

The International Costumer

The newsletter of the International Costumers' Guild, Inc.

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<https://www.costume.org>

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ICG Archives Video Collection Inventory Update

By ICG Archives

The ICG Archives has begun the process of transferring the masquerade videos on DVD and digital files held in the Archives onto the new M-Disk media that (supposedly) will last at least 100 years. It's been a long time since there has been an inventory of what has been collected for preservation. This quick and dirty report has a two-fold purpose:

1. To give the ICG members an idea of how many costume contests and masquerades held, their sources and when they were recorded.
2. To see if they can fill any holes we may have for some shows or even add to the collection.

The Archives team regularly troll the Internet for the better shows, but we always would like any official masquerade DVDs since they will have the best quality. We're particularly keen on acquiring videos from the South and Southwest. (That also goes for photo material from those regions, but that's another topic).

If you know of anyone else who might have material, please put them in touch with us at icg-archivist@costume.org.

View this article online to see the inventory table.

[\(https://costume.org/wp/2025/10/26/icg-archives-video-collection-inventory-update/\)](https://costume.org/wp/2025/10/26/icg-archives-video-collection-inventory-update/)

(Op-Ed) Another Fine Mess: Behind the Scenes of Judging a Worldcon 2025 Masquerade

By Kevin Roche

Note: this item is a personal opinion piece. Events described are as I experienced them.

This year I was thrilled as its creator to be invited to run a Single Pattern Contest for the Seattle in 2025 Worldcon. I was looking forward to running a costume event early in the weekend that did not require stage production, and then presenting the results as part of the entertainment during the judging interval (half-time) at the Masquerade.

In mid-June I was asked by Richard Stephens (one of the Masquerade Directors) whether I would consider being a presentation judge for the Masquerade. After consulting with my husband, and some conversation on how I could still be able to announce the SPC results, I agreed to join the judging panel. Everything seemed copacetic.

One week before the event, we received an email with more guidelines. We were informed that they had 24 pre-registered entries, and had only arranged 40 minutes of half-time entertainment, so there was not time " ... to carefully parse every single entry into the masquerade" and we should walk into deliberations with a "top 3" in mind. Each judging panel would be allowed to choose a best in each of 3 divisions, a Best in Show if we could agree, and up to 3 Judges Choice awards. This was slightly concerning, but with 24 entries not too horrible. I was also concerned that the slide show of the SPC I was supposed to prepare was not included in coming up with the 40 minute timeframe.

The day of the event, things went further downhill:

- There were now **46** entries (two ultimately scratched) in the show,
- Presentation judges *were never given a list of entries*,
- We were given blank judging forms on which we were frantically trying to capture names and take notes as the show ran,
- The planned trailer park reels for the half time did not materialize,
- When we retired to deliberate we were informed that because there were more entries and the show ran longer, we now only had 20 minutes to return because of the time limit on the space,

- We asked for clarification on the number of awards and *it was reiterated that we could only give that maximum of 7 awards.*

I am operating on the presumption that *someone* supposed that fewer awards would accelerate the judging process. That idea, as anyone who has judged, is arrant nonsense. We had strong showings in all three divisions, and limiting us to Best in Show, 3 Best in Division, and 3 Judges choice *made judging harder.* The deliberations were brutal. In instances where normally we could have spread things out to Best SF, Best Fantasy, or any of our other ways to recognize excellent costuming, we instead had to choose a *single* Judges Choice award. We did our best (I have great respect for the other two presentation judges; while none of us were happy with the situation we leaned in hard to come to decisions) and returned our results.

And then, because we were working from our handwritten notes (remember, no list of entries), one of our awards was mis-transcribed (and the entry number elided) and thus mis-announced by the MC. I had to step up from the audience, inform him of the mistake and insist he announce the correct entry (which he did; he was dealing with what he'd been handed). The awards were announced, a few photos were taken, and we left for the hotel, only to discover that every bar and restaurant in the area was already closed.

And then came the aftermath: **We (all the judges) discovered that neither the contestants nor the audience had been informed of the limited number of awards in advance, and so we got to spend much of the rest of the weekend assuaging hurt feelings of those who presumed the judges had been inexplicably stingy in awards.**

THIS IS NOT HOW ONE RUNS A MASQUERADE!

I don't know how far up in the committee tree the decision to limit the awards was made — whether it was the Masquerade Directorss or someone higher up. I suspect the latter, given the inexperienced supposition that fewer awards would shorten deliberations. However the communications failure with the

contestants does fall squarely on the directors' shoulders. It also became apparent that there was no master script for the event, which added to the chaos and confusion. There were issues with stage design (including no place for catchers along the front of the stage; one contestant fell but was fortunately not seriously injured.)

