

International Costumer

Volume XI, Issue 6

International Costumers' Guild

November-December 2012



Then and Now...

*How Costuming
Has Changed -*

An Interview With Karen Schnaubelt



From the Editor

by Carole Parker

Notice the title change? It seems like the universe wants to throw a few curve balls. Things like letting the orange and black team from San Francisco win the World Series a second time, and making me the official newsletter editor of the *International Costumer*.

In the previous two issues that I did as Acting Editor, I didn't worry about the long term vision of the *International Costumer*. Now, that changes.

The end of the year is frequently a time to take a look at what you have done during the past year, and where you want to head in the future. That includes newsletters. Some of the original functions of the newsletter have been taken over by the website. An excellent Conventions Listing, documents, and Chapters Listing are all on the website, so it would seem that the newsletter doesn't need to publish them anymore. Maybe publish the Chapters Listing once a year? What do you think?

Considering this, what would *you* like to see in the *International Costumer* in the future? This is the newsletter of the ICG, and it should reflect the interests of its members.

Which direction would you like to see it go? More interviews? Extended articles? Shorter articles? More chapter information? More photographs?

Most importantly, this can't be done without you, the members. If you're willing to write something, or send in costuming related photographs, I'm

willing to publish it. Please contact me at the ICG Newsletter e-mail for more information.

Some of you may have noticed that I'm not only on the Publications team, but also the Website team. One of my goals is trying to preserve costuming history in another way. While photographs are important as one tool, understanding our LAA winners is just as important. That's why I have a personal project of interviewing all the LAA winners, and getting the interviews onto the website after they have been published in the newsletter. That's why the featured article this month is an interview with Karen Schnaubelt as a means of not only understanding her, but also as a means of understanding an aspect of our costuming history.

The following photos are a bit of self indulgence. I have been dyeing scarves, and recently, I have started selling some of them. I thought people might like to see what I've been doing recently.

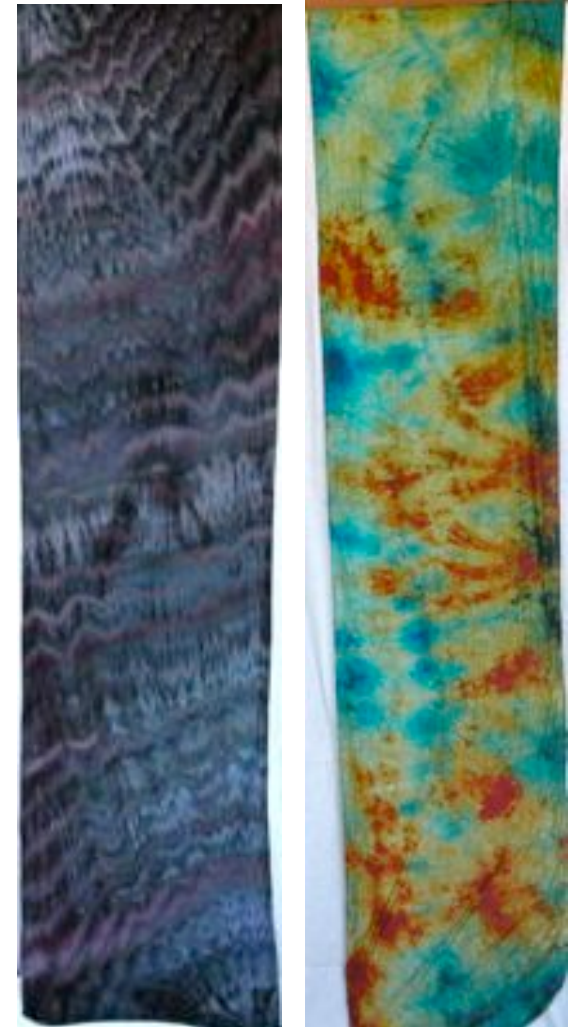


Mutant Chromosomes sold at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles High Fiber Exhibit that ran from October 20th to November 4th. Techniques used were Larch Shibori (circles) and ice dyeing.

Detail photo:



Black Crystal and Planetary Surface sold at Chicon7 over Labor Day weekend.



Want to see your creations in the *International Costumer*? Send me photos and information that you want to share with everyone else.

