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### President's message

It is my very happy responsibility to announce that the SiW is presenting a membership to Costume-Con 24 to Aurora Celeste. In addition to the membership, she will get a "grant" of \$50 to make her attendance at the Con easier and a bit more fun.

A similar \$50 mini-grant will be given to Henry Osier to assist with his Con attendance.

Whereas the SiW cannot promise to be able to do this again in the future, it is very satisfying to be able to do it this time.

### Editor's message

In this issue of the Virtual Costumer, we have a very different kind of article and one which is deeply appreciated. Aurora Celeste has given us in detail an introduction to Costumers and LiveJournal. It demystifies the procedures for setting up in that venue.

I know several members of the SiW are active with LiveJournal, and that, in contrast, even more of us do not have a clue. Hopefully, this will encourage more of us to take a deeper plunge into the ever growing possibilities of expanding the costuming community on line.

Audrey Russell's photographs accompanying her article on the *Dressing a Galaxy* exhibit deserve special notice. They are exceptional.

Next month, with luck and cooperation, there will be an issue of the Virtual Costumer which will revive the series which focuses on our members, as well as information on the upcoming ICG election.

# Costumer's Guide to LiveJournal

## Part 1 - setting up an account

Aurora Celeste

LiveJournal is a program online that allows users to 'blog', or write online diaries. However, in the years since LiveJournal has opened, it has developed into an online networking and communication tool that is pioneering new ways of online contact. Added features and programs allow users to not only write diaries online, but to connect with other users, form groups according to interests, block people from viewing their journals, set up online picture scrapbooks, and more. There is a growing group of costumers using this medium to showcase their work and learn about costumes, costuming, and conventions. If online diaries don't seem like something you would like to do, you should still consider joining for the networking. There are many LiveJournal users who rarely, if ever, post in their own journals. (I post about monthly.) Instead, I use the tools to talk to other people and ignore the personal journal section.

To start out on LiveJournal, you need to setup an account. Start by going to [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com). The main site commands are all contained in the blue bar at the top of the screen. Hovering over Welcome, Search, or About in the dark blue line will make a sub-menu appear in the light blue line below. To start your account, hover over Welcome, then click Create an Account.

The first piece of information you need to enter is your username. This is just like your email account name, it is the name that your journal will be filed under, and how you will log into the system as well as how other people will find you. Just like an email, if you don't want your boss, parole officer, or scuzzy ex-boyfriend to find you easily, then don't use your real name. Make something up that you can remember.

Next LJ (as LiveJournal is called for short among users) asks for an email address. This is where your password is sent to if you lose it, as well as where you will get emails when someone contacts you, so make it one you check often, if not daily. There are ways to block other people from seeing your email, so don't worry if it's an email where you don't want to receive spam. I'll teach you later on how to do that. Then make up a password that is at least six characters and has letters, numbers, and symbols.

The next section says, "Starter Friends". I suggest you un-click all these boxes, although you may want to keep "tipoftheday" to give you updates on how to work with your journal. This is not set in stone, so if you don't click one you like you can add it later on. Next you enter your birthday, mainly as a way to ensure you are over 13 and legal to use the site, so be honest. If you don't want people to know your birthday, you can change the date, or delete the year, later on, after your age has been verified. Next LJ asks if you want a free or a paid account. I recommend starting out with a free account. The main difference for beginning users between free and paid is that paid users get 'scrapbook space', or a photo area to upload and link pictures. You can also try out a paid account for as short as 1 month (currently costs \$3, not much to try the features out). Next, read the standard legalese in the Terms of service, and prove to the bot that you're actually human. Then go to the next page.

The next page contains the web address to your journal. You can click on it to bookmark it, but you can always access the information later on, so it's not a big deal. More important are the other two sets of instructions. One talks about an email sent to your account. Before you can do much with your journal you need to check the email account you listed earlier and find an email from LiveJournal. It contains a link for you to click on to verify you are a real person and you own the email address you said you did. The other link is at the bottom, where it says "Enter Personal Information". Clicking on that will take you to the place that has all the settings for your journal.

At first it just looks like another form, but keep in mind that not only is all this information optional, but it is also viewable to anyone who looks for it. That means that if you don't want your real name known, don't put it in the name field, or if you don't want people to know your hometown, just put your state or country. You don't have to fill out anything other than your email, and that needs to be filled out. Underneath the form is a section that says "About You". This box is for a generic introduction. You can fill it out, or not, as you wish. "Curiosity" is a place to put where you found out about LiveJournal. You can put my name there (Aurora Celeste), or not, no one gets a bonus from referring people so you can leave it blank if you wish. Underneath that is a section called "interests". This is a place to list categories in which you are interested. They must be single words or phrases, not sentences, and each must be separated with a comma. This is so that the interests can be entered into a database so you can search for other people that share your interests. Common ones ICG members might be

interested in adding are: clothes, corsets, costume design, costume history, costuming, fantasy, fashion, historical costume, movies, sci-fi, or science fiction.

