

The Virtual Costumer

A monthly publication of the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

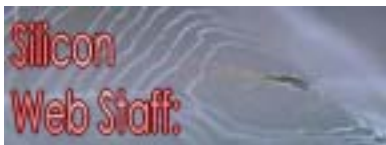
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A message from the President of the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Here we are headed directly into our Holiday season: Halloween is coming up. Strangely enough, we have not been to a Halloween costume event in years. Our costuming seems to be used in different settings than the traditional holiday, which likely initiated all of us into the passion.

I costume shows; I costume for conventions; Bruce and I are going to model in costume for the San Francisco Academy of Art later this month. We did some costuming for Burning Man. We are periodically asked to help costume friends and family for assorted events.

But we are not (at this point) costuming for Halloween. How odd.

For us, Halloween has become focused on pumpkin carving and handing out trinkets to the trick-or-treaters. Because of our proximity to a street that hosts a street party Halloween night, we get a lot of trick-or-treaters. Each year, the numbers increase. Last year, we handed out glow bracelets to over 300.

If those of our members who are costuming for Halloween could email Sharon snap shots of this year's costumes, it would be a great way to see what we are all doing. I promise I will send in photos of our best pumpkins.

This edition of *The Virtual Costumer* will be posted to the public portion of the web site. Every so often the SiW will do this in order to familiarize the rest of the costuming world with our chapter. The rest of our issues are reserved for our members, the ICG officers, and the ICG newsletter editors with whom we exchange issues.

This month we also see the first major how-to article. This is Carole Parker's awaited article on the Shibori method of dyeing. We hope to continue offering this type of in depth article. It will, of course,

depend on our membership's willingness to share their expertise and experiences in this format.

For those of you who are looking at *The Virtual Costumer* for the first time, you will see how this on-line format allows us to illustrate our articles extensively with photographs. We are rather proud of this capacity. It clearly lends itself to photo-essays and is a natural for communicating how-to.

Another major gain from our chosen on-line *modus operandi* is that we have no printing or postage expenses, and can keep our membership rates quite reasonable. We welcome new members, and are set up to take memberships on line via credit card. A side benefit of this method of collecting dues is that foreign currencies automatically translate to US dollars.

We are also linked via Yahoo's group functions and communicate easily via email. Some of us are using the Messenger, as well. Hopefully we can expand SiW's use of the various Yahoo capacities to strengthen further our virtual Costuming community.

If this looks to you like an invitation to new members, you got it right in one guess. We have done gift memberships as well.

Dana MacDermott
President, Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Dum loquimur, fugerit invida. Aetas: carpe diem,
quam minimum credula postero. – *Horace*

Translation:

Even as we speak, nasty Time flies. Seize the day,
and believe as little as possible in tomorrow.



By Sharon Trembley

This month's feature web site is the glue resource



at <http://www.thistothat.com/index.shtml> because, as this web site states, people have a need to glue things to other things.

Each page has a pull down list where the user can pick what kind of substance to be glued to another substance, and the web site will return the answer of what glue will work to get them to stick.

Let's say I enter, rubber to styrofoam ... the web site returns two substances –

- ✿ LePage's Bulldog Grip PL200 and then there's a link to get more info on its packaging, toxicity, where it can be found, and a link to LePage's official site.
- ✿ 3M77 is recommended for large areas of sticking. This is a pricey spray adhesive.

This web site also has other info and news about substances that are produced to stick things together to aid people with their bonding requirements, and also selects a glue of the month.

Going back to October 1999, their pick was Kryolan Spirit Gum to adhere things to skin. Water soluble and safe for children –

<http://www.thistothat.com/gom/1999.10.shtml>

Shibori Project

by Carole Parker

Kimono, haori, and obi using the Japanese tie-dye technique of shibori are beautiful. The inspiration for my attempting the shibori technique is the book:

Shibori The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing Tradition Techniques Innovation by Yoshiko Wada, Mary Kellogg Rice, and Jane Barton ISBN 0-87011-559-6 ISBN4-770-1063-X C0072 Y13000E (in Japan)

As far as I know, this is an out-of-print book that you might find in a used bookstore. I have seen this book selling for \$125, so be prepared to pay for it. A paperback version of this book has come out for approximately \$45, but it does not have the color photographs that the hardbound version has, or as many black and white photographs.

[Editor's Note: Currently the paperback is at amazon.com, bn.com and half.com. Hardbound is out of stock, but sometimes available used through these sites and others.]

This is a relatively complete book about shibori in Japan, including the history as well as the techniques on *how* to do shibori. A little web research shows that shibori existed in other cultures. Like bagpipes in Scotland, shibori has stayed in Japan. Bagpipes were used in other countries, but are associated most strongly with Scotland. Shibori tie dye techniques were known in other countries, but are most strongly associated with Japan.

My Special Considerations

Most shibori techniques are meant to be seen close up rather than at a range, such as the stage. Since most of the intended audience was more than 10 feet away, I had to make the design bolder and larger than most people would.

Pole Wrapping

It seems like most of the shibori being done today involves pole wrapping. Yes, that is wrapping material around a pole. By working material



differently on a pole, you can get different effects.

The Pole

The shibori book points out what they call the American Adaptation of the pole technique. "The plastic cylinders used in this latest adaptation are either lightweight drainage pipe obtained from suppliers of building materials or plastic plumbing pipe; the latter is heavier and more expensive but is more durable." (page 124)

The book also points out that they were able to replicate designs left by a master craftsman, "using a plastic cylinder, 15.5 centimeters (6 in.) in diameter." (p. 126)

Using this information, a five foot length of six inch diameter PVC pipe was bought as the pole material.

Note: Before you go out and buy PVC pipe, please read the Working on the Pole section first.

One thing about PVC pipe: It can be really dirty when you buy it.

The length we purchased had black marks on it, printing that washed off with soap and water, and a label that came off readily enough but left a sticky residue. The label glue was especially difficult to get off, but is necessary to get off, so the material can slide on the pole easily.

