

# Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

## Silicon Web Staff

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<i>Virtual Costumer Editor:</i>	<a href="#">Kathe Gust</a>



## President's Message **Kevin Roche\***

We've just had the Memorial Day tsunami of costume events and conventions wash by, which means that summer is bearing down full steam ahead!

My spring was lighter than usual on the convention front (due in large part to the work my family has been doing dealing with my parents estate) but that certainly did not keep Andy and me from finding places to dress up. I designed and commissioned embroidered team shirts for our bartending robot team at RoboGames this year (thank you, [bowlingconcepts.com!](#)) and they appeared in the Wall Street Journal! If you thought the guys wearing "Make

Drinks Not War" shirts looked familiar, you were right.

We had to cancel our plans to attend Costume-Con 33 in Charleston, but heard great things back from it. I'm especially proud that Silicon Web joined the effort to bring Kathy Sanders to CC33 so she could be honored with the ICG Lifetime Achievement Award in person. [For more about the award, see the Short Subject on page 44.]

Kathy was one of the powerhouses on the scene when I first started costuming at conventions, one of those people who generously shared time, advice and energy



SiW President Kevin Roche (fourth from left) with fellow costumers Bryan Little and Mette Hedin (first and third from left) and fellow Punk Rock bowlers in Las Vegas, Nevada.

with me. I was very glad to see her work finally honored, and happy to be part of making it happen for her.

While many folk were at many conventions over Memorial Day Weekend, Andy and I went to Punk Rock Bowling in Las Vegas again this year. PRB is definitely not for everyone, but we have a great time there getting to be "just fans" of the scene and the music, as opposed to being deeply involved in organization or participation like we are at most conventions.

And there is certainly no shortage of opportunities to dress creatively at the festival! I was wearing mk II of my "Shiny Jeans" using what I learned about Arduino and NeoPixels my Power Suit. The Shiny Jeans are designed for the more hazardous environment of a festival, with removable sealed weatherproof LED strips slipped behind organza tuxedo stripes added to a pair of skinny jeans. They were also comfy and got many compliments at the festival, and, best of all, I can wash them!

From a strictly tourist viewpoint, if you are visiting Vegas and don't have a fear of heights, I heartily recommend the [SlotZilla Zoomline](#) at the Fremont St Experience (old Vegas downtown). It's a really fun and smooth "Superman" style zipline flight right below the pedestrian

mall canopy, and I've wanted to do it since I saw it last year.

Coming up this summer, I'll be at [Westercon 68](#) in San Diego and [Sasquan \(Worldcon 73\)](#) in Spokane, where I'm honored to have been chosen as MC for the Worldcon Masquerade. Be sure to print neatly so I can help you shine on stage!

I'm a part of the Helsinki in 2017 Worldcon bid, which is up for vote in Spokane, so if you give me a chance I'll try to show you all the reasons I think a



Kevin Roche on Zoomline flight, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Worldcon there would be spectacular. (I'm also a board member of SFSFC, which is bidding Worldcon for San Jose in 2018, so if you aren't careful I might try to persuade you of that bid's merits, too. :-)

Have fun this summer. Don't forget your sunscreen, and whatever you do, go out and do it looking FABULOUS!

PS. See the [GoPro video](#) of our Zoomline flight, and the [video](#) of a trip down the Golden Nugget "Shark Plunge" (a water slide that passes through their shark aquarium)



## From the Editor *Philip Gust\**

World War I was one of the defining events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Known as "The Great War," it was the first world-wide conflict, and introduced technology to the battlefield in an unprecedented scale, including tanks, aircraft, wireless phones, and gas warfare. It was also the first time that movie cameras extensively captured the horrors of war, and brought it home for the public to see while it was still in progress.

WWI also ushered in many changes to the clothing people wore, both military and civilian. The need to direct fabric and other resources to the war effort, and the desire to support the troops, transformed the opulent fashions of the Edwardian period into more practical forms of clothing

This issue of *The Virtual Costumer* examines aspects of this transformation as seen in the clothing worn on the battle field, by members of volunteer organizations who supported the war effort, by the civilian population, and by heroines of the silent screen in movies that depict the war.

We begin with a quick look at some of the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild (SiW) members who participated in or helped run events at Costume-Con 33 in Charleston, South Carolina earlier this month. Three SiW members coordinated shows or ran competitions, five members entered competitions, and two received awards.

Next, I spotlight a website run by the British Museum that provides a wealth of resources on World War I. The article highlights the many types of resources available on the site, and shows the different ways available for locating information. The website includes over 500 photos and illustrations that may be a useful reference for costumers who want to recreate WWI era clothing.

The American Red Cross (ARC) provided much-needed support during WWI, both at home and overseas. In a Virtual Author Talk, ARC historian Shirley Powers describes her *Guide to American Red Cross Uniforms*, and references some of the entries that cover the war years. Shirley compiled her illustrated Guide using information from uniform manuals, photographs from the ARC Archives or magazines, and first hand accounts.

