

International Costumer

Volume XV, Issue 1

January-February 2016



Members of the 501st Legion - Wisconsin Garrison at the Star Wars Episode VII premiere. Photo by Victoria Sutton.

Happy New Year!

President's Message

By Philip Gust

As we near the end of 2015 it's time to start looking forward to the new year. I live in Silicon Valley in northern California, and it's become a tradition for many companies here to close down for several weeks around this time. In addition to attending a couple of shows, and catching up on a few books and movies I've been putting off, I also plan to get a start on costuming projects for an upcoming convention and for several events put on by local costuming organizations. Every year, I promise myself to get an earlier start and finish well ahead of time, and every year I invariably end up working right up to the deadline. This year will be different! There, I've said it publicly so maybe I'll actually make good on it this time.

In addition to costuming projects, I'm also working with the ICG Technology and Web Committee to find a replacement for the software used for the International Costumers Gallery. The Gallery contains over 125,000 costume photos from the ICG Archives, spanning over forty years. It is an invaluable resource for our members and the costuming community.

The software we currently use meets our

basic needs, but the open-source community who created it no longer exists, and there have been no updates or patches for several years. As a result, the software is showing its age, and it is increasingly difficult to keep running. Because of our specialized requirements, online photo sharing sites are not a good option, so we are evaluating several open-source solutions, and will migrate the existing International Costumers Gallery to the new software once we have completed our evaluation. I'm grateful to the committee for their efforts.



Kathy Bushman Sanders receives Lifetime Achievement Award from Philip Gust, ICG President, at Costume-Con 33. Photo by Kathe Gust.

The ICG presents its highest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award each year at Costume-Con. The award recognizes "a body of achievement in the costuming art and service to the costuming community." Thirty two recipients have been honored since 1990. Nominations for 2016 are now being accepted.

The ICG President oversees the nomination and election process. Nominations can be made by any ICG member, chapter, or SIG in good standing, and are due no later than March 5, 2016. ICG chapter presidents and the five elected officers vote on the nominations. Send nominations to laa-nomination@costume.org and use "LAA Nomination" as the subject line.

Preparing a good nomination really does take time so I strongly recommend starting now. Visit <http://www.costume.org/lifetime> for qualifications and to read past recipients' citations. Citations are based on information provided in recipients' nominations.

Here are some tips for preparing an effective nomination:

- Not all chapter presidents and officers who vote on the award are familiar with the person you are nominating. Give them a good understanding of your

nominee's qualifications and accomplishments.

- Start with a one- or two-paragraph "executive summary" that addresses all the qualifications for the award. This is your best chance to make your case, so spend some quality time on this.
- Follow that with some notable accomplishments that support what you said in your "executive summary." A few well-chosen examples are usually enough.
- If you are describing costuming skills, include a couple of URLs to photos in the ICG's International Costumers' Gallery or other photo sites as examples.
- Nominations typically run from several paragraphs to a full page (200-500 words). Quality is more important than quantity.

Thanks in advance to those who submit a nomination for your efforts on behalf of a fellow costumer who deserves this special recognition.

I wish everyone a very peaceful and happy new year!

Great Costuming Blogs

By Kathe Gust

There are some great costuming blogs out there. Here are three that I follow for their inspiration, information, and just for fun. They are also listed on the resources pages of Silicon Web Costumers Guild

<http://www.siwcostumers.org/resources.html> along with many others.

Tyranny of Style

<http://tyrannyofstyle.com/>



Tyranny of Style's Joe Kucharski covers the latest in costume design, digital fashion technology, style, and history of dress. Interesting interviews with designers of theatrical, television, film and high fashion garb. Related Facebook, Pinterest and Tumblr accounts. This week's topic is costumes of Star Wars!

Angela Clayton's Costumery & Creations

<http://doxiequeen1.wordpress.com/>



Costumer Angela Clayton offers tutorials and costuming how to's on her blog. She documents the creation of her historical and fantasy costumes from pattern creation to photo shoots of the finished product. Related Pinterest accounts. This week she talks about her 2015 Christmas Gown.

