined below.

**1. Time contraction:** This occurs when a convention which has been scheduled for three years suddenly seems to jump forward by a month. It's the night before the con, and three pounds of sequins still need to be attached. In this situation, it is essential that you hide all the booze in the house. In extreme cases, hide knives, scissors and other sharp objects as well.

**2. Corset boning:** You need to bone a corset in a hurry and nobody local carries corset supplies. (This one was an actual question in THE COSTUMER'S QUARTERLY.) It is important in this situation that you keep one fact uppermost in your mind: *Normal people do not "need to bone a corset in a hurry."* Temporarily going home to mother may be the best alternative.



**3. No closet space:** Sooner or later, this one hits every household with a costumer. Usually sooner. No solution short of opening a portal to the fifth dimension will get you out of this trouble. (If you do succeed in opening the portal, toss the costumer through at once!)

**4: Competition:** This is akin the the problem faced by "football widows," and it occurs when a costumer is spending too much time with leather studs and other unsavory aspects of his/her chosen field. Going home to mother permanently may be the only possible course of action.

**5. Decor:** Living with a costumer, you must adjust yourself to the fact that your quarters will always be decorated in Early Minnesota Fabrics. Decorators have begun to deal with this problem, and it is now possible to order Louis XIV Sewing Machines, Colonial Scraps Bins and Queen Anne Ironing Boards. However, none of this helps because with all the money spent on fabric, trim and thread, who has any left for furniture?

## **SURVIVAL SKILLS**

The single most important phrase you must know is: "Well, what do those people know about costuming anyway?"

The second most important phrase is: "Well, what does Rotsler know anyway?"

Things you must never say, under any conditions, include:

"It's only a tiny stain..."

"I'm sure you'll win."

"Maybe we should throw out some of these old scraps."

"Would you mind putting that sewing machine away while Mother is visiting?"

Of course, the very worst thing you can say is: "I told you that you should have gotten started sooner."

If you heed these rules and keep these simple observations in mind, you should be able to maintain a mutually rewarding relationship with your costumer for many years.

And if not...keep Mother's phone number handy. She has that spare bedroom, you know...

---

DON SAKERS is an SF writer whose mother has just turned her spare bedroom into a sewing center.



**MOM WILL UNDERSTAND...**

# SUNDRY COMMENTS ON BATIK

(or How to Dye and Live to Tell the Tale)

## Part 1

---

by Debby Jones

The principle of batik is very simple. Melted wax is applied to cloth. The wax creates a resist: it prevents the penetration of water, therefore of dye. The cloth is then dyed. The waxed areas remain the original color of the cloth. This process may be repeated, with the new dye color overdyeing the previous colors. Finally the wax is removed from the cloth.

Colors should be planned in sequence from lightest to darkest. You can dye a dark color over a lighter one, but not the other way around. Except for darkest colors, dyes do not completely cover previous colors; you get a mixture. For example, if the first dyebath is yellow, overdyeing with blue will produce a green. Because of this, choose colors that are closely related, such as yellow/orange/red/brown, or pale blue/medium blue/violet/black.

Because it is usually easier and more economical to wax a figure than its background, batik is best suited to lighter designs on darker backgrounds. However, with care and a lot of wax, it can be done the other way.

Wax resist can also be used for a stained glass or "coloring book" type of design, where different areas of color are separated by wax boundary lines. In this case, the dye is usually painted on in confined areas, so the above color limitations can be stretched.

Batik gets its special character from the way the wax behaves under the stresses of handling and dyeing. The wax cracks and crumbles, allowing the dye to come through in random lines. It is possible, with care, to eliminate almost all cracking, but if you don't want that texture, another resist medium might work better.

Unlike the silk painting technique so popular these days, in batik large areas can be covered with the resist, allowing textures and overdye effects that can be achieved no other way.

## Preparing the Fabric

---

The batik process requires fabrics that can take the high temperatures necessary to apply and remove the wax. The fabric must also be able to absorb color in a cold water dye process. Dyes available to artists work best on natural fibers. This more or less narrows the choice down to cotton and silk. Some people have achieved success with linen and rayon. Don't use permanent press fabrics.

*The fabric must be able to absorb color in a cold water dye process... Don't use permanent press.*

The first thing to do is wash the cloth to remove all sizings and fillers and to preshrink. This isn't always necessary for silks, but it doesn't hurt to do it anyway. Be as gentle as the fabric requires, but remember that the waxing, dyeing, rinsing and wax-removal are all at least as hard on the cloth as laundering.

I always draw my design directly (and lightly) onto the cloth with soft pencil. The marks nearly always come out, usually before I'm ready for them to. In one project, my pencil marks all disappeared in the first dyebath, and I had to retrace before I could go on. Some people place the pattern under the cloth and wax right over it, but this won't work unless the cloth is sheer. It is also possible to apply the wax freehand and let the design grow as it will. In any case, allow a generous margin around the design, one inch minimum. A normal seam allowance is not enough; you can lose all of it and more through shrinkage and general wear and tear on edges.

There are two approaches to batiking a garment. First, you can trace the pattern pieces on the cloth (allowing extra space between) and batik the yardage before cutting it out. This is the easiest method. After the batik process is finished and the wax is out of the cloth (which has had a final wash to remove excess dye) pin the pattern pieces on for cutting out, or else retrace the outlines.

The second approach is to make up the garment and batik it in a finished or semi-finished state. This may be better if the surface pattern has to continue across seams and darts, but it makes the whole job much more difficult. I have never done it on anything more complex than a half-circle skirt. If you are sewing with polyester thread, remember to use a thread color close to your final fabric color because polyester may not absorb the dye.

I do not recommend cutting out the garment pieces, then batiking, then sewing. If you must do this, allow WIDE margins (several inches), zig-zag around all raw edges right after cutting, and compare the pieces to the garment pattern pieces after finishing the batik and before making up the garment.

## Equipment for waxing:

Wax, of course.

*Something to melt it in:* -- Never, ever melt wax over an open flame. I use one of those old pre-teflon Sunbeam electric skillets. Look for them at

garage sales. Use shallow aluminum tart pans inside the electric skillet to hold the wax. That way you only have to melt a small amount of wax at a time and keep it at a useful depth. You can also have two different wax formulas side by side to use on different parts of the design.

