

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Silicon Web Staff

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President's Message

Dana MacDermott*

I just attended Costume-Con 30 in Tempe Arizona. Over the course of the four days, I managed to have fairly extensive conversations with two of the three con chairs of upcoming Costume-Cons.

During one of these discussions, I began reflecting on the special virtues of a traveling convention. With a different location and committee each year, the “look and feel” of the convention, the emphasis, panels, special events, and tours change. Each year draws locals who are new to the convention and who can put their own unique knowledge into the mix. This inherent variation keeps Costume-Con always fresh and always exciting; it should never be a “been there; done that” kind of experience.

The programming (which can have panels, talks, roundtables, workshops, retrospectives and anything else the committee can think up) is wrapped around a backbone consisting of the two Masquerade competitions (Fantasy & Science Fiction, and Historical), and the Future Fashion Show. For those of us involved with the ICG, the convention is preceded by the annual in-person meeting.

Only a fraction of the SiW members managed to attend Costume-Con. Since the SiW exists without a geographic focus, we are not ever going to have a convention located in our group's home space. We do not meet, have parties and events, or regularly share the experience of any specific convention. But lacking this unifying experience has another side.

Every regional convention has its own culture; its own personality. In contrast to sharing a single convention, SiW members routinely attend a wide range of different events, with different cultures, practices and emphases. If we use our lines of communication well, our membership has a real opportunity to get a feel for the variations and styles of the conventions in many locations.

I am ending this column by asking our members to share with the SiW their experiences at the events they attend with

more than a list of the awards won in competitions, but with comments and descriptions that clarify the way the conventions or events work, how they are similar to or different from other events, and what surprises we might expect should we happen to attend.

This is my final President's message as I will be taking up the job of representing the SiW on the ICG Board of directors. I will be in touch.....



From the Editor

Philip Gust*

Costuming for Broadway and Hollywood is something most costumers will never do. Those who recreate costumes worn by famous actors and actresses can gain an appreciation of the difficulties the designers faced by studying original drawings and photos in an attempt to understand and reproduce how those costumes were made.

A case in point is Elizabeth Taylor's “Phoenix” cape from *Cleopatra*. The cape recently sold at auction, and the auction house posted a physical description and high-resolution photos that provide clues to its construction. I discuss how auction photos can be used in an article that analyzes

how Taylor's cape may have been made based on this new evidence.

Maral Agnerian, who recreated Cyd Charisse's iconic green flapper dress from the 1952 MGM musical *Singin' in the Rain*, says that the dress probably no longer exists, and her only source was publicity stills and screen caps. Maral rose to the challenge and did a brilliant recreation for Costume-Con 29. In her article, Maral describes the process she followed and shows off the results.

Theatrical and movie costumers often take inspiration from influential designs of the past. Kathe Gust describes how costumes created by famous designers for Florenz Ziegfeld's *Follies* during the early-to-mid 20th century continue to influence designs for lavish Broadway productions, Hollywood extravaganzas, and today's spectacles like *Cirque du Soleil*.

Whether designing for stage or screen, creating successful costumes relies on taking the body types of the actors and actress who wear them into account. Theatrical costumer and theater professor Tara Maginnis offers insight into the process of working with body types to create successful costumes.

Very few costumers ever have a chance to design original movie costumes, but four teams at BayCon 2009 tried their hand at it when they pretended to be designers for a fictitious *John Carter of Mars* movie based on the Edgar Rice Burroughs series. With the recent release of the actual Disney movie, we compare the approaches of movie costume designer Mayes Rubeo with those

of the four teams, and get reactions to the movie from three members of those teams.

Marjorie Wilser recently uncovered a long-lost pattern for one of the fantasy "shoulder dolls" designed by the late Kayta Barrows. In a tribute to Kayta, Marjorie tries her hand at creating her own doll from the pattern, which she shares with readers.

Finally, we present another in our series of "Postcards," contributed by SiW members who attended Costume-Con 30.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in VC. The theme for the August 2012 issue is "Haunting and Horror." Just in time for the Halloween, this issue provides ideas and techniques for costuming in the supernatural and horror genres and looks back at some of your favorite characters and people who created them. The November 2012 issue explores "Costuming and Technologies." From basic techniques and materials, to useful devices, and even some truly whacky inventions, this issue pays tribute to the technologies that have made today's practice of costuming possible.

I'm pleased to announce that the theme for the February 2013 issue will be "Spring Cleaning," covering a range of costume-related topics including managing large costuming projects, and organizing sewing room workspaces.

See the [Upcoming Issues](#) page of the SiW web site for details. Now is a great time to start writing for VC, and share what you know and love with your fellow costumers.



Dreamcatcher Awarded at Costume-Con 30 *Carole Parker**

For the first time since we began awarding Dreamcatchers, one was awarded at Costume-Con 30 during the Single Pattern contest. Normally, Dreamcatchers tend to be awarded during SF&F or Historical masquerades. This is also the first time that a Dreamcatcher was awarded jointly.

"Kimono Dragon" used EL-wire in a way that we had not seen before. The EL-wire dragon was done by Mike Maung following his wife's design. What was so exceptional were the different colors of EL-wire used in the same piece of art. Becky Maung designed the costume, and created the kimono and translucent overlay so the dragon shows.



With the award, Mike and Becky also receive one year memberships in Silicon Web. Please join us in welcoming Becky and Mike Maung to SiW! [Visit the SiW [Dreamcatcher](#) web page for more.]