

International Costumer

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*Photo of Rob Himmelsbach
and Sandy Swank from
Costume-Con 33. Photo by
Richard Man.*

Remembering Sandy Swank

President's Message

By Philip Gust

Sasquan, the 73rd World Science Fiction Convention in Spokane, Washington has just wrapped up and, by all reports, it was an exciting conference with a number of costume-related offerings. ICG members played a significant role at this convention by participating in or leading panels, and helping to organize and run events like the masquerade.

Worldcon is one of three "international" competitions recognized by the ICG, along with Costume-Con and Anime North. These masquerades, and many others world-wide, follow the ICG's "Guidelines for Ensuring Fair Competition," which help promote fairness and equity in masquerade competition and judging. All of us can feel proud that ICG and its members play such a significant role in promoting the art and science of costuming, locally, regionally, and around the world.

At Sasquan, PR committee chair and Corresponding Secretary Tonya Adolfson led our PR efforts, including distributing "ICG Member" badge ribbons for members to wear, and handing out ICG mini-postcards and other literature. Masquerade MC and SiW President Kevin Roche also used his time at the mic to let attendees know about the ICG. Thanks to Tonya, Kevin, and everyone who helped promote

the ICG and its programs, and raise its visibility in the sci-fi/fantasy community.

Let me encourage individual members, as well as chapter and SIGs, to help promote your affiliation with the ICG at conferences and other events that you attend throughout the year. The new "Resource Center for Chapters and SIGs" on the ICG website (found at the following link: http://www.costume.org/resources/chapter-sig_resources.html) provides ready-to-print ICG brochures, postcards, and mini-postcards to hand out. It also includes information on ordering "ICG Member" badge ribbons. If you need support to promote the ICG at a conference, please contact the ICG PR Committee at: icg-pr@costume.org.



Phil Gust with a car that he wished he owned the garage for, at a 1920s event this summer at the Filoli mansion in Woodside California. Ain't she sweet?

Next, I'd like to welcome the ICG's newest chapter, the *Lower Arizona Costume Enthusiasts*, a/k/a L. A. C. E.. Elaine Mami was the organizer for this chapter, which covers the southern half of Arizona. They join the Southwest Costumers' Guild in Phoenix as the two ICG chapters serving major population areas of Arizona. Information about the chapter is on the "Find a Chapter" page of the ICG website. Elaine has joined the ICG board as L. A. C. E.'s chapter representative. Elaine chaired Costume-Con 30 in 2012, and her husband Carl has served as ICG Vice President and President. Many members of the chapter are part of *Wild Wild West Con*, which takes place every March in Tucson

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the ICG now has a "company" profile on LinkedIn: @international-costumers-guild. You can "follow" the ICG by going to our LinkedIn profile from our website or directly at the following link: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-costumers-guild>. Then, select the "Follow" button. You need a LinkedIn account to follow us. Also, don't forget to "share" us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ using the arrow ("Share") button to the right of the "Follow" button.

From the Editor

By Vicky Assarattanakul

I can't believe that we are already heading into fall, can you? Fall-like weather is upon us here in Madison, Wisconsin, and many of us are digging into our sewing projects in anticipation of the cold weather.

This issue features memorials for Sandy Swank and Adrienne Martine-Barnes, two costumers who we have lost in recent months. These two individuals touched many lives in the costuming community. I would like to thank everyone for sharing their stories and memories. We have also recently learned of the passing of Toni Lay. If you would like to write a tribute for her, we would love to include it in the next issue.

We also have an article about what to expect at Costume-Con 34's Friday night social. The theme of the convention is "The Wonder of Nature." The convention committee is excited to see what you will create!

Has your chapter just recently joined the ICG? Have you been to any conventions lately? Consider writing an article for *International Costumer* to let us know about your chapter and your conventions! There is an incredible variety of knowledge and skills within the ICG, and we'd love to hear from you.

Memorial Shield

Photos submitted by Elaine Sims and Jeanine Swick

Editor's note: Elaine Sims and Jeanine Swick attended Pennsic, an annual SCA event, this year. Elaine painted a shield in Sandy's memory, which was then placed on a ship that was later burned.



Shield painted in Sandy's memory.



