

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Silicon Web Staff

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President's Message Kevin Roche*

There must be a chronic hysteresis embedded in the middle of February (I was a week late with last year's column, too!), due most likely to time-traveling off to *The 26th Season of Gallifrey One*, aka G1, this year's edition of my favorite *Doctor Who* convention.

We survived, and (unfortunately for him) I now know Phil can stitch up a errant time loop in a jiffy, so here we go!

This year our little cabal's costumed cocktail party at *Gallifrey One* was "Join us in the Saloon Car for an Evening on the Orient Express." A gratifying number of attendees packed

appropriately themed wardrobe, and the car was rockin' until three in the morning. Andy and I also organized another *Doctor Who* mashup group, this time just for fun as hall costumes: *Bluebox 42*, combining *Doctor Who* and the BBC3 series *Bluestone 42* about an ATO Squad in Afghanistan.

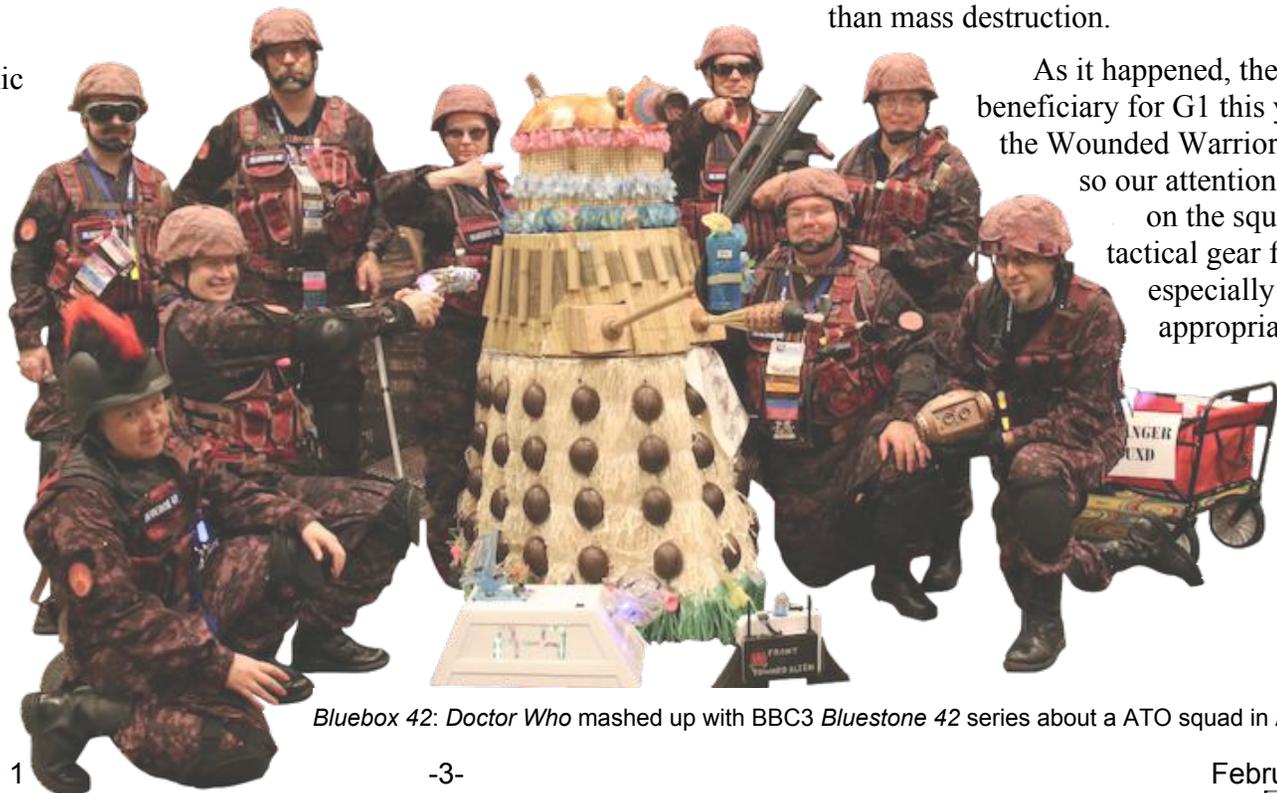
("ATO" means Ammunition Technical Officer, so the ATO Squad is a bomb squad. *Bluestone 42* has been described as a very funny cross between *MASH* and *The Hurt Locker*.)

Nine of us spent 17 hours over dyeing urban camo tactical gear dark red. I built a robot dog ("Arthur-9"). Bryan Little built a wagonful of disarmed devices (plus one real bomb: A DVD of *Battlefield Earth*).

We spent Sunday afternoon at G1 in kit sweeping the convention floor for "Improvised Dalek Devices." (Note: we very carefully avoided using the "b" word out loud in public during all this playacting – except in reference to the DVD.)

We even successfully captured a Dalek – even if he was more interested in Mai Tais than mass destruction.

As it happened, the charity beneficiary for G1 this year was the Wounded Warrior project, so our attention to detail on the squad's tactical gear felt especially appropriate.



Bluebox 42: Doctor Who mashed up with BBC3 *Bluestone 42* series about a ATO squad in Afghanistan.

It seems our convention schedule is already in overdrive; we had [Further Confusion](#) last month and *Gallifrey One* now, and the spring is bursting with costuming opportunities. On top of everything else, the *RoboGames* have been revived, so in April DARPA (the Drinks Advanced Research Projects Agency) will be defending its gold medal in robotic bartending with the latest edition of my barbot "ThinBot." [Costume-Con 33](#) is in May, and I'm already hearing portentous rumblings of splendiferosity from multiple quarters!