What can we do?

The ICG has published multiple manuals on how to effectively run a costume competition. Perhaps we should send a copy to every Worldcon's Events Division or Masquerade Directors. (See the [ICG Press page](#) on the ICG Website to order copies.)

In hindsight, I personally will now push back much harder on judging restrictions. If I'm persuaded to join a panel despite them, I will insist that they be communicated to contestants. I will also DEMAND that the judges be allowed to be at the podium with the MC during awards announcement. And if the awards restriction was not announced to the audience in advance I will make sure it happens during awards.

And a bit of advice for future Masquerade Directors: *If you have a time limit on your venue and are running up against the clock, ANNOUNCE THE AWARDS ONLINE OR ON THE FOLLOWING DAY.* No, it's not ideal, but it's better than the disrespect of giving short shrift to your contestants hard work and your judges expertise and qualifications.

ALSO (for everyone): VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH MASQUERADES. WE NEED TO TEACH MORE PEOPLE HOW TO DO THIS WELL.

OK, getting off my soapbox. I don't have great answers, but wanted y'all to be aware of what was going on behind the scenes. If I used a cane I'd have been shaking it in frustration

I do know that the LACon V masquerade directors were witnesses to the failings in Seattle and took copious notes on what to do better. (And they've asked me to consult, which I will happily do).

Holiday Gift Ideas from the ICG Press

By ICG Press

Looking for holiday gift ideas for the costumers in your life? Books from the [International Costumers' Guild Press](#) make great gifts that provide hours of enjoyment. All titles are available in hardcover, paperback, and digital formats.



[The Masquerade Handbook](#)

This handbook is a complete guide to the art of running mid-sized costume masquerade competitions. With a new layout, typography and graphics, and a new introduction by Janet Wilson Anderson, the second edition makes this classic work available once again to members of the costuming community.



[Myrtle R Douglas: Mother of Convention Costuming](#)

This colorful commemorative book tells the amazing story of the fan who forever influenced what we wear at sci-fi/fantasy conventions, and how the International Costumers' Guild paid homage to her for her remarkable achievement.

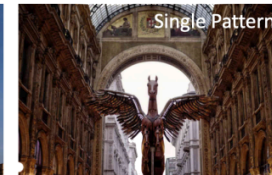


[ICG Masquerade Guidelines](#)

These Guidelines assist costume Masquerade Directors in writing and implementing rules to ensure fair competition in the Masquerades they run, and provide a resource for ensuring that all aspects of a successful masquerade are covered.

Costume-Con 2026 Virtual Competitions Now Accepting Entries

By Philip Gust



The Costume-Con 2026 Virtual Competitions are now accepting entries for the Future Fashion Show, Single Pattern Competition, and Doll Competition. The upcoming holiday season is a great time to start planning your entries.

The virtual competitions will take place on April 18, 2026 at 5pm Pacific Time, 8pm Eastern Time on Zoom. Information about how to attend will be announced closer to the time of the event, Keep an eye on social media including the Costume-Con Facebook page where the information will be announced. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1198007390218367>)

Visit the Facebook event pages for the competitions for the latest information and rules, and to post questions. Also check these event pages for information on entering the competitions.

Future Fashion Show

- Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1234257784742433/>
- Design choice deadline: March 31, 2026
- Entry deadline: April 4, 2026
- Contact: costumrs@radiks.net

Single Pattern Competition

- Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/613867834481640/>

- Entry deadline: April 12, 2026
- Contact: yon_drago@yahoo.com

Doll Competition

- Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1810360342846184/>
- Entry deadline: April 1, 2026
- Information and entry form: <https://tinyurl.com/cc2026-doll>
- Contacts: kathe.gust@gmail.com, philgust@google.com

The Silicon Web Costumers Guild presented a webinar on September 7, 2025 where the co-directors of the three competitions described the events, and discussed the rules, how to enter, and deadlines. They also highlighted a few entries from last year's virtual events and past competitions. The webinar was recorded and is available on the Webinars page of their website.

(<https://www.siwcostumers.org/webinars.html#webinar-2025-09-07>).



Silicon Web Costumers' Guild Spring 2026 Webinars

By SiW Webinars

The Silicon Web Costumers' Guild Presents series offers webinars and workshops featuring speakers on a wide variety of topics about costumes and costuming. Registration is now open for the first two webinars in the Spring 2026 semester.