Some batik artists melt wax in a pan on an electric hotplate. If you choose this method, take care not to drip wax directly on or near the heating element.

## **Tools to apply the wax:**

*Brushes* -- make sure the bristles can take the heat. You can get many different textural effects with brushes.

*Tjantings for drawing lines of melted wax* -- Cerulean Blue Ltd. (P.O. Box 21168, Seattle, WA, 98111-3168. Catalog \$3.50) sells some very fancy and expensive ones (\$12.50). Dharma Trading Co. (P.O. Box 916, San Rafael, CA 94915) has tjantings for about \$5.00.

*Assorted objects to dip into wax and stamp on fabric* -- Cookie cutters, odds and ends of hardware, shaped ends of empty cans, found objects, etc. Experiment! Make your own! Remember to preheat in the wax.

## **Frame to hold the cloth taut.**

I have a supply of pairs of stretcher bars (see your local art supply store) that I can knock together to make the size of frame I need. The Japanese bamboo stretchers called shinshi can also be used. Embroidery hoops aren't good unless you can fit the whole area to be waxed inside the hoop.

For delicate silks, cut a 3 or 4 inch slice from a corrugated cardboard carton and secure the cloth to the top edges of the cardboard over the open center with straight pins.

## **Misc.**

*Thumb tacks or push pins* to secure the cloth to the frame. Don't worry about the holes; in all but the most delicate fabrics they usually work themselves out in the dyebaths, rinses, washes, etc.

*Newspaper* to cover the work surfaces.

*Rags, scraps of material, etc.* to use as "drip cloths".

## **Waxes for Batik**

Both Cerulean Blue and Dharma carry wax for batik. With a little hunting, you may be able to find beeswax closer to home, and parafin is available in most hardware stores.

Waxes vary in melting point and in flexibility when cold. Beeswax (melting point 120 degrees F) is more bendable and can take more stress without cracking. Parafin (melting point 90 degrees F) is very brittle but much less expensive. You can mix the two in equal parts or change the proportions to get more or less crackle. Begin with the ingredient that has the highest melting point. When it is completely melted, add the next, lowering the heat to avoid burning the mixture.

There is a synthetic beeswax called "microcrystalline" wax. It melts at 176 degrees Fahrenheit. It is definitely not as good as natural beeswax, but costs a third to a half as much. Other ingredients are sometimes added to commercially prepared batik waxes. The formula for the wax I have been using contains pine resin, beeswax, damar gum, micro wax and fat (it doesn't say what kind). I'm not crazy about it because the resin tends to scorch and gum up my tjantings and stain the fabric. It is also much harder to remove than a beeswax-paraffin mix.

Note that all these waxes melt below the boiling point of water. This fact comes in handy when it is time to remove the wax.

## **Waxing**

Make sure the work space is well-ventilated and that the electric skillet or whatever you are using is on a solid surface. Be watchful of wax temperature. Parafin can catch fire very easily, and the

smoke is toxic. Avoid letting the wax get so hot it smokes. There will be fumes even at the right temperature. Try to avoid breathing them as much as possible. Cerulean Blue recommends using a respirator mask. I've never been able to tolerate the things for long enough to get my waxing done, but I'm sure a respirator is a good idea. (Do not use one if you are pregnant. In fact, stay away from melted wax and dye if you are in that condition.)

It takes time for the wax to melt. Resist the temptation to turn up the heat to speed things up. Melt small amounts, just enough to get a usable depth for a tjanting. When all the wax is melted, try it on a scrap of the fabric you are using. The wax is at the correct temperature when it soaks right into the cloth and looks more or less the same on both sides. (It is never exactly the same.) If it just sort of sits on the top of the cloth, it is too cool. If it smokes, it is too hot.

While the wax is melting, you can be pinning the cloth onto the frame and setting up your work surface. If you are using tjantings, heat them in the wax for several minutes before you start. I usually put my tjantings into the wax as soon as it melts and leave them there until the wax reaches working temperature. The same thing goes for other metal tools used to apply wax, also brushes.

Melted wax is tricky stuff. It loves to drip. No matter how careful you are, sooner or later you will get a nice big drop of wax on the cloth, exactly where you didn't want it. The best thing to do about this is to try to incorporate it into the design. If you can't live with it, scrape off as much of the blob as you can and melt the rest out onto paper towel with a heated knife tip. This won't get all the wax out, but it may be adequate.

My first instructor taught me to use a "drip cloth". This is a rag or scrap of fabric folded up into a thick pad. You hold it under your waxing tool except when you are actually applying the wax and always keep it under the parts of the tool that are

not touching the cloth. It is a two-handed exercise. If you are right handed, for instance, hold the drip cloth in your left hand. This means both arms and the upper body get into the act. It takes a little practice, but once I got used to it I decided it was worth it to avoid most of the random drips, especially going back and forth between the wax pan and the frame.

Tjantings have a way of leaking from behind the wax reservoir. If you hold a drip cloth underneath and allow just the spout to extend over the edge, you can control the wax fairly well.

