

# *International Costumer*

*The Newsletter of the International Costumers' Guild*

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Jul-Aug 2022



Cosplay Photoshoots Special Interest Group at Costume-Con 40

## From the President's Desk

By Kevin Roche

I am writing this on June 27, 2022 -- it's still June, so Happy Pride!

First, as work kept me from writing a column last issue, I want to take a moment to personally congratulate Leslie Johnston, recipient of the 2022 ICG Lifetime Achievement Award, Betsy Marks, recipient of the ICG President's Award, and Jennifer "Radar" Wylie, Emmanuel "Manu" Hénault, recipients of Costume-Con Founder's Awards, for their achievements, recognized and celebrated at CC40 in May. All four have made a significant difference in our community and artform and I was honored to have a role in recognizing them.

Ironically, as one of the topics I intended to touch on was the complications COVID-19 has added to our favorite activities and events, I am currently isolating at home with an active case. My case has been quite mild, my doctor put me on the 5-day paxlovid regimen (my age and type 2 diabetes put me at risk for complications), and I am hopeful that I will test negative in time to travel to Tonopah for Westercon 74. If not, ah well, I will stay home and (probably) mope a bit.

As we do that, it's worth looking at where the ICG came from some 38-ish years ago, and how we can translate that into today's world (this is an abbreviated and simplified history):

- Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers' Guild was created up as an entity to organize Costume Con 3, and became a social group as well.
- Costumers' Guild West was started by a group of (mostly) Californians in Marty

Gear's attic at the CC3 "dead dog" party, with the goal of being a similar, non-competitive, costuming social group who could a) help conventions run better contests and b) organize social events with more opportunities to dress up.

- Sick Pups of Monmouth County was similarly spinning up as a largely social group.

In 1989 we actually organized paperwork to join up together as the International Costumers' Guild (we'd be international because we had people from Canada and the Virgin Islands) with the idea that most activity would take place at the local level, and the ICG corporate structure could join us together. We've tweaked the details a number of times, including getting our 501(c)(3) status, but that remains our basic model still today: a (relatively weak) central corporate office maintaining the structure to support (relatively strong) local chapters wherever they can organize, organizing the kind of events that appeal to them.

One of those locales was the World Wide Web, and Silicon Web Costumers' Guild was founded with it as a non-geographical chapter, whose members would meet at other events.

I think, however, the meaning of local has changed dramatically since those early days, in our highly-connected and now pandemic-limited world. We've become used to (and often overwhelmed by) virtual gatherings over the last couple years. We've also seen costume and cosplay become a far more mainstream phenomenon, with massive social media presence and new generations of fans turning out all over the world.



So now, as we re-emerge somewhat cautiously from isolation, how can we regain the fun and enthusiasm many of us remember from those early days? And (not a new problem) how can we engage and encourage participation from those new generations?

I can suggest a few things we can try for the latter, based in part on my experiences at Gallifrey One, which went through a significant generational melding over the last years.

- Do things your group has fun doing - that's how we started after all!
- Welcome newcomers and the curious - publicize things
- Make them feel safe in your spaces
- Go and play with other cosplay/costume groups in your locale

- Share what you love about what you are wearing/they are wearing
- Pitch in if they need volunteers - and do things their way unless they ask for advice.
- POST PICTURES OF ALL THE FUN YOU ARE HAVING (that means expanding social media presence)
- Share links to the knowledge resources (Archives/Gallery/Guidelines \*) we've published.

And one more thing to try really hard to do:

- *Abandon the costume vs cosplay argument. It **always** sounds like gatekeeping.*

It is absolutely possible to have deep conversations about what the difference is with someone after you have established some rapport, but too often I have seen it used as a way to close the door to conversation before it can begin.

I hope in two days' time that I will have medical clearance to travel to Tonopah for a rather unique Westercon, and I hope even more that we all get to emerge from our shells and be bright and shiny in public together again.

Stay safe. Stay well. Make friends. Make beautiful things to wear and show off! And then share pictures with us so we can ooh and aah over them.

**\*P.S.** After Westercon, I'll be setting up forms so people who want to help with the new ICG Guidelines standing committee projects, and our corporate structural review, can indicate how they wish to be involved. In conversations with ICG VP Leslie Johnston at Balticon, we

realized that to launch those projects we wanted something less chaotic than email inboxes.

For the Guidelines, one immediate project is to transform the existing single PDF file of the new Guidelines (indexed, but still a large file) into a navigable web document. We are already getting suggestions on areas of knowledge to add and expand to them.

Our structural review is going to involve both documenting our current procedures and examining our corporate documents for obsolete sections and other weaknesses, in line with some of the changes already made over the last couple of years.

More info is forthcoming on both projects!

## Guest Editor's Letter

*By Philip Gust*

Welcome to the July-August 2022 issue of *The International Costumer*, the newsletter of the International Costumers' Guild (ICG). As a member of the ICG Publications Committee, I have been your Guest Editor for the most recent eight issues while we look for a permanent editor and supporting staff.

