

International Costumer

Volume XII, Issue 2

International Costumers' Guild

March-April 2013



Growth and Change

The first costume of our LAA
Interviewee at age eight.

See what this costumer is doing now!

From the ICG

This year's International Costumers' Guild (ICG) annual members' meeting takes place in May at Costume-Con 31 in Denver, Colorado. If you will not be attending the meeting and you want to vote, please print, fill out, and sign this proxy form. Then give it to a member who is attending. You *must* fill in the form completely and sign it. *Incomplete or unsigned forms will not be accepted.*

ICG 2013 Annual Meeting Proxy Assignment Form

On this _____ day of _____, 2013, I, _____ assign my vote to _____, and authorize the above-named ICG member, belonging to the _____ Chapter, to represent me in all business before the 2013 Annual Meeting of the International Costumers' Guild (ICG).

Assignee Name*: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State / Province: _____ Zip / Postal Code: _____

Assigner Name*: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State / Province: _____ Zip / Postal Code: _____

Signature: _____

Who you are authorizing to vote on your behalf.* *Your name.*

President's Letter

by Phil Gust

If variety is what you're after, February is certainly providing it this year. At the same time that winter snow storms are burying the northern U.S., rain is drenching parts of the south, while here in Northern California, we just had a gorgeous week of sun with temperatures in the high 60s F (low 20s C). Regional conventions are also happening around the country providing costumers with a variety of opportunities to try out new costumes that they'll show off at larger ones like Costume Con, WorldCon, and Comic-Con in the coming months. If you haven't quite gotten around to that costuming project you keep meaning to start, there's still time -- if you're quick!

Speaking of Costume-Con, as I write this in mid-February, CC-31 is exactly three months away. There's still time to buy tickets, and make hotel and travel reservations. In addition to the historical, and sci-fi/fantasy masquerades, there's also the Future Fashion, Single Pattern and doll competitions, the dealer room, and many great panels and workshops on all aspects of costuming. I hope to see many of you there. Please take a minute to introduce yourself and let me know which ICG chapter you belong to. I'd love to hear about what your chapter is doing!

Costume-Con is also the time when the ICG holds its annual Board and General Membership meetings. The ICG Board meets through the ICG-BOD Yahoo group throughout the year, but this is our chance to get together in person to talk about

issues that are important to the ICG. The general meeting is also members' chance to meet your board and to elect officers who will serve you during the coming year. I'll be announcing the slate of officers in the next month. If you are at CC-31, I encourage you to attend the General Membership meeting. If you can't make it, please fill out the proxy in this and the next issue, and hand it to someone who will be attending. Your vote really does matter!

In the previous several issues, I've been discussing topics that I think are important for the ICG and its members. This month, I'd like to discuss the third one: participation. Most of us have barely enough time and money for our favorite pastime. The last thing we need is to take on something else. Being an ICG officer, board member, or committee member is a commitment few people can make. Even helping to run a local chapter takes more time than many people have.

What you can do is offer to help out in your chapter with small things. Can you offer to bring snacks to one or two chapter meetings? How about blogging, tweeting, or posting about an event your chapter is putting on or participating in? (*Editor Note: Or maybe send a review to the editor!*) Maybe you can help organize a fabric and pattern exchange for current and new chapter members. How about showing off a technique you've learned at an upcoming meeting?

Participation is about a lot of little things everyone can do that make a big difference to your chapter, to the ICG, and to those who help keep them running for you. You

joined a chapter, presumably, because you enjoy costuming and getting together with other costumers in person and online. The habit of participation is the key to ensuring that your chapter grows and prospers. It really is up to you.



Phil Gust as King Rudolf of Ruritania;
Costume by Kathe Gust.