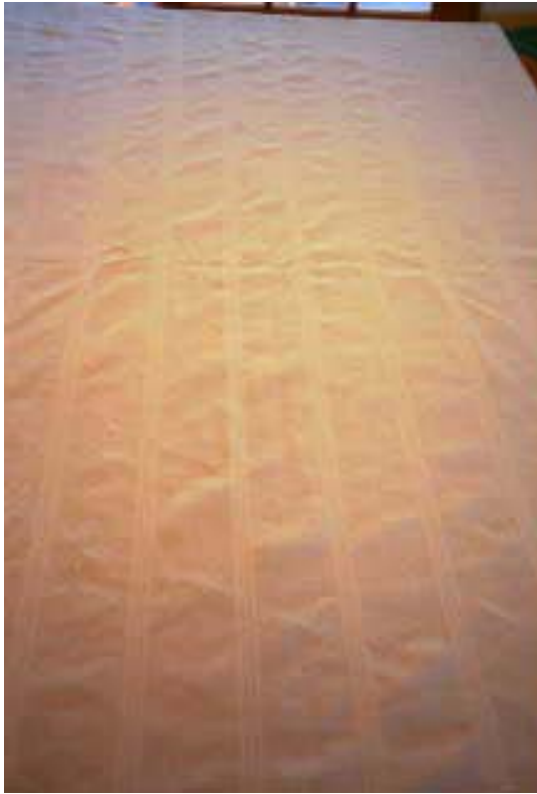
Several applications of Goo Gone (a petroleum based product) and a putty knife to scrape off the glue was necessary.

CAUTION: Use Goo Gone or any other petroleum-based product in a well ventilated area and away from any flame source. Also, wash the pole and dry it before putting the material in contact with it.

Materials Used

The material used on this project were some old drapes that were left by the previous owners of our house. Fabric burn testing and examination of

the material showed cotton with some twill weave stripe repeats throughout.



The drape hems were undone, the panels were separated from each other and then cut into thirds to get to a manageable size for working on the pole.

A second material used was a drapery scarf of 100 percent cotton bought at a store that went out of business. The original length was six yards, and was cut down to three yards for the wings of my costume.

All material was washed with a "stain removing" detergent with the cruelest settings on the washing machine. Since the materials probably had finishes on them, the combination of the detergent, hot water, and stain setting (with a soak cycle) have probably combined to remove or mostly remove any finish that was on the material.

About Soda Ash

Since we have a swimming pool in our backyard, we have soda ash to help balance the

chemicals. We were led to believe that soda ash is soda ash, so if you have a swimming pool supply place near you, you can probably get it cheaper there than anywhere else.

Soda Ash helps the fiber absorb the dye better. Probably not harmful to most people, but we still wore filter masks and gloves when we were dealing with powders.

Other Ingredients

The other chemicals used were:

* Fiber Reactive Dye/Procion dye
This comes in powder form that needs to be mixed with chemical water. A filter mask is necessary, and wearing protective rubber gloves is highly recommended (unless you want your hands to get dyed).

* Urea - Organic Nitrogen
Necessary for the chemical water and part of the reaction process. It looks like little white balls when dry. Use hot water to dissolve it. A filter mask is necessary. Gloves are a good idea.

* Sodium Alginate
A thickener used to limit the spread of dye. Optional. A filter mask and gloves are a good idea. It may take a few minutes for the reaction to become apparent. Add alginate and then wait to see what happens to your dye mixture.

Working with Chemicals

As with all chemicals, please use caution. The literature from Dharma Trading Company highly recommends using filter masks when working with powders, and making sure that children and animals *cannot* gain access to the chemicals or the liquids that you create. Dharma also stresses that pregnant women should consult their doctor before doing any dyeing.

As to clothing, wear the kind of clothing that you don't care whether or not it gets stained because it's already stained. I wore a long sleeved cotton t-shirt to help protect my arms since I have sensitive skin. Gloves are highly recommended for protecting your hands from dye stains.

CAUTION: If you use *any* measuring tools to measure dye chemicals, or pots to heat dye chemicals, DO NOT EVER use them for food preparation again! Keep all dye tools and pots away from food preparation areas, and put them where no one can mistake them for food preparation.

Using dye tools and pots for food preparation can potentially kill or make someone (including you) seriously ill, as in needing to go to the hospital because of poisoning. Please, please, please be careful with your dye tools and pots, and make sure they are labeled correctly if you ever move.



Dry Run

Before trying to work with wet material, I tried wrapping the material on the pole. The material is supposed to meet edge to edge, but the first try had the material overlapping several inches.

Experimenting with your material and the pole is essential.

It was during the dry run that I discovered the problem with the label glue on the bottom of the pole because the material would not budge.

Second Dry Run

After the glue was removed, and the pole washed and dried, another dry run was done. This time, the tape kept breaking off as the material was being pushed up and twisted on the pole.

It looks like the material needs to be pushed up to get some slack and then twisted *hard* on the pole. By twisting the



material, you're taking up the extra slack that happened when you pushed the material up.

Wet Run

After the dry run, and getting the idea of how the material works on the pole, I decided to do a wet run. A panel of the material was wet with plain water and put on the pole to see what would happen. I wanted answers as to how the material would move on the pole while it was wet.

Would it be harder or easier to move the material on the pole?

* Seems a little easier - less friction?

Would the folds be larger or smaller than when the material was dry?

* About the same, maybe a little larger.

How would the masking tape stick on the wet material?

*It doesn't. Admittedly, it was cheap masking tape, but no matter how much we wrung it out, the tape did not stick to the wet material.

The workaround used was to take some embroidery floss (on the needle), and do a knot at intervals. The knots held, and it didn't impact the folding.

Second Wet Run

During the first wet run, the cheapie masking tape didn't work, and putting some knots at intervals did work. However, the knotting method takes longer. So, we went back to the hardware store and bought a different kind of masking tape:

Scotch 3M Painters' Masking Tape
For Hard-to-Stick Surfaces

IDEAL FOR:

- * Rough Surfaces: Stucco, Concrete, Brick
- * Lacquer Applications
- * Cool Temperatures

On the flat of the tape, it says:
For 1" use
3 DAY Clean Removal
INTERIOR & EXTERIOR USE

And it has an indicator area that says:

This tape is VERY HIGH ADHESION and shows a series of circles with a range from LOW to HIGH, with the highest circle filled in with red.

