

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Silicon Web Staff

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President's Message Kevin Roche*

Fortunately, I just finished building a time rotor core, because it's one week after "Gallifrey One" and I was supposed to deliver this column the weekend of the convention. So wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey and allons-y, I can still turn it in on time!

I've been watching *Doctor Who* since it first starting showing on PBS in the SF Bay Area, and Gallifrey One is the only media convention Andy attend. DW is also one of the only shows I've constructed media recreation costumes for. The first was the Vardans from The Invasion of Time serial, who on screen appeared as strange shimmering force fields. We accomplished that by cello-taping flat bags of superinsulation (very thin aluminized Mylar,

thin enough that we could see through) open at the bottom for us to walk.

There is something about *Doctor Who* that inspires my wickedly depraved costuming sense of humor. A grey silk housecoat in a community closet became the frock coat in a monochromatic version of "The Fourth Doctor as seen on a very old, very small black and white television set," featuring a 37-foot long scarf knitted for me on very large needles by Jennifer Tiffit. From the new series, there is Captain Jack Harkness, a character so appealing that I actually wore wool (itchy!) and sprayed my hair black to more effectively play his omnivorous rake.

And then there was the Tiki Dalek (right), the construction of which I detailed in a construction diary at the Project Dalek Forum (yes, an entire web community of Dalek Builders) and wrote about as well in the [March 2011 issue](#) of *Yipe!* magazine.

Kevin Roche's Tiki Dalek. Photo: [Heather E. Croft](#).



The Tiki Dalek* (TDK) is one of my few "creature" costumes, and one of my favorite to play, because its general zaniness (and island music soundtrack) seems to put a smile on everyone's face. This year I finally thought to trundle him out to the poolside oasis at the LAX Marriott for some photos amongst the palms (alas! the cabana bar was no longer there, so we could only pretend to sip frosty tropical cocktails) and rediscovered his Pied Piper nature. An impromptu conga line formed behind TDK as soon as he entered the pool deck, which proved helpful in getting him up and over the little bridge, and I was quickly surrounded by a dozen dancing children. TDK actually managed 30 minutes of banter with the 8-and-under set before they wandered off and I could pop the hatch and change into my trunks for our photo shoot.

Gallifrey One is actually one of our favorite events and very costume and cosplay friendly, and one of the few places where we've observed a more traditional fan base (from the original series) melding successfully with a much younger generation (discovering DW with the recent reboot).

* I should also note that I've deployed just the bottom half of TDK to execute a "Tiki Davros".



The wardrobe ingenuity ranges from screen-accurate cosplay (and crossplay) to creature costumes to wild concoctions like the “femme” versions of the Doctor, a plethora of Tardis- and Dalek-inspired dresses, and wild wackiness like the Tiki Dalek or Bryan and Mette’s “disco mode” for their Ogri (stone monolith creature from “The Stones of Blood”).

This year Andy and I stretched our comfort level and produced an exhibition-only masquerade entry that was all assembled store-bought clothing instead of constructed costumes (to create Mike Brewer and Edd China in a mashup of *Doctor Who* with *Wheeler Dealers*, an obscure but fun British car-restoration reality series). This foray into something more on the cosplay side of the game was great fun, and we expect Mike and Edd (and the Time Rotor) will make a number of repeat appearances.

I hope you enjoy *The Virtual Costumer’s* dive into the Time Vortex!

PS. Conventions coming up! Include Costume-Con in Toronto at the end of April, from which Andy and I will be dashing directly to Des Moines where we’re delighted to be Fan Guests of Honor.

PPS. Are you attending LonCon3 (This year’s Worldcon at the Excel in the London Docklands)? Andy and I are in charge of the Costume, Cosplay and Style area of the programme, and hope to make use of your talent and ideas. The first step is to fill out the [programme volunteer survey](#)



From the Editor *Philip Gust**

The BBC television series *Doctor Who* is a cult phenomenon in the sci-fi and cosplay communities. It began as a family show that first aired in November, 1963 in a serial format. The theme of time travel allowed the show to explore scientific ideas and famous moments in history. It was to have alternated between science and history, but eventually gravitated to sci-fi as the historical episodes proved less popular.



The first twelve incarnations of Doctor Who. Photo: BBC.

