



## Judging a Masquerade

**Janet Wilson Anderson**

*An experienced masquerade judge shares her personal experiences, and offers advice to potential judges and to masquerade directors.*

This article is revised from one I wrote for the original *Masquerade Handbook* that was published over a decade ago and is long out of print. Why am I the one sounding off on this subject?

- I'm qualified: I've been a judge at Worldcons and Costume-Cons, and I've judged a number of regional and local conventions as well.
- I'm not afraid to tell it as I see it!

The opinions expressed in this article are my own, and do not represent those of any other group or person.

### **Criteria for Judging a Costume.**

*"What do you look for when you judge a costume?"* This is the question I get asked most often as a judge. So here are my criteria. Other judges may put their priorities in a different order, but this is a good place for the first-time judge to start.

### **Costumes First**

Whether I am judging a presentation or a workmanship competition I look first at the costumes.

How the costume appears on stage is important, but for me, particularly when judging those competing in the Novice and Journeyman divisions, a good costume will overcome a so-so presentation and get an award. If two entries are tied for the top prize, I will personally opt for the one with the more challenging costumes. After all, this isn't an acting or stagecraft competition; it's a costume competition.

Of course, if I am judging a separate workmanship competition, the emphasis will be primarily on up-close examination of the costume, but how the costume appears on stage will still be a factor.

So what do I look for in a costume?

- Originality
- Execution of Design
- Unity of Concept
- Consistency of Execution

**Originality.** I evaluate costumes on originality first. While I try to clear my mind of everything I've ever seen before and look at each competition with fresh eyes, costumes that try something I've not seen

before will still impress me more. This is particularly true the further up in the skill divisions you go. I expect more originality from entries in the Master division, because their skills permit it. (Of course, this isn't the first criterion for Recreation costumes, but even then there can be originality in the choice of costume created.)

**Execution of design.** I evaluate costumes on execution of the design concept. Is it cleanly done? Are the extraneous bits distracting my eye – too much glitz in the wrong place, for example. Does the workmanship visible from the stage look neat? (I mark costumes down that are falling apart before my eyes, or which are obviously missing the finishing details they need.) Is the choice of colors appropriate?

This last one has caused a number of lost points over the years – colors that clash, or main characters overshadowed by a minor character in bright red. Color happens to be part of my main career and I'm particularly pleased to see it well used.

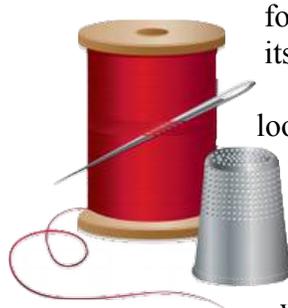
**Unity of concept.** In a group, I look for unity of design concept. Do all the members of the group look like they belong together, whether from the same universe, culture or story? This is probably the single biggest error made by groups – no unity of design.

I know it's fun to have everyone doing their own thing. But if three of the group are in sexy-lady outfits and the others are swathed to the ears, it's apt to look strange, especially if two are in purple, one green, one yellow, and one black. (Yes, I'm describing a real group here. I might note they were supposed to be the same entity.)

Wilson Anderson's Rule: A group shall look like it didn't just happen to meet accidentally.

**Consistency of execution.** Again, in a group, consistency of execution is important. If one costume is really poorly done, it will drag down the cumulative effect of the group. If you have one spectacularly-done costume, it should be given prominence but not overshadow the main character in the group. Off-balanced execution is the second biggest problem I've seen with groups. Bjo Trimble said it years ago: A group is only as good as its weakest member.

## Workmanship



For the workmanship competition, I focus on the costume itself, and not on the costumer wearing it. I look at everything up close to see that the costumer has executed their concept and design with skill, and used appropriate construction techniques.

I also look at any documentation to see how well the workmanship matches the original concept and design. Historical masquerades usually have a separate documentation competition, but that is not normally so for sci-fi/fantasy masquerades.

If the costume is historical, I personally don't deduct "points" for using modern techniques, materials and/or equipment, especially if it is historical interpretation rather than historical recreation. But if the work is well executed, I would add points for using original techniques. If the entire concept is to execute the work in original techniques and/or materials, then it should be judged on that basis, and the costumer should be able to justify his/her choices.

