

# Silicon Web Costumers' Guild

## Silicon Web Staff

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## President's Message **Kevin Roche\***

Welcome to almost-summer!

For me, this is the last few months rolling full-speed (strike that -- let's say careening at ten to the power of 17,000 R) towards Worldcon 76 in August. If you are a Worldcon fan, Hugo voting has opened, the Hugo Voters Packet has been released and Site Selection is about to open as well. Come to my Worldcon -- it will be spectacular!

May was my practice-how-to-cope-with-all-the-things month in advance of August, with a mix of Worldcon meetings,



representing IBM Research at Maker Faire, flying to New York to be part of the first class of IBMQ Ambassadors, bowling for the first time at Punk Rock Bowling (my best game was a 98, with two strikes, if you care), and, of course, attending Costume-Con 36 in San Diego.

At CC36 I had the honor and responsibility of being head judge for the Historical Masquerade. They had set the cut-off year for "historical" as 1970, so I decided to serve the citizenry of costuming as the Boy Wonder (1966). That was great fun, even if I did fall off the stage after

presenting the awards (thanks to my trainer knowing I'm a klutz, I have lots of practice at landings. I ended up slightly bruised but the only real injury was to my pride). It was an impressive array of entries, but I'm proud to say the panel of 3 judges (Jonnalyhn Wolfcat Prill, Colleen Crosby and I) finished deliberations in 45 minutes!

As SiWeb president, I coordinated several conversations about possible winners of our Dreamcatcher



Award for the competitions at CC36, and we ran into an interesting problem. Our current description of the Dreamcatcher is that it is for the "most innovative use of technology" in a costume in competition. What we saw this year were a number of very effective and interesting uses of technology, but they were all applications

we had seen before. As it has been getting easier and easier to incorporate tech into costumes, it may be rarer to see actual new uses as opposed to effective and evocative uses. I think perhaps it is time to open a discussion into whether to expand the Dreamcatcher Award brief to be for the "most innovative and/or effective use of technology in a costume" going forward. I intend to launch a conversation about this in our online discussion groups, and urge you to take part in the conversation!

My next column will likely be written after Worldcon 76. I hope it will include spectacular comments about what all of you were wearing there!

Photo credits:

Robin: Photo by Steward Hartman  
Judges: Shotwell Collection



## From the Editor *Philip Gust\**

Some say that limits are there to keep us safe, to ensure we don't go too far, or even to keep the wheels of our society from falling off. Others see limits as something to be pushed, a barrier to be broken, a signpost that tells us we have gone beyond the ordinary. In this issue of VC, we read about our authors' experiences with boldly pushing limits, whether it a personal limit or the limits of what is possible.

In her Spotlight Review, Sasha Collins visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art's new exhibition, "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination," which pushes the limits of social and religious norms by juxtaposing fashion, medieval art from The Met collection and papal robes and accessories from the Sistine Chapel Sacristy. The exhibit challenges viewers to explore the relationship between fashion and the traditions and practices of the Roman Catholic church.

Liz Vandal was the costume designer for Cirque du Soleil's insect-themed production, *Ovo* ("egg" in Portuguese), an innovative show that pushes what is even possible to do with costumes and performance. In her article, Liz talks about her design process and some of the challenges that she faced. She tells us that the world of insects was her passion as a child. In fact, when Cirque du Soleil first

approached her, she thought someone was playing a joke on her. She eventually came to believe that the job was just perfect for her. According to Liz, "I was in the perfect position to pay tribute to this majestic world with my costumes."

In my article, "The King of the Golden Hall." I describe how my wife Kathe and I pushed our own personal limits and our costuming skills to recreate King Théoden's spectacular battle armor from the "Lord of the Rings" movies. Without Weta's advanced tools and materials, could we



Kathe Gust as Arwen Undómiel and Philip Gust as King Théoden on the red carpet in Wellington, New Zealand for the premier of LOTR: The Return of the King in 2003.

recreate what many consider to be one of the most technically difficult costumes in the entire on-screen trilogy? A nudge from a senior Weta designer and from an actor who portrayed King Théoden's lieutenant in the movies finally encouraged us to take up the challenge.

According to Jennifer "Radar" Wylie, she decided to take on what many of her friends called a "crazy" idea: to organize and run a Costume-Con in the heart of Silicon Valley. With some local conventions entirely striking costuming and competitions from their programs, "Radar" wanted to bring in a convention that catered to folks who wanted not only to compete with what they made, but also to share their experiences and expertise. In an interview, the newest Costume-Con chair reflects on the challenges and her road ahead, including how she plans on handling the work-life-con balance that is so frequently disrupted for con chairs.

Here is a preview of what is upcoming in VC. For August 2018 the theme will be "Accessories," about all the things that costumers carry or wear to complete their ensembles, and give them extra authenticity, whether for historical, sci-fi/fantasy, or any other kind of costume.

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.