LAA Interview: Kevin Roche

by Carole Parker

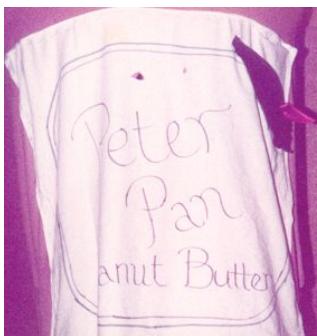
Spring time is frequently thought of as a time of growth and change. Come see how one costumer has grown through costuming, and how he helped the ICG to grow as well.

When did you realize you were a costumer?

I've been making and wearing costumes since I was eight years old (*see cover*). My parents always encouraged making our own costumes, however simple, over store-bought costumes. I really started to get more serious about it in high school.

Where do you find your costuming inspiration?

Everywhere! Books, films, art, sometimes just a piece of fabric. I'll also admit to an overgrown sense of mischief: some of those high school costumes deliberately perverted the theme of a "spirit day" -- a costume that was a giant top hat for Mad Hatter day, or a giant Smiley button (complete with bent coat-hanger safety pin back) for Crazy Button and Tie day. I've built a costume inspired by a brand of peanut butter, and the St. George Spirits Special Forces were inspired by a t-shirt at a Veteran's Day weekend open house at our favorite distiller.



Kevin's response to the "no peanut butter" rule that many masquerades now have.

What appeals to you about costuming?

Several things. One is the ability to make a bit of fantasy or art come to life in three dimensions, and by so doing, to draw the audience/onlookers/passersby into that artistic vision with you. Another is the opportunity to explore and indulge in a style that is not appropriate in my everyday work life. Sometimes, I just feel like dressing up.



A hero to some, the Icarian Pilot is probably not appropriate to wear at work.

What was your reaction when you received your LAA?

I was very pleased. I can't say that I was completely surprised, as folks had told me they'd started suggesting me as a possible recipient a couple years earlier, but I had no idea that I would receive it that year. I suddenly felt like

Sally Fields in her "*You really like me!*" Oscar speech.

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?

Share what you've learned, but don't be a diva. Pitch in and help with events, especially new events, leading by example rather than by lecturing, so groups new to costuming (and especially costume competition production) can see the value of the lessons we've learned over the last 30 years. Nothing works like success, so

helping someone do something successfully goes light years further than telling them the "right way" to do it.

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

Adrian Butterfield and Victoria Ridenour, Karen (nee: Schnaubelt) and Kelly Turner, Rusty and Diane Dawe, Janet Wilson-Anderson, Bjo Trimble, Julian May, Kathy and Drew Sanders, Jennifer Tifft, Sally Fink, and Adrienne Martine-Barnes, just to name a few.

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

Adrienne Martine-Barnes sat me down after my entry crashed and burned at the Phoenix Westercon in 1982, to tell me she really liked my costume, but if I would take some constructive criticism on the entry. "Auntie" Adrienne gave me some very good guidance not only on costuming but on life as well. As for inspiration, see my answer to who encouraged me. This was all happening for me when "costuming became sentient," as the tradition has it.

Spectral Sorcerer - an award winner in 1984. Kevin says he still wears the cloak and shows it at cloak and cape panels.



What do you see as the future of costuming?

With the growing "maker" culture, I think we're going to see more people having fun making/assembling things to wear; I think the steampunk costume trend is a reflection of that. I'd like to see the balkanization of fan costuming (The multiple costume tracks at Dragon*Con that ignore each other, for instance.) decrease, but that depends on efforts of folks like us whose costuming interests cross over beyond a single idea. I also expect we're going to see more and more really interesting applications of high technology manifest in costuming, as the tools and materials to use those technologies become more generally available to the home and hobby market. I expect that sound, animatronics and illumination will continue to become more prevalent, especially in science fiction costuming. I also think that many of the most effective/beautiful costumes will be the ones that don't lose touch with the human form within them.



Kevin's first Worldcon entry in 1984 at the Journeyman level which won no awards. Kevin and Jennifer Tiffet were the group masterminds.

What do you think makes for a successful masquerade presentation?