In workmanship judging, a contestant presents his/her costume to the judges, either in the Green Room before the masquerade or in a separate judging session.

**Time is limited.** I have a fixed time for each costume based on the total time available and the number of entries. When the time is up, I need to move to the next entry to make sure everyone has their slot. For large groups, I may allow multiple time slots, depending on the size of the group.

**Plan ahead.** Think about how you want to present your costume ahead of time. Some judges want the costumer to take the lead, especially for experienced costumers, while others will ask questions, especially for newer costumers.

**Tell me what's right – not what's wrong.** Tell me about what aspects you are the most proud of or that I should give special attention to. Never tell me what is wrong! If it's obvious you won't have to tell me, and if I don't notice, why point it out?

## Presentation



For the presentation competition, I weigh the costume elements of design and execution together with the presentation itself. For me, the purpose of presentation is to increase the impact of the costume. I've seen a number of presentations actively hurt the judges' ability to evaluate the costume. Artsy lighting so dim the costume can't be seen. Staging that keeps the most impactful member of a group clear in the back. Blocking that obscures key elements of the costume. As a judge this drives me crazy!

I want to see the costumes, and if you want an award from me, you should let me see your work at its best advantage, unless we are dealing with the category of "Humorous Shtick" where costume is not really the point and presentation (especially timing!) is everything.

**Show the costume to its best advantage.** I look for a presentation that shows off the costume to its best advantage. I love a presentation that has no wasted moves, where every element displays some new aspect of the costume for my view. I know that you sometimes need a little time and stage movement to establish character, but far too much time is spent on this in most presentations.

**Don't bore me!** This is a visual art, and I use a rule of thumb that says something new should come into view every 10-15 seconds on stage. This could be a costume mutation, a new prop, a new member of a group. Just to stand on stage and wave your arms for 60 seconds, or for a group to parade on stage and stand there flapping their capes for 3 minutes is really boring.

**Let me see you!** Likewise, to scuttle across stage at the speed of light doesn't do much good either. Or to design a costume with a beautiful back and let the judges see it for a microsecond as you whirl around.

Of course a good presentation adds immeasurably to a good costume. And at the more skilled levels and for Best in Class/Show, both count. But a bad costume will lose more points with me than a bad presentation.

### **Past History Shouldn't Count**

I've changed my mind about one element of judging over the years. I used to feel that, as an experienced costumer, it was

part of my judging qualifications to be able to take into consideration the previous costumes done by a particular costumer or costumes throughout history. To be able to say, particularly for those entries in the Master's category, "This isn't up to 'X's best work, and so should be scored less than 'Y', who has really come a long way." Or to be able to say "I've seen 432 Snow Queens and this one doesn't stack up to the one Jacqui Ward did at Chicon." I no longer think this is appropriate.

### **See Each Costume for the First Time**

I feel it is a judge's obligation to look at each costume and at each competition as if she/he had never seen any other of the contestant's work or similar costumes before. To the extent humanly possible, I clear my mind of knowledge of specific costumes seen before. As a judge, I don't personally know a soul on that stage. This also eliminates the problem associated with entering the same costume in different masquerades. As far as I'm concerned, I'm seeing each costume for the first time, and judging it only in the context of the masquerade in which it is entered.

### **An Absolute Standard**

I now approach each masquerade with an absolute standard against which I measure each entry (see above for the composition of that standard). It varies only by the level of the Masquerade. I do judge

## **A Judge's Bill of Rights**

- Judges should be considered fair, unbiased and competent, until proven otherwise.
- Judges shall have the freedom to award prizes to everything they see worthy of them and not to any unworthy.
- Judges need consider no other points of view but their own in their deliberations.
- Judges should be given the equipment/facilities needed to do their job.
- Judges shall be briefed by the Masquerade Director as to the contest rules.
- Judges shall have access to the Masquerade Director during their deliberations, but that Director shall take no part in them.
- Judges shall use whatever scoring system they mutually agree upon.
- Judges shall be given a competent clerk who understands confidentiality.
- Judges shall not be forced to reveal any of their deliberations.
- Judges shall not be required to defend their decisions to anyone!
- Judges should be as expedient in their deliberations as possible.
- Judges should maintain confidentiality about their deliberations.
- Judges should make their advice available to costumers genuinely wishing to improve for the future.

more stiffly at a Worldcon and Costume-Con than I do at a large regional like Westercon, than I do at local one like Baycon. Everyone is judged to the same standard, without regard to their personal history or previous masquerades.

