

International Costumer

Volume XX Issue 4

July-Aug 2021



Claude Monet, *Poppies*, oil on canvas, 1873; Musée d'Orsay, Paris. [Wikipedia](#).

From the President's Desk

Kevin Roche

It is hard to wrap my head around Dana MacDermott's passing. She's been a friend and a force of nature in my costuming world for so long that she is inextricably wound into my personal life and history in the costuming community.

Dana's eye for design was magnificent, and I especially loved the sculptural element (whether in fabric or less tractable materials) she incorporated so frequently into costume. I also loved her willingness to challenge conventional Western norms of beauty to create jaw-dropping costumes and characters, as well as her truly wicked sense of humor and willingness to put on a joke.

It's been mentioned how Dana loved fostering group endeavors, but this went far beyond just being part of group costumes; she was so adept at pulling people together in so many ways – the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild itself is just one example.

I have fond memories of numerous events at Bruce and Dana's lovely home,

including an Intergalactic Ambassador's Ball where we were encouraged to craft alien potluck items for the table, and their annual pumpkin carving event. Her style of hospitality greatly informed the evolution of my own version of the hosting arts, and I think her touch persists in many of the ways we do things in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Which brings me to what may be her most subtle and yet deeply important legacy to our fan costuming community. I had the privilege of working with Dana several times on revision of the ICG Masquerade Guidelines, something we both felt passionately about making useful and meaningful.

In the course of science fiction/fantasy convention masquerades since the early 1980s, contests experimented with a variety of judging and scoring techniques (with mixed results, which isn't surprising for such a subjective art form). In the process of our revising the judging section of the guidelines, Dana distilled it all down to crystal clarity: Excellence deserves recognition.

With that as a starting point, judging unfolds into a far more pleasant (though no less difficult) process. Don't focus on

what is bad, but on what is good, and laud and honor it publicly. I think that's not a bad way to approach a good many things in our complicated world.

Dana was a magnificent artist, a great supporter of our community, and a quirky and complicated person who will be hugely missed. I hope we never fail to recognize the excellence that her presence brought to the universe.

Guest Editor's Letter

Philip Gust

My wife Kathe and I are saddened by the death of Dana MacDermott, and our sympathy goes out to husband Bruce, sons Ari and Jaron, brother Daniel, and family friend Pennie. Early in our relationship, Dana and Bruce passed on an important lesson to us about the costuming community: to be kind and generous in supporting new costumers. This is also one of their lasting legacies.

The issue includes a remembrance of Dana MacDermott, highlighting her many contributions to costuming over the years. It also includes a review of a favorite book on my bookshelf, *How to Make Sewing Patterns* by San Francisco Bay Area author Don McCunn.

In Remembrance: Dana MacDermott

A costuming legend and long-time member of the costuming community takes her final bow.

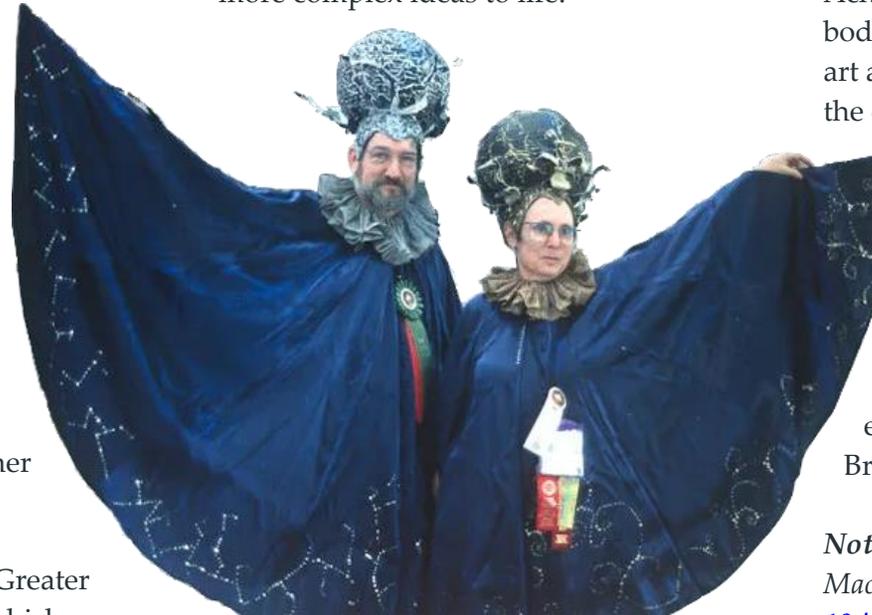
It is with great sadness that the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild, the International Costumers' Guild, and the larger costuming community mourn the passing of Silicon Web founding member Dana MacDermott. Dana had struggled with serious health issues for some time. She passed away peacefully on the evening of 3 August 2021 with her husband Bruce, sons Ari and Jaron, brother Daniel, and family friend Pennie at her bedside.

Dana received her Master's degrees in both Architecture and Fine Arts – Costume Design. She and her husband, Bruce began costuming together in 1983.

In 1990, they helped start the Greater Bay Area Costumers' Guild, which

then joined the ICG as a sub-guild of Costumers' Guild West in Los Angeles. When GBACG eventually left the ICG, Dana and Bruce went on to help found the ICG's internet chapter, Silicon Web Costumers' Guild.

As a costumer, Dana often said she enjoyed creating “weird, twisted and fantastic” costumes that were frequently non-human in character. She also found working in groups stimulating since the varied skill sets allowed bringing much broader and more complex ideas to life.



Bruce and Dana MacDermott. Photo: Richard Man.

