

International Costumer

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Promoting Our Mission this Fall and Beyond

President's Message

By Marianne Pease

Greetings!

As the summer vacation months come to a close, I am looking forward to the changes September will bring. For one, my eldest boy is starting first grade, which will leave me considerably more time for sewing during the day, and the cooler weather will allow me to wear my polyester costumes without boiling myself in the process!

Lately I've also been dealing with changes in the NoVA chapter here in Virginia, and I'd like to share my ongoing experience with it. I hope that this will help inspire other chapters in similar situations.

NoVA was founded a few years ago as an offshoot of the GCF CG chapter in Maryland with the goal of creating a more accessible chapter for members living on the other side of DC. The DC area also has an incredibly strong sci-fi/fantasy/anime costuming and convention-going community, as well as participants in everything from the rich historical heritage ranging from colonial reenactments all the way up through the Civil War. We hoped to tap into this wealth of costumers.

Unfortunately, it didn't happen and over the past few years we've lost several of the



Arctic Mermaid with photography by Alicyn Drew with makeup and concept by SierraRoses SFX. This photo is part of an environmental awareness mermaid series with each mermaid affected by the destruction of her habitat.

people who originally participated in the chapter to the vagaries of life.

While a handful of us continue to meet monthly at a member's home to sew and talk, little else has happened, and in the past few months we started having discussions about why we continued to remain a separate from GCF CG and the potential to close the chapter. The *potential* to create a vibrant and active in the northern Virginia area remains, however, and I personally do not want to see the opportunity wasted without giving it one more try.

My first challenge is one that has defeated me in the past and one that several other

chapters face.

Where to meet? Meeting in a member's home is convenient but not conducive to inviting new members who are strangers to the meetings. The potential member may feel uncomfortable going to a stranger's home and the host may feel uncomfortable giving the city an open invitation to their home. We needed to find a public space to meet, which is its own can of worms. The difficulties we faced boiled down to two factors:

1. Price. Many locations- even libraries- charge anywhere from \$30-150/hour for use of their space.

2. Scheduling. Even if a space is free, scheduling it can be difficult and competitive. Ideal time slots and days fill up quickly and it's nearly impossible to establish a regular schedule of meetings- if a reservation can be made at all.

This is not an insurmountable problem, however, and I would encourage other chapters who face it not to give up. I spent a few weeks making a spreadsheet of potential locations, their pros, cons, and costs, and making phone calls. Contact local arts non-profits, your city or county, as well as privately owned businesses who have tables in them. Fabric stores are the obvious business choice but game stores often have tables, and white collar businesses have conference rooms! Local museums, county offices, and schools after hours are also options a city may offer as well as the ever popular libraries. In the end, NoVA found a relatively new fabric store that had moved into the area that is willing to host us but in spite of the difficulty, there were still other options I was willing to pursue if necessary.

The second challenge is one that *every* chapter faces, and one that we're still facing. Members. Most of the NoVA leadership does not want to stand for re-election next month. Our goal? to do a blitz of recruitment aimed at local costumers who are not ICG members but who are interested in stepping up to lead the NoVA

chapter with the goal of passing the torch to fresh blood with new ideas and the motivation to carry them out. We are uniquely fortunate in the DC metro area that the community of costumers is so large and varied, but reaching out to potential new members should always be on our minds and chapters should ideally be maintaining a constant presence online and in attending a variety of local events instead of getting stuck attending the same one or two things every year.

I don't know how well our recruitment blitz will work out to be honest but I hope that in the upcoming months I'll be able to share NoVA's continued growth and success with you! I hope that you and your chapters will be able to share similar stories and that I'll be able to continue to announce new chapters and SIGs forming. In the meantime, keep on costuming! We have achieved a very special community that is exceptionally supportive and open to all. I'm proud of the ICG and though we face challenges, I believe it's an organization worth fighting for.

Yours in costuming,
Marianne Pease
ICG President

A Brief History of Miss Lizzy's Traveling Historical Fashion Show and the Great Water Event of 2018

By Lisa Ashton



These photos represent the early stages of water incursion; the final water level was up to the 5th step (would have covered all the steps you see in the photo).