Note: *The High Fiber Gallery is now online, so you can see what people did and still purchase items of interest:*

http://www.sjqmiltmuseum.org/gallery_highfiber2012.html

President's Letter

by Phil Gust



Phil Gust as a member of the Unseelie Fairie Court. "What fools these mortals be!"

In this end-of-year issue, I'd like to reflect on some happenings within the ICG in 2012, and some important issues for the coming year.

2012 was a year of transitions and new beginnings. The membership of the ICG increased from 416 in January to 469 in October, a 12% increase over ten months. The rise of the Minnesota Society of Costumers over the last 18 months has been amazing. At 104 members, they are now the largest ICG chapter. I had the privilege of meeting several of their officers at Costume-Con 30, and their enthusiasm and energy was inspiring! We all need to hear more about what they, and all the other ICG chapters, are doing in 2013.

ICG's finances are also moving in the right direction. The 2011 end-of-year report posted on the ICG website showed a modest surplus, and I'm pleased that the 2013 budget that the Budget and Finance Committee submitted to the board on November 1st continues that trend. I'll be talking

with the board in 2013 about how to put some of that surplus to use to further the mission of the ICG and to help our chapters strengthen and grow.

The web team has also been busy this year. Improvements to the ICG website make it more maintainable and compatible with major web browsers. They also participated in transitioning the ICG Gallery back to our own servers after trying an outside hosting site for a year and finding they weren't flexible enough to meet our needs. Finally, a new area of the website has information about the ICG's Group Exemption Letter (GEL) that allows participating chapters to operate as tax-exempt organizations.

The Publications Committee is also completing a transition. Newsletter Editor Patrick O'Connor retired from the position after publishing the May-June Costume-Con 30 issue. In the interim, committee member Carole Parker stepped in for the next two issues while we searched for a permanent editor. Carole recently offered to become the permanent editor and has given the newsletter a new look and a new name: *International Costumer*. A Board vote to confirm her appointment is scheduled to end on November 20th.

I recently completed appointing members to the Budget and Finance, Technology and Web, and Publications standing committees for this year. I'm now in the process of forming the fourth one, Public Relations. If you have an interest in promoting the ICG and its chapters to the public and the greater costuming community as a vibrant costuming organization, I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me at icg-president@costume.org.

The final transition during 2012 was the election of officers at the annual ICG meeting at Costume-Con 30. Ann Catelli completed her term as ICG President, and I ran for the position after serving as Vice President. (Marty Gear quipped, "didn't run fast enough, eh?") Aurora Celeste moved from Recording Secretary to Vice President, and Kathe Gust stepped in for the unfilled Recording Secretary position. Jeanine Swick and Jan Price were reelected as Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary, respectively. Thanks go to Anne and to the current ICG officers for their service.

In the last issue, I talked in detail about ways the ICG can provide value to its members and chapters. Since then, I've been having phone calls with chapter presidents and board reps. I plan to continue contacting each chapter in the coming months to learn more about issues you are facing, things you are trying out, and ways the ICG can help. I look forward to talking with you!

In my next letter, I'll talk about the importance of the ICG actively reaching out and finding ways to cooperate with other costuming organizations, not only in the U.S. and Canada, but also in other parts of the world. All of these organizations serve the wider costuming community. If your chapter is already doing things with other costuming related organizations in your area, please drop me a note or post a message to the ICG-D Yahoo Group to let everyone know what you're doing and how it works.



LAA Interview:
Karen Schnaubelt
by Carole Parker

Her costuming experience spans nearly four decades. She started out in *Star Trek* fandom, got involved with science fiction masquerades, and started Costume-Con. Come take a

look at where costuming has been and where it might be going with one of the leading lights of costuming.

When did you realize you were a costumer?

I made some halfhearted attempts when I was 10-13, but my sewing skills were not up to what I wanted to create. I think I first realized it when I was 18 attending my first *Star Trek* convention, and realized I wanted to make costumes to wear the entire weekend regardless of what anyone else was doing.

Where do you find your costuming inspiration?

Everywhere. Art, music, books, media, graphics on the side of a car...almost anything can set my imagination spinning.

What appeals to you about costuming?

It's a chance to be someone or something completely different and out of the ordinary.

What was your reaction when you received your LAA?

I was very happy, as I was sort of envious of the recipients who had received it in the years before me.