People include everything from favorite movies, movie stars, authors, bands, food, restaurants, and schools in their interests, so feel free to add in anything.

Next is a spot for a picture. LiveJournal puts a picture with every post you make. These pictures help to split up the page, as well as identify who is talking, and show off more interests of users. You don't have to have one, but most LiveJournal users do. LiveJournal pictures are called icons. They are very small, only 100 pixels on each side. You can find tons of websites that have pictures by googling "LJ icon" or some variation. You can have up to six pictures with each free account, but for now you just need one. The next slot is for you to title your journal. Do this if you wish.

After that is an important section on the privacy of your journal. The first section is about your email address. You can select that no one be able to view your email address, but I recommend making your address "Friends Only". That means that the only people that can see your address are ones that you choose to allow access to your journal. To do this keep the first box clicked, and scroll down in the next menu to "Friends Only". Another great option is "Mangle your displayed e-mail address", which means that even if people can see your address, spambots cannot. I highly recommend you click this box, unless you enjoy emails about rich Nigerian relatives.

Next is another list of information that people can or cannot view. Just read the list and decide how private you want your journal to be. Some important ones to look at include "Receive copies of my own comments via e-mail", which emails you every time someone replies to a comment you made so that you don't have to constantly check up on your journal. "Enable commenting on my journal" determines who will be able to comment on things you say in your journal (comments are like replying to an email), which I recommend you set to "Registered Users". After that, click "Save Changes" at the bottom of the page.

You are now at your new journal site! You can put up a journal entry if you wish by clicking on "Journal" then "Update". If not, then go to the box on the right side of the screen. In the text area, type in "costume\_con". Be sure that the second field says "username", and click search. This section allows you to find people online. The Journal you are finding is the group community for Costume Con. When the page comes up you can see the user information for the journal. If you like this journal and want to keep track of it in the future without searching for it again, you have two options. First, you can "join the community". This allows you to post new "threads", or questions, on that journal. To join a community, follow the instructions at the top of the page. Follow the instructions, and be sure to "add the group to your friends page". We'll talk more about that later.

If you aren't sure if you want to join the group but you want to watch what's going on, or if you're looking at a person's journal and not a group, you can keep track of them by 'friending' them. In the little blue box at the top of the page, click on the icon that looks like a person with a plus sign next to it. Click "add" in the next screen and you will be watching the community. There are two ways to watch the community. You can go back to the community page and click on the blue words next to USER: (in this case it is costume\_con). This brings you to a page of "posts", or threads about information. Posts are organized according to the date they were posted. "Comments", or follow-up posts, are "threaded" under each email.

In the Costume Con community the comments are listed on the right hand of each post in blue, where it says "comments". If you want to send a reply, click on 'leave a comment'. You can leave a comment to the main post, or to a reply someone else made. Be sure that you are replying to the person you mean to reply to; don't reply to the main post if you're disagreeing with a reply. Some other great costume communities you might want to think of adding are con\_costuming, \_cosplay\_, animecons, archon\_illinois, con\_central, con\_masquerade, corsetmakers, cosplay, costume\_movies, costumes, costumestuff, costuming, dress\_up, elizabethangarb, gbacg\_costume, victorian\_fash, victorianera, and victoriansewing. You can also search for communities according to interests like costumes or costuming.

The other place to watch posts is your "friends" page. If you go back to a page that has the blue 'LiveJournal' menu bar at the top of the page, you can find your friends page by going to 'Journal' then 'Friends'. Be sure to click on 'Friends' and not the ellipsis following it; they are two different places. This page is a listing of the posts of all the people and groups you have friended. They are listed in order of time posted, and the most recent is first. You can bookmark this page to check up on posts made by your friends and in your communities recently.

Last, there are a few etiquette rules on LiveJournal, just as in other forms of communication. When you join a community, be sure to read the page called "User Information" that comes up when you search for it. This will have the rules of the community. Most communities frown on posting just to introduce yourself. Include a question or an announcement that pertains to the group. Other things that are generally considered bad manners

are posting advertisements about another LiveJournal community, posting pictures, or asking random people to 'friend' you just to get a higher number of friends. I will talk more about etiquette and how to post in my next article.

Finally, do a username search for 'auroraceleste'. You should friend that journal. It's mine, and I'd love to know who's learning to use LiveJournal because of this article! Hope to see you there soon!

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## Detail and Texture in Dressing a Galaxy

by Audrey I. Russell

In December I was fortunate to visit the *Dressing a Galaxy: The Costumes of Star Wars* exhibit at the Fashion Institute for Design & Merchandising (FIDM) in Los Angeles. Quite a long trip for this Florida girl! I spent four days in the L.A. area, visiting the fashion district, participating in FIDM Fan Day, and walking through the exhibit every day. Each day I discovered something I had not noticed before.

As much time as I spent there and as many pictures as I took, after I left I realized there was so much I hadn't SEEN! I made my most interesting observations and enjoyed the experience most when I left my camera turned off. I wish I had spent less time looking through the lens and more time really LOOKING at the costumes!