The Pragmatic Costumer

<http://thepragmaticcostumer.wordpress.com/>



Liz Hayes says costuming pragmatically doesn't mean you're limited to what you can scrounge up from the \$2 bin at Goodwill, (though it's a great place to look). Costuming pragmatically means utilizing all the resources you have available as far as you comfortably and financially can with the challenges an average, occasional costumer encounters like budget, time crunches, material shortages, limited knowledge, and less-than-par sewing skills. This blog seeks to blend the two vastly different methods of costuming into a more affordable, accessible method: pragmatism. Related Facebook and Pinterest accounts. This week we have a review of three Dollar Store products.

From the Editor

By Vicky Assarattanakul

Happy 2016! Is your convention season already packed with costume plans? I'd love to hear about your plans and the conventions and costume-related events you attend this year. Consider writing an article for *International Costumer* and sharing your experience with the International Costumers' Guild.

Costume-Con 34 is quickly approaching. I hope your preparations are going well! In addition to the usual masquerades, there will be a tote bag contest, which Stace Feldmann tells us about in this article. Bruce Mai, the director of the Single Pattern Contest, has included an interesting twist for this year's show. The convention committee is quite excited to see the creative ideas that everyone comes up with. The Future Fashion Folio has also been distributed to individuals who have purchased memberships. Check it out, and pick a design to make for this year's show!

Be sure to keep an eye on the Costume-Con 34 website and Facebook page for updates, videos, and information about the Madison area.



A Darth Vader costumer chooses between popcorn and pretzels.

About the Cover

The cover photo for this issue features members of The 501st Legion, Wisconsin Garrison, as well as a couple of costumers from the Rebel Legion. For those unfamiliar with these groups, the 501st Legion and Rebel Legion are made up of Star Wars costumers. The costumers in the

501st Legion specifically costume as villainous characters, while those in the Rebel Legion costume as characters on the protagonists' side. A few members of Madison Area Costuming Society are also members of these groups, and attended the premiere of Star Wars Episode VII in costume. Although my husband and I did not attend in costume, we had a great time taking pictures with those in costume.

It is always fun to see how members of the general public react to costumers at movie premieres and other events. Even in my home city, which is notorious for its eclectic people, when people are in costume in public, there are usually many stares and questions about what play they are in. However, I have found their reactions to be overwhelmingly positive.

Have you attended any public events that involved costumers? Send us a photo! We'd love to hear about it.





Costume-Con 34 Single Pattern Contest

By Bruce Mai

The Single Pattern Show originated 20 years ago, at [Costume-Con 14](#). An idea by Kevin Roche, it has been a semi-regular second fashion show. While a competition, it's a good way to get used to being on stage. The rules for the Single Pattern Show are relatively simple. Two or three sewing patterns are chosen by the convention months in advance (much like the Future Fashion Folio). The maker can modify, embellish and/or ornament in any creative fashion they desire as long as the finished garment is recognizable as having been derived from the selected pattern(s).

Previous patterns used for the competition have been the [Tibetan Panel Coat](#), the [Russian Cossack Coat](#), the [Haiku Jacket](#), the [Afghan Nomad Dress](#), [Kimono](#) and [Hakama](#), Next Costume-Con's patterns are all from Simplicity: the [Misses Fairy Costume](#), the [Animal Body Suit](#) and the [Child's and Pet's Dinosaur Costume](#).



Competitors can choose either to adapt the pattern, staying close to the original design, or transform it into something completely different.