As many of you know, on May 16, 2018 I arrived home at 1 am to Harpers Ferry, WV after being in transit for over 48 hours from CC36 in San Diego (a widespread rainstorm mostly on the East Coast had disrupted flights nationwide and closed some airports temporarily) to find significant water in my basement, the home of Miss Lizzy's Parlor, the home of Victorian antiques including ephemera, authentic garments and accessories, items related to Victorian domestic life and treasures such as painted porcelain, hair wreaths and antique beadwork and photos, as well as the



computer set-up that I use for Miss Lizzy's and all the files. The water rose to 39" at its highest point. It was later determined to have been a sump pump failure (no reason known)

that was unfortunately during a time of heavy rain.

After calling my insurance company and receiving NO ACTUAL HELP from them, the fire department came out (I literally had no idea how to proceed), and determined that my electric should be shut off until the water was pumped out, because it was getting close to the electric box.

It was 2 days before someone could be located to pump out the majority of the water. Thanks to Eric Eugene Cole, (a friend of a friend, and someone who understands these life emergencies) who rented a "trash pump", waded in through the waist-deep water and began to pump it out through my front tiny basement window.



Eric setting up the pump next to the basement window water egress; the water being pumped out in the yard over a period of 6 hours.

That got rid of about 85% of

the water, and the power company came out and turned the electric back on, and a new sump pump was installed immediately and started working. The next step was to get a company in to set up giant dehumidifiers and removed the soaked carpet; and to begin removing everything to another location to start to dry, and to think about what could be washed, salvaged, and repaired. This was a company out of Martinsburg, and they left the giant dehumidifiers for over twice the length of time they contracted for!

Many of you came up and helped to bring things out and begin to move them to another location. Much else was in progress: Thanks to Leslie Johnston for setting up a GoFundMe campaign, putting up photos and updates and tracking progress;

<https://www.gofundme.com/miss-lizzys-disaster-recovery>

We are over half-way to our goal at this point. A grateful thank you to everyone who donated. She also set up an Amazon List for me, and many have donated by sending me practical items that are already in use, such as shelves, folding tables, and large and small plastic bins.

Also many thanks to the ICG for the funding from the Marty Gear Fund that

helped enable us to move forward. This was most generous, and it was processed quickly enough to make a big difference! Going forward with funding, once we start into moving back into the space, there will be more need for funds; and physical help. All of you have shown what true friends are, and you are too numerous to name here.

The water folded up the carpet; many things floated away to other areas, even things hung on walls and on high shelves were damaged by humidity. You can see by the photos below, that even a bodice that



was hung fairly high has a dark watermark from the crest of the wave.

After the majority of the water was removed, now the carpet needed to be removed and then all the items! I had not realized I would need a moving truck and service, because I had only thought of it in the terms of "adding one or two items at a time", not in the totality. Although we had removed some things, it barely made an impression, compared with the amount of things still in place.

I will write some further entries, but right now it makes me too depressed to continue writing. For those interested in the timeline and photo documentation of events, please friend me on my Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.ashton.3591>

And you can scroll back in time to see many more details. There is my list of damaged-beyond-recovery reference and other books, as well as photos of the ongoing work.

At this time, the basement is essentially empty, completely dry, and appliances and systems have been replaced and it is now waiting to begin Phase III--the rebuilding. It required demolition of all the drywall and insulation, and will likely require all the electric outlets switched out for new ones. I am hoping that will start very soon, and then I can look at getting help to start

moving things back in. I am also interested, once that happens, in finding someone who could commit to working on setting a real database for Miss Lizzy; I have no prior experience with this but I'd like to make out acquisitions searchable with loads of photos for actual Victorian research.



Costume Camp 2018

By Nora Mai

The St. Louis Costumers Guild held this educational event as a proto-Costume Camp. There were three different two hour sessions, covering different costume related subjects or techniques. The goal was to see if we could produce a single day event for costumers where they could learn with hands on classes. We had 16 attendees from our membership, which includes all the instructors and helpers.

Starting at 10 AM, the first session was an introduction to Basic Sewing Tools taught by myself. We covered almost everything for cutting, sewing and ironing. While exploring their various uses and covering practicality and cost, attendees got to handle everything from the very basic to more advanced tools. I got to show off a lot



Left to right: Andrea Lewis, Karen McFerran-Pruitt, Karen Heim, Genie Hillen, Jeff Morris, Dana Hinterleitner, Nick Butcher, Carol Inkpen



Left to right: Keelie, Jeff Morris, Carol Inkpen, Nick Butcher, Karen McFerran-Pruitt, Mary Morris

of things I've picked up over the years but don't use very often including some items that most of them hadn't seen before. We wrapped up by discussing one of the most important tools – the sewing machine, hoping to make our beginner sewers more comfortable before the next segment where they'd actually be sewing.

