

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

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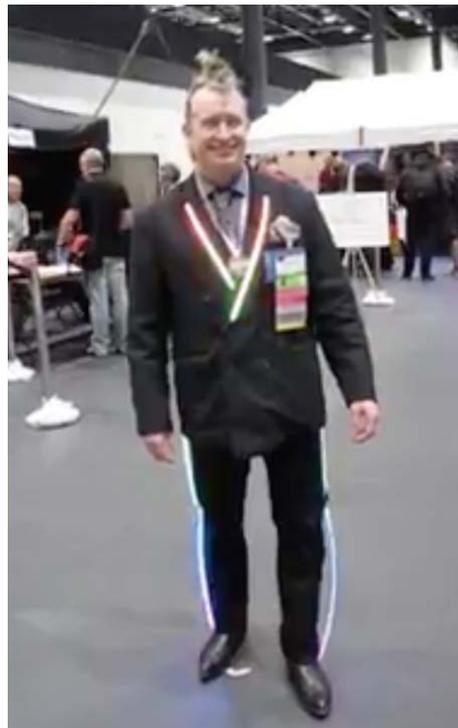
I'm writing you from Gilroy's restaurant on the fifth floor of the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Ireland, with a pint of the "black stuff" in front of me and luncheon on its way.

We've just finished the 72nd World Science Fiction Convention, Loncon 3, last weekend at the ExCeL Centre in London Docklands, and a number of us extended our trips to include Shamrokon, this year's Eurocon in Dublin.

Andy and I, with able assistance from Aurora Celeste were the area heads for the Costume, Cosplay and Style part

of the Worldcon programme, which ended up as 30 items out of the roughly 600 overall in the convention. All of them seemed packed, and I can say that Silicon Web members were a significant portion of the presenters.

One of my panels was especially in line with the embellishment theme of this issue -- we did a Costume Electronics and Illumination workshop that included a hands-on introduction to [LilyPad](#) sewable e-textiles. The resources page we assembled is available at [Amy M. Young's website](#).



Techno-suit with LED accents. Photo: Ric Bretschneider.

As prep for that workshop, I built a double breasted suit with addressable LED accents in the lapels and down the pant legs, plus a LilyPad-driven necktie and ELastolite silk pocket square.



Tiki Dalek invades London -- Inebriate!

I'm also proud to report that the Tiki Dalek was one of THE most photographed objects in the Loncon 3 displays. I had the opportunity to climb inside him and trundle out into the crowd a couple of times, and the fans at the "Whopalooza" awarded him 3rd place in their costume contest (I had not planned to enter) because 3rd prize was a fez and

they unanimously agreed that the Tiki Dalek needed a fez.

That's all for now; we've just finished our puddings and it's time to finish our beer and go shopping!

PS: Oh, yes -- I would be remiss if I failed to mention that Andy Trembly is now chair of the SFSFC bid to bring Worldcon back to San Jose in 2018. So now I have mentioned it :-)



From the Editor

Philip Gust*

The wearable arts community is a diverse and active group of artists who create individually designed pieces of handmade clothing or jewelry as fine or expressive art. While making any article of clothing or other wearable object involves aesthetic choices, “wearable art” implies that the work is intended to be accepted as a artistic creation or statement.

“Embellishment” is a set of techniques used by wearable artists and others to produce artistic effects. Examples include embroidery, beading, quilting, embossing, painting, and dying, but also modern technologies such as light emitting wire and even wearable embedded microprocessors.

A number of organizations are dedicated to embellishment and wearable art. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the [Peninsula Wearable Arts Guild \(PenWAG\)](#) includes hobbyist and professionals who meet regularly for hands-on classes on techniques and trends.

Although these organizations are not specifically focused on costuming, many costumers, including Silicon Web members, belong to wearable arts organizations, and apply the techniques they learn to the the costumes they create. Other costumers create wearable works of art and apply embellishment techniques on their own, without realizing that they are part of a larger community of artists and craftspeople.

This issue of *VC* features a just sample of wearable art created by costumers, and the embellishment techniques they use to create them. I hope that by focusing on the topic, the two communities will be more aware of each other, open active dialogs, and work more closely together.

Art begins with design. Frank Billecci, with co-author Lauranne Fisher, wrote the recently published book, *Irene: A Designer from the Golden Age of Hollywood*. In his article, Frank talks about the process of researching and writing the book, and tells us about the talented designer behind some of the most creative and beautiful costumes from the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Lead conservator Zenzie Tinker describes the work that she and her team did to conserve and restore the belt and beetle wing embellishments from Ellen Terry's iconic “Beetle Wing Dress,” made famous by the John Singer Sargent painting. In a future issue, Zenzie will report on the process of conserving the entire dress that was recently completed.