I was also happy Marjii Ellers was in the room to see me receive it, as she had mentored me when I was a newbie. My own parents were already gone at that point, so it was very meaningful to me that the person who was my costuming parent got to witness my getting the award.

To receive an LAA, service to the costuming community is one of the criteria. What would you suggest to others on how they could serve the costuming community?

Run events. Teach. Invent new techniques. Invent new competitions. Help other people find their way and enjoy the hobby.

Who were some of the costumers who encouraged you along the way?

Bjo Trimble and Marjii Ellers. If your readers don't know these names, they should. Both were luminaries of early science fiction costuming.

Was any one particular costumer an inspiration or mentor to you?

When I was first starting out in the hobby, I greatly admired the work of Fran Evans, Sally Fink, and Kathy Sanders. I admired their design ability and aesthetic, and wanted to be like them someday.

I was mentored by Marjii Ellers. I will forever be in her debt for insisting I make the headpieces bigger on my Egyptian Gods group in 1981. She had a great sense of what was the proper scale for a huge stage. I have never forgotten the lesson.

What do you see as the future of costuming?

I see much more costuming at conventions now, especially media and anime conventions.

I see four overall trends happening:

1. More people are buying (or commissioning) their costumes instead of making them.
2. The people who are making their own costumes are attempting some amazing and ambitious things.
3. More men in the hobby, which leads to:
4. More tech-type costumes - armor, giant robots, etc.

What do you think makes for a successful masquerade presentation?

It has to tell a story and create an audience reaction in a very short period of time. You have to know who that character is and know what they're about.

Do you have any particular advice that you would like to give to costumers reading this article?

Make costumes because you love them and want to wear them. Don't worry about awards and competitions, or don't make that your primary focus.

Enjoy the hobby. Try new things outside your comfort zone. Make mistakes. It's all part of the learning process.

One of my mentors in clowning had a saying: "When you're green, you grow. When you're ripe, you rot." So stay green.

Many new costumers are afraid to approach "big-name" costumers for help or advice. What would you tell them if you could?

Big name costumers are just people. They were new once, too. Most of them will be happy to talk to you, so don't be afraid of them.

Remember that costumers can be introverts. If a big-name costumer seems quiet and aloof, don't assume they are snobby. It's possible they're just shy.

Do you have photographs of your first level winners (novice, journeyman, master) that we could publish along with when and where you entered them?

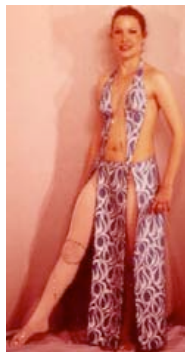
The Division System did not exist when I first started costuming.

Karen's first competition costume at Equicon in 1973, which she points out was very monochrome.



When I competed at the convention where the Division System was attempted for the first time, I chose to compete (and won Best-In-Show) in the Master Division. I could have competed in the Journeyman Division at that point, but I had been in the hobby for eight years and felt I was ready to compete in the open division.

Karen's first competition-winning costume, at Equicon 1974, which received a Most Beautiful award that was her transition from Novice to Journeyman.



Egyptian Gods 1981 Worldcon entry in Denver, which won Best in Show.



Karen Schnaubelt as Isis in the Egyptian Gods Best-In-Show Winner in 1981.

Your Novice and Master wins had a seven year separation. Were you winning other awards during that time, or did trying to compete at the next level pose a challenge for you?

No, I was winning very consistently all along, except for 1978, when nothing I did seemed to win anything. The following year, I made the

transition from skimpy costumes to the sort of stuff I do now.



One of Karen's favorite costumes that did not win an award in 1988, the Stars My Destination. "With the headpiece, I was 9 feet tall, but I was still swallowed by the gigantic stage and overrun by more imaginative entries. I'm very proud of the rocketship headpiece with its contrail of ostrich feathers, which required a back brace and a lot of engineering to carry/distribute the weight."

It seems that years ago, nude or seminude masquerade entries were popular. Then something happened, and the rule "No costume is no costume" came into being. Do you know what caused that to happen? Skimpy costumes were popular in the 1960s and 1970s. It was more a sign of the times than anything else; people were bathing nude in mud puddles at Woodstock, "streaking" on college campuses, and having naked hot tub and pool parties at science fiction conventions.

At the point where I started competing at science fiction conventions, scantily clad females and ugly aliens were usually the two things that consistently won prizes. It was also the era of celebrity judges, who often voted on visuals versus scope of work attempted.