Being in California, the labeling also has the text in Spanish. The other unusual thing about this tape is the color: a light yellow-green, what some people might call leaf green.

Tape Results

The original copyright of the shibori book is 1983, with a second printing in 1986. It would appear that the formulation for masking tape has changed between then and now because neither of the masking tapes held onto wet cotton fabric. No stick existed.

Using a needle and thread and creating large stitches, the material held together and twisted up the pole. However, too large a stitch stresses easily, creates gaps when you move the material, and the thread breaks. Experimenting with your thread and material is highly recommended to see what works.

It takes longer to stitch than to use masking tape, so, if you are timing your material, I would recommend: soaking, putting the material on the pole, stitching it on, and then soaking the next piece. Otherwise, your material may soak for too long. Especially if you are using a soda ash pre-soak, which has a 20 minute *maximum* for cotton material. Anything longer can destroy the material.



Working on the Pole

The Shibori book is not always organized the way I, a technical writer, would have organized it. For example, on page 126, it mentions that a master of shibori, Yamaguchi, had directions which indicated a cylinder 15.5 centimeters (6 in.). However, in the back of the book on page 288 of the appendix, a page is dedicated to ARASHI NOTES - Suggestions for Beginners.

The first suggestion states:

1. Start with a cylinder no larger than 10 centimeters (4 in.) in diameter. The greater the diameter of the cylinder, the more difficult it is to push the cloth along it. They then go on to explain that the cylinder must be perfectly smooth and provide a method to get the smoothness.

I would have appreciated knowing this information sooner. Like before I tried this experiment. Yes, it definitely was hard to move the material up the pole of a 15.5 cm/6 inch plastic cylinder. You have less control with a larger cylinder. I have large hands, and I had a hard time. I would hate to think what an effort someone with small hands would have.

I stitched the material onto the pole when I discovered that masking tape did not hold wet cotton material. When stitching, I did not worry about what size the stitches were. Turns out that I should have been a little concerned about it. With the large stitches that I took, when I pulled material up the pole and tried to turn it, the threads became stressed, and some of the stitching broke. This made for large gaps which created large folds in the material.



In the Future 1:
I will take smaller stitches keeping in mind that the size of my stitches can impact the size of the folds. For another pole wrap, is used one-quarter inch (approximately 0.5 cm) stitches.

Because I was surprised, and not as prepared as I should have been, when I discovered that the masking tape did not work, and I had to stitch the material onto the pole, I grabbed the first thread spool that I could grab. Unfortunately, it was my 100 percent cotton quilting thread rather than the cheap poly-cotton thread.

While the 100 percent cotton thread worked, I believe that the poly-cotton thread would have held up better with all the twisting and pulling.



In the Future 2:
I will use poly-cotton thread for shibori stitching. Besides being cheaper and more readily available, it will probably hold up better under the conditions presented by dyeing. Actually, I did another set of panels, and the poly-cotton thread used with smaller stitches held up very nicely.

On the first set of panels, I stitched the second panel to the first panel, and the third panel to the second panel to retain the diagonal line of how the material went around the pole. I had to stitch along the ends and then along the sides. This added time and thread to the stitching that I already needed to do.



In the Future 3:
I will not stitch succeeding panels to the previous panel. I will have them next to each other on the same pole.

For the second set of panels that I did, I did not stitch succeeding panels to the previous panel. The one drawback was the extra material that flopped around a bit and created a slightly larger fold than when stitched together. However, the time saved was very well worth it. I found that by tucking the bottom tail underneath, I got some control of the material back.

What Happened When...

Photographs are always nice, and these are the results of what happened when I tried different technique combinations. All material was presoaked in soda ash for 15-20 minutes.



First Pole Work

Again, the material was old cotton drapes with a twill weave stripe repeat left by the previous owners of our house. Since both kinds of masking tape did not stick to the material, I had to stitch the material onto the pole.



The rust color Procion dye was mixed with urea and two teaspoons of sodium alginate - a thickener. The dark brown Procion dye was mixed with urea and three teaspoons of sodium alginate. The sodium alginate makes the dye thicker to the touch.

Notice that the dye with alginate does not drip down like water.



This is what the material looks like part way through the twisting process. I found that it was easier to control the twist by twisting up the pole rather than twisting down the pole.

The material completely twisted and compressed looks like:



After getting the material twisted, it was easier to dye the twisted material with the material at the bottom. The dye was painted on with cheap foam brushes that you should be able to find at most any hardware or paint store. This picture shows what the material looked like after the first color (rust) was applied. Notice the visibly large white areas.



After the second color (dark brown) was added, this was the result:

Notice that less white area shows, but you can still see white areas.



In the Future 1:
I will make sure that no white areas show on my shibori pole work. Unless I want large white areas to show.

After dyeing the material, it needs to be wrapped in plastic wrap or put in a plastic garbage bag that is tied or taped shut. I had plastic wrap handy, so I used it.



After waiting 24 hours, rinsing the material on the pole was an interesting challenge. Getting a five foot (approximately 1.5 meter) pole into the laundry sink was manageable, but I was glad to have the assistance of my husband to lift the pole. Wet material adds a lot of weight to an otherwise light piece of plastic pipe.



Rinsing the material of dye is water intensive. No wonder dye sites were frequently near running sources of water.

Finally, after 24 hours and rinsing the fabric, we get to unwrap the material and start to see what the finished material looks like.



Seeing what it looks like bunched up and unwashed doesn't give you the true results, though. After washing and drying, the material looks different:



Note the large white areas on the material. This is more white than I intended or wanted.



First Twist Work

After the somewhat disappointing results from the first pole work, I decided to try a different technique on the part of my costume to be the wings. The material was a light drapery scarf of 100 percent cotton. While the label said white, when out of the package, the material looked more like a natural or slightly beige color. This material was considerably lighter weight than the drape material used on the pole.

The same rust and dark brown dyes were used on the pole. The material was treated differently, though. The steps used were:

1. Fold the material in half lengthwise.
2. Fold the material in half lengthwise again to get the material into quarter folds.
3. Take one of the quarter fold ends and bring it up to the center point.
4. Take the other quarter fold end and bring it up to the center point.
* This gave an accordion fold effect.
5. Twist the material tightly.
6. Bind the material with thread.