I've boiled my approach to presentation down to a very simple idea: sell your story to the audience. By "sell" I mean have the story or central idea of your costume in mind when you take it on stage, and let that inform the way you move it across the stage. Show off the costume, and let that story show *through* while you are doing it, to evoke a response from the audience -- whether it's snickers, guffaws, astonishment, sighs, or groans. I find that basic goal informs my presentation designs far more reliably than complicated choreography or narration. (I'll also admit it sounds rather pretentious. ;-))



Kevin's second Worldcon entry in 1987, Earth Magic, at the Master level which won Best Original.

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

Have fun! Make your costumes and show them off because you want to make them, not because you want to win a prize. Go places in costume where your presence makes the world a brighter place (that's how our SGSSF uniforms were born). When you're in costume, remember to let other people have a chance to star as well. Don't be a diva, don't be afraid to try new things, and don't be afraid to fail. (Wait. This is starting to sound like a commencement speech.)

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

Don't be afraid but be polite. By that I mean, pick an appropriate time to ask -- *not* backstage during a masquerade they are entering when stress levels are high, or when they are deep in conversation with someone else. Catch them after a panel they are in, or when they are wandering around the event. If they are too busy to talk, don't take offense, presume that they actually *are* too busy. Ask if there's a time you could chat for a few minutes. Basic courtesy goes a long way. Oh, and because I have this problem -- don't be upset if they don't remember your name! I have a terrible time attaching names to faces (Even at work, it can take me six months to get a new coworker's name right.), especially in crowded places. One simple practical suggestion for new costumers: buy a portable steamer! I've seen lots of costumes made (for budget reasons) out of

inexpensive fabric that crushed down in transit. A few minutes with a steamer will let all the good aspects of your work shine again, so we can see them.

Do you have a photograph of a favorite costume that may or may not be an award winner that you're especially proud of that you would like to share with our readers?

At this point, it would be *Liberacicus*. My other favorite would be my entry in the Historical Masquerade at CC28, *White Star Line Able Seaman*.

Liberacicus. Yes, that's a live microphone, and yes, Kevin can sing.

If I recall correctly, you mentioned that you were at the meeting that happened in someone's attic that created the ICG.

I don't claim to have every detail correct in my memory, but here is the tale as I remember it.

Whose home was it?

Marty and Bobby Gear's.



What was the circumstance of the meeting?

A party at Marty and Bobby Gear's home after Costume-Con 3 in Columbia, Maryland. A bunch of us ended up in Marty's attic office.

Who else do you recall being at that meeting?

Me, Janet Wilson (Anderson), Karen (nee: Schnaubelt) and Kelly Turner, Kathy and Drew Sanders, and Jennifer Tifft. Others, including Marty, probably wandered in

Why did this group of people feel that a costumers' guild was necessary?

Karen had invented a paper *Fantasy Costumers Guild* as the sponsoring organization of the first Costume-Cons. Marty and the CC3 committee had formed the *Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers Guild* (GCFCG) as a real group to organize the convention, and it had gelled into a real club. Janet had recently moved to California and missed the unique social/costuming community that GCFCG had become, and said we should start something like that in the Bay Area/California, that could both be a social community and a costuming/masquerade running resource for California conventions.

What did this group hope to accomplish by forming a guild?

There was much discussion of past failed fan/costuming groups (Karen and Kelly had experienced ugly fan feuds in San Diego, as had the Sanders in the LA Area), and of whether we would be seen as trying to secretly take over costume fandom in California. I made a flip comment that we weren't attempting to be "some secret costume Mafia" and that

quickly turned into our initial (ironic) name for the new group, the California Costumers Mafia. We discussed what an appropriate mascot would be and I whipped out the original sketch for 'Da Ghodfuzzy (*now used by the Costumers Guild West*).

What were the original hopes for this guild?

Our goals were to create both a social network and a fannish costuming resource group, and Kelly Turner, I think, was tasked with being our Official Gadfly to let us know if we started getting swelled heads or other delusions of control/power.

How were the original officers decided upon?