Earlier this year, an adjunct competition was announced. Called the Single Pattern Concept, it takes cues from the Syfy Channel's popular show "Face Off" where the competitors are given a particular subject challenge. For the Single Pattern Show, competitors may use any Simplicity pattern to reflect the contest's subject: "Wicked Plants." So far, there has been a little confusion as to what makes a plant "Wicked". Put as simply as possible, the plant can be either deadly, toxic or an irritant to people or animals. To help people

with ideas, here's a list of candidates people can look up to draw inspiration from:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Bella Donna | Foxglove | Children's Bane |
| Mistletoe | Hemlock | Doll's Eyes |
| Elephant Ear | Hyacinth | Angel's Trumpet |
| Oleander | Blood Root | Black Locust |
| Poison Ivy | Cactus | Poison Sumac |
| Sundew | Bloodwort | Pitcher Plant |
| Hogweed | Castor Bean | Mala Mujer |
| Suicide Tree | Poison Oak | Strychnine Tree |
| Venus Fly Trap | | |
| Blind Your Eye Mangrove | | Bleeding Heart |

Important Note: The competitors must present a **printed photo reference** of both their Wicked Plants and their chosen pattern to the judges in order to be considered for an award. It cannot be a picture on a device, unless the competitor intends to leave the device with the judges during their deliberation.

Judges for the competition are:

Kevin Roche

Andrea Schewe

Dave Kanoy

For more information, visit the web page at <http://www.costumecon34.com/competition/single-pattern-contest/>, or contact cc34singlepattern@gmail.com.

CC34 Tote Bag Contest

By Stace Feldmann

Continuing in the tradition of fun display contests like shoes, hats, and codpieces, Costume-Con 34 will be holding an informal Reusable Tote Bag Contest. The brainchild of contest coordinator, Stace Feldmann, this is an opportunity to tie in our costuming and sewing skills and interests to the Green Movement and CC34's overarching theme, *The Wonder of Nature*. All pieces submitted for the contest will be on display in the Exhibit Hall alongside the Doll Contest entries, where conference attendees can admire them up close. There will even be an opportunity to vote for an "audience favorite" bag, to be awarded alongside the regular juried judges' awards.

One of the simplest things any of us, as crafters, can do to reduce, reuse, and recycle, is to create a bag which can be used at the grocery store, fabric store, or anywhere else we shop, so as to reduce the amount of plastic that ends up in our landfills – and perhaps reuse or recycle scraps of fabric out of our stashes! There are no requirements for patterns to use, everything is free-form and up to the imagination. You can go creative and wacky, or beautiful, re-create a character's

bag, or design a bag a favorite character would use. It doesn't have to be a traditional "tote" shape, but it should still be functional. Consider the number and size of pockets, pocket placement, strap style and placement, overall size, closure styles and placements, embellishments, etc. Make use of fabric and embellishments already in your stash, or design something that is an expression of you in color, fabric choices, and style.

The actual contest rules are as follows:

1. All bags must be larger than a clutch or purse, they should aim for "tote" size, large enough to serve as a backpack, grocery tote, or similar bag. No smaller than 1 foot tall x 6 inches wide x 3 inches deep. No specific measurements or dimensions are required otherwise.
2. Decorations, closures, and pockets are entirely at the creator's discretion! However, make sure no decorations are so fragile that the bag would be unable to be used for its intended purpose.
3. All bags should be utile – that is, after the competition if you or anyone else were to want to use the bag, they could do so. You may, if desired, stuff or pack the bag to show its utility or help it keep its shape

while on display, but do not include valuable or sensitive items.