When Visual Arts student Félicia Dussault was looking for a character to cosplay from Dreamworks Animation's 2012 film, *The Rise of the Guardians*, she took a path less traveled by recreating “Toothianna, the Tooth Fairy.” Read about the fabric painting techniques she used to produce the iridescent colors of this charming character.

Pierre Pettinger believes that all faiths reflect the truth, and conceived a Cloak of Faith that displays symbols of many faiths.

To create it, he developed an embellishment technique that enabled him to cover the cloak with “stained-glass” windows, each representing a different faith. Pierre describes his technique and shows off the costume he created for the Single Pattern competition at Costume-Con 32.

The Prince of Egypt, Dreamworks Animation's 1998 film adaption of the Old Testament story of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt is a great movie to cosplay. In her article, Bethany Padron, one of the two members of a Costume-Con 31 historical masquerade entry describes the ancient and modern embellishment techniques she used.

Elaine Sims, an avid quilter and the head of the Costume-Con 33 Quilt Show, reports that quilts have moved from the bedroom to become a world-wide clothing phenomenon. In her article, she shows many examples, from Olympic fashions to haute couture, from around the world.

Karen Nyberg goes one step further. A NASA astronaut and avid sewer, she tells us how she got into sewing, and describes what it is like trying to quilt in outer space, aboard the International Space Station (ISS). She also talks about the world-wide community quilting project that she kicked off last year with the International Quilting Festival.

Ribbon embroidery was a prominent feature of a 1780 man's court costume that Kathe Gust recreated for a Costume-Con 31 historical masquerade entry. Kathe provides us with a gentle introduction to this beautiful embellishing technique that is easier for beginners to master than it first appears.

Deborah Lynn Dixon developed a stencil-based textile embossing technique that resembles intricate beading and embroidery for court presentation dresses at the Krewe of Contraband Mardi Gras Ball. She and Terry Banker show us step-by-step how to use her product and techniques.

Aspiring “virtual” costumer Gunther Burger, SiW's first honorary member, talks about how he created the plaid cummerbund that he wore with the tuxedo he also made for his high school prom, and gives some background on this article of clothing.

Finally, Carole Parker shares photos and “virtual postcards” from Loncon 3, the 72nd World SciFi Convention in London.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. The November 2014 issue is “Odds and Ends,” with a variety of fascinating articles on common and unusual aspects of costuming, by some of the most interesting new and veteran *VC* authors

For February 2015, the theme is “Gods and Men,” with costuming for all manner of deities, faeries, elves, trolls, and supernatural beings, and those who worship them.

I am pleased to announce that the theme for the May 2015 issue will be “Dressing for the Great War,” in honor of those who served their countries on the 100th anniversary of WWI, and covering the war's influence on clothing, military and civilian.

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.

SiW Presents Dreamcatcher Award at Costume-Con 32

The Silicon Web Costumer's Guild presented its Dreamcatcher award to Vanessa Koch at the Costume-Con 32 Science Fiction and Fantasy masquerade on April 26, 2014. Vanessa's entry, “Optimus Time” features a brilliant transformation from a DeLorean automobile into a robot. The award recognized her technical achievements in creating the costume.

Here is what Vanessa says about her costume:

“If you’re going to build a transforming *Transformer* costume, why not do it with style? As a long time fan of the *Back to the Future* films and an experienced *Transformer* costume builder, my DeLorean Time Machine *Transformer* costume does what it says on the box. Complete with working lights, option for sound, and a *Mr. Fusion*, this thing is the culmination of nine months of work, starting with having to come up with a thesis for my final year in Theatre Production at Ryerson University.

“Dubbed 'Chrona', she is a physically demanding costume, weighing somewhere around 20-30 pounds and involves a lot of movement while showing off its abilities. Standing up, I’m a robot. Crouched down, I’m a car. Given its measurements it’s roughly 1/3 scale of a real DeLorean. I used one of my models for reference.

“It’s mostly made of swearing and tears but some coroplast, craft foam, pvc vinyl, a backpack, and real headlights made

their way into the construction process. I still have to learn how to run at 88mph.

“Often called ‘Optimus Time’, it’s also a fitting moniker because she’s built to last. 'Chrona' was completed August 2012 and she’s got a few more conventions left in her. 2015, here we come!”

The award comes with a one year membership in SiW and the ICG. We are pleased to welcome this talented costumer as a [member!](#)



Vanessa Koch's award-winning "Optimus Time" costume at Costume-Con 32. Photo: Christine Mak.