

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

Silicon Web Staff

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President's Message **Kevin Roche***

Wait. What happened to December and January? How can it be February?

Oh, that's right, there was Loscon, then Smofcon, then GX3, the Santa Run where my team ran as a Hanukkah Menorah rather than as Santas (right), then Christmas, then Further Confusion, then fleeing the SuperBowl for wine tasting, then Gallifrey One. That's how it got to be February, trending into March.

It's well before the solstice, but the Spring rush of conventions and events seems

to be growing faster. For Andy and I, this is partly because of the San Jose in 2018 bid. We'll be flying to Manchester for Eastercon in March and I have to admit I'm rather excited about it; we've only been once before, in 1999, and that was before Andy had even moved out to California!

As an aside, if you are interested in helping the bid, we are looking for more people to represent the San Jose bid in these last 6 months leading up to the vote at the Kansas City Worldcon, especially folks from parts of the world other than the western US,. Send me an email message at kevin.roche@sjin2018.org or fill out the [form](#) on the website and let's see how you might help!

(Note: I obviously have a personal bias for the San Jose bid, given as how if we win

I'll be chairing a Worldcon. If you happen to be a New Orleans supporter, more power to you. A contested bid generally makes for a more engaged membership, and we get along just fine with our counterparts on the New Orleans bid, but I'm obviously still rooting for San Jose.)

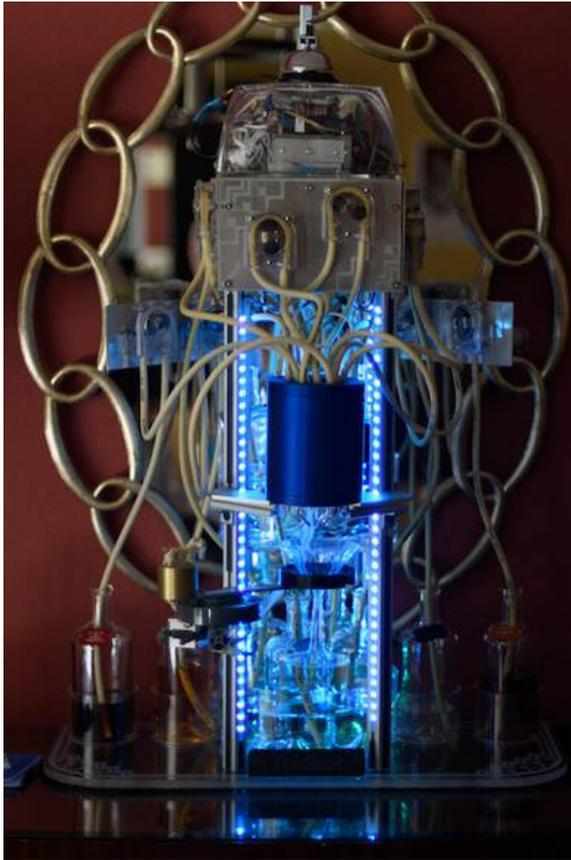
I'm writing this just days before presenting to the Livermore Reads Together program about robotics, showing off ThinBot (my bartending 'bot, who has had a major esthetic makeover), Arthur-9 (who was built for a costume) and wearable / programmable illumination. While the talk isn't about costuming per se, my hobby robotics projects certainly wrap back into my overall design and construction esthetic.

I mentioned Eastercon; we'll also be at FogCon, Costume-Con 34 and Punk Rock Bowling as the Spring event cycle unfolds. Our assorted circles here in the Western US will be at Norwescon, BayCon, FanimeCon and Clockwork Alchemy, just to name a few. I'm going to try a blacklight 5K run in April, which certainly merits a bit of wardrobe skullduggery on my part.

What are you doing this Spring?



Kevin's team dressed as a Hanukkah Menorah for the Santa Clara (California) Run.



Kevin's made-over, bar-tending ThinBot is artfully famed by a decorative mirror. Photo: Andy Trembley.

P.S. Start thinking now about whether you might like to run for one of the Silicon Web CG's officer positions -- elections will be shortly after Costume-Con. Because of the virtual nature of our chapter, none of the duties are particularly onerous.

P.P.S. Or you might consider participating in one of the ICG's new Special Interest Groups (SIGs) or on an ad-hoc committee! There are many ways to contribute to SiWeb and the ICG as a whole.



From the Editor **Philip Gust***

According to Janet Wilson Anderson in her introduction to the book, *The Costume Maker's Art: Cloaks of Fantasy, Masks of Revelation*, the genesis of the modern costume masquerade had its roots in sci-fi/fantasy conventions, where fans who dressed as their favorite characters participated in costume parades during special masquerade parties, and received awards that recognized their work. A few even began to add a bit of presentation.

She argues that it was fairly low-key until the early to mid 1980s when three things happened to turn the masquerade into what it is today: the development of the skill division system that encourages and protects newer costumers; the start of Costume-Con, a convention dedicated to all types of costuming; and the founding of the International Costumers' Guild with its local chapters that encouraged costumers to learn from each other. Through the masquerade, costuming has become a unique artform.

