

The ICG Newsletter



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The International Costumers' Guild, Inc. (ICG), is an affiliation of amateur, hobbyist, and professional costumers dedicated to the promotion and education of costuming as an art form in all its aspects.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



his time I want to do a little nagging about participation. The ICG has a lot of things to offer and a lot of new ideas for activities and promotion. But none of these things can happen without member participation.

Our newsletter and website, the two biggest promotional tools we have at this point, are basically the product of two people. They're fabulous for what they are but it could be so

much more if everyone felt the urge to contribute. Articles, links, suggestion, advertisers (yes, you can stump for the ads, too); Jeff and Denisen would welcome input from all of you.

And if you can't do it yourself, how about badgering someone else into contributing? Say you know someone who did a great job with their first tailoring/welding/<insert random technique here>; and you think their story of how they proceeded, what problems they ran into, how they solved a difficult part would be interesting to others (cause it would be). Tell them so. Suggest they write up their experience, add a photo and send it in. I've done it; it works. Making a specific suggestion gets a better result than "maybe you could write something."

Or maybe they're an expert in some field. If it's a topic they've already devoted considerable time to then a summary isn't that difficult. Or if they've gone further and already published online - that'd be a good link from our website.

How about a suggested resource list? That would be good content online. A book/event/convention review is always good. And speaking of same - know any upcoming events or conventions that costumers might like to attend? Jeff has a place for those on the site, Denisen puts them in the newsletter. Drop them a line and let them know what's going on in your neck of the woods.

Speaking of events/conventions - going to any this year? Odds are good you'll be attending at least one. At the very least, bare minimum, you could bring some flyers to promote the ICG; contact Karen Heim who heads the PR committee on what we have available. Maybe the organizers of the event would let you head-up a panel or two on costuming and the ICG. Make your friends help you. Extreme participation? Volunteer to help organize some of their costuming related events, up to and including the Masquerade, if need be.

You may be the only ICG member at a particular event, so volunteer and make us look like the good guys. ICG members are slowly making their presence known in a variety of venues from WorldCon to DragonCon, from media to anime cons. At DragonCon this year, Aurora Celeste ran the Friday night costuming event and

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

What Nora said. But also my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter during my first year as editor. Writers, photographers, editing staff, advertisers, folders, staplers, mutilators ... To Betsy who put up with endless calls for advice, Dana who offered me support at the outset, Carl who said more than once "it's your newsletter, do whatever you want," Nora who continued that theme, and Richard Man, who's kindly given me permission to reprint "many" of his photos in multiple issues of the newsletter. And especially to sweet Jay, who has sat in front of the tv with me more than once when mailing parties were just us two, and who minds the girls while I write editors messages and curse the inventors of WordPerfect. Thanks a really lot, everyone!

Meanwhile, the trusty (but not dusty!) ICG Board of Directors, web people and I have been cooking a (nefarious) plan. Bulk mail seems to be taking foreeeever to deliver the newsletter. Accordingly, we're investigating offering online access to ICG members in addition to sending out hard copies of the newsletter. It's important to note that this is in addition to, NOT instead of, hard copies of the newsletter. A hard (paper) copy of the newsletter will still be sent to your home unless you specifically tell us not to. If you have a chance, email us at newsletter@costume.org, and tell us if you would be interested in this option if it was offered at some point in the future (the online version, by the way, would include color versions of the many of the photos you've been seeing in the newsletter). We are such a service oriented group!!!!

I owe an apology, by the way, to Jeff Morris. Sorry Jeff. You really are a "Super-guy"! I identified him as Jeff Harris in the caption to the picture of him in the last issue. Thanks to those who pointed out my error.

Last, but by no means least, we're going to try and get out the holiday season issue of the newsletter a little early this year. So get us your submissions early - by November 1st, please, and thanks in advance!

Say it with me:
"Submit early, submit often!!!"

