

# Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

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## President's Message Kevin Roche\*

### *Reuniting the Tribes*

It has been a rough spring. We've lost a number of people near and dear to us this year, including my parents (Mom in March and Dad in April). Thank you to all the Silicon Web members who offered us comfort and support during those trying times. There will be moments of sadness cropping up, I know, but we are past the very worst of it.

On reflecting on the state of things as we approach the beginning of summer, I realized something that had eluded my notice during the stress and drama of recent events. Gallifrey One was in February, Costume-Con 32 was a month ago in Toronto and Worldcon (Loncon 3) is only three months away, and something wonderful is happening.

I'm part of the generation of fan costumers who has watched with some bemusement the growth of the cosplay community in the US. I was one of the costumers at the 1984 Worldcon which can be justifiably credited with sparking the beginning of cosplay in Japanese fandom.



Dakek conga line at Gallifrey One.

I watched as it transferred back into, first, US anime fandom and then more generally into US media fandom, and I've been subjected to diatribes from (usually quite young) cosplayers who deny that what they do ("cosplay") has anything to do with what I (and thousands of other fans) have been doing ("costume") for decades<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Not all cosplayers, by any means. But often enough that such conversations really stuck with me.

I've watched cosplayers struggle to figure out many of the same lessons about competition and cooperation that we've learned and which led, in large part, to the creation of the ICG and its chapters. I've lamented the generational divide which seemed to have formed, and wondered what we can do to get them to believe they can come play with us.

It's happening. At [Gallifrey One](#) (the big *Doctor Who* convention in Los Angeles, California) in February, I was struck by how fans of the new series (many younger, many identifying as Cosplayers) and older finally seemed to be melding. Not only were there lots of new fans enjoying the older series and costumes inspired by it, but there seemed to be less "Get off my lawn!" reactions from us codgers. There is also the entire new genre of costume fashion -- dresses inspired by creatures and props, notably Daleks and Tardises -- that shows no sign of slowing down.

At [Costume-Con 32](#), I was pleased and tickled to see a HUGE influx of young cosplayers who came to play, learn, and teach. Cultural differences still abound, especially, to my eye, in different approaches to presentation on stage, but it was fabulous to see so many NEW faces and ideas mixing and swirling together. The next generation came out to play, and they certainly appeared to feel welcome.

Which brings us to [Loncon 3](#), only a few months away. Andy and I are in charge of the Costume, Cosplay and Style area of the programme<sup>2</sup>. We specifically changed the name to make sure that everyone who likes to make, assemble, or even just wear their version of our art form<sup>3</sup> knows that these programme items are for and by them. We've got a local contact who is making sure that the message gets out to the area cosplayers that they are welcome, and they will be coming to play.

Loncon is also setting up a special Fanac tent on the exhibits floor, and a few of the costume/cosplay items are slated to happen there for everyone to see. (On a personal note, Loncon invited me to exhibit the "Tiki Dalek," but there was no budget for transportation. Friends suggested we try crowdfunding, and in less than a week 50 fans contributed enough to cover most of the expenses! See for yourself on [GoFundMe](#).

I've always felt that costume and the love of it is at the root of what we do, not competitions, not conventions, but the sheer joy of expressing ourselves in designing, recreating and/or wearing things that reflect our passions, creativity and fandoms. It's bothered me that it seemed we (ICG in general) seemed to have trouble bridging the gap to a new generation. I'm thrilled to see signs that perhaps the semantic war is

2 Yes, "programme" because that's the way my boss at Loncon 3 spells it.  
3 The archives of four different countries have recognized masquerade costuming as a legitimate art form and will be preserving archive material of convention masquerades now. *How cool is that?*

ending, and we can focus on just looking fabulous together.

We'll be at [Westercon 67](#) in Salt Lake City, Utah; Worldcon in London; and Eurocon in Dublin this summer. Hope to see you there -- what are you going to wear?

PS. I would be remiss to fail to mention that my husband Andy is the chair of the bid campaign to bring Worldcon back to San Jose in 2018. The official launch party will be at Westercon.



## From the Editor *Philip Gust\**

The animated and live-action characters in the films produced by Walt Disney Studios have always provided a rich vein of material for costumers to mine. Starting with the first appearance of "Mickey Mouse" in "Steamboat Willie," dolls of the Disney animated characters became popular items. The premier of "Disney's Folly," the 1937 classic *Snow White*, provided the first truly human figures, which would be easier to present as costumed, live-action characters.

However, Disney was slow to commercially exploit the possibilities. The studio first used live-action, costumed models to provide reference material for the Disney animators. It wasn't until the opening of Disneyland in 1955 and the television shows that helped promote it that the public could actually meet and interact with actors portraying Disney animated characters.