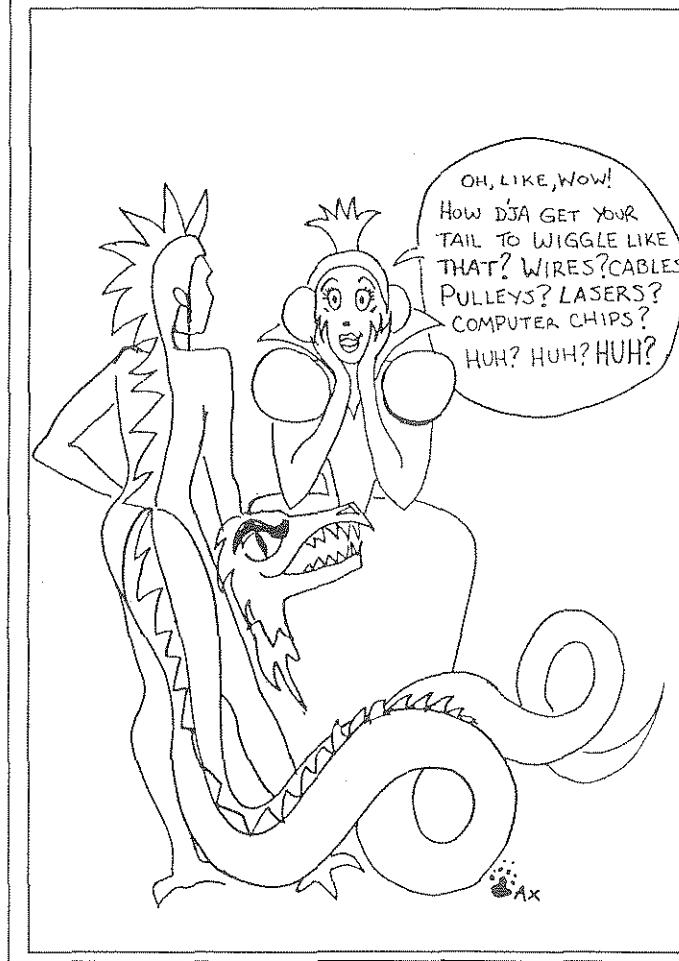
If the spout of the tjanting seems blocked, try heating it in the wax a little longer: it may be clogged with unmelted wax. If this doesn't work, try cleaning the spout gently with a fine wire. If this doesn't do the trick, the tjanting may be clogged with resin, and I don't know what will get it out. According to my instructor, resin in the spout is the end of usefulness for the tjanting.

As you work, check the back of the cloth often to make sure the wax is getting through. It is never exactly the same on the front and back, but it should be close. For heavier fabrics it may be necessary to wax both the back and front. Handle such projects carefully because the thicker the buildup of wax, the more likely it is to crack, or even flake off.

If you are doing a "coloring book" type of design, in which the wax resist forms boundaries between areas of painted-on color, wax over all the lines on the back of the cloth. Any small break in the boundaries will permit dye to seep across where you don't want it.

Next issue, we will talk about dyes, and how to apply them. We will also cover the removal of batik wax.

### Costuming For Cats by Animal X



# STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

## THE NEW UNIFORMS

by Fran Evans

This article is taken from first-hand observations, watching the show on TV, and from information received from people who were on the set or who have talked to William Theiss. I've tried to be as accurate as possible, but there may be things I've missed or don't know about, or the people I talked to didn't have the correct information.

### MATERIAL

The fabric used to make the principal actors' uniforms is a heavy-duty, non-snag, polyester doubleknit called "Miss Minnesota." Some of the background people and extras do have uniforms made of spandex--possibly even spandex that has been reversed (i.e., wrong side out, shiny side in). It has been suggested that some of the first "test" uniforms were made of spandex before a more suitable fabric was found.

The colors are black, cranberry red, cyan (a blue-green), and a toned greenish-yellow (i.e., some black has been run into the color mixture).

### CLOSURES

There is an invisible zipper down the front of the uniform from neck to crotch (22" or longer). Also, there is a 7" invisible zipper in each leg at the hem-line, center front. The zippers in the legs are the same color as the uniform (e.g., a red uniform has red zippers, a blue uniform has blue zippers, etc.). I'm not sure about the center front zipper, but I would assume it is also the same color as the uniform, or possibly the zipper has been hand-dyed black in the black areas. Black laundry marker will darken a zipper nicely and permanently.

There is probably a hook and eye, or some other fastener, at the neck above the zipper.

A piece of wide black elastic goes under the boot to pull the pants tight (see figure below).

#### \*\*SPECIAL NOTE\*\*

If you have any old invisible zippers, keep them. The invisible zipper is being phased out of existence, so you'd best buy up whatever you can find in whatever colors.