A photo of the ship



The Tiger is Elaine's son's toy that went to Pennsic in his stead (he was in school). When Sandy met Aaron (aka Tank) at CC30, he called himself 'Unca Sandy'



Another view of the ship

Remembering a Dear Friend

By Lisa Ashton

I knew Sandy Swank within the East Coast costuming community, via Philcon, along with Rob Himmelsbach, for a long time. For about 5 years, I planned Philcon's costume programming track. It wasn't a huge undertaking, as Philcon was moderately small and getting smaller. There was a core group of costumers that attended Philcon, and Sandy and Rob Himmelsbach were head of it.

One Philcon about 5 years ago, Sandy and I were on a panel on Sunday morning. I think I had been in the Masquerade the evening before, but I don't remember the costume I wore, or the topic of the panel we were both supposed to be participating in. What I remember, is that only one person came, another friend of ours, and we all just started talking about costuming in general, and where we drew our ideas from.

The discussion came around to Ken Burns' documentary of the Civil War from the 1980's and we all agreed it was one of the best things we had ever watched. We got a real sense of the time and events by his technique of using still photographs, music and narration of actors reading actual letters



Sandy Swank and Lisa Ashton at the Costume-Con 28 Friday Night Social. Photo courtesy of the International Costumers Gallery. Photo located at http://www.costume.org/gallery2/v/bruce_mai/costumecon/cc28/friday/CCN2010_07_185_001.JPG.html

and journals of the time. I said that the letter of Sullivan Ballou to his wife had always made me cry, and Sandy told me there was a whole book that had been written about it. Something passed between us, that electricity that often happens when several costumers experience a shared "Eureka" moment, and that inspired the idea to do historical

recreations of Sullivan Ballou and his wife, and read at least a portion of his letter to her, as a stage presentation. I had wanted to do an 1860's dress, and Sandy said he had always wanted to do a uniform of that regiment. We agreed that we would do it the following year. I think we were both worried that the Philcon Masquerade had gotten so small it might disappear.

We went home and started researching and emailing. My costume turned out to really ignite an interest in me, which then became Miss Lizzy's Traveling Historical Fashion Show. Sandy was busy, and procrastinated. Then procrastinated more. I was worried. I went ahead and had a soundtrack made up for us. Marty Gear helped me and also did the voice on the soundtrack, reading the edited letter to music. Just before Philcon, Sandy sounded as if he were not expecting to do the presentation, and I told him that if I had to, I would do it solo, I had figured it out. He pulled through, and although his uniform was far less ornate than he wanted it, it was clearly recognizable as a Union uniform. We had one rehearsal for tech, and that was it.

Sandy looked so thoroughly the Union soldier that he was totally believable. A child in the audience that night, about half

way into our performance, suddenly gasped and blurted, "OOOOH, he's a ghost!" We had people coming up to us afterward, saying things like "The hair stood up on the back of my neck", "I couldn't stop crying", "I couldn't take my eyes away from you on stage". The costume did win BIS at Philcon, and the following year at CC won awards in all three categories. I still watch it and will cry when I hear the music and hear the letter read.

More photographs and a video clip (if you have the proper plugin) can be viewed at: http://www.costumegallery.com/CostumeCon29/historic/yank_widow/Dscn4740A.htm

Additionally, a clip of the presentation can be found on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/4FUACCHaNgE?t=20m42s>

Goodbye Sandy, you were my friend and costuming partner for one incredible costume. Now you belong to the ages.

Editor's note: For a more detailed article on the presentation described in this article, please also see "Sullivan Ballou's Farewell" by Lisa Ashton. The Virtual Costumer, Volume 9, Issue 2, pp 23-31. (http://www.siwcostumers.org/vc_contents.html#v9_i2).



Sandy Swank and Lisa Ashton as Sullivan and Sarah Ballou from the Historical Masquerade at Costume-Con 29. Photo by Ken Warren.

A Tribute to Sandy Swank

By Carole Parker

Sandy was like the honey pot of social costumers. People liked being around him, and he made everyone feel welcome. Sandy was lots of fun to talk with, and I had some pleasant, long conversations with him for the last couple years.