Photographing Costumes for Virtual Masquerades — Sun. Jan. 25, 2026 (1pm PT, 4pm ET)



Costumes for virtual masquerades or competitions are not presented on a stage. Instead, entrants submit high-quality photos or videos that may be shot in a studio, on location, or even in a virtual environment. Hugo Award-winning photographer Richard Man offers advice on

creatively photographing costumes for virtual competitions, including choosing locations, using the right lighting, planning shots, adding accessories, and posing, that will make judges and the audience go “Wow!”

Miss Lizzy's Traveling Historical Fashion Show — Sun. Mar. 1, 2026 (1pm PT, 4pm ET)



Miss Lizzy's Traveling Historical Fashion Show is a Special Interest Group of the International Costumers Guild. Its mission is to use educational outreach to extend knowledge of Victorian and Edwardian culture and dress by collecting, preserving, studying, and repairing extant garments,

photographs, artifacts, style periodicals, and ephemera of that time period, from approximately 1830 to 1930.

Join Miss Lizzy's chair and award-winning costume historian Lisa Ashton to learn more about collecting and studying

costumes and other historical items from the period, and to see some of the items in her extensive collection.

The series began in 2022. It was sponsored in part through a generous grant from the ICG Marty Gear Costume Arts and Sciences Fund.

Watch recordings of past webinars on the [Webinars](#) page of the SiW website.

Webinars are offered at no cost thanks to sponsorships and donations, and to the use of the ICG Zoom platform that is available to all ICG chapters and SIGs. See the [Calendar](#) webpage for more information on newly announced webinars in the series.

If you have an idea for a webinar or speaker, please send it to webinars@siwcostumers.org.

Apply For a 2026 Marty Gear Fund Grant

By Marty Gear Fund



photo: Stephen Lesnik

Now is a great time to consider applying for a 2026 Marty Gear Costuming Arts & Sciences Fund grant. The Marty Gear Fund is an International Costumers' Guild program to provide grants in support of projects by ICG members that advance the art and science of costuming and benefit costumers in general or in specific groups. These are grants, not loans, and do not require repayment. The Fund was established in 2013. For 2024, it has \$2,000 available to fund projects.

Any ICG member may apply for a grant, using the application form on the ICG web site.

The Fund was named in honor of Marty Gear, who was one of the founders of the ICG and its executive director during its formative years. In 1991, he became the second costumer to be awarded the ICG's Lifetime Achievement Award.

When a grant application is received, the Administration Committee reads it to assure it is complete. then sends it to two members of its panel of reviewers to evaluate its content, proposed timetable, and requested funding. The panel consists of highly experienced costumers appointed by the ICG president — truly masters of our art. They may request additional information in order to complete their review.

If the panelists recommend approval of an application and the amount to award, the applicant is notified and payment is arranged. For applications that will take an extended period to fulfill, payment may be spread over several tranches.

If you have an idea that may be beneficial to all costumers or some of us, but that seemed too costly and/or complex to implement, put it on an application to the Marty Gear Fund. You can learn more about the Fund, read about past grants awarded, and submit your application at <https://www.costume.org/wp/marty-gear-costuming-arts-and-sciences-fund>.

Consider an End-Of-Year Donation to the ICG

By Philip Gust



Looking for a last-minute end-of-year tax deduction? Consider making a donation to support one of the ICG's educational outreach funds. The ICG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization, and your donation may be tax-deductible. Consult your tax advisor about your specific circumstances.

You can donate with PayPal by visiting the Donate page on the ICG website. (<https://costume.org/wp/about-the-international-costumers-guild/donation-page/>) Any amount is appreciated! If

you are paying by cheque, make it payable to “ICG” and send it to

ICG Treasurer
c/o Jeanine Swick
113 Townsend Harbor Rd
Lunenburg, MA 01462-1818

Please note which fund the donation is for on the cheque.

The ICG General Fund

Your donation to the *ICG General Fund* supports our current outreach activities such as conventions, on-line forums, and educational programs that benefit our members and the entire costuming community. It will also enable us to develop new programs, not currently funded by membership dues, that will make the ICG an even more valuable resource for our chapters and members. If you would like to support educational outreach to the costuming community, please make a donation.

The ICG Press Fund

Your donation to the *ICG Press Fund* supports the creation and publication of new books and monographs that further the mission of the ICG as a non-profit educational organization. It also enables us to encourage and support new authors to share their knowledge by writing books and monographs, and to promote its publications to the greater costuming community through publicity and placements with influencers and the media. If you would like to support the publication of new books and monographs and special publication initiatives, please make a donation.