Session two was scheduled for 1PM, after lunch. With help from Dana and Bruce Hinterleitner, Carol Inkpen created custom hanten patterns for each person so they could learn basic cutting and sewing with simple square pieces. Carol explained the basic processes and then people began laying their pattern pieces out on their fabric. More experienced sewers helped the others while Carol circulated through the room, stopping to help where needed.

During this two hour session everyone got their fabric cut out and most started on

assembling the hanten. While no one completely finished they all had full instructions to take home to guide them.

After a brief clean-up break we started on the third session: Working with EVA foam lead by Scott Pope.

He started by showing us basic cutting and forming techniques, demonstrating the tools needed to work with foam. While he worked with the foam he described the different types of foam and glues to use with it (Barge). We also discussed finishing techniques and ways to paint & decorate the finished pieces.

Everyone got to cut and shape a bracer, then we went outside to glue the edges together – always use Barge in a well ventilated area!

Everybody had a good time and learned something new. Overall it was a good experiment although we were all very tired by the time it was over.



Left to Right: Dana Hinterleitner, Nick Butcher, Nora Mai, Carol Inkpen, Heather Hinson, Andrea Lewis, Karen Heim

The Knitting Work of Denise Salway

By Leah O'Connor

To paraphrase the Rolling Stones “You don’t always find what you want ... but sometimes, you find what you need.” ...especially on the Web. I was looking for ways to knit the face of a goat, so I Googled “knit doll faces.” That led me to a Pinterest page of knit dolls including one by Denise Salway. Most knit dolls have faces that are nothing more than a knit ball with button eyes and an embroidered mouth. What I saw was a caricature of Hercule Poirot which actually looked like the actor, David Suchet.

When you are looking for the source of a photo, Pinterest is sometimes a dead end, but the picture of Poirot had a link to Denise’s Flickr page and I was blown away. There are 9 pages of photos like this one, which can be found at this link: <https://www.flickr.com/people/theknittingwitch/>

There are always knitters at Costume-Con and other science fiction conventions, so I thought our members would find Denise’s work interesting. I contacted her on Facebook and asked her about her work. I’ll let her speak for herself.

“I started making dolls in 2012... My knitting started up again due to my

daughter getting married and my husband needed Scottish hose/socks to wear... I’d never made socks so decided to give it a go ... then it was shawls for the bridesmaids ... and then we found our theme: ‘crafty wedding...’ so the favours were egg cup cosies as it was an Easter wedding.”

“So, this continued for each of the wedding party; my hubby asked for Darth Vader and each of my friends asked for a different character.....after that a friend of my daughter asked if I was able to do a doll ... and then my daughter asked for Thorin from the Hobbit ... then on my birthday I had a birthday wish on twitter by Stephen Hunter, who plays Bombur in the film *The Hobbit*, so I felt I’d needed to design the full set after that, and Graham McTavish who played Dwalin also liked what I did, as did some of the other actors... then Wales media printed it in the papers and on line.... After that, people seem to enjoy what I do...their feedback encourages me to continue, and lots of kindnesses have been returned. I’ve lost count of how many I’ve made ...but sadden when ones on loan



Photo from <https://www.flickr.com/people/theknittingwitch/>

by a PR company have not been returned to me.”

“My favourites are the Hobbit, the Tudors, Wolfhall and especially the Brontë sisters, as groups ... but my Dragon and the Hobbit dust jacket for knitting ... they take such a long time when they are all created from my head as all the dolls ... each one is a special challenge...”

“My favourites would be the ones where I get the image of the face close ... I only have one chance, and sometimes with massive disappointment, it doesn’t happen ... wool and yarn flexing and fixing’s awkward.”

“The hardest was the Hobbit Jacket, dwarves , dragon ...Jane Eyre ...tribute for the Brontë museum ... Wolfhall ... but each one I make is a challenge, all designed and hand knitted and assembled by me....”

“I do love my other crafty stuff, especially my cushions etc.”

It sounds like Denise is our kind of people. Maybe we can persuade her to join the ICG. Do we have a chapter in Wales?