"No costume is no costume" wasn't a hard and fast rule; I believe it was an observation by several influential people in the hobby.

Does it seem like masquerades got stodgier since then?

No, not at all.

Do you feel that masquerades are better because of this rule?

Again, I don't think it is a hard rule, but I think masquerades are better because entrants are being rewarded for their creative efforts and technical skills versus showing skin.

Your dad was involved with Star Trek in some fashion. What did he do?

My dad was the artist/engineer who drew the *Booklet of Ship's Plans* (aka *Enterprise Blueprints*) and the *Star Fleet Technical Manual*, published by Ballantine Books in 1974 and 1975.



Was he an official or unofficial part of Star Trek?

Very gray area. His works were drawn in the interim period between the original *Star Trek* television series and the first *Star Trek* movie. They were seen and endorsed by Gene Roddenberry (who later recanted). My dad's influence is seen in subsequent *Star Trek* movies and TV series, and in the other

blueprint and technical manual type popular works that followed.

He also designed the props for Roddenberry's *Planet Earth*.

How did your dad's involvement in Star Trek influence your costuming?

More like my costuming influenced my dad's involvement in *Star Trek*. The enlarge-by-squares uniform patterns in the *Tech Manual* are mine. He drew many of the blueprints, so my friends would have schematics to build more consistent communicators, tricorders, phasers, etc.

What was the inspiration for starting Costume-Con?

At the Denver Worldcon in 1981, there was a lot of interest in costuming. Panels ran over time and spilled into the halls afterward. It was clear we needed our own convention, and not just a program track at a general S/F convention.



Karen with husband Kelly Turner as Lady and Lord Valentine in 1981.

Besides you and your then husband, Kelly Turner, who else was involved in getting Costume-Con started?

Adrienne Martine-Barnes (another luminary from early S/F costuming) approached me at the Denver Worldcon and said if I could put a group of ten Egyptian Gods on stage, then I had the basis for a convention committee.

A very hardworking crew of San Diego fans ran the first Costume-Con, and the best and the brightest costumers from around the country at that time graciously gave of their time and talents to teach panels (Julian May, Sally Fink, Adrian Butterfield and Victoria Ridenour, Bjo and John Trimble, etc.).

What do you think contributed to the early success of Costume-Con?

There was a lot of interest in costuming at that point, and people liked the idea of going to an event where they could change clothes all day and have their work appreciated.

At that time, Costume-Con's historical masquerade was one of the only events where the historical costuming community could compete with their peers and be recognized.

How much has costuming changed since you started Costume-Con?

I think people are still doing the same basic types of costume; more people are actively costuming, and, as previously mentioned, more people who are consumers versus creators.

What have you liked and disliked about the changes you've seen in costuming?

There isn't a lot to dislike. I'm constantly looking at photos from current conventions and events, and I continue to be amazed (and humbled) by people's skills and creativity.

We just celebrated Costume-Con 30 in Tempe this year. How did that make you feel?

Very proud, that something I created as a one-shot has survived for three decades. It's quite a legacy.

Anything more you'd like us to know about Costume-Con, your dad, or you that we haven't covered already?

My parents were instrumental in my early costuming. They made sure I got the tools and materials I needed to do the work, and they were always encouraging, even though they didn't always understand what I was doing. I was really blessed to have them, and I would strongly encourage other parents to be equally encouraging of their own children's creativity.

I've been costuming for nearly four decades, and I still have new ideas on the drawing board and things I want to try. I enjoy the creative process just as much as having the finished garment--sewing or beading or doing other handwork is like Zen meditation for me.

I'm still enjoying the hobby, I love to see other people's work, and I can't wait to see what's next!

Cover Photo Credit

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Chapter Focus



New Jersey-New York Costumers Guild by Byron Connell

Nickname: Sick Pups of Greater Monmouth County

<http://www.sickpupsnot.org>

After Costume-Con 3, a group of people had such

a great time, that they decided that they wanted to run Costume-Con 5. So, they started meeting in a member's costume shop each week. Local business people saw the members in different costumes and make-ups every week and gave them the name.

One of the members loved Bloom County, and asked cartoonist Doug Clayton to draw a canine version of Bill the Cat.