## Personal Bias

If the above is the policy for all judges, then the question of judges judging Significant Others should, in principle, go away. As a judge you know no one on stage personally. In the Real-World, though, it can be a perceived problem for the audience and contestants (including those who are not willing to consider their own shortcomings: it's much easier to blame bias than one's own failings.)

So as a judge, I abstain from scoring any member of my family or entering into the deliberation about their entry, and insist that if any of them wins an award, my abstention be so announced. I think this is appropriate action for judges in general.

## Real Bias

The fact is, every single judge that ever judged is biased in some way. Judge 'X' likes glitz; judge 'Y' hates ugly monsters; judge 'Z' thinks techie props are neat. That's why we have a panel of judges, not just one. But to the extent that judges can put personalities aside and just look at the costumes, judging can be as fair as possible. And for those who can't we quickly learn

who they are and try to avoid using them as judges again.

## Sandbagging



Is it the judges' obligation to take action against sandbaggers (those who compete in a division below their skill level or who compete a costume that has won previously in a more challenging competition)? In an absolute sense, I think the answer is no.

It is the Masquerade Director's job to set up the rules and see that the entrants abide by them. The more knowledgeable the Masquerade Director, the easier it is to spot people competing in inappropriate classes or costumes beyond the normal range for that masquerade and steer them into higher divisions.

The judges should judge what they are given to judge. If someone is entered in the Novice division and the Masquerade Director has let them so enter, they will be judged against other Novice class entries. To penalize an entrant for something the Masquerade Director has sanctioned is not a judge's task. And it really confuses the audience if someone in an outstanding costume is overlooked in the judging or given a prize in a higher division than they competed in.

In the Real-World, however, things are sometimes a little less clear.

## The Masquerade Director Sets the Rules, Not the Judges

As a judge, it is my obligation to be familiar with the rules of the competition I'm judging. A copy of those rules should be given to the panel prior to the start of the judging by the Masquerade Director during the



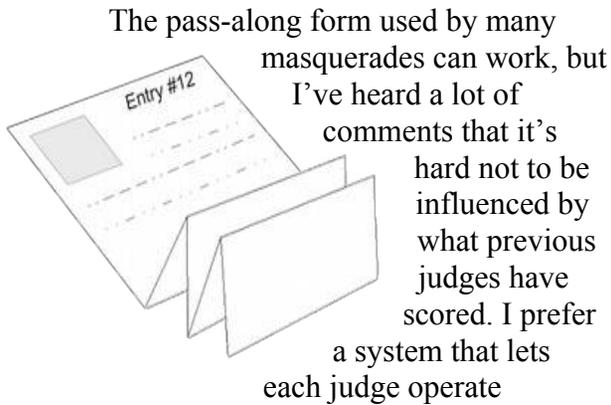
judges' briefing, and placed in the judges' room during their deliberation. This isn't always the case, so the judges should have the right to ask the Masquerade Director for clarification of a contestant's standing.

If the judges know something the Masquerade Director doesn't, he/she had better let him know. It then is up to the Masquerade Director to rule on whether the contestant gets bumped up in Class or stays as entered. In any event, it is the Masquerade Director's call, in my opinion. (Of course, the Masquerade Director should let the contestant know too.)

This also goes for things like costumes that took prizes in more demanding masquerades and are now "competing down." As a judge, I've never seen this costume before officially. Obviously, the more experienced the Masquerade Director, the less likely sandbagging should be.