The show was famously low-budget, and production staff were always scrambling for scripts, sets, costumes, and props that kept them under the BBC's strict budget. It resulted in some very creative story lines, using weirdly re-dressed BBC sets (in part of one story no set at all), costumes from BBC wardrobe or put together by the actors, and an assortment of recycled prop gizmos.

At first just an eccentric alien time traveler, the Doctor explored time and space in an unreliable time machine called the TARDIS (time and relative dimensions in space) that looked like a blue police call box outside, but was much larger inside. Only later did the writers develop the storyline of a renegade Time Lord on the run.

Regeneration was also introduced later because William Hartnell, the first actor who portrayed the Doctor, was in poor health and the part had to be recast. Each incarnation had his own wardrobe that kept elements from previous ones, while introducing new and often more fanciful elements.

Clothing worn by the Doctor, his “companions,” and assorted villains became the grist for generations of children who “played” *Doctor Who*, grew up as sci-fi fans, and eventually attended conventions in recreations of the show's costumes and its props, including the Sonic Screwdriver. As a kid growing up in the 1960s, I remember watching black and white episodes that were imported from the UK as filler. William Hartnell and especially Patrick Troughton were the Doctors that I knew.

The show also featured alien creatures. The Doctor's best-known nemeses, the Daleks, first appeared in a 1963 script that was rejected because of a BBC ban on "bug-eyed monsters." With no other script ready, the show was forced to use it, introducing the aliens that became the series' most popular monsters, and ushering in the BBC's first merchandising boom. This cleared the way for a menagerie of creatures, including the robotic Cybermen and an ancient earth race, the Silurians, which offered a rich vein of new material for costumers to explore.

This issue of *VC* explores some of the costuming, the prop-making, and the creature-building opportunities that this venerable series has provided over its first fifty years.

Leading off is Christopher Erickson, a renowned cosplayer and a leading *Doctor Who* character re-enactor, who talks about the essential elements every costumer needs to recreate his or her own favorite Doctor from head to toe.

Next, Stacy Meyn and Tracy Newby introduce us to a "nightmare in silver," the Cybermen. With a long pedigree in recreating everything from Storm Troopers to assorted aliens, they offer an introduction to these fearsome menaces, and present several projects that show how you can create your own from either the classic or the new series.

With a family background in NASA and the U.S. Space program, it was only natural that Jennifer Wylie would take on the

mission of recreating "The Impossible Astronaut" from the episode of the same name. Her costuming odyssey and the techniques she developed make for some fascinating reading.

I have a long-standing interest in prop-making, so what could be a better as a project than to recreate the classic Sonic Screwdriver, used by the Third, Fourth and Fifth Doctors? The biggest challenge wasn't construction, but the process of researching it and working out its shape and dimensions. The essential techniques that I illustrate in my article can be used to reproduce many other movie and TV props as well.

Madame Vastra, was one of the more popular aliens in the *Doctor Who* series. Awakened from hibernation in the 19th century when her lair was disturbed during construction of the London Underground, she became a part of London society and a consulting detective to Scotland Yard. Sahrye Cohen describes how she made the costume, and created the complex prosthetics for the character in her kitchen, with little prior experience.

With the Gallifrey One convention in Los Angeles barely over, we are pleased to present a series of "Virtual Postcards" from one of the premier *Doctor Who* creature cosplayers, Mette Hedin. Mette gives us an insider's view of the venue, the people, and the costumes at one of the largest *Doctor Who* conventions. Her report includes hall costumes and some of the best entries from the costume masquerade.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. The May 2014 issue will take us to the Wonderful World of Disney costuming. The many colorful characters in Disney's cartoon and live-action classics provide an opportunity for imaginative and occasionally goofy takes on some of the most iconic costumes anywhere.

The August 2014 issue will be all about embellishment techniques and "Wearable Arts," which incorporate unusual materials and construction techniques to create wearable works of art, and provide costumers with new avenues for creativity.

I'm pleased to announce that the November 2014 issue is "Odds and Ends," which includes a variety of costuming topics that don't always fit into a single theme. This issue will include a fascinating variety of articles on both common and unusual aspects of costuming, by some of the most interesting new and veteran *VC* authors

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

Well, that's it for this issue. It's time for me to get back in the TARDIS and go on to my next adventure! Now where did I put that key?