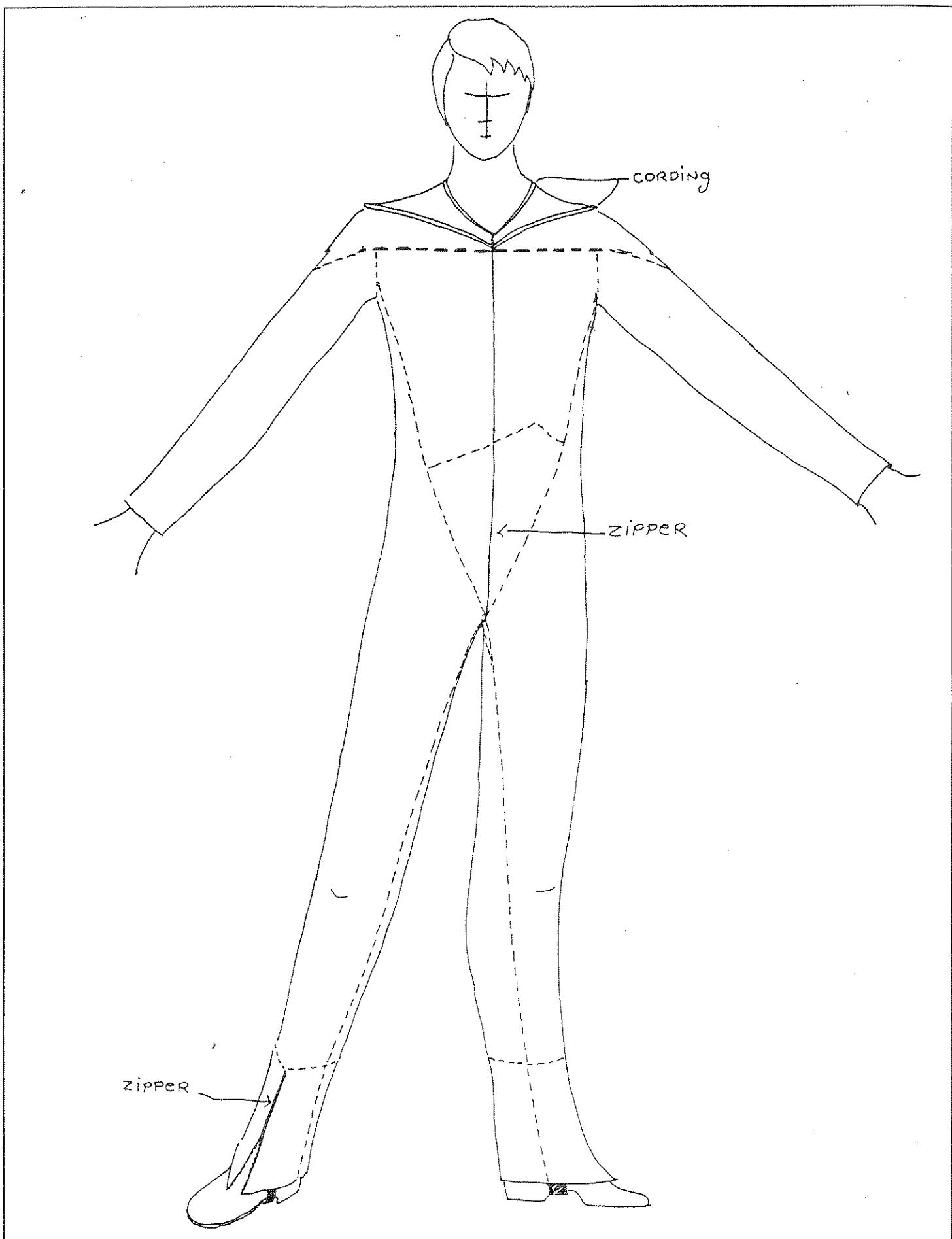
### DETAILING

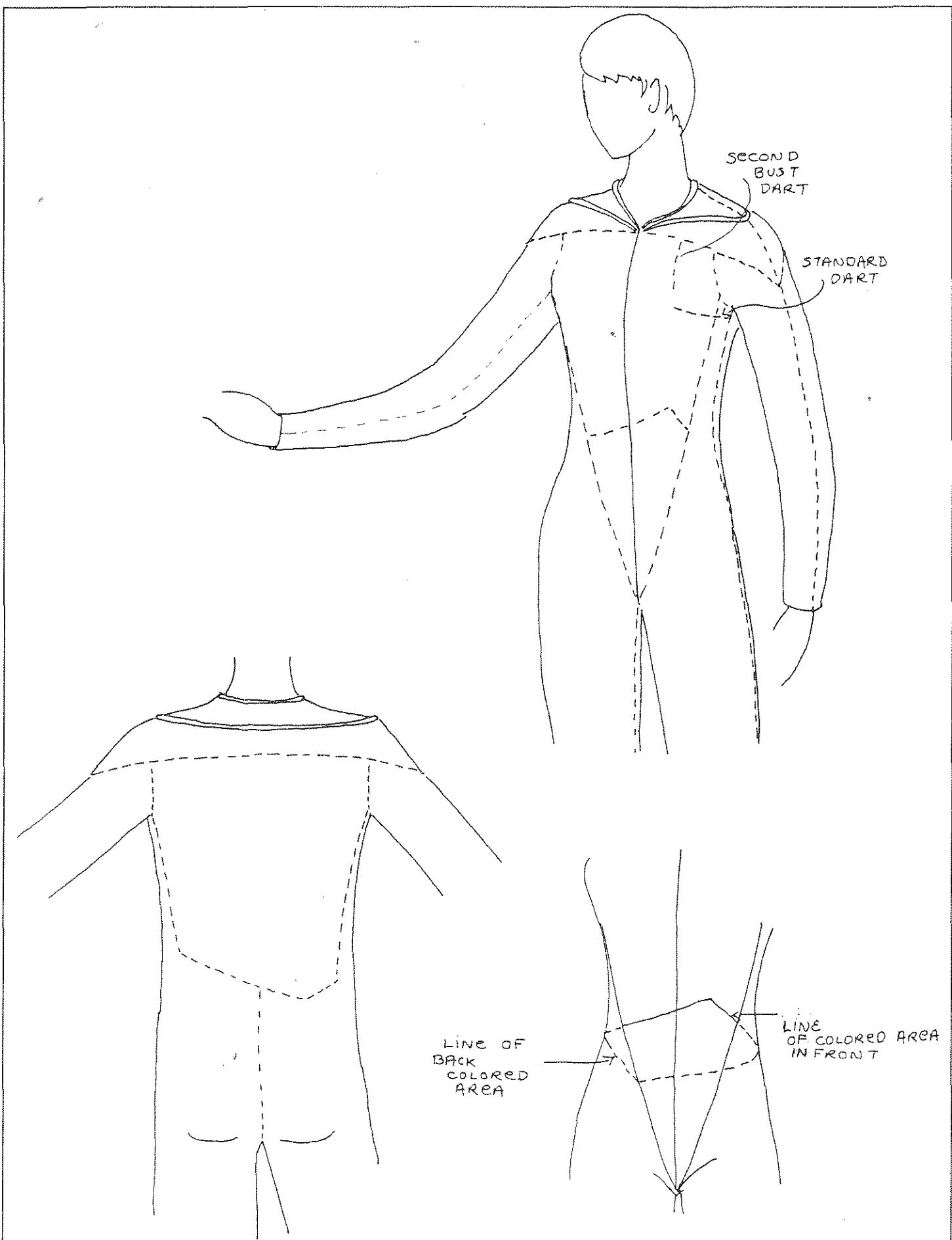
The drawings I've included with this article have the seams indicated along the dotted lines.

Something that does NOT show in the drawings is that the uniforms have a gusset in the crotch to provide extra ease. As far as I know, both the men's and the women's uniforms have the same gusset.

There is cording the same color as the uniform at the neck and diagonally from the point of the shoulder to the center front seam. This cording runs straight across the shoulders in the back (see drawing). Only the officers have this cording, which is the same color as the uniforms. [I think Fran may mean "piping" instead of cording if it is set into the seam rather than tacked on top--Ed.]

The men's and women's uniforms are basically the same except for the breast dart in the women's outfits (shown in drawing). If you are a woman with a





large bust and a small chest, you'll probably find that you'll have to put in a second bust dart (also shown in drawing).

A friend pointed out to me that the colored areas on the uniforms of the principals in the show are specially tailored to their bodies. For example, Geordi has a smaller area of color, with a slightly curved line across its bottom edge, on the front of his uniform than Ryker does. This is obviously because LeVar Burton is both smaller and shorter-waisted than Jonathan Frakes, and is something you'll want to consider when you're doing your own uniform.