* Experience shows that the thread has to cross the folds to hold them. Thread going in the same direction does not hold the material well.



On the second close up especially, you can see the sharp edges of where the colors end. This is because of the sodium alginate that was added.



7. Dye the material.



Note: This is not a recognized shibori technique. Twisting the material after folding it is not in the shibori book. It is an experiment that I came up with.



This produced a type of stripe effect, and again, we had more white area than I wanted. So, we dyed the material a second time.

This time, the treatment was:

1. Pleat the material in 1 inch/2.5 cm folds.
2. Twist the material tightly in the opposite direction of the original dye effort. Instead of twisting the material to the right, we twisted the material to the left.
3. Bind the material with thread.



4. Dye the material.

We still have a stripe effect, but it is a nice one, and we're going to fly with these results:

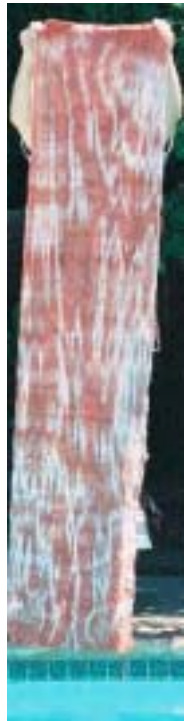
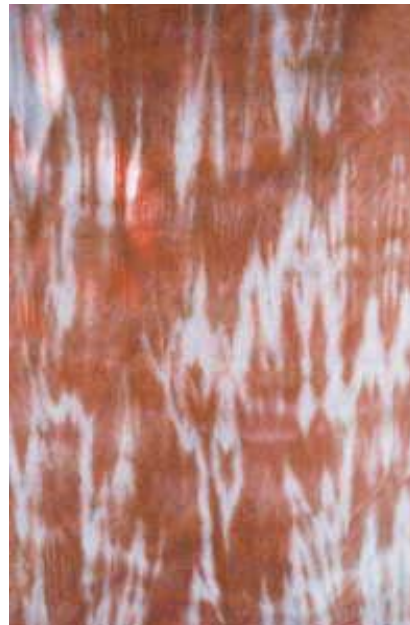




Second Twist Work

Realizing that folding the material gets stripe effects, I tried another variant. This time, we took the drapery material and twisted it without doing any folds of any kind. Just twist, bind, and dye. Again, this was not a recognized shibori technique in the book, it was my experimental idea.

A different dye formulation was used, also. No (zero, none) sodium alginate was used in the rust dye. The dark brown dye was kept the same. The combination of twisting and non-alginate dye produced a dramatic look that I like:

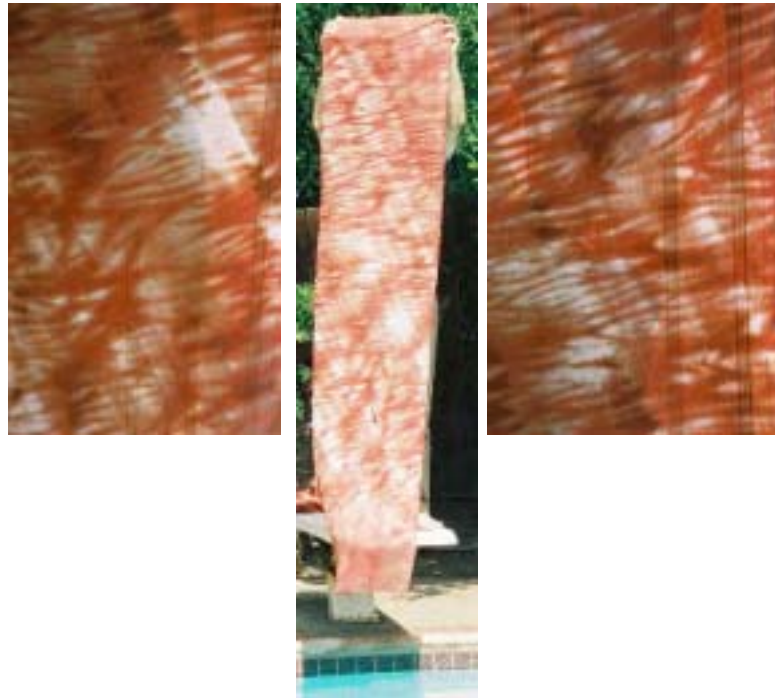


Second Pole Work

Since the second twist work got such a dramatically different result by not having sodium alginate in the rust dye, I decided to use the same rust dye with the shibori pole technique and see what would happen. The same dark brown dye was used for this batch of material.

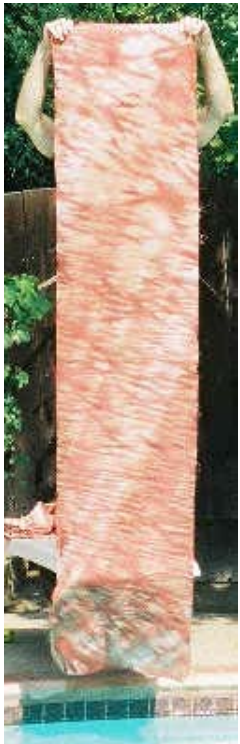
The rust dye spread more readily and got an interesting diagonal effect rather than a vertical effect. I suspect that the diagonal lines are because I did not twist the material on the pole hard enough.

On the close up pictures, you will notice that the dye has softer lines and tends to mix a little more. Contrast this with the sharp color edges that the pieces from the first pole work had.



Pieces Together

Before constructing my costume, I laid out the material to see how the pieces would work together, and I played around with the pieces to see how to get the most pleasing effect.





Unfortunately, I do not have a photograph that I can publish of my final costume. Other people took photographs, but I did not get a photograph of my costume.

[Editor's Notes: After Carole wrote this article, she let the SiW group know that a photo of her costume was posted on the Emerald City site, maintained by Cheryl Morgan at http://www.emcit.com/photos/T3masq_17.JPG and a selection of many masquerade photos in the overall con review by Sharon Archer, with photographic assistance from Bruce Wallace towards the bottom of <http://www.sfreu.com/ISSUES/2003/0309/Worldcon%2061/Review.htm>

BTW, Carole's costume was awarded for Workmanship at Torcon III for Best Dyeing Technique.]