## Procedures

### Forms



The pass-along form used by many masquerades can work, but I've heard a lot of comments that it's hard not to be influenced by what previous judges have scored. I prefer a system that lets each judge operate independently, either by individual score cards or a fold-up-from-the-bottom-as-you-score sheet that hides each judge's score from the others. This also eliminates the problem of the last judge in line unduly influencing the total score. (I'm not saying it's happened, but on a straight-score basis, it could). I'll have more to say about both systems shortly.

### Scoring

Scoring should be a guide to the judges' deliberations, not the final determination. I hate straight score judging!! No matter what score I give to an individual entry at the time, I reserve the right to change my mind after I've seen the entire show. A judging system that just adds up the scores and awards entries on that basis is the pits and unfair to costumes that appear later in the show. I strongly feel that scores should only be a guide to the final awards.

### Scoring Scale

There's been a lot of debate on 10 point systems, versus 5 point systems. I personally use a 10 point system, but if I'm judging with people who prefer 5, I simply use half points: 7 points on a 10 scale =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  points on a five scale. Since it should only be a guide, it's not worth getting steamed up over. Use what's comfortable and allows you to make discriminations among the contestants.



### Making the Award Determination

As I mentioned earlier, there are two judging systems that you can use. Either of them is reasonably quick, and allows for consideration of each entry in comparison with the entire show.

**Group scoring.** If you have a pass-along form and a judges' clerk adds up the scores use this procedure:

1. Have the clerk add up the total score for each entry as the masquerade progresses.
2. The clerk sorts the scores into piles by division, highest score on top.
3. The judges look first at all the highest scores without regard to division to see if they can reach a consensus on Best in Show. There may be a strong difference of opinion, which can be resolved by

giving two Bests (if they happen to be for two totally different types of costumes, e.g. Recreation and Original or Solo and Group, etc.) Or by waiting till all the potential candidates have been discussed. Or by reaching a consensus that no Best in Show award should be given. (See my discussion on this later in this article.)

4. The pile for each division is then evaluated. There is often a natural break in the scores with those above notably more impressive than those below. This makes it easy to tell the potential award winners. In any case, the entire pile should at least be discussed on a yes/no basis; to allow for any changes of heart a judge may have had after seeing the entire show.
5. The judges then discuss each entrant that any one of them feels should be considered for an award. Again, they may choose to start by determining Best in Class or wait till all candidates have been discussed.
6. As an award winner is identified, an award name may be determined at that time. If the panel is stumped over an appropriate name, it is best to go on and come back to the problem name after all the others are decided.
7. The same procedure is followed for all skill divisions used.
8. After all the awards are determined, the order the awards should be read in is

decided. Traditionally, the order is Junior Costumer, Novice, Journeyman, Master, Best in Show. Within each division, the lowest award is read first, leading up to Best in Class. Also by tradition, Judges' Choice takes precedence over all other awards except Best in Class/Best in Show.

9. The judges' clerk makes a full list of the award winners, or notes each award title on the entry form for the MC to read. It is particularly nice if the clerk makes a second copy for the Masquerade Director so a full record is available. (If the convention has a newsletter, make a copy for them too.)
10. The clerk is also responsible for gathering up all judging material and returning it to the Masquerade Director. Judging forms should be destroyed after use! Judges should take care to also destroy any personal notes they have used, lest they fall into outside hands.

**Individual scoring.** If each judge is scoring individually, this procedure is similar, except in its initial stages.

1. The judges refer to their own notes for the initial discussion on Best in Show. It is each judge's responsibility to identify the likely candidates for this honor as she/he views the show.
2. After this award has been given, the judges' clerk divides all the entry forms into division and sorts them by entry

number so the judges can identify them in their notes.

3. The judges take each division's pile and sort the entries one by one, using a "Definitely yes/ Maybe/ No Award" decision. This should be done very fast, with each judge referring to his/her own notes for the sort. If any one judge feels strongly about an entry but others disagree, put it in the "Maybe" pile for further consideration. This saves time and argument!
4. They then go through the "Definitely Yes" pile to find consensus on the Best in Class candidates. After that is determined, they go through the rest of the "yes" group assigning award names.
5. Then the judges take a look through the "maybe's" to see if any of them, after consideration, should receive an award as well. Often, these will be candidates for "Honorable Mention/Honored for Excellence".
6. And lastly, if time permits after all the divisions are sorted and awards named, a last look through the "no's" for anything worth reconsidering is a fair thing to do.
7. After all the awards are determined, they are sorted and recorded as above. It is particularly important in this system that each judge destroy his or her own notes!