The YWCA also played an important role in supporting the war effort on the home front in many countries around the world. In her article, costumer Ann Morton pays tribute to the women who volunteered to serve by creating the WWI era YWCA costume she would have made had she lived 100 years earlier. Her costume, based on existing uniforms in museums and vintage photos, was made using reproductions of contemporary patterns, and period accurate materials and construction techniques.

According to historical costumer Anne Merritt, World War I triggered major changes to clothing styles, going from the opulence of the Belle Époque to elegant practicality. In her article, Anne describes the styles worn in the years leading up to WWI, how the war impacted not only the materials used in civilian clothing, but also the styles as military influences found their way into wartime fashion. She also shows how these made a lasting change to contemporary styles in the years after the war ended.

With documentary movie footage of the war being brought back home and viewed on the home front as the war was in progress, it was only natural for Hollywood to capitalize on the demand by making movies about the war. Released through the end of the 1920s, silent movies featuring popular stars, told stories that gave the public what they wanted. Kathe Gust looks at the fashions worn by the heroines in three WWI movies that were made during the

war, just afterwards, and nearly a decade later. She found that in some cases, the demands of fashions when the films were made sometimes overruled historical accuracy.

Finally, costumer and historian Byron Connell describes the uniform worn by U.S. Marine Corps officers during World War I, and tells the little known story about one of the toughest fights the Marines had during the war: the right to wear their service's uniform on the Western Front, rather than adopting the U.S. Army uniform championed by Allied Expeditionary Forces commander John J. Pershing of the U.S. Army. It resulted in the Marines having to wear a mix of uniform parts, some from their own service, and some from the Army as supply lines faltered. It also demonstrated their resourcefulness in transforming Army gear to sport Marine colors and symbols.

At Costume-Con 33 this month, I presented several awards as President of the International Costumers' Guild, including President's Awards to SiW members Elaine Sims and Jeanine Swick for service to the ICG. Please join me in thanking and congratulating them. You can read about these awards on page 8.

It was also my privilege to present the ICG's highest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award, to costuming pioneer Kathy Bushman Sanders. Kathy has not been able to attend a Costume-Con since CC18, and it was especially satisfying that members of the costuming community

pulled together to ensure that she could attend Costume-Con 33 to accept her award in person. Kathy has asked me to convey her gratitude to the Silicon Web Costumers' Guild and to several SiW members for contributing to this effort. You can read more about the award in a "Short Subjects" item on page 44.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. In the August issue, we pay a visit to "The Wild West," and learn about the clothing of gun slingers, gold miners, robber barons, and pioneers of fact and legend who tamed the American West. The theme for the November 2015 issue is "Wings!" This issue will delve into the many and varied aspects of using or incorporating wings into costumes or accessories.

I'm pleased to announce that the theme for February 2016 is "Masquerade." This issue will cover many aspects of preparing for, performing in, judging, and running these costume competitions that combine presentation, workmanship, and documentation into a unique art form.

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.

## Silicon Web Costumers' Guild at Costume-Con 33

*A recap of Silicon Web Costumers Guild members who participated at Costume-Con 33.*

Costume-Con 33 took place this year from May 15-18 in Charleston, South Carolina. Although not as large as some past conventions, the quality of the events more than compensated.

SiW members from different parts of the U.S. attended, and several of them took part in events during the convention. Here is a brief summary of the members who took part and the events.

### Costume Exhibit



**Jeanine Swick** coordinated the Costume Exhibit. A highlight was a selection of costumes showing

off the work of CC33 Guest of Honor, Janet Wilson Anderson. Among the dresses was Janet's recreation of Eliza Doolittle's "Ascot" dress from Costume-Con 6, complete with her amazing historical documentation and research notes on the outfit.



[ICG Archives photo](#) by David Bloxford, 1988.

### Quilt Show



Photo by Kat Bushman.

**Elaine Sims** coordinated the Quilt Show. There were a number of beautiful entries by several quilters, with both traditional quilts and quilted costumes.

Also on exhibit were three panels from the "Astronomical Quilt" project, started by U.S. Astronaut and quilter **Karen Nyberg** and first exhibited at the 2014 International Quilt Festival. Three SiW members made quilt squares that were included in the panels along with Karen's: **Kathe Gust**, **Philip Gust**, and **Elaine Sims**. [See Karen's article on quilting onboard the International Space Station in the [Aug. 2014 issue of VC.](#)]



Portion of quilt segment displayed at CC33 with Karen Nyberg's red-white-and-blue star square in the center.

### Future Fashion Folio



**Carole Parker** coordinated the Future Fashion Folio competition, where costumers submit designs in one of several categories. The designs are judged and included in a folio.

Costumers can create costumes from the designs and present them in the Future Fashion Show at CC33.

Included in the Portfolio were six designs by **Dawn McKechnie** in multiple categories of the competition.



"Wolf Guard" by Dawn McKechnie in "Military" category.

## Miss Ellen's Portieres

Inspired by the green velvet "curtain" dress made by Scarlett O'Hare in *Gone with the Wind*, and the famous spoof of it on the *Carol Burnett Show*, entries in this competition must be made primarily of curtains or curtain material.

**Kathe Gust** created a reproduction of Cardinal Richelieu's costume from a contemporary painting, using red cotton moire curtain material, lace curtains and a lace valance. **Philip Gust** presented the costume, portraying *l'Éminence Rouge*.