In regards to the colored areas front and back, if you removed the black areas from under each arm, the colored areas would form one continuous line on the bottom (see drawing).

At this time, I have no information on the dress uniforms.

## BODY TYPE

This uniform looks best on tall, slender persons of both sexes. To be blunt, this uniform is designed specifically for men who have good bodies. You will notice that the women who wear it are, for the most part, small-chested with as little hips and backside as possible.

The Doctor, who has a more mature figure, normally wears a medical smock over her uniform, which hides a multitude of sins.

The Counselor wears a different uniform because, I was told, they had difficulty making her look good in the regular uniform. [She has three factors going against her: she is short in stature, VERY busty, and short-waisted--Ed.]

**THIS UNIFORM HAS NO MERCY FOR BODY FLAWS!!!**  
Someone who was on the set said that some of the performers are wearing spandex undersuits to control minor body bulges.

## RANK PINS

The rank pins appear to be small, gold, convex discs about 1/4" to 3/8" in diameter. In some of them, depending on the officer's rank, the center has been painted black. The unpainted gold discs are probably a brushed gold or have had their surfaces slightly dulled. Shiny metal objects tend to reflect the lights into the camera lens.

The communicator/insignias are available at conventions and by mail-order through several companies.

[Two of these companies are : Intergalactic Trading Co., P. O. Box 1516, Longwood, FL 32750, Price: \$11.95 and Star Trek Enterprises, P. O. Box 69470, Los Angeles, CA 90069, Price: Unknown. Ed.]

## CONSTRUCTION

Before constructing one of these uniforms, I STRONGLY advise making a "muslin" first of some cheap fabric with a stretch factor similar to the final material. (Many fabric stores have cheap doubleknit available for under \$1 per yard in truly awful colors.) Get a friend to help you with the fitting, marking, and tailoring.

I hope the preceding information will be of assistance for anyone trying to make up one of the new Star Trek uniforms.



# TRAINS

By Karen Turner

( cribbing from the knowledge of Victoria Ridenour & Dianne Dawe)

Many of our costumes are created with trains, but how often have you noticed that not all trains lie flat, or follow without folding over into a wad? This is especially true of most commercial patterns for formals and wedding dresses. Here are a few patterns and tips on how to cut a train that will behave.

For 60-inch fabric that is two-sided (approximately 5 - 6 yards for a 5 yard skirt), cut the front and side front on a folded piece of goods. The front panel is cut on the fold, side front is on the selvage. The back panel is cut on a open piece of material (see Fig. 1).

You will need this basic curve in the back (see Fig. 2). This curve "breaks" where the train first touches the floor. To determine the position of the break, hold one end of a tape measure at your center back waist and walk forward, letting the tape measure trail out behind you. The point on the tape where it "breaks" on the floor is the point on the back seam of the dress where the train should flare. On a 5'7" woman, the distance straight from waist to floor is about 42", while the distance from waist to the "break" point is about 49".

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The point of the flared portion must end in a 90 degree angle to flow properly.

The length of the train can be extended as far as desired as long as the 90-degree angle at the point is maintained. Standard measure around the hem is about 6 yards. Take up the excess at the waist by gathering in at the back. If you are working with a nap or printed fabric, you will need more fabric and need to try several different pattern arrangements.

FIGURE 1

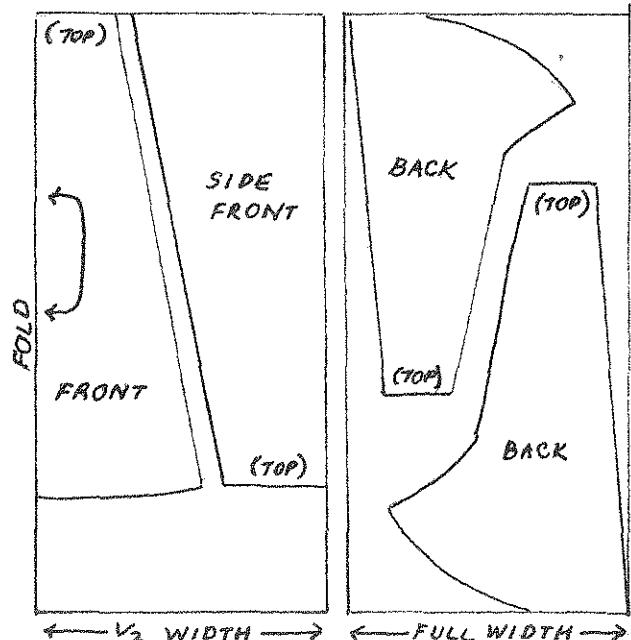
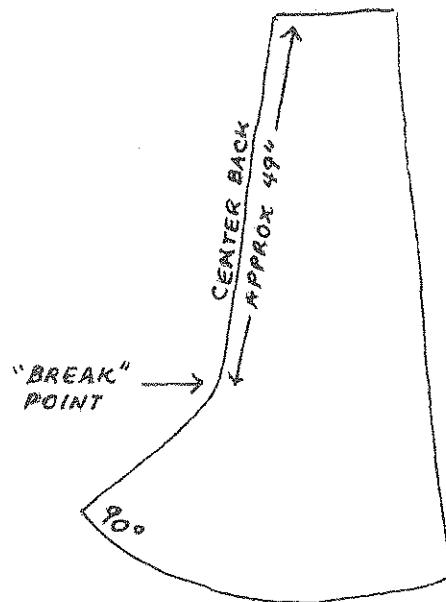


FIGURE 2



# COSTUME CON 6 UPDATE

## Costume Con 6

Dates: February 12-15, 1988

Rates: \$30 until January 31, 1988

\$35 at the door.

Address: 112 Orchard Ave.  
Mountain View, CA 94043

This is the annual bash for many Science Fiction/Fantasy and Historical costumers. It features 2 masquerades (SF/Fantasy and Historical), a fashion show of future fashion, exhibits, demonstrations, parties, dealer's room, and many panels and how-to's.