When we got back to California, we did some things informally to get things rolling. Janet quickly realized that ironic or not, we couldn't file any organizational paperwork or open a bank account with "Mafia" in our name. At Westercon there was a Very Long Meeting where we finally decided to become Costumers Guild West, and set up with the basic corporate officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary). Janet was the founding President, and I the founding VP.

Anything more that we should know about the original organization or people involved forming the ICG?

Somewhere along the way we all realized that with two guilds on opposite sides of the continent, there was no reason other people couldn't use this model to form their own groups in their localities, and the resulting network could be the chapters of an International Costumers Guild. The rest is history.

What gets you excited about costuming today?

I still get excited when a project seizes my imagination (I'm currently working on both a Single Pattern entry to send to CC31 and an entry for the LoneStarCon 3 masquerade). I'm also excited that there are so many materials now accessible to hobbyist costumers for creating costume effects than ever before, including print-to-order fabric and lots of fun electronic/illumination effects. I love not necessarily having to solder every special effect into my costumes from scratch.

It's also thrilling that so many people have discovered the fun of dressing up again, with the groundswell especially in anime and Doctor Who cosplay, and in the joy of creating your own things, as seen in the Maker, Burning Man, and Steampunk communities.

When you see a new (to you) costumer doing exciting stuff, what's your initial reaction?

It's pretty simple:

Yay! (Then I usually try to meet them and invite 'em to conventions and parties.)

Sometimes, other more colorful idioms may be substituted for "Yay," followed by "Why didn't I think of that?"

When a new costumer comes up to you and asks you a question, how do you feel about that?

Happy to share! Especially if I can help them get through a sticking point, or discover more fun and joy in their costuming.



White Star Line Able Seaman, award winner at Costume-Con 28 for Best Documentation.

Photo credit for Liberacicus and White Star Line Able Seaman by Andy Trembley, used with permission.

For more of what Kevin is doing lately, take a look at the next article.

Kevin shows his special brand of humor with Tiki Dalek - BIS winner at Gallifrey One in 2011, plus presentation and workmanship awards at CC29.



International Costume

Westercon 66

by Kevin Roche

Westercon is the longest running general science fiction convention in western North America, and this year's convention in Sacramento is the 66th West Coast Science Fantasy Conference. It's the first time back in Sacramento in 27 years!

In its heyday, Westercon was used by many of us Western Zone costumers as a dress rehearsal / trial run for our Worldcon masquerade entries. Sacramento is full of active fan groups including anime, Steampunk, and even a Ghostbusters re-enactor club, so as co-chairs, Andy and I are enthusiastically encouraging lots of costumes at our Westercon. We've made a point of awarding special memberships to talented costumers at conventions and events all over the west for the last year and a half, because we love the energy they brought to a space. Phil and Kathe Gust are our Masquerade Directors, and we know they'll do a phenomenal job.

The Hilton Arden West is a great space for our expected attendance of 800-1000 people. It features a gorgeous atrium / solarium space for socializing and big events, as well as an enormous back lawn begging to be filled with costumed fans sipping tea or playing croquet.

We hope you'll join us July 4-7, 2013 for what we hope will be an enthusiastic, fun reboot of the Westercon experience. Visit <http://www.westercon66.org> for more details and links to our registration and reservation pages. And don't forget the special ICG discount code of "Glitziana" when you register!

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

All members are welcome to join the ICG general discussion *Yahoo! Group* and participate in lively conversations on costuming. Please send comments and suggestions to the board and the standing committees using these e-mail addresses:

WebSite: <http://www.costume.org/>
Yahoo! Groups

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icg-d@yahoogroups.com

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Your ICG membership benefits include participation in a chapter(s) of your choice, voting rights, and a subscription to the *International Costumer*.

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

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

When prompted, enter the user name "costumer" and the password "proxyform."

Back issues of the ICG newsletter are available online for the entire costuming community to enjoy. Contact the newsletter editor 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.

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