They both served multiple terms as ICG and chapter officers. Dana was on the ICG Guidelines Committee and is proud to have been the author of the “Excellence Deserves Award” guideline. She was editor and a major contributor for many years for Silicon Web's *The Virtual Costumer (VC)*.

In 2009 Dana and Bruce were jointly honored by the International Costumers' Guild with their highest recognition, the [ICG Lifetime Achievement Award](#). The Lifetime Achievement Award recognized their body of achievement in the costuming art as well as their long-time service to the costuming community.

Dana will be sorely missed by the costuming community. Our condolences go out to her family and her many friends.

To learn more about Dana, read an extended interview with Dana and Bruce in [VC volume 16, issue 3](#).

Note: This remembrance of Dana MacDermott also appears in [VC volume 19 issue 3](#).

Book Review: *How to Make Sewing Patterns, 2nd Edition*

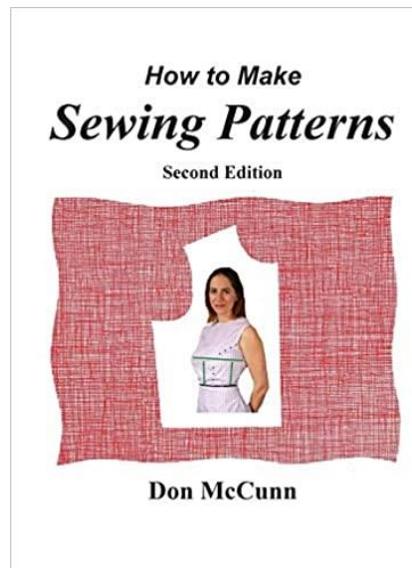
Reviewed by Philip Gust

How to Make Sewing Patterns by Don McCunn solves the mysteries of pattern drafting with easy, step-by-step instructions and clear line drawings that show how to create custom-fit garments in a wide range of designs. The book's detailed instructions on measuring and fitting include do-it-yourself photographs as well as directions for creating custom dress forms.

Don McCunn is a master of pattern drafting and fitting a wide range of bodies. This book is a good reference, whether or not you have taken pattern drafting in a class. The detailed instructions are especially clear on taking measurements on the body and the solution for side seams which are not perpendicular to the floor. He also shows things like how to measure yourself accurately when you do not have a fitting buddy (especially important during in the COVID-19

pandemic), and how to check the sloper is hanging correctly on the body

The book is a fantastic resource for those who want to learn pattern drafting, and then use those patterns to create their own clothing. It contains images that are easy to follow along with if you are a visual learner, as well as well-written instructions for those who prefer that. This book is easy enough for a novice sewer to follow, but contains enough information that even a seasoned tailor or seamstress could learn new techniques from it.



This book is very well structured with clear explanations that, also introduce basic pattern-making terminology. Sections break down by basic skirt, pants, bodice, dress, jacket pattern and conceptualized variations of their basic form. For each section it covers relevant elements, such as collars, lapels, sleeves, pockets etc. It then introduces principles of altering patterns for stretchy fabrics such as knit. The last section is dedicated to scaling a design into a full size pattern.

After studying this book you can create virtually any design that you can imagine. It is a great place to start with your own designs, but remember that you need to know how to sew first to make use of the techniques. It's a supplement to your skills, not a recipe book of sewing patterns.

How to Make Sewing Patterns, 2nd Edition by Don McCunn. Design Enterprises of San Francisco, 2016. Hardcover, 182 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0932538208.

Read a virtual author talk with Don McCunn about his book in [The Virtual Costumer volume 14 issue 2](#).

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*.

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

ICG Facebook group:

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

ICG Gallery

<https://gallery.costume.org/>

Members-only Google discussion group:

<https://groups.google.com/a/costume.org/g/cos-chat>

ICG Board meeting Google group:

<http://groups.google.com/u/6/a/board.costume.org/g/meeting>

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icg-president@costume.org

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icg-vice-president@costume.org

Treasurer: Jeanine Swick

icg-treasurer@costume.org

Corresponding Secretary: *vacant*

icg-corr-secretary@costume.org

Recording Secretary: Anne Davenport

icg-rec-secretary@costume.org

Helpful Hands

International Costumer editor: *vacant*

icg-newsletter@costume.org

Webmaster: Philip Gust

webmaster@costume.org

Archivist: Pierre Pettinger

icg-archivist@costume.org

Gallery Administrator: Nora Mai

Gallery Webmaster: Leslie Johnston

gallery-admin@costume.org

GEL Administrator: Bruce MacDermott

gel-admin@costume.org

Assistant Administrator: Elaine Sims

Parliamentarian: Pierre Pettinger

icg-parliamentarian@costume.org

Writing for the *International Costumer*

Are you working on a new costume for a convention? Do you know a sewing technique that would be useful to others? If so, why not share your project or skill with the costuming community by writing an article for the *International Costumer*? Articles by new as well as by long-time costumer are welcome. For information or to submit an article contact the editor at icg-newsletter@costume.org.

About *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 editor at icg-newsletter@costume.org. All graphics formats are accepted.

Contacting the Editor

Please contact the editor to report problems, or to offer comments and suggestions:
icg-newsletter@costume.org.

Newsletter Delivery

The *International Costumer* is available as both an online and print edition. Your preference is part of your ICG membership record. To update your information or change your preference, contact your local chapter. Returned copies of the print edition cannot be re-mailed.

Members who have an e-mail address on record are notified when a new issue is available.

Access the online edition at

<http://costume.org/wp/the-international-costumer-newsletter/> The user name is

"**costumer**" and password is "**Remembrance**"

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