Sandy Swank and the Next Generation

By Philip Gust

I knew that Sandy was interested in fostering costuming communities, and that he was just starting to help a new chapter get started in Charleston after he and Rob moved there. However, I didn't realize how involved he was in mentoring the next generation of young costumers until I was in the green room for the "Miss Ellen's Portiers" curtain competition at Costume-Con 33, and started talking with other contestants.

Most of the young people who were competing were local, and said that Sandy encouraged them to enter. They spoke fondly of Sandy, and told me stories about how they looked on him as a mentor and felt encouraged by him. That's when I realized just how much impact he had in such a short time living in the area. I can think of no better tribute to Sandy than the legacy that he left in the young people he influenced. My hope is that some of them will go on to form a costume community in Charleston to carry on where he left off.

A Corset Started It All

By Rebecca Marcus

I first heard Sandy's name long before I met him. I was lamenting to friends at various cons throughout the season that I couldn't get someone to help me into a corset, and more than once, more than one person said, "Ask Sandy to help you." I didn't know this "girl" Sandy, and I was not going to ask a total stranger to lace me into a corset. When I found out some time later that Sandy was a man I was all the more certain that I didn't want to walk up to a strange man and ask for help. What I wish someone had said from the beginning was that Sandy was not just a man, but a master costumer, and would have been happy to help another costumer, or at least someone like me who just happened to like roaming the con in a hall costume.



Rebecca Marcus and Sandy Swank. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Marcus.

I am blessed with many nice memories of Sandy at Lunacon, Philcon, parties, planning meetings, and other venues. He had a warmth about him, and a smile, and a kind heart. In the days before everyone just stored photos on their cell phone or digital camera, I used to make elaborate scrap books from the cons I attended, and I am fortunate that I have several of Sandy in various costumes. Cows, baseball, pink, Revolutionary War, are all words that come to mind as I think back on the photos I know I have in my photo albums. Tall, elegant, and fun to be around are words I think of as I write this. His easy going way was evident when he told me that he was there when the Phillies won the World Series and since he couldn't even try to get home he just stayed up partying all night long with everyone else at the stadium. And he had a big smile when he told me that story.

He had a great sense of humor. When Sandy and I inadvertently wandered into a party room where there was a little too much action for either one of us, we quickly made our escape and we laughed about it for years afterwards. And many years ago when I was at a house party someone walked into the house and stood in the middle of the room and shouted out "Sandy died." I was hysterical as I knew he was not well and had sent a card to him just the day before. Then a few minutes later the person who blurted it out said he made a mistake

that Sandy was in the hospital, not dead. While I was furious that someone would announce that, when I saw Sandy shortly after that I told him that story, and he laughed and just loved it, and he asked me to repeat that story on subsequent occasions for a very long time after that, maybe every time I saw him after that.

I had not seen him since he moved to the South. I knew he was looking forward to it, and to the Costume Con. The e-mail alerting us to his passing was a great shock to me as I had been telling a story about Sandy to a friend less than a week before. I don't even



Sandy Swank. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Marcus.

recall how I finally met Sandy since he never did lace me up, but he will always hold a special place in my fannish life. Thank you for allowing me to share this with all of you.

Nice, With a Sense of Humor

By Richard Man

I met Sandy a few times in previous Costume Cons. We didn't interact too much so I only knew him as a nice guy with a sense of humor but not much beyond that. When I found out that I was receiving an ICG grant for my photo project in April, I immediately emailed Sandy to request a use of space at CC33, which would take place in just a few weeks. Sandy went out of his way to work with his team and got a solution for my needs.

When I showed up at the hotel, chatting with people, I heard Sandy speaking behind me saying "Hi Richard, I hope you have everything you need from us." I turned around and was surprised to see that Sandy was in a wheelchair. To co-run a costume con and then also to take care of my last minute requests in such timely manner while being sick shows that he really loves the con and the community. I was speechless.

I made a point of photographing Sandy and his partner Robert after Friday Night Social when everyone dressed in their finery. I followed his progress on his Facebook postings and was looking forward to his recovery. Sadly, we have lost a good person and a good friend. Dear Sandy, you will be missed.

Toni Lay

By Vicky Assarattanakul



Toni Lay at Costume-Con 10. Photo courtesy of the International Costumers Gallery.