One of my favorite features of the exhibit was the touching wall. Motion sensors guarded the costumes, but we could finger the goods on the touching wall as much as we liked!



The two things that kept catching my eye and dropping my jaw in wonder were the extraordinary detail and rich textures I was just itching to reach out and feel! Photos really can't do them justice.

No detail was too small for Trisha Biggar's team, even for characters that were barely seen on screen for a few seconds. Beading, hand-painting, embroidery, couching, tooling, interesting construction, and many more techniques I don't have names for contribute to the intricacy of these costumes. Many textures were then layered to complex and full-bodied effect.

This handmaiden costume, pictured from the front in *Dressing a Galaxy: The Costumes of Star Wars* (the companion book to the exhibit), was displayed full-length from the back and featured a beautiful train. The scarf is made up of strips that are beaded and, I believe, wired on the edges. Below the flower the beading and wiring trails off, and the strips flow freely.



I love the undersleeve on this handmaiden costume. It looks like sheer strips serged together to create ruffled seams. Notice also the emblem on the tabard, and barely visible are small buttons made of light green cord, which appear to be spaced out along the outside of the sleeve and shoulder. This costume is not pictured in *Dressing a Galaxy*.



Incidentally, many of the costumes included extra-long sleeves as a first layer. I decided that it must be very cold in that galaxy, far, far away!

I just love the cutwork on the gown below, and that the top is beaded even though the beading is only visible at the neck and wrists.



The Cut Blue Senate Gown was not on display to the general public, but Fan Day volunteers were able to view it in the office lobby. I was surprised to learn that some of the details are painted onto the velvet, below left. More interesting surface designs on the gold handmaiden costume (below center) and Breha Organa's veil (below right).



The next few pictures show some of my favorite textures. Below left, the Chancellors gold and black robes were my favorite and I kept going back through the exhibit just to figure out how it was done. (If anyone knows, please tell me!) Young Anakin Skywalker's Jedi Padawan garb (below right) looks simple, but the fabric has a hand-quilted appearance.



The next four costumes were mainly monochromatic in color, but the textures took my breath away. These I was able to capture clearly with high-speed black-and-white film.



I was also impressed by the variety and quality of fan-made costumes at Fan Day in December. I was asked to help judge one of the costume contests and the decisions were difficult! Clockwise from the top: the adult contest winners and judges; two of the children's contest participants (including the Best in Show winner, Obi-Wan Kenobi with the painted-on beard!); and me standing next to the Original Trilogy exhibit in my Hoth Leia recreation costume. (Top photo and bottom right photo by Brit Dietz.)



And finally, what Star Wars article would be complete without Darth Vader and George Lucas?



I happened to be present when Vader's batteries were being replaced, and was impressed by the system of hidden straps and fastenings that kept all the costume pieces in place. Above right, the costume in which George Lucas made his *Revenge of the Sith* cameo.

When all was said and done, I packed a whole suitcase of fabric buys to take back with me, and had another box shipped. My trip was a fantastic experience and has inspired me to learn and create more!

### **Naka-Con 2006, Lawrence, Kansas**

Aurora Celeste

For a small-town con, there were a surprising number of entrants in the con's cosplay contest. Most were beginners with less than a year's experience, but I was pleasantly surprised to find such promise in small-town Kansas.

The entries included some very nice painting jobs, including the Best In Show winners, who did a skit and made costumes of some J-Pop stars (Japanese singers, like Britney Spears or N-Sync but in Japan) The costumes in the skit included a black kimono that was fully hand painted.



The workmanship winner got her award for painting as well; she painted a dragon on the sleeves, arm bands, and leggings of her costume.



Not being an anime fan, I didn't quite understand the skit that won best skit, but they had the crowd rolling.



The best newcomer award went to a girl who I predict will go far. She had solid construction, paying attention to materials, linings, and seam finishings, as well as making her own prop fan. ↓



With such great outfits, it was soon clear to us judges that there wasn't going to be near enough recognition for the great stuff we were seeing, so the con director (there was no masquerade director-something I am helping them fix for next year) let the judges create their own awards. Each judge picked a person to recognize, and they were all for workmanship details. One was given for hand-embroidery ,

←



Another went for pattern drafting and props.

←

We gave one, as well, to a 16-year-old in a white dress for future potential. (She is on the left in the picture.) →



After judges' awards we added in some silly awards. Crowd favorite went to a great Roy Mustang look-alike who didn't make his own costume, but spent a great amount of time practicing to walk, talk, and act like his character. ↓



We gave a best look-alike award to a guy who made his entire vinyl outfit by himself, including lining and piping details, for his first costume. →





← The best butt award went to a guy in a great suit that left the crowds rolling.

In all it was a great con. The masquerade needs work, but this is only the second year this con has been held and they are very open to improvement.

In addition to the masquerade, I held two costuming panels, both of which were sparsely attended, but I got some great interest in holding workshops and learning sessions outside of the con, so that more people can dress up next year. Hopefully some of you will see the fruits of this con, because I have convinced one of my fellow judges to go to Costume Con with me, and she's already bought her membership!