## Recommendations on Forms and Procedures

I would prefer a judges' contestant list for each judge with room on the page to score individually.

As I said, I prefer the independence of individual scoring because it allows each judge to use whatever system suits him/her. It frees the judges' clerk from a lot of arithmetic. And there are no tell-tale total scores anywhere to cause flack if they are found. ("I scored higher than X, but she got an award and I didn't" has been heard!)

There would still be a form for the judges to see that would include the relevant information the contestant wants the judges to know and with attached documentation. This form would be passed along during the presentation and would be available in the judges' room.

## Photos are a must!

Every entry should be photographed and the photos should be available to the judges. If a printer is available, give the judges hardcopy. If not, then transfer the images to a memory chip so the judges can look at them on their laptop screens.



However they are made available, the judges's clerk should label the photos and put them in order by entry number, so the judges can refer to them to refresh their memory. If there are more than 20 entries this is the best way to be sure no one disappears from memory.

## **Awards and Titles**

The most common mistake made by inexperienced convention committees and Masquerade Directors is to think that limiting the number of awards and/or pre-determining the titles/categories of awards will shorten the judging time. This is totally false. Telling the judges what awards to give just makes the job harder, as you try to force a wide mix of costumes into a pre-set list of titles. (As a bit of a maverick, I have been on a judging panel where we just taped over the trophy title and gave the costume the award title it deserved – which wasn't what the director had pre-engraved.)

I prefer to have the freedom to award whatever titles are appropriate to the costume. It is a judging panel's obligation to take a great deal of care in selecting titles.

## **Overriding Principal for Award Titles**

The overriding principal for award titles is to make the awardee feel good about getting it! Here are some guidelines for award titles that I use.

1. MOST and BEST are more satisfying to win than SECOND or THIRD. I'd rather

personally be the best at anything than only second, or even worse, third. Let's be honest: we're all in this for an ego boost, so why not maximize it? MOST or BEST also tells the audience just what the judges thought was worthy of an award.

2. HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE is more satisfying to win than HONORABLE MENTION. If a costume entry in its totality isn't up to a Most or Best, why not recognize the element of the entry that the judges did think worthy?



If the costume had excellent use of color, or spectacular wings, why not give an award for excellence for those things, instead of the "not quite good enough" award of Honorable Mention? As a contestant wouldn't you rather be recognized for what you did right?

3. Silly titles belong only to costumes that are trying to be humorous. It is quite disheartening to get a frivolous award for a costume you worked your tail off

for; On the other hand, if you are trying to amuse the audience and succeed, the judges should have the license to award you, something like "Too Cute to Live", or "Best Rockumentation".

4. If a category is announced ahead of time (e.g. Time-travelers, Star Trek, etc.) the judges should make every effort to award a prize for that category. If absolutely nothing comes up to snuff, then the MC should announce that the judges gave no award in category "X". This clues both contestants and audience. Of course, it's still better if you don't have to deal with pre-set categories at all!
5. Embarrassing titles should be avoided. Would you like to tell your mother/co-workers that you won Best Turd when you were going for Best Earth Mother? Titles like Most Graphic, Most Pornographic, Worst Presentation are not fun to win unless you've made it clear that's what you were going for. Of course, there are exceptions, but I really don't feel any serious costume deserves a frivolous or embarrassing title.
6. There can/should be more than one award given for Recreation costumes if more than one deserves it. If Recreation is judged on the skill level system, not as a separate absolute category, then it, too should have a full range of awards available. Some ideas that come to mind: Best Characterization, Most Authentic, Best Translation from 2-D,

Best Japanimation, Honored for Excellence in Accessories, in Attention to Details, etc.