If you are a participant in [Worldcon 2015](#) and the *Hugo Awards* nomination/voting process, I'd like to point out that *The Virtual Costumer* qualifies to be nominated in the "Best Fanzine" category. *VC* has been published since 2003, and is chock-ful of SFF-ally appropriate articles. It's been ably steered by our editors all that time, and I hope you'll consider it when making your nominations.

Time to wrap this up before the timewarp closes -- have a great rest of the winter and start of spring, and, as always, if you're wearing something funny, be sure to get pictures and share them with Phil and *The Virtual Costumer*!



From the Editor *Philip Gust**

Welcome to the first issue of *VC* for 2015! This is Volume 13, and I began writing this column on Friday, February 13th. Should I worry about a supernatural connection, or is "13" just a natural number, between 12 and 14?

Humans historically invoke the supernatural to explain the power of the world around them, and have worshiped a pantheon of deities to seek their protection. In addition to the rituals and ceremonies, costumes often play an important role. In this issue of *VC*, we explore a number of interesting aspects of costumes worn by the gods themselves, by their acolytes, and by those who worship them.

We begin with a report on the YouTube channel of a "Hairdressing Archaeologist" who first hit the news for her work reconstructing the historic Roman hairstyle of the Vestal Virgins by analyzing multiple sculptures from the time. Kathe Gust takes us on a tour of the the videos that show reconstructions of many other ancient and historical hair styles.

Next, Deb Salisbury offers a "Virtual Author Talks" about her new book, *The Art of the Mantua-Maker: 1870 – 1879*. Deb tells us that she worships the fashions of the 1870s, and adores nineteenth-century fashion magazines and sewing books. Her book combines her passions by reproducing

a selection of articles from her extensive collection of fashion magazines and books from the decade, categorized by the type of article, and citing the original sources.

Few people would be brave enough to combine Voodoo and Steampunk, but Samantha Witt does it with her "Steampunk Voodoo Queen" costume. In her article, she tells how she was inspired by "Dr. Facilier" from *The Princess and the Frog*, and wanted a steampunk version that embodied the essence of the character. The result is a terrifying brew that is guaranteed to leave you spellbound!

Rae Bradbury-Enslin has had a decades-long fascination with the Greek statue of Athena Parthenos. After years of nagging by the Goddess, she finally obeyed the summons and created an embodiment as an entry for the *Costume-Con 32* Historical Masquerade. She tells in her article about her multi-year journey, and offers technical details about every aspect of creating the costume and the props that she presented. Based on the audience and judge's reactions, the Goddess must have been pleased!

In a little more than two decades, Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) conquered nearly the entire known world. Surprisingly little is understood about the body armor that Alexander and many of his men wore. A group at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay finally discovered the secret of creating "linothorax" armor from linen and glue. In their article, Gregory Aldrete, Scott Bartell, and Alicia Aldrete

describe how they did it, and how they proved that it works – including stopping a recreated period arrow that Gregory shot at an armored Scott from 15 feet away! These are truly dedicated historical costumers with skin in the game!

The Romans were famous for being able to joke about their deities. Kevin Roche describes how an informal costume became a new god in the Roman pantheon: “Liberacicus, God of Lounge Singers.” The updated costume included loads of hidden storage pockets, enabling him to wear it to convention parties and bring along money, keys, and cell phone. It is one of his favorite slightly-salacious evening hall costumes.

In the last issue ([VC volume 12, issue 4](#)), Kevin Pishion was ready to admit defeat trying to recreate the god-like Marvel Comics super-villain “MODOK.” Now he tells how he finally overcame the odds and completed his odyssey (with a little help from his friends), and went on to glory at the *2014 San Diego Costume-Con* masquerade.

Finally, Mikaela Renshaw and her father, Mark offer a tutorial based on their construction of Drow Elf and Woodland Elf costumes, made of EVA and craft foam. Mikaela and her brother showed off their creations in the *2014 San Diego Comic-Con* masquerade. The level workmanship was astounding!

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. The theme for the May 2015 issue will be “Dressing for the Great War,” in honor of those who served their

countries on the 100th anniversary of WWI, and covering the war's influence on clothing, military and civilian.

In August 2015, 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.

I'm pleased to announce that 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.

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.



**From the Web
Diva
Kathe Gust***

A while back, a request came in for a list of where to find fabric for historical costumes. That got me thinking about the topic of other items for historical costuming. There are lists on the Web, but normally I find that half the links are dead, and they don't really give you a idea of what the seller offers or why you might want to go there.

Voila! A new resource was born: the “[Historical Costuming Resources](#)” page on the SiW website.

I don't list everything, just places I either used myself or heard recommended by other costumers. If I bought something there with no hassle and no disappointment, I gave it the Web Diva Seal: 👑. It doesn't mean they are perfect, just good enough for me to feel comfortable recommending them personally.

The four sections so far are:

- ***Fabrics and Notions***, which cover everything you would need to make garments from a historical period: buttons, trims, fabrics, and threads.
- ***Jewels and Metal Work*** includes jewelery, medals, and military decorations from many historical periods.
- ***General Stores*** covers all types of goods, reproduction accessories, shoes, and ready-made garments.
- ***Patterns*** from a variety of historical periods.

Visit the new “Historical Costuming Resources” page on the SiW website. Give them a try and feel free to suggest your favorites to add to the list. You can contact me at my [Web Diva email address](#).

Also, don't forget to visit the “[Costume Links](#)” and “[Vintage Sewing Books](#)” resource pages!