After publishing calls for a year and a half for volunteers who have experience writing or editing for a newsletter, or are interested in learning, it seems increasingly unlikely that there are members with the skillset or interest. I will continue to publish calls for volunteers until I step down as Guest Editor at the end of 2022 in case we have new members, or current members whose circumstance change, who are able to volunteer for these positions.

**Editor(s):** responsible for soliciting content and creating the newsletter. Two people could be co-editors.

**Website helpers;** responsible for uploading the newsletter to the website and posting newsletter announcements to members.

The Newsletter Editor is also the Chair of the Publications Committee, and as Guest Editor, I am also filling that role temporarily. I plan to begin conversations within the committee soon to discuss the role of the newsletter in our organization as a way to disseminate information to members, and to consider other ways to accomplish that. Many organizations are having similar conversations.

In this issue, chapters and SIGs report on their activities, including volunteering at conventions and participating in community events. It would be great to have reports from more chapters and SIGs in future issues.

## Cosplay Photo Shoots Special Interest Group at Costume-Con 40

*By Dan Arargo – Cosplay Photoshoots SIG*

The Cosplay Photo Shoots Special Interest Group is a group of costumers and photographers who collaborate to photograph and capture spectacular costumes and the characters of cosplayers. We practice our craft by hosting monthly events in the Washington DC metropolitan area and helping each other on posing, lighting, and photographic effects. Our leadership team are members of the Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers' Guild who formed the SIG in order to elevate our monthly events.



### **First Contact**

Dragon Rose (Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers' Guild president and Costume-Con 40 Conference Committee Co-Chair) approached us in 2020, when she and her team started planning for Costume-Con 40, and asked us to provide photographic services. We learned about the longstanding tradition of photographing contest costumes and artifacts for the ICG historical archives. Together, we also made plans for promoting the art of costume and cosplay photography by providing services that went beyond a quick documentary photo.

### **Planning**

Our group started planning in earnest about two months prior to Costume-Con 40, holding weekly meetings, coordinating with the Costume-Con planning team, and developing the logistics for taking, tracking, and delivering a significant number of documentary costume photos and artistic portraits. Our group has developed skills in managing monthly events with 40-50 attendees, but we weren't practiced in delivering a large volume of photos linked to a large number of photo subjects in order to help the ICG archivists identify the people and costumes in each photograph.

We also worked through how to provide additional services outside of the contest photography to bring attention to the art of portraiture of people in costumes. The Costume-Con planning team was providing us with a large space to work in (see cover), so we were able to set up two studio settings using equipment provided by our Cosplay Photo



*Preparing to photograph costume.*



*Finished costume photograph.*

Shoots SIG leadership. One setup was dedicated to photography of costume-contestants, and the other was designed for more creative, deliberative, and custom portraiture.

We worked out how to track and deliver the contestant photos to the ICG and how to take donations to our SIG for the portraiture photos. We developed a system using Google Forms, PayPal, identification numbers, and a commercial website where our photo subjects could find and download their photos.

As we got closer to the event, we developed a checklist of equipment we needed, scheduled our staff coverage, setup our website, and rehearsed our logistics. Our leadership team also contacted some of our regular event attendees who were planning on attending Costume-Con 40 to recruit them to help us get all the contestants through the studio setup quickly before they had to go on stage for their shows.

### **Lights! Camera! Smile!**

In between contests, Costume-Con 40 attendees dropped by the Photo Suite setup adjacent to the main stage and Green Room. When they requested a portrait session, our photographers took the time to learn about the subject's costume and personality in order to set up a lighting scheme and develop poses to create a photograph that conveys a mood, a feeling inspired by the subject.

Just before each contest show, Green Room 'den mothers' brought contestants through our Photo Suite. Our team efficiently collected the contestants information and recorded their contest entry number on a hand-

held whiteboard. Our photographers took a quick “mug shot” of the contestant with the whiteboard entry number so we could match up photos with contestants for delivery. (see previous page) We took photos of the front and back of each contestant, checked for quality on the tethered computer and sent the competitors back to the Green Room.

### **All That and a Panel**

Cosplay Photo Shoot events we have been hosting in the Washington DC Metro area since 2015 have been uncommonly successful. We’ve seen cosplay groups and photo clubs attempt to hold regular photo events and they’ve rarely lasted. So, in addition to the photographer services, we presented a panel at Costume-Con 40 explaining what we try to achieve at our events and how our leadership team of costumer/cosplayers and photographers bring perspectives from our respective craft cultures to encourage collaboration in pursuit of creative photography.

### **After the Convention**

After Costume-Con 40, we quickly edited all of the competition and portraiture images, uploaded them to our public galleries at [dccosplayphotoshoots.mypixieset.com/galleries](https://www.dccosplayphotoshoots.mypixieset.com/galleries), and delivered official contest photos to the ICG archivists, all in a week’s time. The photos were organized by contest and contestant entry number to help the archivists post the photos to [costume-con.org](https://www.costume-con.org). It was a great experience for our team to support our Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers’ Guild chapter and the Costume Con 40 team.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks and gratitude to Allison, Pippin, Sara A, and Rachael for hosting an important panel on Diversity & Inclusion in Photography & Costuming. There was some good discussion that will hopefully help people reflect on how they can be more mindful of these topics. Gloria, Mike, and Sara ran an excellent workshop on Posing for the Camera. It was fun to see the attendees mirroring the examples that were presented.