Stage ninja John Haverly pays respect to *l'Éminence Rouge*. Photo: Bruce Mai.

## Science-Fiction/Fantasy Masquerade

There were two entries involving SiW members in the Sci-Fi/Fantasy masquerade.

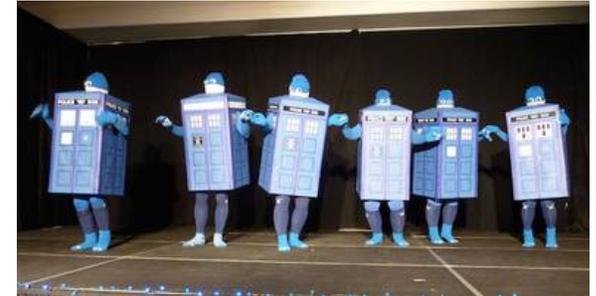
**Carole Parker** designed, made, and presented an entry in the Journeyman Division called "Coat of Many Colors." The entry is a reversible coat with material that she dyed herself. The inside of the coat was festooned with scarves that she also dyed.



Carole Parker in reversible coat that she dyed herself.

**Elaine Sims** and **Anne Davenport** helped present a group entry in the Master Division, made by Steve Swope, entitled "Police Box Trolls." The entry, a mashup between *Box Trolls* and *Doctor Who*, had a group of

costumers cavort on stage wearing cardboard boxes that were ingeniously crafted to look like different versions of the blue police box TARDIS that the *Doctor* and his companions travel in.



Above: "Police Box Trolls." Below: Anne Davenport and Elaine Sims presented two of the "trolls."



## ICG President's Awards

ICG President **Philip Gust** presented **Elaine Sims** and **Jeanine Swick** with President's Awards, in recognition of their service to the ICG.

Elaine was cited for, “setting up and administering the software and templates for participating Group Exemption Letter (GEL) Chapters and SIGs.”

Jeanine, along with Byron Connell, was cited for, “helping to establish and serving on the Administration Committee of the *Marty Gear Costuming Arts and Sciences Fund*.”



Jeanine Swick (left) and Elaine Sims (right) receive President's Awards from ICG President Philip Gust.

## Historical Masquerade

There were two entries in the Historical masquerade involving SiW members.

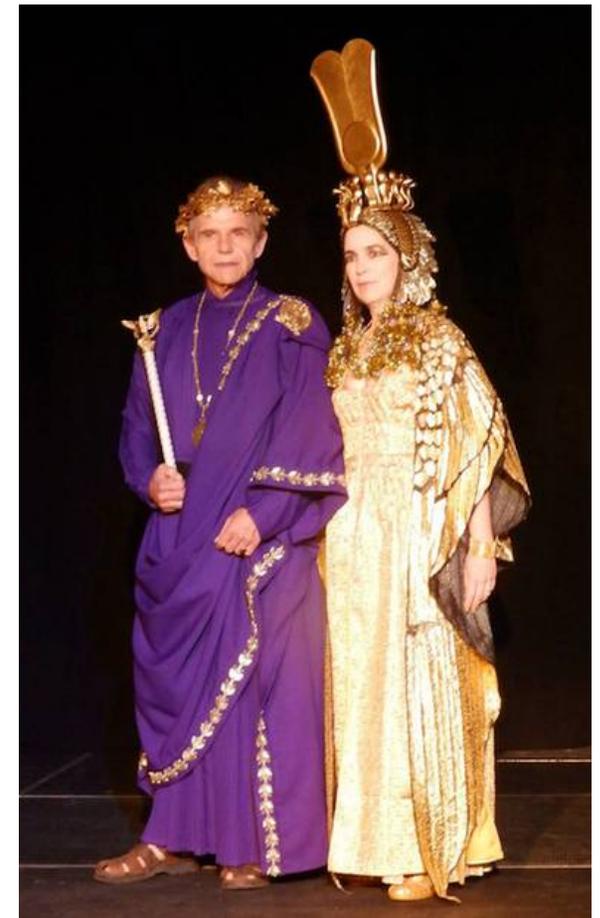
**Margaret Decker** designed, made and presented an entry in the Journeyman Division entitled “My Grandmother's Suit – 1912.” The costume included a reproduction of a walking suit, a wide-brimmed hat, and a fur muff.



Margaret Decker in “My Grandmother's Suit – 1912.”

**Kathe Gust** and **Philip Gust** presented Rex Harrison as “Julius Caesar” and Elizabeth Taylor as “Cleopatra” in an entry in the Master Division entitled, “Entrance to Rome – *Cleopatra* (1963).” The presentation

reenacted the filming of the big scene. The costumes are recreations of the ones originally designed by Irene Sharaff for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox production. Cleopatra's headdress was originally designed and made by Wah Ming Chang. According to director Joseph L. Mankiewicz, “The picture was conceived in a state of emergency, shot in confusion and wound up in blind panic.”



Philip and Kathe Gust as Rex Harrison and Elizabeth Taylor from *Cleopatra* (1963).. Photo: Bruce Mai.