**Congratulations to Trinity Blood!
Winners, L.A.con 2006
Masquerade**



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several panels. And other ICG members (including Marty Gear, Judy Mitchell, Jan Price, Dany Sloane and many others whose names slip my mind this instant) were tapped for judging, panels and participated in many of the events. Hopefully we'll have a review from someone who was there for the newsletter. This is a growing venue.

On the West Coast, a number of members are participating at some of the large anime cons (they have several out there). Kevin Roche, Andy Trembley, Richard Man and Karisu-sama (and others) have all made contributions towards getting the ICG's name out there to a largely untapped pool of costumers.

Be proud to be a member of the ICG. What we do as a hobby is creative, educational, inspirational and therapeutic. We are artists, every one of us, who should share our passion and experience whenever and wherever we can. So step up, speak out and flaunt the fact that you're a costumer and a member of the International Costumers' Guild.

The ICG is the sum of its parts - you're one of the parts.
 Nora Mai
 ICG President

ICG TREASURER'S REPORT

September 15, 2006

Submitted by Bruce MacDermott
 ICG Treasurer

I have been working on entering the transactions for the year to date into a financial management application. This has been hampered by the minimal information I received when I took over the Treasury. I expect to have all of the records entered by the end of September. Meanwhile, here is the situation as of the writing of this report.

The current state of finances can be seen in the Balance Sheet:

Balance As of 9/15/2006 (Accrual Basis)

ASSETS

Cash and Bank Accounts	
Checking	6,599.28
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	\$6,599.28
Other Assets	
Customer Invoices	0.00
Memberships Receivable	108.00
Un-Deposited Funds	164.00
TOTAL Other Assets	272.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,871.28

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

LIABILITIES	
Other Liabilities	
Sales Tax	0.00
Accounts Payable	87.88
TOTAL Other Liabilities	87.88
TOTAL EQUITY	\$6,783.40
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$6,871.28

The cash flow can be summarized with the following report.

Income/Expense Report

	Year-to-Date	Last 30 Days
INCOME		
Member		
Memberships	1,354.00	102.00
Non-Member		
Ad Sales	270.00	60.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,624.00	\$162.00
EXPENSES		
Member		
Awards	114.60	0.00
Computer	22.47	22.47
Postage	543.72	0.00
Printing	1,557.62	0.00
Supplies	44.78	0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,283.19	\$22.47
OVERALL TOTAL	<\$659.19>	\$139.53

As you can see, the corporation has incurred a net loss of \$659.19 for the year-to-date. This is not bad, considering the loss of income from the CGW and the GBACG, while we continue to send out the ICG newsletter to their members.

Next issue I will have the budgeted numbers entered into the accounts and will be able to report on how we are doing compared to our budgeted projections.

Non-Profit Group Exemption Status

I have been in contact with the IRS and discussions have begun on the Board of Directors to address the issues that will have to be worked out to meet the current requirements for Group Exemption Status for "subordinate" organizations (Chapters). It remains to be seen if the requirements will be acceptable to any of the chapters. I assure you that your Board Representatives will be keeping you posted as the discussions progress.

We are looking for a computer savvy person to take on the position of Assistant Treasurer - Membership. This person will have the following responsibilities:

1. Receive data from chapters & newsletter editor.
2. Update membership database.
3. Send updated database to Treasurer once a month.
4. Generate mailing label file for newsletter every other month
5. Work closely with the Treasurer to keep information flowing

If you would like to volunteer for this ~~thankless wonderful exciting~~ interesting [feel free to insert any adjectives you like] position, please contact me at Bruce-T@mnouveau.com.