The Pat and Peggy Kennedy Archive and Photo Gallery Fund

Your donation to the *Pat and Peggy Kennedy Archive and Photo Gallery Fund* supports the collection and preservation of

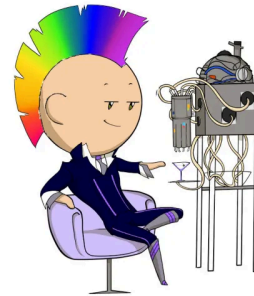
material, and the exhibition of images in the photo galleries. The ICG makes these resources freely available to the costuming community. If you enjoy the archives and photo galleries, with over a quarter century of costuming history, or use them in your research, please make a donation.

The Marty Gear Costuming Arts and Sciences Grant Fund

Your donation to the *Marty Gear Costuming Arts and Sciences Grant Fund* enables the ICG to make grants to support innovative projects and activities that advance the costuming arts and sciences. Grants are awarded based on detailed proposals that are evaluated by an independent panel based on merit. If you would like to help support innovative projects and activities that advance the costuming arts and sciences, please make a donation.

From the President’s Desk — December 2025

By Kevin Roche



there has been a little.

Seasons Greetings!

Amidst the chaos of my work location shutting down (all but a scant few dozen people have now retired, been laid off, or relocated to the Silicon Valley Lab site just south of us, there has not been much bandwidth for costuming or ICG business — but

The Paws that Refreshes — Fursuit Frenzies

I DID finish my Qubit fursuit project in time for PawCon. I even managed to add a tail to the “partial” so had head, paws and tail ready to go for the convention, and got out in him to visit the dealers room for about an hour. That was my limit, in part because I discovered the head was still shedding some fur pile from the edges and it kept getting into my eyes.





MANY MANY gory details of the construction are documented in my [Twisted Image build diary](#).

I also had a very fun mission for LACon 5, which was to find a vendor and commission a partial fursuit of their mascot, Fuzzy the Channel Island Fox (named in honor of Fuzzy Niven). I knew I didn't have time to build it myself, but found a great Etsy

artist who delivered on time for Fuzzy to initially appear at LosCon Thanksgiving weekend. It was a super fun commission and I can hardly wait to see the pictures of Fuzzy in action.

New explorations:

Andy and I will be visiting Portugal for the first time in early January. Who knows what costume inspirations may strike?!!

LAA Nominations

It is *never* too early to submit (or update/reactivate) nominations for the 2026 ICG Lifetime Achievement Award. I've already received one. To quote from last year's post:

Any ICG member, chapter, or SIG in good standing may submit nominations for the ICG Lifetime Achievement Award. Nominations may be submitted at any time (see below for deadlines) to laa-nomination@costume.org

The Lifetime Achievement Award, the ICG's highest honor, recognizes a body of achievement in the costuming art and service to the costuming community. Candidates must have been active in the costuming community for at least 10 years, have

achieved significant recognition for their costuming skills (which may be in the form of, but not restricted to, competitive awards, professional accomplishments, teaching of skills, and/or media recognition), and have made significant contributions in service to the costuming community.

Full nomination criteria are posted on the ICG website at <https://costume.org/wp/icg-lifetime-achievement-award/>

I will post next month with the exact timeline for nominations, but expect it will be similar, with an early February deadline for the 2026 award.

Happy Holidays

In this time of year when (Northern Hemisphere) days are short and nights are long and especially dark, and as we navigate our current sometimes gloomy world, many solstice-adjacent celebrations encourage us to join together and shine our light for all to see — to celebrate life, each other, and the good around us, with an eye to building a brighter and better tomorrow.

I wish you joy, love, comfort, and security during this season and those to come. I intend to keep burning bright; I hope you will join me.

Kevin Roche
President, International Costumers Guild

About the International Costumers' Guild

The International Costumers' Guild (ICG) is an affiliation of hobbyist and professional costumers, dedicated to the promotion and education of costuming including cosplay as an art form in all its aspects. The ICG is a U.S. 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization.

Benefits

Member benefits include participation in local Chapters and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), voting rights, eligibility for grants, online forums, social media, learning and volunteer opportunities, and announcements about ICG business and activities. Chapters and SIGs are eligible for tax-exempt status, Quickbooks, web hosting, Zoom, and Google Workspaces.

ICG Officers

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- **Treasurer:** Jeanine Swick (treasurer@costume.org)
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Anne Davenport (corr-secretary@costume.org)
- **Recording Secretary:** Anne Davenport (rec-secretary@costume.org)

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The International Costumer is published by the ICG Editorial Board. We welcome short costuming articles, book reviews, event reports, and news items. For the latest content, visit the [International Costumer webpage](#).

ICG Editorial Board: Kathe Gust, Philip Gust, Betsy Marks, Patrick O'Connor, Kevin Roche, Jeanine Swick, Randall Whitlock.