We take costuming seriously, but we don't take ourselves seriously. Our mascot, Spaz, typifies us.

The Spazzy is awarded for the sickest humor in a masquerade by an entrant other than a Pup by consensus of the Pups present.

Our style is weird, and we're known for our sick humor. For example, we observed that one of the patterns for the CC 15 Single Pattern contest looked like a bathrobe, so we put 18 bathrobes on stage in the entry, *Morning Wear*. When the group turned their backs to the audience they displayed the painting, *Spaz Crossing the Delaware*.

The first ICG President was a Sick Pup, and other Pups have held offices as well. You'll also find Sick Pups running masquerades at all levels and one Pup member, Byron Connell, has run numerous Green Rooms with Tina Connell running the repair table.

Costume-Con 31

May 17-20, 2012

Red Lion Denver SE

Denver, CO

<http://www.cc31denver.com>

We are very excited to announce Dragon Dronet of Renegade Effects Group as a Featured Artist at Costume-Con 31. Renegade Effects Group provides Costumes, Props, Physical Effects and much more for movies, television, music videos, advertising and more. Of recent note, Dragon portrayed Darth Malgus in the *Star Wars: The Old Republic Flash Mob* in Times Square in December 2011. Renegade Effects Group provided all of the costumes and choreography for the event.

Costume-Con 32

April 25-28, 2014

Toronto, Ontario Canada

<http://www.costumecon32.com/>

Not only will Costume-Con 32 have four days of knock-your-socks-off fun events and competitions, but you have a chance to visit this world class Canadian City with attractions such as the Textile Museum, The Bata Shoe Museum, The Hockey Hall of Fame, our famous Little India Sari and Textiles District, and so much more! Visit nearby Stratford or Niagara Falls!

We are still looking for an experienced Dealers Liaison. Oodles of dealers are chomping at the bit to exhibit at CC32 so we need you soon! Interested?

Contact

Dawn McKechnie:

[Kaijugal\(at\)hotmail.com](mailto:Kaijugal(at)hotmail.com)

Chapter Newsletters

Does your chapter publish a newsletter? Is there a costuming e-zine that would be of interest to ICG members? Send your recommendations to:

icg-newsletter@costume.org

If your ICG chapter wants to start a newsletter, the Publications Committee can help you get started. To learn more:

icg-pubscommittee@costume.org

ICG By E-Mail or Internet

WebSite: <http://www.costume.org/>

Yahoo! Groups:

General Discussion

ICG-D@yahoogroups.com

Board of Directors and Officers

ICG-BOD@yahoogroups.com

Technical and Web Discussion

ICG-TW@yahoogroups.com

Publications Discussion

ICG-Pub@yahoogroups.com

ICG-D is open to everyone, including nonmembers. Everyone can read message archives of the other groups, but only invited members can submit messages.

ICG Membership Benefits

Your ICG membership benefits include voting rights and a subscription to *International Costumer*. Chapters that fail to report their members and submit their dues run the risk of being deactivated. Members of deactivated chapters who wish to participate in activities as ICG members must join an active chapter of the ICG. Members of Chapters that have 'expired,' but are in good standing, are temporarily placed in the 'T-chapter,' a sort of limbo for members 'between chapters.'

ICG Editorial Board

Betsy Delaney, Philip Gust, Patrick O'Connor, Carole Parker, Jeanine Swick, and Randall Whitlock.

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Newsletter Delivery

The ICG Board of Directors authorized an online as well as a print edition of the newsletter. Your newsletter delivery preference is part of your ICG membership record. If you want to change or verify your delivery preference, contact your local chapter. The newsletter staff relies on these records to determine who receives a newsletter and by what means of delivery.

Members who have an e-mail address on record are notified when a new edition is available. Those who receive the print edition are also welcome to experience the online edition by going to:

<http://www.costume.org/currentnewsletter>

When prompted, enter the user name "newsletter" and the password "reflections."

Back issues of the ICG newsletter are available online for the entire costuming community to enjoy. Contact the newsletter e-mail address to report problems or comment on the newsletter. If your postal or e-mail address changes, notify your local chapter promptly, or send your updated information to icg-membership-corrections@costume.org. Returned copies of the print edition will not be re-mailed.

Online Submissions

Submit copy as rtf, doc, .docx or .txt files to the newsletter e-mail address. All current graphics formats are acceptable.

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