

Virtual Soapbox



A Letter from a Cartoon Costumer **Gunther Berger***

A "virtual" costumer and the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild's first Honorary Member talks about making his own wearable art, and some fascinating background about its origin.

Hi, fellow costume enthusiasts! Gunther Berger here. You may recall me as Luann's friend (she of the comic page) and avid seamster.

I haven't been making any costumes recently because I was busy working on a tuxedo! That's right, I made my own tux for prom a few weeks back. What a challenge THAT was! The pants were pretty straight-forward but the coat was really hard, especially the lining.

While I was working on it, a friend asked if I was also making a "cumberbun." I knew what he meant, but I slyly replied, "Is that some kind of a baked good?" He looked at me for a second, shook his head and walked off, muttering something that sounded like "geekhead" but which I'm sure was really "genius."

Lots of people mispronounce "cummerbund." Not sure why. The word

comes from the Persian "kamarband," literally meaning "loin cloth," and was a colorful sash worn by Afghan warriors. British militia, stationed there in the 1850's, found the sash to be a comfy alternative to their own heavier waistcoat. The style

migrated to Britain, pleats were added (men used them to hold coins, tickets, receipts, etc) and the modern cummerbund was born.

Anyway, yes, I did make my own cummerbund along with a matching bow tie. While solid colors are the norm, I opted for something a bit more bold: plaid, my favorite fabric style ("Berger" may be a Germanic name, but I have Scottish patterns in my genes!)

So how did I look on Prom night? If your answer is "Wow!" it's probably got more to do with Rosa at my side than the cummerbund at my waist.

Til next time, I remain your
Cartoon Costumer. – Gunther.

Gunther Berger graduated from Pitts High School in June. He enjoys costuming as a hobby and hopes to have a career in costume design. He created many costumes that he and his pal Luann wore for library story hours where they both volunteer. He also created all the costumes for his high school production of the musical, "West Side Story." Gunther appears in the "Luann" comic strip, drawn by cartoonist Greg Evans. Follow "Luann" by visiting this [website](#).



Gunther with Rosa going to their high school prom. Drawing: Greg Evans.