Respectfully Submitted.
 Bruce MacDermott, ICG Treasurer

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Photography with a Compact Digicam

by Richard Man, Copyright © 2006

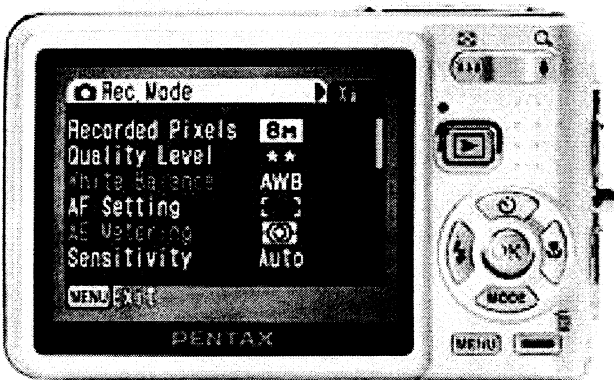
So, you picked up one of those FOUR MEGAPIXELS OPTICAL STABILIZING 4X ZOOM COFFEEMAKERs digital cameras. Now what do you do with it? In this article, I will give some tips on how best to use the camera, with some emphasis on costume photography.

A digicam is short for "digital camera," and typically refers to the pocket-fitting, stylish accessory that happens to take pictures. Most cameras are pretty good these days. Stick with major brands and avoid cameras that are unusually cheap or expensive; there is always a catch. Currently, \$200 to \$250 is a "sweet spot" for digicams. At this price range, the camera has 4-5 megapixels, which is good enough for web pictures, 4x6" and even 8x10" enlargements. Cameras with higher megapixel counts are not really necessary, and just create bigger files resulting in slower camera operation.

The camera should respond quickly. Turn it on; how long before it is "awake" enough to take a picture? Press the shutter button; how long does it take to focus and take the picture? Try it with the flash enabled as well. How long do you have to wait before you can take another picture?

Do the controls feel comfortable to you? Do the control and software menus look confusing or well thought out? How good is the video mode? Does the recording look jerky or smooth? Finally, consider getting one with "macro mode" to take close up pictures.

Figure 1 Make sure the buttons are not too large or too small



Control that Camera

Digicams are meant to be "idiot proof." Turn on the camera, press the shutter button, and you will get a beautiful picture. At least that's what the manufacturers want you to believe. Spending a little time on a few important features will improve your actual picture quality greatly.

It is important to learn where your camera auto-focuses. "Artsy" photographs aside, if a picture is out-of-focus, it's not going to be a good picture. Your camera will usually do a pretty good job, but sometimes it can be fooled. One classic example is two out-of-focus people with a background sharply in focus. Try shooting a scene like that before you meet those two once-in-a-lifetime costumers! If you know the camera mis-focuses in certain situations, you can focus on the subject you prefer by centering it in the viewfinder, half-pressing down on the shutter button, then moving the camera (while still holding the shutter button) to re-compose the image.

Figure 2 Focus on the important things

Another feature to check out is the hue and saturation color adjustment menu. If you find your pictures too "cold" (e.g. too blue or yellow), adjust the hue slider in the display in the "plus" direction. Alternatively, if your pictures are too red, adjust the hue in the "minus" direction.

"Saturation" is how rich a color looks. For people, a "softer" saturation look usually looks better, but for flora and costumes, you may want a stronger "punch."

Do not jab the camera when pressing the shutter, because shaking the camera makes the pictures blurry. Press gently halfway down for the camera to focus and then push down firmly. Don't immediately pull your finger up as if it is on fire. Just lift it off gently.



It's All About The Light

Pay attention to lighting: its quality, colors, direction and how it interacts with the subject's features. Look at the tones and the textures. Are they the effects you want? A softer light is preferred in most cases. Examples of soft light include sunlight filtering through the clouds, incandescent lights with lampshades, or lights bouncing off walls and ceilings. Any light that is diffused looks softer.

For portraits, there is no better light than the so-called "Rembrandt light" – light coming in at similar direction from where you are shooting. It gives a lovely texture to the subject. The worst lighting is strong overhead light (e.g. noonday sun, or strong hotel overhead lights). This causes eye sockets to become dark circles with no details. Fortunately, even in this situation, you can use something called "fill flash" (see below).

Figure 3 "Rembrandt" light, but vampire casts no shadow?



Ambient Light

If at all possible, taking pictures via natural light outdoors is the best. Noon sun is brutal. Sunlight filtering through hotel plants often leaves strange shadows. Try a slightly shady area close to hotel walls; building lights provide accent lighting and the walls diffuse the natural light.

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