Member Spotlight

This month's volunteer is
Rima McKinzey
(Interview completed
August 13, 2003)



ST: Do you have any pets?

RM: Not at the moment, though I have had cats, dogs, chickens, ducks, and a goat in an earlier incarnation.

ST: Do you have a spouse or significant other?

RM: Kim and I have been married 24 years as of Aug. 18th.

ST: Any children?

RM: No.

ST: Where are you currently living?



RM: Albany, CA (just north of and attached to Berkeley).

ST: Do you consider that your hometown?

RM: No, though we've lived here nearly 18 years. I was born and bred in New York City.

ST: Do you have a favorite vacation destination?

RM: Too many. I always have the problem of both wanting to go back to places I've visited and going someplace new to explore.

ST: Do you have a favorite costume movie?

RM: I loved Amidala's clothes in Star Wars I and II.

ST: Before others rent it, is it a good movie, or is it just good costumes?

RM: Though Kim would disagree, the movies weren't particularly good, but her clothes were fabulous. Elizabeth and Shakespeare in Love were good films as well as having great costumes. Hmm, there are so many I've enjoyed. Lester's Three and Four Musketeers had good ones too, especially if you ignore the inconsistencies of Raquel Welch's costumes.

ST: What are you currently reading?

RM: The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay – which I want to finish so I can read the latest Harry Potter. I'm very far behind in my reading. I used to be able to read a lot during commute times, but since I work at home and my commute is about 5 seconds, I can't get a lot of reading done then.

ST: What originally got you interested in costuming?

RM: I always enjoyed looking at costumes (entirely different from paying attention to fashion, which never interested me) and playing dress-up, but it was Dana who was more seriously into it and got me to play along. And then we combined two major interests/hobbies – food and costumes. This led to the fairly spectacular First (and thus far only) Invitational Intergalactic Ambassadorial Potluck.





ST: What are your favorite costuming topics?

RM: Since I really feel on the periphery of costuming, I don't know that I can offer any advice to anyone about much of costuming. I enjoy admiring the astonishing work I've seen others do, and I'm happy to dress up if given the opportunity.

ST: Are you currently working on any costumes?

RM: Only in my fantasies... though I was currently asked to be Matron of Honor at my sister-in-law's wedding.

ST: Do you have a favorite historic period?

RM: I've had lots of fun with late Victorian, as I've been a docent, occasionally in costume, at the Haas-Lilienthal



House in S.F., built 1886.

ST: A favorite color?

RM: I don't really have a favorite. I don't do pastels, though.

ST: A favorite food?

RM: You mean other than chocolate?

ST: And your current education or career?

RM: I have a degree in Comparative Language (Linguistics) and have been fortunate to have a career utilizing it. I'm an orthoepist, i.e., I'm a free lance lexicographer, a pronunciation editor for whatever dictionary will hire me. My husband doesn't trust any dictionary that doesn't have my name in it.



This Year at Burning Man – 2003

by Dana MacDermott

What exactly is Burning Man? It is an event; it is a temporary city located in the Black Rock desert about 100 miles from Reno, Nevada. It is an Art Colony. It has also been variously characterized as a community, a sinful dissolute retreat, a medieval village, or a weeklong party. It has been called evil; it has been called wonderful. For some, it is the antidote to the depersonalized competitive modern society. It is certainly an alternate reality.

They call the temporary city that grows in the desert for the annual event, "Black Rock City". Attendance in 2003 was said to have exceeded 30,000.

Having attended Burning Man in 2001, Bruce and I were far better prepared this year. That last time, we had rented a VW camper Van and found it inadequate and uncomfortable.

During the spring, we purchased a nearly 30-year-old tent trailer with our week in the Black Rock Desert in mind. When opened up, it has beds front and back, a sitting area, a sink, storage, a three-burner cook top, and a small propane run refrigerator. We pulled it with the van Bruce uses for his tools in his General Contracting business. This allowed us to bring along all kinds of various amenities, such as a propane barbecue, table and chairs and a bicycle.

Sunday, August 24

We left Berkeley on Sunday afternoon, and drove almost to Reno before stopping for the night. We had spent a thankfully relatively brief time sitting by the side of the freeway with a flat tent trailer tire. I am very appreciative of the AAA. Getting at the equipment we carried to put on the spare would have meant emptying the van of the chairs, coolers, containers of water, barbecue, folding table, tarps etc.

Under the misimpression that a casino would offer better food than a simple motel, we stopped at Boomtown for the night.

Boomtown is a Casino with a Cowboy theme. The food was appalling, though the salad

from the salad bar was edible. I have no idea what they put on the steak; I probably do not want to know.

The only redeeming (?) detail was the presence of genuine costume items encased in glass in the lobby; a pair of chaps and other cowboy paraphernalia, and some elaborate silver decorated saddles. Perhaps the carpeting says everything about Boomtown that needs to be said.



The Sights of Boomtown



Monday, August 25

In the morning, after some dreadful pancakes and a very marginal cup of coffee, we headed onward. After obtaining a replacement for the deceased tire in Reno, we drove on and

eventually took the turn off towards Gerlach, the town closest to the site of Burning Man.

During the winter, the Black Rock Desert is a lakebed. As the moisture evaporates, the ground dries, hardens and cracks. It is perfectly flat, and mostly hard; excellent for bicycle riding if the conditions have been good. The ground is very alkaline. Imagine an expanse of brown-gray baked and compressed sheet rock dust, and you will have a reasonably accurate image. Although the dried substance is quite firm, some of it powders as it is disturbed by the friction of the wind or other forces.

The winds gust from time to time across the playa, raising clouds of the ultra fine dust in swaths that can range from very localized to intense white outs. Dust masks and goggles are *de rigueur*.

The dust was up as we approached the greeters at the entrance to Black Rock City. They checked that we were ticketed, gave us the maps and schedules and lists, a bit of orientation, chatted warmly and welcomed us to Burning Man, reminding us to drink often and deeply.

We circled around to the city's clock shaped grid, and made our way to the intersection of "Literal" and "Authority", joining our friends and family at our theme camp, Bioluminati. The



remainder of that day was spent erecting the group's geodesic dome, pyramidal cook tent, shower, and setting up our living spaces.

