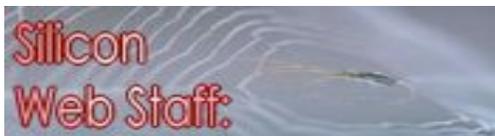




Editor's Message	1
Costume College 2006: A Neophyte's Experience	2
Costumes at Burning Man 2006	7



<i>President:</i>	Richard Man
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Betsy Delaney
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Bruce MacDermott
<i>Secretary:</i>	Jeanine Swick
<i>Representative to the ICG BOD:</i>	Betsy Delaney
<i>Alt. Rep. to the ICG BOD:</i>	Richard Man
<i>Web Site Coordinator:</i>	Ari Hollander
<i>Editor</i>	Dana MacDermott

The Silicon Web Costumers' Guild (SiW) is a non-profit, volunteer-run chapter of the International Costumers' Guild (ICG). Redistribution or republication of content requires permission of the author and editor of this publication.

Editor's message

Dana MacDermott

A lot has happened to our organization since the last issue was released. The Silicone Web Costumers' Guild is now the largest chapter of the International Costumers' Guild. As of this moment we have 61 members. Quite a few have come from the Cosplay ranks, due to the enthusiasm of some of our active and vocal members.

The SiW members have a habit of active participation. Currently both the ICG Treasurer and Vice President are in our ranks. We also have members who are editing the ICG Newsletter (thank you, Denisen), heading the ICG Guidelines committee (nod to Andy), and members on both that Newsletter editorial board and that Guidelines committee.

We also salute Betsy, who has spent so much effort over the years bringing the Costume-Con.org website into terrific shape. Now with so many photos up to date, it is a joy to investigate.

The hotly anticipated return of Costume-Con to the West Coast in 2008 after a long absence is being chaired by Kevin, and he has more of our members on the Con-Com. We have numerous chairpersons from Costume-Cons past among us.

We have members going to all sorts of conventions and costume events. We have so many of the recent Best in Show winners from assorted Conventions that it is almost egotistical to mention.

And we all know that sharing our experiences and knowledge is what the organization is about. So many experiences; so much expertise...

So, why do I have such a difficult time getting articles for this Newsletter???

We would love to know about any of your experiences relating to costumes or costume events, hints or techniques, film reviews, descriptions of your costume related career, photo essays, organizations, your backstage experiences, cartoons, how you built something...

We do prefer the articles not to have been previously published (simultaneous is OK). We love photographs. Contact me if you have questions, or need assistance.

I will accept articles whenever you have them and will publish when we have enough to run with. This is all about sharing.

Thanking you in advance, and especially thanking Audrey for this month's article,
Your Editor

Costume College 2006: A Neophyte's Experience

Audrey I. Russell

Last month I attended Costume College (www.costumecollege.org) for the first time. Hosted by Costumer's Guild West, it is held annually at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, CA. I learned about it from my friend Colleen when I visited L.A. for the *Dressing a Galaxy* exhibit at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) last December.

At registration, my roommate and I received packets which included hot pink "new member" ribbons to affix to our name badges. My roommate was hesitant about branding herself in this manner, but I laughed and told her it was my "license to be stupid"! As far as I was concerned, wearing that ribbon gave me permission to ask all the questions I wanted. After all, I was spending a lot of money to fly clear across the country for this opportunity to learn, and I planned to make the most of it!

I came into costuming from church plays, Ren faire peasant garb and sci-fi movie recreations, so my exposure to and knowledge of historical costuming is limited. I was both excited to learn and nervous that the instruction might be over my head. The first morning my worst fears seemed to materialize as the half-dozen women in my *1840's Prairie Bonnet* class carried on about their Civil War costumes, quibbling over details and techniques of which I had never heard. Plus we had only three hours to construct our corded bonnets, and I felt like the instructors and veteran students were pushing time-saving cutting and construction techniques. I spent the first half-hour feeling stressed until I realized that, although I am new to historical costuming, I have good sewing habits, and I would work more efficiently by making use of them! Only one person in the class was on track to finish her bonnet, so I decided to enjoy the process. After class I took a sewing machine (a generous loan by Colleen) back to my room and enjoyed a couple of hours of sewing Zen.



Two views of my completed Prairie Bonnet.



There was so much information to absorb, I would have been happy to take just one hands-on and one lecture class per day! I was assigned three of the limited classes I requested (*Prairie Bonnet*, *Meet the Pleat*, and *Aging and Distressing Costumes*), and

rounded out my schedule with everything from *Color Theory* to *Clothing of the Working Cowboy*. In *Casting in Your Kitchen* I learned what a vacuum table is and how simple it is to build one (although I will probably not be up to melting plastic for a while). I was fascinated by *Aging and Distressing* and tickled that I could recreate the exact stain that winds up on my husband's t-shirts when he works in the yard!