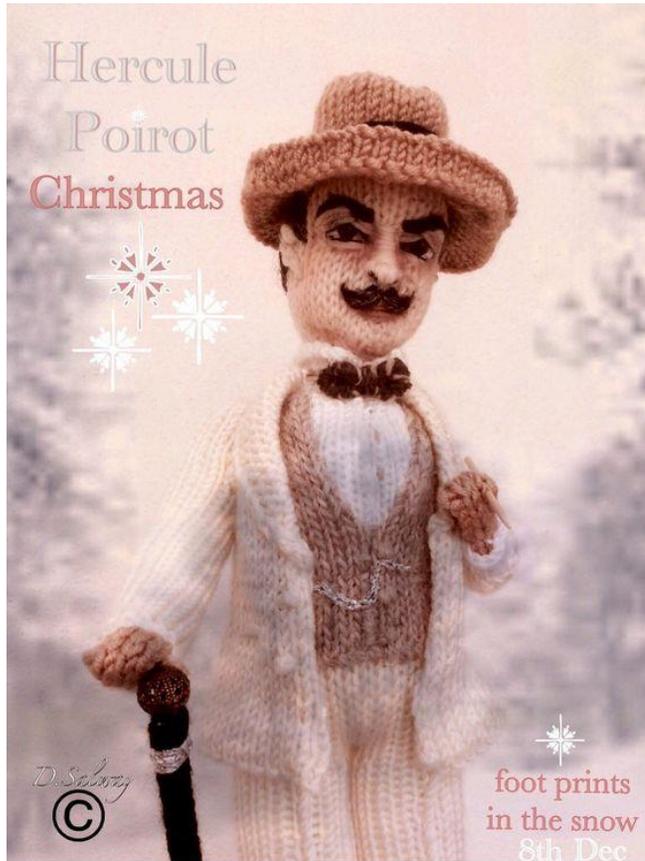


Photo from <https://www.flickr.com/people/theknittingwitch/>

From the Editor

By Vicky Assarattanakul

As summer winds down, I hope that you are all finding plenty of time and motivation to work on your costuming projects. The end of summer always seems to bring on a flurry of costuming activity, brought on by the numerous conventions in August.

I had to hold my breath, as we got some very serious flooding in the Madison area in August. My sewing room is in my basement, and I greatly feared the river pouring down my backyard. Fortunately, we did not have any water enter our house. For those of you who attended Costume-Con 34, the area around the hotel was underwater for about 48 hours. In the near decade that I've lived in this area, I have never seen flooding like this, so as you can imagine, things are quite shaken up.

To piggyback off of Marianne's address, MACS also launched a recruitment campaign this summer. We promoted our chapter, as well as the ICG, in the ambassador alley at Kitsune Kon in July. The convention is small, and the demographic skews young since it is an anime convention, but there was significant interest. Many people took business cards

and brochures for both our chapter and the ICG.

I have submitted requests to have fan tables at other conventions, including Wizard World Madison, so I am hopeful that we will get the word out about our organization.

It often surprises me at how few people know about our organization, especially when members of our chapter have been very active in staffing and volunteering at local conventions. This is a powerful reminder that no matter how much we think we're promoting, we're still not reaching a good portion of people. So, it is my goal to promote as much as possible, because there are many costumers who would love to be a part of our community.



Members of MACS at the fan table at Kitsune Kon.

About the ICG

Membership Benefits

ICG membership benefits include participation in local Chapters and in Special Interest Groups, voting rights, eligibility for grants, online forums, learning and volunteer opportunities, and the International Costumer.

ICG Online

Visit the ICG website for current information and resources:

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

Join us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/internationalcostumers>

Join the ICG-D Yahoo! group for lively discussions on costuming-related topics:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/icg-d>

Amazon Smile link:

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The Kennedy Memorial Archives and Gallery

The ICG's Pat & Peggy Kennedy Memorial Archives is the world's largest archive of photographs, video and paper ephemera of costuming. Exhibits include an online photo gallery (<http://www.costume.org/gallery2/>) and the ICGArchives YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/ICGArchives>).

The International Costumer

The *International Costumer* newsletter is published bi-monthly by the ICG. The current issue is for members only. Back issues are freely available to the costuming community on the ICG website.

Online Submissions

We welcome short costuming articles, book reviews, event reports, and news items. Submit your copy as rtf, doc, docx or txt files to the International Costumer editor: icg-newsletter@costume.org. All graphics formats are accepted.

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