Each year the streets are named in keeping with the theme. They are also referenced by the clock face (the Man is at the center). The innermost street circling the vast central open space is the "Esplanade". This year's theme was *Beyond Belief*.



Map of Black Rock City

Tuesday, August 26

Tuesday began with the news that thunderstorms were a strong possibility. It was

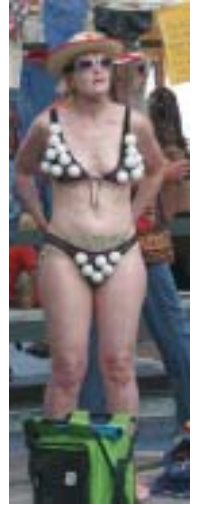


overcast. In a usually dry environment, you could smell moisture. Bioluminati put up our flagpole and installed the flag I had created in painted silk. Rumors of possible rain up to an inch kept us all looking skyward nervously. Fortunately, it did not materialize.

That day, the pictures we took were against an ominous cloud filled sky. Tuesday was the day Bruce and I had volunteered to prepare



dinner. Most of our wandering as a result was to Center Camp, which is located at 6 O'clock, and was fairly near our theme camp.



The core of center camp is the coffee shop. It is large and busy and a fine place to sit and watch the people and costumes go by.



The coffee, tea and lemonade available here and the ice also available elsewhere in Center camp are the only purchasable items in all of Black Rock City. It is a gift and trade economy.



Costumes at Burning Man are everywhere. It is part of the culture that many participants wear something odd, or fun, or festive, but most of all, **different**. There is no rhyme or reason to the images, and imaginations can and do run wild.





The heat of the day is a dominating factor. Many of the costumes are brief and there are many people who wear nothing save a layer of powerful sun tan lotion. Tattoos are proudly displayed. Body paint, sometimes very

elaborate is common, either as part or the entirety of a costume.



Dinner at Burning Man depends on your philosophy and organization. There are those who believe the appropriate approach is minimalistic. Freeze dried food or perhaps cereal or sandwiches eaten in a hurry simply to keep the body going accompanies the constant fluids you are repeatedly encouraged to consume.

Bioluminati is of another school entirely. It is a challenge to produce high quality dinners in this setting, but we take our turns doing just that. Bruce and I made Paella for 25 that night; a salad, and Sangria accompanied it, with rice Krispie treats for dessert. There was, of course, enough extra to hand out to neighbors and passersby. Bruce made four pans of rice Krispie treats; so we also had them to hand out during the rest of the week.

Wednesday, August 27

By Wednesday, most of the construction of the Art Installations was at least nearing completion. I would guess that they had all been scheduled for earlier completion, but.... Wednesday was our first major excursion. This means we set out on the bicycle, in costume with the entire surreal environment to explore.



Those are "Un-brellas" atop our heads. There are misters attached under the fabric, and they rain gently inside when we turn a valve.

The bicycle allowed us access to everything! Because I do not actually know how to ride a bicycle, we had not had one the first time at Burning Man, and our range was very limited by both the distances and the heat. This time, with our eBay-purchased tandem bike, we wandered throughout, from nearby to the far reaches, from center camp to the distant perimeter fence, camera ready, and flavored soda water within easy reach. We did learn to open the soda water before we set out, and to take a few gulps. I only got drenched the first time, and in the heat, it was just funny.

Wednesday was our first nighttime exploration. We concentrated on the local area and followed the lights and people to the outskirts of some very active parties. It proved difficult to take nighttime photos of costumes as the lit costumes were on people who tended towards high activity levels. There was one notable triad with head pieces that seemed inspired by Klingon skulls with an additional front to back row of pistil shaped protrusions that were dipped in a liquid and set aflame. They were in formal attire, dancing furiously, and every attempt to get a photo failed miserably. Only a few of the nighttime costumes could be documented; it is far easier to capture nighttime vehicles as they sit.



The wind and dust do not stop at night. It also becomes cool, even cold, necessitating different wardrobes and producing different images. We walked briefly into Center Camp; I turned around and was confronted with this memorable view of Bruce.



Thursday, August 28

On Thursday, the sky was punctuated with kites. I don't know whether there was a concentrated effort or if it was simply happenstance. They were high up and tiny to the onlookers, but they flew that day in numbers.

On the ground, the show continued.



Not only are people costumed, but many bicycles are as well. There are a vast number of decorated vehicles -- art cars, scooters, motorized furniture, and furry slippers traversing the playa. The variety is limited only by the imagination.



Thursday was a day to wander; we investigated some of the many theme camps.

Of the thousands of campsites, large and small, many of them offer some kind of activity, service or entertainment. We happened upon two costume-centered sites. There may have been more. One of the geodesics, right on the



Esplanade had a substantial collection of costumes and odd clothes available for examination, trying on and taking. They also had a skilled make up artist wielding his airbrush. Also present was a sign requesting usable costume items be donated to the collection.



At another site, there was equipment and materials for constructing wings. By the time we came upon this group, it had already seen the creation of numerous sets of wings in many variations,

and the choicest fabrics and the heavy gage wire had largely been utilized. Still, however,

people continued on working with the less flashy fabrics, coat hangers, and colored plastic wrap.

Costumes are ubiquitous. If you did not come prepared as many did, you could improvise, borrow, or go to one of these sites.



Thursday when sunset approached, we were out on the playa. Up above, I noticed several small moving arcs. Although I never saw the plane, it soon became obvious that these were people dropping into Black Rock City. We were fortunate in our location; one of the chutists reached earth where we were standing. That night, we were expecting Jaron and Samantha to arrive with my brother. We heard from them that they were leaving the Bay Area later than hoped. So many times we had gone on vacation expecting to be able to be in touch, and had been unable to access our email. Here, in the middle of the desert, where no cell phone rang, Burning Man was on wireless, and we were connected.



Friday, August 29

My brother, Daniel, arrived quietly at around 5:30AM, and tiptoed into the tent trailer we had offered to share with him. We got up, got ourselves dressed and went out onto the playa to catch the sunrise. It was a wonderful experience. Here and there were assorted individuals,



couples and groups also up or still up to see the dawn. There is a light at sunrise that is even more magical in the desert. We watched the sun come up on the Art of the Playa.



