

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Silicon Web Staff

President:	Richard Man
Vice-President:	Kevin Roche
Treasurer:	Bruce MacDermott
Secretary:	Deb Salisbury
Web Site Editor:	Kathe Gust
Virtual Costumer Editor	Philip Gust



President's Message **Richard Man***

As I step down as SiW President, we can celebrate many positive changes that have occurred in our chapter since 2006. Several of our members have been honored with the ICG Lifetime Achievement Award for their contributions to our craft, and many of our members have won numerous awards in regional and international costuming competitions. However, more important than the awards is our common interest in costuming that defines us as members of the SiliconWeb. We are all passionate about the craft in our own ways, and I hope it will continue to bring you much joy.

A recent major accomplishment for the ICG is the filing of the 501 (c)(3) umbrella non-profit status for participating chapters

and our members. SiW Treasurer Bruce MacDermott was instrumental in getting that done. I'd like to see this kind of positive change continue for our chapter and for the ICG.

In that light, I am also happy to see that our chapter magazine, *The Virtual Costumer*, has a good amount of contributions from sources outside of the chapter. The ICG is all about "big tent" and cooperation, and I'd like to think that ours is a model chapter in that sense.

My only regret in leading this organization is that we have not achieved a critical mass of members who get involved in serving the chapter: we "lost" a few prospective candidates because they are members of executive staff of the ICG and we have people that are already over-committed and cannot contribute in that capacity. Nevertheless, I hope that some of you will rise to the challenge and participate in the next election. We have good people in our group. Let's see if we can engage each other more.

And that is all I have to say. So long, and thanks for all the fish!



From the Editor **Philip Gust***

Before moving on the issue at hand, I'd like to thank Richard Man for serving as President of SiW, and wish him well in whatever he takes on next.

What some of you may not realize is that Richard has been president twice. He first took office in June 2006, succeeding our first president, Dana MacDermott, and served until June 2008 when Aurora Celeste became president. At the end of Aurora's term in June 2009, Richard once again agreed to serve, and has remained president until now.

In Richard's very first "President's Message" (see [VC volume 4 issue 3](#)), he talked about SiW being a place where talented costumers gather, not because they have no local chapter, but because they find value in joining. During Richard's terms, SiW has gone from 40 members in 15 states to 67 members in 21 states. He also talked about members becoming involved in the chapter as volunteers. His final message to us in this issue is the same.

I've enjoyed working with Richard, and have looked forward to being the first one to read his column in each issue. Thanks, Richard, and good luck!

Military uniforms have always held a special fascination for costumers. Whether the uniform is historical, or one from sci-fi or fantasy, costumers continue to study and recreate them. This issue is devoted to the theme of militaria and military themed uniforms.

There are so many countries and times, and so many genre of fiction, that no single issue can cover every aspect of the topic. However, this issue does provide a fascinating glimpse into a variety of military themed costumes and accessories that are of special interest to our authors.

Christofer Bertani offers a glimpse into British naval uniforms in the golden age between 1747 and 1857 in his review of a book on the subject, which also discusses masculinity and contemporary fashions.

He returns later in the issue to tell us how he recreated the military uniform of one of his favorite fantasy characters, Miles Vorkosigan, using only book jacket illustrations and the sparsest of descriptions provided by the author.

Next, well-known fantasy and game illustrator Larry Dixon continues his discussion on how the artist interprets literature by encouraging us to consider using illustrations from Role Playing Games (RPGs) like Dungeons and Dragons as a source of inspiration for many unusual military style costumes.

Kathe Gust provides a detailed narrative on how she recreated the Rohan

armor of King Theoden's lieutenant, Gamling from the *Lord of the Rings* movies, which she wore in the Costume-Con 26 sci-fi/fantasy masquerade. She also reveals how she received some expert advice from a surprising source.

I introduce a bit of Japanese militaria that I did not realize even existed until I attended the opening of the Hand Fan Museum recently, and learned from a fan collector there that the most secret weapon of a Samurai was his war fan.

Lisa Ashton provides a look at the clothing worn by Sarah Ballou, whose husband Sullivan's moving letter was immortalized in Ken Burns' documentary "The Civil War." Lisa shares her extensive historical research and the reproduction of an outfit that Sara Ballou might have worn, which she exhibited in the Costume-Con 29 historical masquerade.

Lisa also offers an event report on a conference of 1860s Civil War era costumers that she attended recently near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Her first-person account will whet the appetite of Civil War era costuming enthusiasts to attend next year's event.

With a fascinating look back at what an able seaman wore in 1912, at the time of the Titanic, Kevin Roche describes the historic photo he discovered, and the subsequent research he did to create the period accurate reproduction that he exhibited in the Costume-Con 28 historical masquerade.

Byron Connell's article on what WWII US Army officers wore, from the skin out, provides a wealth of information and vintage photos that will enable historical costumers to create an authentic look, whether buying vintage pieces or creating reproductions from scratch.

Finally, historic button expert Sadie Jackman explains why costumers should take an interest in collecting vintage buttons, and why holding one is like holding a bit of history in the palm of your hand.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in VC. The August 2011 issue will have the theme "East Meets West," about Eastern influences on Western clothing, and how Western styles influenced Eastern clothing. The November 2011 issue will have the theme "Heroes and Villains." As "clothes make the man," they certainly also define the heroes and villains of history, literature, and our own imaginations.

I'm pleased to announce that the February 2012 issue of VC will have the theme "Americana," covering elements of costuming, accessories, and related culture that are quintessentially American, from native Americans, to iconic historical costumes, to classic and contemporary American clothing styles that will influence costumers in the years to come.

See the [Upcoming Issues](#) page of the SiW web site for details. Now is a great time to start writing for VC, and share what you know and love with your fellow costumers.