7. Judges' Choice is a title that I regard as second only to Best in Class/Show. This title is useful when everything is so good you don't want to single out just one element as a Most or Best. It is also useful for honoring entries that have merit not obvious to the casual audience, but noticed by the judges.

A list of award titles (expanded from one Marjii Ellers did some years back) that might be of use to future judges appears at the end of this article. Feel free to copy it, and take it with you when you judge. Having a list of suggested titles has shortened many a judging session for me! Additions also welcome!

## Best in Show – A Personal View

For my money, there is always a Best in Show. I believe it is a judge's obligation to make the fine discriminations necessary to pick a personal Best and a judging panel's obligation to evaluate those discriminations until a resolution is reached. Nowhere is it written that the judges have to agree unanimously. We usually have an uneven number of judges so that ties don't occur. Majority opinion is sufficient to decide.

If the judges are willing to pick enough nits - openly, candidly, and objectively - I believe they can virtually always reach at least majority agreement. If judges do not

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award a Best in Show, they are, in my opinion, tacitly stating that they cannot perform their function of discriminating among diverse costumes/presentations and call into question all other awards they give!

I know this makes a number of people very uncomfortable, especially if there is vehement disagreement among the judges. Here's where the Judge's Choice option comes in, or the option of awarding Best in Show in both Original and Recreation, if that's appropriate. Or if all else fails, 'fess up and award a tie. I think that's less of a cop-out than saying no one was worthy enough to be singled out as Best overall.

## How Many Prizes Do You Give?

My basic rule is to recognize everything worthy. In some masquerades this may only be 10%; in others 60%. Usually, in my experience you run out of "worthy" at about 35 - 40% of entries. I prefer to err on the generous side, since, as I said, all people are getting out of this is an ego boost anyway. As long as what is recognized is genuinely good, what's another piece of paper?

If there is a "young fan" category, I believe in presenting an appropriately titled

award to every entry, to recognize their willingness to step out on stage, and to encourage young fans to continue their interest in costuming. If there are enough "young fan" entries and I am sufficiently impressed with one of them, I will consider presenting a "Best Young Fan" award.

## Facilities

**Presentation judges' table** – placed to provide a clear and unobstructed view of the stage with reasonably comfortable chairs, and equipped with:

- Flashlights - judging is very difficult under the best of circumstances. Doing it in the dark is well nigh impossible! Please provide your judges with flashlights or some other lighting source to score by. The pocket flashlights cost 99 cents each - not a major expense.
- Glasses & water.
- Pens to write with and spare paper to take notes on.
- A list of contestants, costume titles and divisions. It can be hand-written right after the masquerade is put in order (typed is better), and copies run off for the crew and judges. It helps if this list matches the numbering used by the MC.
- A competent judges' clerk to see to our needs and keep the paperwork in order.

**Workmanship judging area** – located in a quiet area of the Green Room or another quiet place where workmanship judging will take place, and equipped with:

- A table to put all the papers on
- Reasonably comfortable chairs
- Pens to write with and spare paper to take notes on.
- A list of the contestants, costume titles and divisions.
- A competent judges' clerk to bring us contestants, watch the time, and keep the paperwork in order.

**Deliberation room** – a quiet, well-lit place for our deliberations away from the crowd and the costumers and equipped with:

- A table to put all the papers on
- Reasonably comfortable chairs
- Near-by bathroom.
- Sodas/other drinkables during the judging deliberation are appreciated.
- A competent judges' clerk to help us stay on track, keep the paperwork in order, and record our decisions.

## **Judging Doesn't End When The Awards Are Presented**

### **Post-Mortem Availability**

I do believe it is part of the judges' job to be available if possible at the post mortem. It is not part of the judges' job to defend their decisions, however, procedural explanations may be of assistance to the audience. (Yes, we did see all the recreation documentation: no, the Novice panel did not participate in the Journeyman/Master's judging, etc.)

### **Private Advice**

I also feel it is part of my obligation to offer advice on an individual basis to those costumers who wish to know how to improve for the future. I point out things that impressed me about winning costumes, and will privately tell someone my own opinion of what could be done better.