The Man stands in the center of the great open space with the city arc running from 2 to 10 O'clock. The diameter of the entire circle is about one and a half miles, with the center three quarters of a mile open space. Scattered in the open areas in the center, and beyond the center between 10 and 2 as well as along the Esplanade are the bulk of the art installations. There is a tremendous range of size and construction, of image, inspiration and quality. In spite of our wanderings and efforts, I am sure we did not see them all.



It was common to be riding around getting a new view of the works we had already seen, and to discover suddenly an Artwork previously unnoticed. Some are intimate; some are of an

impressive scale. They could be whimsical, or dramatic. The desert setting added to the impact and significance of them all.



Friday was also the day of the women's critical mass bicycle ride. It has become a tradition on Friday afternoon for masses of women to ride bare breasted through Black Rock City.

After the ride, in which a number of the Bioluminati women participated, our camp celebrated the Genghis Khan Barbecue. With six Mongolian firepots, and assortments of meats, fish, chicken and vegetables we had yet another feast. This production was Ari's gustatory work of art.

After dinner, we were out again on the playa. Nighttime out in the center is another unique experience. Off in the distance is a ring of lights. No power comes into the desert, aside from the batteries, and generators. Add to this the solar panels and wind turbines. It is still amazing to look around and see the night lit with both stationery and mobile glows.



Saturday, August 30

This is the day to find the installations you have heard about, and do the things you were planning to do. The Man burns on Saturday night.

I had been looking at the body paint, and contemplating. Down the street from us and towards center camp was one of the body painting camps. They had a series of person sized stations and pump pressurized containers with water and food coloring. Spray all over, pause and rub dry, repeat.

I chose yellow.

In my yellow skin I then sought out another theme camp whose mission was the application of glitter. I had a layer of red glitter added to the yellow. It does wash off with water and soap, but sheddings of the fine red glitter found their way into the tent trailer and bedding and eventually into the basement laundry at home.



The night of the burn we cycled out into the territory near the Man but outside of the huge crowd. This time, we watched from a place where the crowd did not engulf us. After the fireworks, the Man began to burn. It was a sudden rise of flame unlike the slow burn we witnessed two years before. A vortex formed in the flames and roared upwards. We could feel the heat even at our distance.



The flames illuminated the playa so intensely that the details were clear all the way to the Esplanade.

After the burn, nighttime on the playa was in full celebration.

We visited one of my favorite low-tech sites with high tech impact. A corridor of PVC pipe holds up a latticework of Christmas tree lights. At the entrance, everyone is handed a pair of cardboard diffraction glasses. The lights break into three-dimensional patterns, and you walk down the aisle surrounded by rainbow notes.



Sunday, August 31

This was clean up and pack-up day for much of the population. We were included in that group. Time to dismantle the site, to put our clothes and goods into the van, close down the tent trailer and make our way out.

As well meaning and industrious as we were, it took until 4PM to get ourselves ready to leave. With hugs and promises to keep in touch, we pulled out and headed towards the road, and were immediately engulfed in the most intense white out we had experienced on either visit to the desert. We could not see 10 feet ahead. Like a classic pea soup fog, the dust swirled and gave us momentary glimpses of our surroundings. In each such moment, we made a bit of progress until we emerged from the dust storm into the summer air.

Later we found out that the camp experienced none of this, and several hundred feet behind us, remained in the clear unobscured air.

We headed homeward, covered in the unmistakable gray dust, tempered with a powdering of fine red glitter.

Dana MacDermott

A more extensive set of photos is available for viewing at:
MNouveau.com/BurningMan2003



**ICG President's
Message**
Sept. 24, 2003:

Hello Everyone,

Sorry for the lack of word from your president but the last couple of months have been well filled.

First, I want to say well done to all the Board members who took the time to vote. You are the greatest. It was nice to see the vote tally. It doesn't matter how you cast your vote, but that you voted. Again, Well Done.

World Con is over (Thank the Gods) It was not the easiest Con I ever worked; I made several mistakes as deputy but everyone helped me get through it.

Alixandra Jordan did more work on the months before the Con than anyone else and never stopped until it was over. She was, in my opinion, the real power behind the throne.

My first mistake was not making sure I was 100% aware of what was happening and letting things slide as not my job.

My second mistake was not making sure people understood what I was asking them. This cost me one of my judges.

The remaining judges did their job well and Vickie was very special as workmanship, as I had been short sighted and not understood that over 70% of the people would wish to be judged.

Gord Rose was a great MC and I would not wait for a second to use him again. He handled anything we threw at him like the Pro he is. When the problem came up with the house and the fashion show he did not lose his head but asked what we needed and went to work, unlike some others.

Tech was right on the money Larry as we all know is one of if not the best, at calling a show. The other gentleman, Phil, and his back stage crew were right on the money.

But even with this there were problems.

There was not enough lighting. The costumes washed out about half way back. Most of this was the committee's fault but not all. Martin did not fight when he should, and the event needed a hard fighting leader.

The problem with the hall was a bad one: you don't put 2000 people in a room with one way out and one escalator. This was the problem discovered the night before at the Hugos and the fix decided on was given to the masquerade at 4:30pm the night of the show. As soon as the problem was discovered we should have been told and allowed time to fix it, but we also should have been right there Sat. night finding out if the problem was being addressed, and we were not.

This is the reason the Fashion show was in the middle of the masquerade. At 4:30 we were told the show would be halted at the last contestant and the lights turned up and the hall cleared before the half time could start.

After the hall was cleared anyone wishing to return could do so. This would have meant the Fashion show was playing to an empty house The person in charge of the Fashion show had a fit and said she would not go on under those conditions. After much swearing by the lady it was decided to move the fashion show to the middle as many of the models were costumers as well and they had worked hard getting ready for this show. The change caused delays and made Gord's job much harder than it had any right to be but as I said earlier, he was

professional and with out any fuss did what was needed. If any one person saved the show it was he.

The Committee was no help for anything, from the start to the end. I will not go into other problems with the Con except for programming.