Shortly before the newsletter was published, we learned of Toni Lay's passing. I only had the opportunity to interact with her a few times, but I remember her as a very kind woman who knew how to make everyone laugh. Her humor calmed me down during the judging at Costume-Con 32's Historical Masquerade, and it really helped make the experience fun. I'd like to invite members of the ICG to submit their tributes to Toni for the next issue of *International Costumer*.

Memory of an Inspiration

By Carole Parker

I met Adrienne Martine-Barnes in San Jose, CA when visiting mutual friends. Fun lady, well informed.

I did not see her for several years until a convention in Portland, Oregon. She was doing a panel, probably about dye work, and mentioned a particular book. She said, "If you find this book, buy it! It is out of print." When I saw the book later, I bought it, and that was my entry to shibori dyeing. If not for Adrienne's recommendation, I may not have gotten into shibori dyeing.



Adrienne Martine-Barnes. Photo courtesy of The International Costumers Gallery



Dance with the Sidhe
Costume-Con 34 Friday Night Social
By Danielle McKinney

The theme of Costume Con 34 is the “Wonder of Nature.” This theme is being carried out through the entire convention from the doll contest, single pattern contest, off-site tours, and even our Friday Night Social.

The Friday Night Social is titled *Dance with the Sidhe*, and is an opportunity to enjoy the single pattern contest while dressing as your favorite mythical nature-themed creature. As twilight descends upon the natural world, wondrous creatures hidden from human view come out and play. Join us as magical creatures (great and small!) feast, cavort, and dance in a fairy ring!

This evening event will include great food, cocktails, and entertainment. Along with the Single Pattern Contest, guests will be able to enjoy dancing and a variety of other fun activities (to be announced, so check

our website and Facebook page for updates).

Even if you’re not participating in the Single Pattern Contest, the Dance Among the Sidhe is a wonderful opportunity to create and wear that nature-themed fantasy creature you’ve always dreamed of making; fairy, gnome, elemental, giant, troll, faun, shapeshifter, harbinger, pooka, siren; to name just a few.

Please like and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Costume-Con-34/516882478383516?fref=ts> for the latest updates, information, and to see what other great programs will be available! You can also follow us on Twitter (@CostumeCon34), or view our YouTube channel at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7nbCB5_fliuifSScpjTsw.

We hope to see you in Madison in May!

ICG Archives Provides Entertainment for Geek.Kon

By Bruce and Nora Mai

Last month, the ICG Archives provided the video entertainment for the Geek.Kon masquerade halftime. Geek.Kon is a regional convention in Madison, Wisconsin that began in 2007. This venue is staffed by several members of the Madison Area Costuming Society.

Since this venue is a good place to encourage relatively new costumers to compete on stage, this was seen as an opportunity for promoting the ICG and costuming history.

The halftime program included clips from many well-known presentations of the past 30+ years (as well as some that should be MORE well-known) plus trailers for other productions that are part of the Road show. Word is, the program was well received.

Video entertainment from the ICG Archives was also provided at Sasquan.

About the ICG

Membership Benefits

ICG membership benefits include participation in local Chapters and in Special Interest Groups, voting rights, eligibility for grants, online forums, learning and volunteer opportunities, and the International Costumer.

ICG Online

Visit the ICG website for current information and resources:

<http://www.costume.org/>

Join us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/internationalcostumers>

Join the ICG-D Yahoo! group for lively discussions on costuming-related topics:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/icg-d>

Send comments and suggestions to the ICG board and standing committees:

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The Kennedy Memorial Archives and Gallery

The ICG's Pat & Peggy Kennedy Memorial Archives is the world's largest archive of photographs, video and paper ephemera, spanning 70+ years of Science Fiction costuming. Exhibits include an online photo gallery (<http://www.costume.org/gallery2/>) and the ICGArchives YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/ICGarchives>).

The International Costumer

The *International Costumer* newsletter is published bi-monthly by the ICG. The current issue is for members only. Back issues are freely available to the costuming community on the ICG website.

Online Submissions

We welcome short costuming articles, book reviews, event reports, and news items. Submit your copy as rtf, doc, docx or txt files to the International Costumer editor: icg-newsletter@costume.org. All graphics formats are accepted.

Contacting the Editor

Please contact the editor to report problems, or to offer comments and suggestions: icg-newsletter@costume.org.

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