### **Confidentiality**

You have an obligation to keep the all the proceedings in the judges' deliberations totally private. I think it is reprehensible behavior for one judge to tell a contestant that they lost because another judge disliked this or that! That is a violation of judging confidentiality. Remember the old game of gossip? You can imagine what distortions can creep in once the news has passed through a few people. A responsible judge keeps a buttoned lip!

### **Last Words**

As you can see, it isn't easy being a judge. It's a tough demanding job, with few psychic rewards. You can be personally vilified for non-existent bias, considered blind, deaf and stupid, and be called an

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incompetent fool (or worse). I began judging because I thought it would make me a better costumer to see things from the judge's point of view (and I believe it has). I continue judging because most folks seem to react favorably when they hear I'm one of those selected to evaluate their work.

As long as the costume community thinks I'm a good judge, feels I'm fair to their work, and I keep getting asked, I'll probably keep doing it. I have enough chutzpah to think "Better me, than some I could mention!" And I'll keep training up the new folks brave enough to give it a try!

*Janet Wilson Anderson has been appearing on stage in costume since she was five and has been making costumes herself since the late 60's. Janet has taken numerous awards for her costuming, including Best in Show SF, Best in Show Historical, and Best in Show Workmanship among many, many others. She helped found the ICG and won the International Costumer's Guild [Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994](#). In 1992 she became the owner of [AlterYears](#), a major resource for costumers of all types. She claims being Guest of Honor at Costume-Con 33 as her crowning honor. A devout worshipper of the goddess Glitziana, look for her in vivid colors and sparkly bits wherever rhinestones glitter and feathers flutter!*

**Janet Wilson Anderson's  
Suggested Award Titles**

*Reproduction of this list is actively encouraged.*

\*Best in Class/Show  
Judges Choice  
Honored for Excellence  
\*Most Outstanding  
Most Impressive  
Best Spectacle  
Best Extravaganza  
Most Splendid  
Most Magnificent  
Most Majestic  
Most Spectacular  
\*Most Beautiful  
Most Elegant  
Most Exquisite  
Most Graceful  
Most Glamorous  
Most Brilliant  
Most Charming  
Most Captivating  
\*Best Fantasy  
Best Mythology  
Most Mythological  
Best Pantheon  
Best Deity  
Most Celestial  
Most Mystical  
Best Wizardry  
\*Best Science Fiction  
Most Literary  
Most Scientific  
Most Avant-garde  
Most Advanced  
Most Futuristic  
\*Best Recreation  
Most Authentic  
Most Accurate  
Best Media  
Best Characterization

Best Adaptation  
Best Comic Book  
Best Film Character  
Most Thorough  
Most Detailed  
\*Best Design  
Most Artistic  
Most Refined  
Most Subtle  
Best Concept  
Most Visual  
Best Use of Color  
Best Use of Glitz  
\*Most Original  
Most Creative  
Most Clever  
Most Fanciful  
Most Outrageous  
Most Imaginative  
Most Unusual  
Most Provocative  
Most Exotic  
\*Best Presentation  
Best Performance  
Most Dramatic  
Most Theatrical  
Most Compelling  
Best Makeup  
Best Props  
\*Best Alien  
Best BEM  
Best Feline, etc.  
Best Creature  
Best Beast  
Best Monster  
Most Monstrous  
\*Most Horrifying  
Most Terrifying

Most Grotesque  
Most Evil  
Most Villainous  
Best Villain  
Most Menacing  
Most Ominous  
Most Macabre  
Most Spectral  
\*Most Humorous  
Funniest  
Most Amusing  
Silliest  
Cutest  
Wittiest  
Most Comical  
Best Schtick  
\*Most Sophisticated  
Most Aristocratic  
Most Imperial  
Most Distinguished  
Most Urbane  
Most Opulent  
Most Sentimental  
Most Romantic  
\*Best Tech  
Best Hi-Tech  
Best Electronics  
Best Mechanical  
\*Best Military  
Best Uniform  
Best Weaponry  
Best Armored  
Best Mercenary  
\*Best Barbarian  
Best Ethnic  
Best Folklore  
\*Most Promising  
*Best Junior Costumer*