Here is a rough schedule for the convention:

### Friday:

Panels include: Historical makeup, Plastics, Electronics I, Construction and modification of Shoes, How to do Batik, Surface Treatment of Fabrics, Beading, Historical Costumes Made Easy, and Substituting Modern Materials in Historical Costumes.

Evening: Social and retrospective of Future Fashion Shows.

### Saturday:

Panels include: Tailoring & Draping I, Welcome Novice, Period Accessories, Glues, "Blibeting" workshop, Electronics II, Hand Finishing and Detailing Historical Costumes, Characterizations, Wigs, Embroidery and Lace Making, Fashion & Society, Odd Materials, The "Ethnic" look, Costuming for Big Beautiful Women, Mourning Dress, and How to work with Leather.

Evening: The Science Fiction & Fantasy Masquerade.

### Sunday:

Panels include: Tailoring and Draping II, Featherworking, Make-up, Costume Design, Historical Organizations, Working with Cardboard and Cel-luclyay, Making Headpieces, Historical Stage Presentations, Hand Finishing and Detailing SF Costumes, Historical Millinery.

## Evening: The Historical Masquerade

### Monday:

Panels include: Pattern Drafting, Making your own dress form (demo), Corsets, Doing Historical Research, How to achieve the "High-Tech" Look, Indians and Mountain Men, Presentations Workshop, Careers in Costuming, and the Annual International Costumer's Guild Meeting.

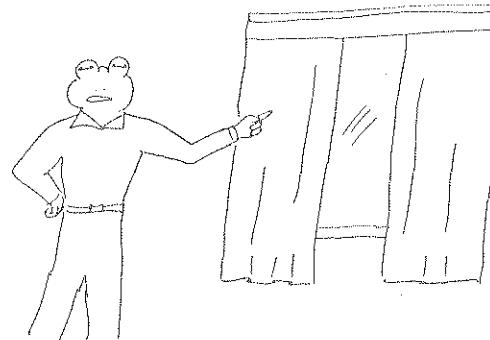
Many things may change between now and then, but this is how things stand currently.

Corporate sponsors for this year's Costume Con include Past Patterns, Elna, Madhatter Press, Ornamental Resources, and Sew News. Many of these companies are offering prizes! Elna is demoing some of their equipment. Ornamental Resources will have a workshop on making your own jewelery.

Don't forget, you will also receive the 120+ page Whole Costumer's Catalogue! Over 500 sources of costume goods listed!

New this year, they will have 24-hour costume videos running in the hotel rooms throughout the con. This will include classic movies, past masquerades, and tape-delay broadcast of the major events at the con.

This is the big one...DON'T MISS IT!



# COMING ATTRACTIONS

## A calendar of costume related events

### Hollywood and History: Costume Design in film.

This is an exhibit at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

It features actual costumes from Hollywood's historical films. It runs from December 20, 1987 through March 10, 1988. An accompanying book (by the Costume Curator Edward Maeder) has been published. (See "In Print" for more info.)

### Dress for all occasions: Women's costumes from the 1880's through 1890's.

An exhibit that runs through March 31st. Sponsored by the Connecticut Historical Society. Address: 1 Elizabeth, Hartford, Connecticut.

### NolaCon II

Nola-Con II is the World Science Fiction Convention for 1988. It is located in New Orleans.

Dates: September 1-5, 1988

Rates: \$60 until December 31, 1987

\$70 until July 14, 1988

?? at the door

Address: P. O. Box 8010  
New Orleans, LA 70182

This is the biggie for Science Fiction/Fantasy costumers. Probably the largest masquerade of the year. (50 - 100 enties, about 5,000 in the audience)

### Ride The Train

Imagine a whole car full of costumers riding the train all the way from New York to New Orleans for NolaCon (in their own private car round-trip!)

Carl Mami of the NY/NJ Guild (aka the "Sick Pups") has been researching just such a trip. The cost would be about \$200 per person round trip. It depends upon the availability of cars, choice of days to travel, and at least 50 people to make it feasable. Sick Pups and their guests will be allowed first crack at available seats. If necessary, another car may be aquired.

For information write to Carl Mami, 85 West McClellan Ave., Livingston, NJ 07039.

### Costume Con 7

Dates: May 26-29, 1989

Rates: \$25 until April 1, 1988

\$35 until May 15, 1989

\$40 at the door.

Address: P. O. Box 2323

Empire State Plaza Station  
Albany, NY 12223

This is the next Costume Con on the East Coast. It features all of the Costume Con standards, plus a few new twists. These include: A gorgeous hotel (The Desmond Americana Inn) whose interior is done as a colonial village. To honor the hotels decor, a special award will be given for the best American Colonial Costume (1750 - 1780). Also, all spectators of the masquerades are requested to come masked. A simple domino would suffice, but they're really hoping to see some originality. Prizes will be awarded. Watch these pages for future developments.

Get your memberships now while they are cheap!!

Is there a convention or exhibit that we should be listing?? If so, LET US KNOW! We can't know everything on our own. We rely on our membership for our info, so speak up!

# IN PRINT

## Notes from the world of costuming publications

### A Lady of Fashion

Edited by Natalie Rothstein

The publishers ad reads: "As you turn the pages of this entrancing album you will experience the joy of unearthing a rare treasure-trove. For here is a visual "diary" of a privileged English woman's life in the 18th century world of country houses, theatre, travel,... but mostly fashion. For some eighty years, Barbara Johnson pinned fabric swatches, pasted pictures, and scribbled notes in this delightful cornucopia as she recorded the clothes she collected and the places and events she witnessed. The riches of her marvelously discerning eye are revealed in 93 superb full-color facsimile pages, accompanied by the fascinating story of this remarkable woman and her album."

Drama Books of San Francisco writes: "A beautiful facsimile of the accounts, swatches, and engravings collected by Barbara Johnson (1738-1825) in order to dress stylishly. The numerous fabrics are reproduced to show texture and weave and textile historians will warm to the account information as well; costumers will particularly enjoy the essays by Madeleine Ginsburg and Anne Buck."

Publisher: Thames and Hudson, Inc.  
500 5th Ave.  
New York, NY 10110

208 pages  
123 illustrations, 93 in color.  
Hardbound  
Cost: \$75.00

(Thanks to Jacque Ward and Drama Books for the above information.)