Gloria and Mike also provided invaluable help advising us on how to photograph the costumes for the ICG historical records from their previous Costume Con experiences. Then they went above and beyond - pitching in during the photo sessions, shepherding contestants through the photo sessions.

Finally thanks to our event leadership team of Dan, Lena, Angela, Jason, Robert and volunteers Mike and Gloria, and to the Cosplay Photo Shoots SIG leadership team of Dan, Rachael, Angela, Jason, and Robert.



*Processing contestants for photos in the green room.*

*[Visit the Costume-Con Visual Gallery to view the many photos that the Cosplay Photo Shoots SIG took at Costume-Con 40:*

*<https://www.costume-con.org/costume-con-archives/costume-con-visual-gallery/-ed/>*

### **Southwest Costumers’ Guild Loves Library Conventions**

*By Randall Whitlock – SWCG Vice President*

Newsletter Editor Philip Gust wrote to me with the question, “What has Southwest Costumers Guild been doing?”

As I expect is the case with most chapters, the pandemic has been hard on our chapter, limiting in-person activities and putting the brakes on recruitment outreach. Still, we have a cohesive core membership and we get together for lunches every month or so. One thing that has helped us a great deal is our cordial relationship with local libraries.

Glendale Public Library and Tempe Public Library are very friendly to SF, comics and pop culture in general. Tempe hosts FanCon every January (<https://www.tempepubliclibrary.org/event-calendar/tempe-fancon>) while Glendale hosts LibCon West (<https://www.libconwest.org/>) every December, along with a special event in May for Free Comic Book Day. These are single-day events, free to the public, with library-hosted presentations inside the buildings and merchants, artists and fan groups in the spacious landscaping around the library buildings. Naturally there are masquerades.

SWCG participates in these events with a meet and greet booth to invite all to join with



us in our love of costume. Over the years our display has taken on an identity of its own, with a table banner, flyers, business cards, scrapbooks of costume projects, finished costumes, sample newsletters, and printouts of how-to articles displayed along with a slideshow of costume pictures running on my iPad. All of this is done beneath a popup pavilion, suitable for most any outdoor event.

A couple of years ago, the sun shone dazzlingly under the west edge of our pavilion, so I improvised by hanging a blanket from its side. The cartoon kitten on the blanket attracted as much attention as the rest of the display, hence inspiration was born. Paula and Mahala came up with the idea of building side panels for the pavilion that would enhance our display.

This became a dispersed group project, with each member challenged to build a 30-inch wide curtain panel to be hung alongside the others. My own is just a bunch of fabric-printed graphics from our web page. Tasha outdid herself by creating a sampler of her ribbon embroidery and other needlework. This is a work in progress and more panels will be added as we go along.

As the pandemic goes endemic, public events are slowly coming back. There will be an actual in-person CoKoCon over Labor Day weekend (<http://www.cokocon.org/2022/index.html>). We're still brainstorming about how to participate, perhaps with a fan table, con-suite sponsorship, or some combination of the two.



*Tasha, Paula, and Randall tend the SWCG pavilion at LibCon West, December, 2021.*



*Old Ben Randall and Pirate Paula at Free Comic Book Day at Glendale Public Library, May, 2022.*



*Tasha does needlework in front of display panel.*



## Gulf Coast Costumers Mardi Gras Costuming

*By Antoinette de Alteriis – GCICG President*

Mardi Gras was back this year and amazing! We were out in force vaccinated and armed with hand sanitizer. Our parade was filmed and aired on CBS Sunday morning as part of a king cake story. Our prop work was also included in a museum exhibit - cannon, cake, and shield. Then we jumped into a few more parade holidays and festivals. It has been an amazing year so far!

Yellow (far right) is a Mardi Gras Indian Little Queen with our beading. Silver armour (right) is me at a museum opening. The still from CBS (below) shows cutting the first king cake with royalty. Most of the costumes in this photo are my work.



## About the ICG

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

### ICG Online

**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>

### Use Amazon Smile to support the ICG:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1656188>

### Board of Directors:

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### Technology & Web Committee:

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### Guidelines Committee:

<http://guidelines-committee@board.costume.org>

## ICG Member Benefits

Member 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* newsletter.

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### About the *International Costumer*

The *International Costumer* newsletter is published bi-monthly. The current issue is for

members only. Back issues are available to the costume 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](mailto: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:

[newsletter@costume.org](mailto: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. The online edition is at <http://costume.org/wp/the-international-costumer-newsletter/>. The password is "CC40Photoshoots".

### Editorial Board

Kathe Gust, Philip Gust, Andrea Lewis, Betsy Marks, Patrick O'Connor, Kevin Roche, Jeanine Swick, Randall Whitlock.

### Writing for the *International Costumer*

Members, chapters, and SIGs are encouraged to share projects, skills, or events with the costuming community by writing an article for the *International Costumer*. Articles by new or long-time costumers are welcome. For information or to submit an article contact the editor at [icg-newsletter@costume.org](mailto:icg-newsletter@costume.org).