Early attempts at animated character costuming in the park fell far short of today's standards. It wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that the studio developed a systematic approach to character costuming in the park. Since then, the costumes have evolved in sophistication, to the



point that they have begun to include animatronic features that enable "Mickey" to blink, show expression, move his mouth, and even converse with guests. It will be interesting to see how this new technology evolves, and how wide-spread it becomes.

Costumed characters from live-action movies and television shows have not been exploited by Disney to the same extent. Guy Williams, TV's first "Zorro" made special appearances at Disneyland in the first several years, as did Fess Parker as "Daniel Boone" and "Davy Crockett." Disney capitalized on their popularity by issuing children's costumes including "Zorro" hats and capes, and "Davy Crockett" coon skin caps. *The Mickey Mouse Club* TV series introduced the famous mouse ears that are still popular with children and adults.

Live-action characters were not as popular as animated ones until 2003 when *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* hit the screen. Suddenly costumes from the movie were in demand, and especially those for the zany pirate, "Jack Sparrow," brilliantly designed and

executed by Penny Rose. With the advent of more live-action movies since then, Disney live-action costuming is now in its heyday.

This issue of *The Virtual Costumer* celebrates the Wonderful World of Disney Costuming. Leading off is Al Megas, a cosplayer specializing in “Jack Sparrow.” Al takes us along on his journey, from his first “dime-store” version to his most recent, screen-accurate rendition. He also tells us about fulfilling his dream of portraying “Captain Jack” for a day at Disneyland.

Next, the costuming duo of Milo Martinez and Bethany Padron discuss a phenomenon known as “gender-bending,” where the male takes on a female role and vice versa. Gender-bending has actually become a popular sub-genre of cosplay because of the rich opportunities it provides. Milo and Bethany show us examples of how they gender-bent the roles of “Frollo” and “Esmeralda” from Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and “Aladdin” and “Jasmine” from *Aladdin*.

A group of articles by members of a masquerade entry entitled “Basic Black” at Costume-Con 31 in 2013 asks the question: exactly what do Disney villains and villainesses wear under those black robes? The answer will surprise you!

Rae Bradbury-Enslin, who appears on the cover, came up with the idea for this off-beat treatment and took on the role of the ultimate Disney villainess, “Maleficent” from *Sleeping Beauty*. Her menacing outer garments hide an equally disturbing secret, which you can read about in her article.

Lisa Ashton, discusses the inspiration for her recreation of the tentacled villainess, “Ursula” from *The Little Mermaid* and describes some difficulties in bringing the drawings to life. Underneath her robes are – more tentacles, but not what you’d expect!

Reagan McHugh had built her “Evil Queen” costume from *Snow White* some years earlier. In her article, she talks about the difficulties of repurposing a costume to meet the needs of a new presentation. How she reworked her costume so she could remove the outer layer to reveal what’s underneath makes for entertaining reading.

William Kennedy describes himself as the “punch line” of the presentation, as he takes on the role of “Jafar” from *Aladdin*. His presentation of this modern Disney villain is frighteningly spot-on – at least until his outer robes come off to reveal a very different “Jafar” from the one that Disney artists ever imagined.

Finally, I show the steps I followed to reproduce the character head for “Mickey Mouse” as part of a “Sorcerer’s Apprentice” presentation with my wife Kathe early in our costuming careers. Having visited the Disney World costuming shop and seen an actual “Mickey Mouse” head close up, I decided to tackle the project, despite having no previous sculpting experience beyond carving a bar of Ivory soap into the Sphinx in a fifth grade art class.



Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. The August 2014 issue will be all about embellishment techniques and “wearable arts,” incorporating unusual materials and construction techniques to create wearable works of art, and provide costumers with new avenues for creativity.

For November 2014, it’s “Odds and Ends,” which includes a variety of costuming topics that don’t always fit into a single theme. It will include a fascinating variety of articles on common and unusual aspects of costuming, by some of the most interesting new and veteran *VC* authors

I’m pleased to announce that the theme for the February 2015 issue is “Gods and Men” covering all manner of deities, faeries, elves, trolls, and other supernatural beings and those who worship them.

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.

On a personal note, this marks my 20<sup>th</sup> issue of *VC*. I’d like to thank the many authors who have contributed to it over the last five years, and also the members of the Silicon Web Costumers’ Guild for joining me on this journey. Most of all, I’d like to thank my wife and SiW web diva Kathe. I could not have done this without her steadfast support and help over the years. This issue is dedicated to her.