For months Charles Mohapel and Alix worked hard to set up a good track of programming. Maybe not the greatest, but it was damn good. What we got was nothing like what they worked so hard on. In fact it was not close it was to be in one room. It was moved between two buildings several blocks apart with only ten minutes to get from one to the other.

To make matters worse the green room was in a third area. It made for a great loss of time and problems.

With that thought I wish to say I am sorry to my other panel members for showing up late for my second panel.

Dora gets a big thank you. She handled the certificates she designed them, took care of the paper work, and filled them all in, and stayed with it until the wee hours of the morning, and then got up early and worked non stop on them until each one was finished,

As Martin and Barb also gave out certificates or participation as well as the awards it was no easy job. This year we decided to award a different certificate for workmanship. This resulted in printing over 140 certificates in one of the three styles.

When we left the building she handed Martin all of the certificates that had not been picked up.

On a more pleasant note. With the sale of disks & tapes from Torcon 3, the Archives will now have 40 disks to work with, meaning 40 more masquerades will be saved.

Torcon was also the first sample showing of the Book of Costumes. It was well received. The book will be making the rounds with me to other Cons; stop by and take a look

C. D. Mami
President



Sense and Sensibility
based on the novel by Jane Austen

A review by
Sharon and Madelaine Trembley

This movie is a contrast of romance, and we have two penniless, yet highborn, sisters to watch through the movie with their experiences and misplaced affections leading up to marriage.

Emma Thompson, who stars as Elinor, and wrote the screen-play said, "Women still fall in love with the wrong guy. They still get jilted, they're still looking for people to marry."



Emma Thompson as Elinor Dashwood

Can there be instantaneous passionate burning with something akin to 'love at first sight'? The so-called Marianne route. OR Is steadily growing love better? The Elinor route.



Kate Winslet as Marianne Dashwood

Madelaine and I also question what Ang Lee, *Sense and Sensibility's* director, brought out of *Sense and Sensibility* into *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* – a Hong Kong style action film with depth of character, complex relations and underlying multiple romances. Though we are pleased that the crying women syndrome from *Sense and Sensibility* was excoriated.

Madelaine and I were concerned that it appeared that only women cry in *Sense and Sensibility*, and it was all the guys' fault, with the exception of the Colonel Brandon character, played by Alan Rickman.



As Elinor's constant love interest, there is Edward Ferrars, played by Hugh Grant.

Considered by JA enthusiasts to be too pretty for the role of Edward.

Marianne's dashing suitor is John Willoughby, played by Greg Wise.



Marianne says 'Willoughby' quite a bit too much during the movie for our tastes.





The Costumes:

Madelaine says they are dreadfully dull.

This is set during the Regency Period: 1812-1830. That's when the Prince of Wales was named Regent after King George III fell ill, or went insane (depending on your viewpoint).

Fashion-wise, there was little in the way of underpinnings – no panniers and no hoops! Everything was simplicity based on ancient Grecian statues ... though Sharon's not sure why the English followed the French in this change of fashion since the French were being Revolutionary when they thought this up. And with the young French ladies catching pneumonia in their thin, see-through muslin gowns, why would the English think it a good idea to dress this way?



The ladies' dress was characterized by a raised waistline that usually had a sash to help define it. The usual wearing of a gauze bodice or a muslin neckerchief seems to be



missing at times during this movie. Outdoors, ladies were also wearing spencers – a long-sleeved jacket cut beneath the bust – and pelisses – a longer jacket cut ¾ down the length of the skirt. They also wore bonnets outdoors. The straw variety is seen throughout Sense and Sensibility.

The hairstyles while appearing natural, were parted by letters of the alphabet T, V, Y and U - bizarre to us, but Madelaine does like that zig-zag part down the middle.

During the Regency Era, male attire dimmed color-wise, and wigs were hardly worn by younger men. However, this was the beginning of the fancy cravat tying.



Pant breeches, stockings and buckled shoes changed into breeches tucked into riding boots.

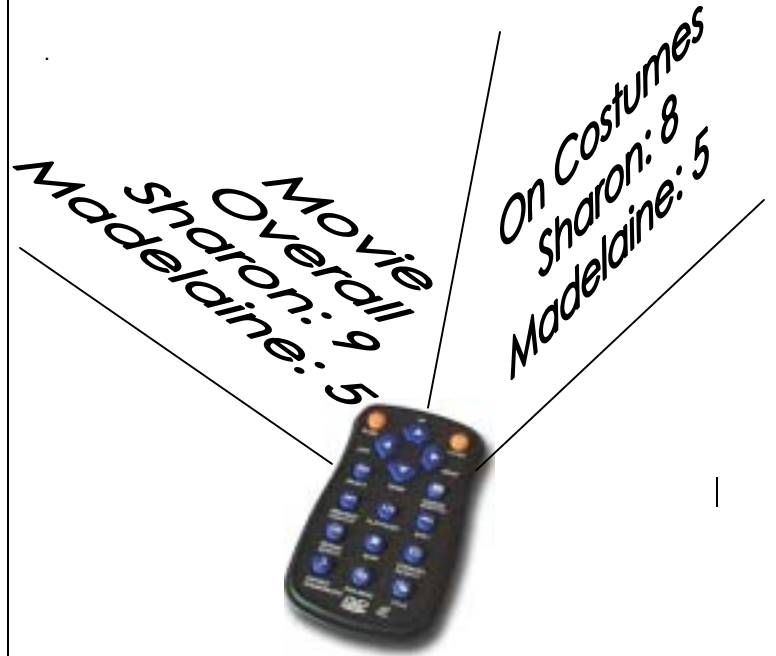




Sense and Sensibility offers a lot of different Regency Era costuming - outdoors and indoors, fancy dress and plain dress.

Awards:

- 1996 Academy Award: Best Writing Adapted Screenplay
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Picture nominee
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Actress nominee: Emma Thompson
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Supporting Actress nominee: Kate Winslet
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Cinematography nominee
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Music Score nominee
- 1996 Academy Award: Best Costume Design nominee
- AFI: Top 100 Passions
- AFI: Top 100 Movies nominee



Sense and Sensibility is owned by Columbia Pictures. All images used with no intent to profit from them except for information purposes. Emma Thompson quoted by CNN.