4. You must be a registered member of Costume-Con 34 to display a bag and enter the contest.

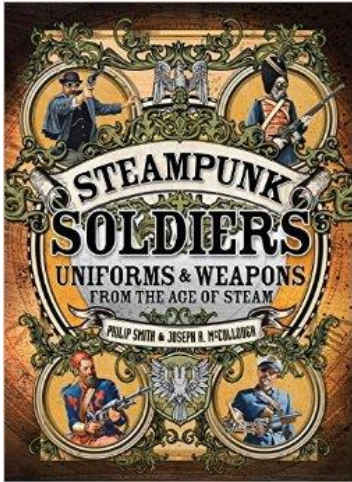
A small panel of judges will take a stroll through the exhibit Sunday morning, and the awards will be announced at the Future Fashion Show. All awards except the "audience favorite" are at the judges' discretion, but may include honors in such categories as Best Use of Recycled Material, Most Amazing, Most Beautiful, Best Recreation, and the like. There is no limit to how many bags any one person may enter, but if you intend to submit more than three, we would appreciate a heads-up so we can make sure there is display space for all entries. Pre-registration is not required, but if you would like to inform them ahead of time or request special display hardware, please email cc34scifi@gmail.com. Entry forms will be available at the time of submission and all entries should be dropped off at the Exhibit Hall by noon on Saturday to be considered a valid entry.

Consider entering the Tote Bag Contest at Costume-Con 34, we appreciate all styles of approach and can't wait to see what everyone is dreaming up!

Book Review

By Byron Connell

Smith Philip and Joseph A. McCullough.
Steampunk Soldiers: Uniforms & Weapons from the Age of Steam. Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4728-07023-1. Pp. 156.



“Between 1887 and 1895, the British art student Miles Vancroft travelled around the world, sketching and painting the soldiers of the countries through which he passed. In this age of dramatic technological advancement, Vancroft was fascinated by how the rise of steam technology at the start of the American Civil War had transformed warfare and the role of the fighting man.

This volume collects all of Vancroft’s surviving paintings, along with his associated commentary on the military units he encountered. It is a unique pictorial guide

to the last great era of bright and colourful uniforms as well as an important historical study of the varied steam-powered weaponry and equipment that abounded in the days before the Great War of the Worlds [from *Steampunk Soldiers’* back cover].”

Steampunk isn’t my most favorite genre. However, given my interest in uniforms, once I took a look at *Steampunk Soldiers*, I couldn’t resist it. The book purports to show the uniforms, weapons, and accouterments of officers and men of the great powers at the end of a 19th century that saw a “different” development of engineering and technology resulting from some differences in the growth of scientific knowledge. In 64 paintings, Mr. Vancroft encompasses the armed forces of Great Britain, France, Germany, the United and Confederate States of America, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy, Japan, and several minor powers (Finian pirates, Ottoman Empire, the Shaolin sect of China, Korea, the Free Port of Antwerp [Belgium], Cuba, and the Brazilian Empire). Most of the soldiers are male; however, there are two females shown.

Many of the uniforms are unchanged from those in our world and the reader has to take a close look to see their steampunk aspects. A private of the “Fire Zouaves” (11th New York Infantry), for example, is depicted in essentially the uniform worn in our world as part of the Union Army

during the Civil War, but wielding (appropriately) a flamethrower.

Others are not so close. One of my favorites is an infantryman of The Black Watch (the Scottish regiment) in his “Highlander Battlesuit,” a suit of plate armor and a kilt! There’s a similar departure for a member of the Union Army’s Iron Brigade (known as such in our world for their iron discipline under fire), depicted in iron and ceramic plate armor but with the brigade’s distinctive black slouch hat.

Lest the reader think the conceit of an artist traveling the world and capturing in paint the uniforms and equipment he saw is far-fetched, some artists in our world actually did so. Between 1907 and 1914, a Scottish artist, A. E. Haswell Miller, did just that, recording the uniforms worn by the armies of Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, and other powers. His efforts are captured in *Vanished Armies*, edited by John Mollo [Oxford: Shire Publications, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-747780-739-1].

If you’re looking for inspiration for a steampunk costume, or if you’re interested in – or even just curious about – steampunk, alternate histories, or 19th century uniforms and equipment, you may find *Steampunk Soldiers* a hoot. I did and am happy to recommend it.

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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icg-board@costume.org

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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.

Newsletter Delivery

The *International Costumer* is available as both an online and print edition. Your preference is part of your ICG membership record. To change or verify your preference, contact your local chapter.

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