### Hollywood and History

(Costume Design In Film)

Organized by Edward Maeder

Published by:  
Thames and Hudson, Inc.  
500 5th Ave.  
New York, NY 10110  
ISBN #: 0-500-01422-1  
Cover price: \$40.00 (hardback)  
\$24.00 (trade paperback)

The official description reads: "Cleopatra, Queen Elizabeth, Scarlet O'Hara -- Hollywood has dressed them all. This delightful salute to movie costumes...is filled with photographs and sketches of frilly, furry, and sometimes freaky examples of Hollywood's way with history." It has 284 illustrations (104 in color).

This book is not as spectacular as HOLLYWOOD: GLAMOUR! GLITTER! ROMANCE!, which chronicled the 1972 costume exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; however, it does have two sections that will be appreciated by costumers and film buffs. One is a two-page, comprehensive chart of 'modern' fashionable makeup and hairstyles from the 1920's to the 1960's, which will be invaluable to anyone trying to re-create the "look" of those eras. The other is a filmography which tells which motion pictures have accurate historical costumes and which are completely off-base.

Also of note: chapters on the three Cleopatras (Theda Bara, Claudette Colbert, and Elizabeth Taylor), and on Hollywood's influence on the fashion industry. There is also a complete list of the costumes and design sketches that will be on display at the upcoming LACMA exhibit.

Other than that, the book is filled with lots of photos of costumes and design sketches, and some very perceptiven discussion. My only regret is that the book (and the related costume exhibit) choose to highlight rather obscure film costumes rather than the spectacular ones we know and love. Neither Scarlett O'Hara, Cleopatra, nor Queen Elizabeth appear to be part of the exhibit, although they are touted in the blurb for the book! I hear that the L.A. County Museum of Art has one of the premier collections of movie costumes held by any institution, but these are NOT the pieces they are showing!

(Review by Karen Turner. Thanks to Jacqui Ward for the publisher info.)

See comments elsewhere on the related exhibit at LACMA.

## 20,000 Years of Fashion

By Francois Boucher

This is considered, by some, to be THE reference book for historical costumes. In fact, many classes use it as a textbook. It was out of print for a while and existing copies skyrocketed in value to \$150.00. But it is now back in print with an expanded version and on better paper!

459 pages  
1188 illustrations, 356 in color  
Hardbound  
Price: \$39.95



## Getting It On: The Clothing of Rock 'n' Roll

By Mahlen Jones

"You can love rock 'n' roll, you can hate rock 'n' roll. But you cannot escape rock 'n' roll."

This is probably the first comprehensive book available on the costumes worn by rock stars. It spans 4 decades (1950's to present-day) and has separate chapters on almost every different style, including the "bad boy" look of the Fifties, the psychedelic look of the Sixties, the glitter rock and disco look of the Seventies, the heavy metal look of the Eighties, and beyond.

Featured designers include Bob Mackie (Cher, Elton John, and Tina Turner), Larry LeGaspi (Kiss, LaBelle, Grace Jones), and Fleur Thiemeyer (Ozzy Osborne, Rod Stewart, Pat Benetar). The designers talk about the constraints of designing stage costumes for rock performers (apparently, many of the costumes must survive a LOT of abuse!).

One other interesting aspect of the book is that it discusses the costumes in terms of archetypes taken from Greek mythology. For example, heavy metal rockers personify the savage followers of the god Dionysus, while Tina Turner personifies the image of the Great Goddess.

It is fascinating reading, but even if you never make it to the text, this book is worth owning for the lavish illustrations alone. There is a little bit of everything, from vintage publicity stills from the Fifties to color design sketches and photos of the made-up garments from the Seventies and Eighties.

Publisher: Abbeville Press, Inc.  
488 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

208 pages  
Hardbound  
Price: \$35.00

# GUILD CHAPTERS

This magazine is sponsored by the International Costumer's Guild. Dues are \$12 a year and you receive 4 issues of this magazine, a local newsletter, meetings, and local discounts. There are chapters at the following locations:

**Greater Columbia  
Fantasy Costumer's Guild**  
P. O. Box 683  
Columbia, MD 21045

**Tidewater Costumer's Guild**  
-- this chapter has disbanded --

**Costumer's Guild West**  
c/o Janet Anderson  
9645 Via Torino  
Burbank, CA 91504

**Southwest Costumer's Guild**  
c/o Wykle  
835 West Linder  
Mesa, AZ 85202

**The Great White North  
Costumer's Guild**  
c/o Costumer's Workshop  
Box 784 Adelaide St. PO  
Toronto, Ontario CANADA M5C 2K1

**The NY/NJ Costumer's Guild**  
c/o Mami  
85 West McClellan Ave.  
Livingston, NJ 07039

**Deep South Costumer's Guild**  
c/o Cindy Riley  
Route 6, Box 1050  
Pell City, AL 35125

## Midwest Costumer's Guild

c/o Pettinger  
2709 Everett  
Lincoln, NE 68502

## Costuming for Cats by Animal X



# WESTERCON UPDATE

Fellow Costumers:

I have been asked by the committee of the 1988 Westercon in Phoenix to assume the responsibility of running the masquerade. I have accepted this position.

Copies of this short letter are being sent to guilds and costuming publications to announce my directorship and to ask for support, help, and input. Due to the late date at which I am coming into this situation, I would appreciate your letters of comment sent directly to me at the address below rather than to the convention post box; I will still receive material routed there, but time is against me and I would prefer to respond to your concerns as soon as possible. I can also be reached over Compu-Serve, where my user ID is 72327,3476. My busi-

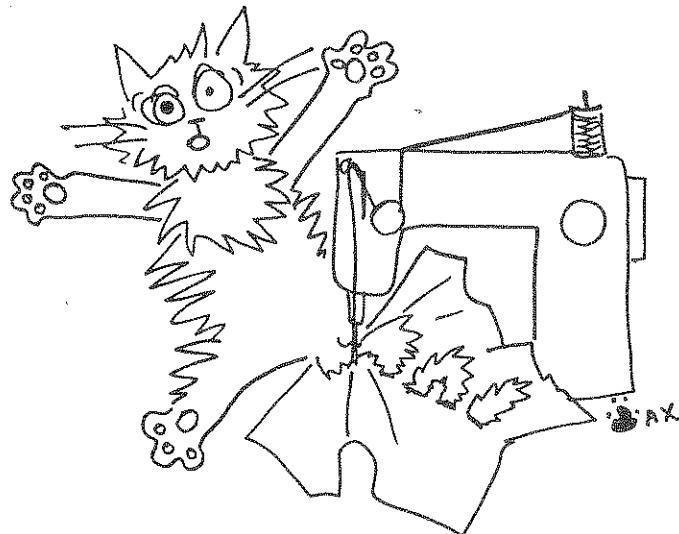
ness concerns keep me from home and I am difficult to reach by telephone. However, communication is vitally important and I will be available Sunday mornings if you feel your concerns are best handled by voice. If you need to call, please try to do so between the hours of 7:30 and 10:30 a.m. MST. My number is (602) 831-8499.