Steve Kruger taught *Clothing of the Working Cowboy*

Jennifer Michaud sets out materials for students to practice *Aging and Distressing Costumes*.



I volunteered to serve as the model for *French Drape Pattern Making* and left with my own pattern. I'd been trying to decipher online instructions for cartridge pleating with no success, but I left *Meet the Pleat* with my own hand-made sample, a handy reference for future projects. Most of the instructors provided handouts (one had a CD-ROM), some for a small fee, of which I was glad. Some of the classes, particularly the hands-on ones, could have used more time. By the middle of the third day I gave my poor overloaded brain a break, with lunch and a nap in the hotel courtyard.

Kathy Lear drapes me in *French Drape Pattern Making*.

The weekend was a visual feast of costumes, on display and worn at the Tea and Gala, as well as by a few intrepid costumers during the day.



A table at "Tea and Erte at The Ritz".



This lovely couple noticed me and a friend admiring their grace on the dance floor, and came over to teach us a few steps!

Vanessa's beautiful purple Victorian gown.



Ladies taking a break from the Time Traveler's Gala.

Classes weren't the only venue where learning took place; I got an education just by walking around! I found if I openly expressed my curiosity, everyone I asked was more than willing to pose for a picture and share details of their costume's historical basis and construction.

One of the most valuable outcomes of my experience was the exposure to clothing from a variety of time periods. By the end of the weekend I had identified the silhouettes I was attracted to and which I would like to try. Two examples in



particular, Vanessa's lovely purple ball gown and Diane Yoshitomi's "Sunday in the Park" dress on display in the Historical Costume Exhibit, inspired me to try something Victorian.



Diane Yoshitomi's "Sunday in the Park" dress



Colleen Crosby strikes a fashion-plate pose in her fabulous Erte creation



Colleen's stunning Erte creation encouraged me to proceed with an Art Deco inspired dress.

I participated in playing dress-up as well, encouraged by other costumers. I was surprised and pleased that several complete strangers recognized my "Saffron" costume (from the television series *Firefly*).

"Saffron" costume (from the television series

Firefly).

Me (as "Saffron") and Colleen (as "Kaylee") in our "Firefly" costumes.



Nobody laughed when I showed up to the informal “underwear breakfast” in only a chemise! The underwear breakfast, all fun on the surface, was actually valuable in that I got to see and ask questions about items of clothing that are usually not visible at all!

A few ladies at the "underwear breakfast" (yours truly is second from the right).



While I am outgoing by nature, it was comforting to be rooming with two ladies I had previously befriended, and to have Colleen as a sort of guide. She introduced me to several of her friends, also Costume College veterans, who enthusiastically welcomed me and showed me around the Marketplace, introducing me to vendors they knew and liked.

The Marketplace, a modest-size ballroom overflowing with vendors carrying every conceivable notion and trinket known to costumers (i.e., many unfamiliar to me), was a very tempting place! As the weekend progressed, I found it easier to focus on three or four booths that interested me instead of trying to wade through every one. Through my new friends I met Janet from Decades of Style and Aja of Atelier Mela. Decades of Style (www.decadesofstyle.com) had an entire rack of samples made up from their vintage pattern line, which we were able to try on. Janet recommended which pattern sizes I should cut, gave me sewing tips, and modeled some of the samples so I could take photos for reference.



Janet Manning models two versions of the Decades of Style Parisienne Coat pattern (version 1)



Parisienne Coat pattern (version 2)

Aja, a stylist, not only helped me pick out an adorable, affordable hat to go with a twenties dress I have planned, but after looking at my fabric showed me how to accessorize in the twenties fashion for a pulled-together look. Because I wasn't able to attend any of the corset-making classes, I stopped by Farthingales

(www.farthingales.on.ca). There Linda Sparks showed me her book on corset making for absolute rank amateurs, and introduced me to Joady next door at Hedgehog Handworks (www.hedgehoghandworks.com), who had in stock for me the pattern Linda recommended. I left the Marketplace with an armload of treasures and a sense of purpose.

Best of all, I left full of inspiration to pursue new projects, armed with enough knowledge to execute them and the confidence to go looking for answers when I get stuck. It's usually difficult for me to make decisions about fabric, patterns and methods, so I tend to procrastinate. Since returning from Costume College I have had a clear vision for several projects and have already worked on two vintage-inspired garments, started a set of Victorian undergarments, and am currently constructing my first corded petticoat. I highly recommend the Costume College experience to anyone!



No trip to L.A. would be complete without a visit to the fabric district! Here's a photo of my haul from the Marketplace and the fabric district.

Costumes at Burning Man 2006

Dana MacDermott

This is more or less an annual photo article where I share some pictures of the vast variety of costumes in the Black Rock desert. It seems to me that there are an increasing proportion of costumed participants every year. Unadorned nudity seemed to be somewhat less popular, although the proud display of usually hidden tattoos remains significant. There are also some very interesting accessories.