This issue of *VC* explores the art of the masquerade and many of the aspects that go into producing one. Whether you have been tapped by a local or regional convention to run a masquerade, asked to be a judge, MC, or photographer, or are called on to help out in some way behind the scenes, the articles in this issue provide valuable information about what is involved and how to do a good

job. These articles will also give costumers who enter masquerades an appreciation of everything that it takes to put you on stage and make you look great!

First, Jay Jorgensen talks about his new book, *Creating the Illusion: A Fashionable History of Hollywood Costume Designers*, which he co-authored with Donald L. Scoggins. Jay is a film and fashion historian and collector and a photographer. His interest in film costuming began in the 1980's and 1990's when he received some original costume sketches from films as gifts. He began appreciating the sketches for the works of art that they are, and set about acquiring more and learning about the people who designed them. This book looks at the works of hollywood costume designers, from the early silent films to contemporary productions. It is richly illustrated with design drawings and studio photographs from Jay's extensive collection.

The principles embodied in the "ICG Guidelines to Ensure Fair Competition" are a foundation of modern masquerade competitions, so we lead off with an article by Andrew Trembley, who participated in the most recent revision of the Guidelines. Andy helps us look behind the Guidelines to understand their simple underlying principles, and to appreciate why it is so important for masquerades to adopt rules that embody them.

In "Running a Masquerade," veteran Masquerade Director Pierre Pettinger tells us what it takes to run a masquerade, and

outlines the areas that the Masquerade Director (MD) is responsible for overseeing. Like a movie director, the MD is in charge of the overall production and for “hiring” and supervising the departments and staff that make it all happen. Pierre's insights based on years of experience will be valuable for both novice and veteran MDs, and enlightening for costumers who enter.

The Green Room is the backstage hub of activity for a masquerade for both staff and contestants. It is overseen by a Green Room Manager who is responsible for everything it takes to get contestants ready and put them on stage. In his article, “Organizing a Green Room,” Byron Connell shares his years of experience to explain everything a Green Room Manager needs to know about setting one up, staffing and provisioning it, and making it run smoothly.

Janet Wilson Anderson is the unofficial “dean” of modern masquerade judging. In her article, “Judging a Masquerade,” Janet explains the process and her philosophy behind judging a masquerade. She also offers her frank insights into what both judges and contestants need to know, and pitfalls to avoid. Janet gives detailed instructions on proving the right kind of space and equipment for judges and their clerks, and offers suggestions on choosing appropriate award titles. Every judge, MD and masquerade contestant should read this.

His background as an entertainer, costumer, and masquerade MC makes Kevin Roche eminently qualified to offer his

insights into what it takes to be an outstanding masquerade MC. In his article, “Mastering the Art of Ceremony,” Kevin describes what it's like to be the face and voice of a masquerade, and how to put both the contestants and the audience at ease. He also advises potential MCs on dealing with difficult situations like delays, glitches, and unruly audiences with grace and poise.

Costuming is a transient artform. Once the masquerade is over and the costumes are packed away, it would all be forgotten if it weren't for the skill and artistry of the masquerade photographer. Veteran masquerade photographer Richard Man gives us a rundown on how MDs and Green Room Managers can work with the masquerade photographer to make their job easier, including what kind of space and facilities are needed. He also offers advice to photographers on lighting and backdrop, posing costumers, and making photos available afterwards.

Organizing a large group entry for a masquerade is difficult under the best of circumstances. When members of the group live hundreds or thousands of miles apart and meet for the first time at the convention where they will perform, things gets even more interesting. If they do it over and over again, you have what Bethany Padron describes as “The Big Group Card.” In her article, Bethany describes how they all cope.

Most think that veteran costumers were born “scary,” but many costumers still remember their first masquerade, and some

even look back on it fondly. In “My First Masquerade,” Kathe Gust reflects on being talked into entering one at her first-ever sci-fi/fantasy convention, without ever having seen a masquerade or knowing anything about one. With a little help from friends and support from a “fairy godmother,” she came through with flying colors. She also offers advice to those entering the first time.

Here is a quick preview of what is upcoming in *VC*. The theme of the May 2016 issue will be “Polynesian Apparel,” looking at the traditional clothing of the people of the Polynesian islands, from the Maori of New Zealand to the ceremonial dress of Hawai'i. The apparel of the many islands of the central and southern pacific present new opportunities for costumers to explore these cultures through their dress.

In the August 2016 issue, we'll explore “Hair, Hairstyles, and Accessories,” and the many ways that historical costumers as well as those in sci-fi, fantasy, anime, and other genres, use hair, hairstyles, and hair accessories to accentuate their costumes.

I'm pleased to announce that the theme for the November 2016 issue is “Labors of Love,” exploring why costumers are driven to invest outrageous amounts of time and effort into their creations, completely out of proportion to any reasonable expectation of any return for their efforts.

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.