For the good of Westercon and the costuming community in general, I will do my best to provide an open, positive atmosphere for this undertaking.

Sincerely,

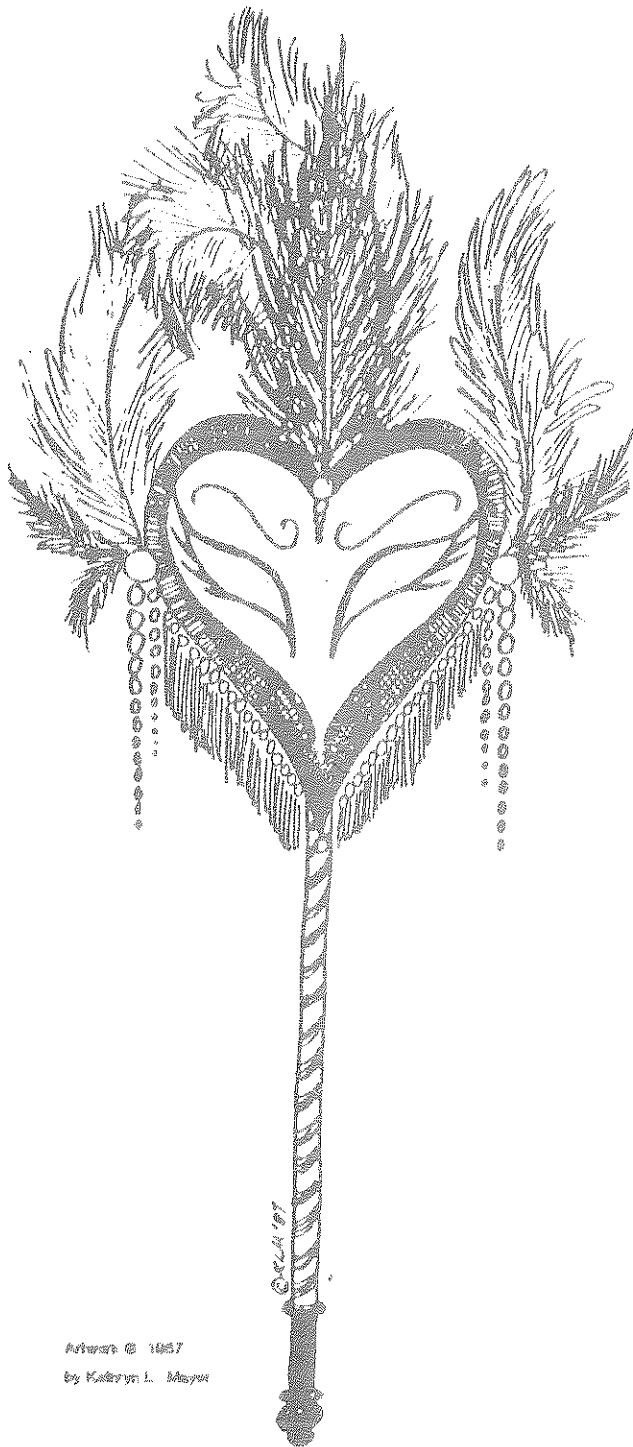
Debora Wykle  
835 W Lindner  
Mesa, AZ 85210

## Costuming for Cats by Animal X



CURIOSITY MANGLED THE CAT

# COSTUME CON SEVEN



MAY 26th thru MAY 29th, 1989  
(MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND)  
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- ★ Fantasy and SCIENCE FICTION
- ★ Historical Reproduction
- ★ Historical Interpretation
- ★ Special Hall Costume Award  
for Colonial American Costumes

#### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

\$25.00 until April 1, 1989

\$35.00 until May 15, 1989

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Supporting \$15.00

For information, send an S.A.S.E. to

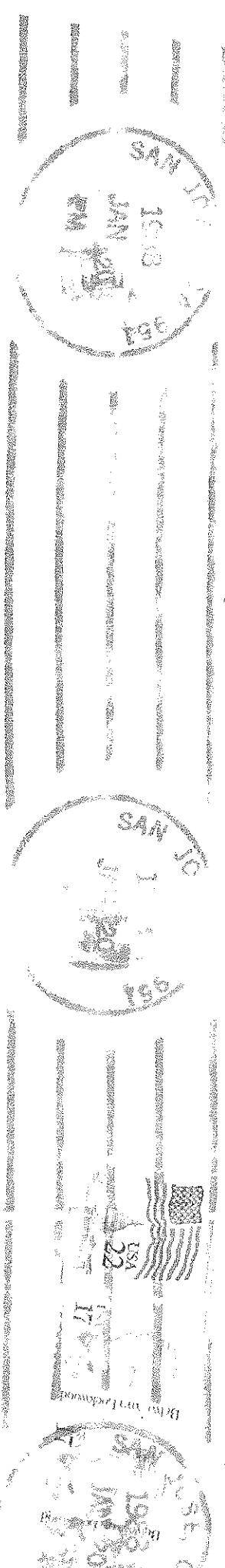
COSTUME CON SEVEN  
P.O. Box 2323  
Empire State Plaza Station  
Albany New York 12223

Artwork © 1987  
by Kathryn L. Meyer

1697 PEAKWOOD DR., SAN JOSE, CA 95132

Summer's  
Quarterly

86



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