

## Editor's Message



So honey, does this format make my butt look big? (Don't answer that.) So there I sat, after the last issue of the newsletter went out, staring myopically at the text. Squinting, really. "Geez honey," I said to my loving husband, "This 9-point type sure is getting hard to read!" "Hmph!" he replied eloquently, "You noticed." Hence a format change. A slightly larger type size. A different cover format, one that makes the mailings go just a little faster (and actually saves a little budget money as well - Rio, here I come!). What I'm hoping for from you in response is input on same. Nothing is cast in stone. Like this format so much you've decided to pursue newsletter publishing with me as your idol? Groovy. Hate this format so much you've decided to pursue newsletter publishing to run me out of town on a rail? Not so groovy. But I would like to know. Send me messages to [newsletter@costume.org](mailto:newsletter@costume.org), or post to the ICG-D list. Any maybe I'll have (another) wild idea next issue, and the format will change again. Or not.

Meanwhile, while I'm not expending creative energy on header and footer styles, I'm off hunting for new article ideas and

people to write them for the newsletter. **Deb Salisbury** is our new best friend. We have a wonderful article from her on the research that goes into creating historical costuming, which article includes a number of her favorite research sources. I hope you enjoy Deb's well-written article as I much as I did.

Special thanks in that regard also go to **Lisa Ashton** and **Susan Eisenhour**, who so kindly sent in photos of their own historical costuming creations for use with this article, and to **Steve Houle** who responded to my "many" pestering emails for permission to use his photos.

In addition, as far as ICG business goes, we have many money figures (say that three times fast!) from Bruce MacDermott, the ICG Treasurer. The new year's budget has been voted on and passed, and here are number figures on how the ICG finances are working. There are also minutes here from the Board of Directors meetings from December 2006 - February 2007. At the risk of sounding like your 7<sup>th</sup> grade Civics teacher, let me remind you that the minutes are there for your convenience in following what your duly-elected Board of Directors is up to, and your Board Reps stand waiting to hear from you if you have questions or concerns.

Ok everyone, say it with me: Submit early, submit often! And I'll look forward to seeing seeing and meeting some of you at the next science-fiction convention or historical re-enactment event we attend!

*(Incidentally, for those wondering, that cool [albeit slightly fuzzy] graphic above is the heraldic symbol for the Optometrists Association Australia (Victorian Division)).*

### ICG NEWSLETTER 2007 DEADLINES

(aka Don't Say We Didn't Tell You!)

(aaka The Reminder You Asked For!)

(aaaka What Was That Deadline Again? ...)

May 1!

July 1!

September 1!

November 1!

**SUBMIT EARLY!**  
**SUBMIT OFTEN!**

### ICG Newsletter Identification Statement:

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c/o Denisen Hartlove, Editor

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**OH WHERE, OH WHERE . . .**  
**List of ICG Chapters and Chapter Representatives**

**Beyond Reality Costumers Guild****BRCG**

650 NW 76th St  
 Seattle, WA 98117-4044  
<http://www.brcg.org/>

Contact: Vicki Glover

ICG Board Representative: Kate McClure

**Chicagoland Costumers Guild****a/k/a "The Chicago M.O.B."**

c/o Barbara Wright  
 1926 N. Maple Avenue  
 Arlington Heights, IL 60004  
<http://chicostume.org>

Contact: Barbara Wright

ICG Board Representative: Val Roberts

**Costumer's Guild of Western Pennsylvania**

1619 Beechwood Blvd  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Contact: Igor Roussanoff

ICG Board Representative: Igor Roussanoff

**Dallas/Ft. Worth Costumers Guild**

c/o Maggie Smith  
 5925 Forest Lane, Suite 505  
 Dallas, TX 75230

<http://www.dfwcg.org>

Contact: Jennifer Thompson

ICG Board Representative: Jennifer Thompson

**Fibre Fantasy Artists of Canada**

c/o Dawn McKechnie  
 2001 Bonnymede Drive  
 Suite 148, Building 2  
 Mississauga, ON L5J 4H8 Canada

Contact: Dawn McKechnie

ICG Board Representative: Dawn McKechnie

**The Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumer's Guild****GCFCG**

Post Office Box 683  
 Columbia, MD 21045

Contact: [gcfcg@yahoo.com](mailto:gcfcg@yahoo.com)

ICG Board Representative: Ann Hamilton

**The Greater Delaware Valley Costumers' Guild**

c/o Sandy Swank Chapter President  
 246 West Upsal St F-303  
 Philadelphia, PA 19119-3229

<http://dvcg.bravehost.com/>

Contact: Sandy Swank

ICG Board Representative: Sandy Swank

**NJ/NY Costumers' Guild aka Sick Pups**

c/o Elaine Mami  
 85 West McClellan Ave.  
 Livingston, NJ 07039

<http://www.sickpups.org/>

Contact: Elaine Mami

ICG Board Representative: Dora Buck

**Northern Lights Costumers Guild**

c/o Susan Smith  
 1 Glen Meadow Road  
 Franklin, MA 02038

<http://www.northernlights.pothole.com/>

Contact: Susan Smith

ICG Board Representative: Janice Dallas

**The St. Louis Costumers Guild****aka The St Louis Ubiquitous Tailoring Society (SLUTS)**

c/o Bruce Mai  
 7835 Milan  
 University City, MO 63130

<http://www.casamai.com/slcg/index.html>

Contact: Bruce Mai

ICG Board Representative: Bruce Mai

**Silicon Web Costumers Guild****aka The Virtual Costumers Guild**

c/o Carole Parker  
 630 Barnsley Way  
 Sunnyvale, CA 94087

<http://www.siwcostumers.org/>

Contact: Carole Parker

ICG Board Representative: Betsy Delaney

**The SoutEastern Costumers' Society****aka "The SECS Fiends"**

c/o Michelle Belle Isle  
 336 Jordan Drive  
 Tucker, GA 30084

<http://www.secsfiends.org/>

Contact: Marissa Wronka

ICG Board Representative: Marissa Wronka

**Southwest Costumers Guild (SWCG)**

PO Box 39504  
 Phoenix, AZ 85069-9504

<http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org/>

Contact: Randall Whitlock

ICG Board Representative: Lyn Jeppesen

**Utah Costumers' Guild****aka The Sew-and-Sewzz (UCG)**

289 W. Hidden Hollow Drive  
 Orem, UT 84058-7552

Contact: [utahguild@aol.com](mailto:utahguild@aol.com)

## DOCUMENTING HISTORICAL COSTUMES

by Deb Salisbury - The Mantua Maker

Documentation is an important part of a historical costume, not just for the judges, but for the costume designer. Researching and documenting a garment clarifies what you are creating - and what you need to avoid. This article will explain some of the basics of documenting historical costumes, and explain what to look for, as well as warn what to avoid.

### Levels of Documentation

There are three basic types of documentation for you to consider: Primary, Secondary, and Rumor.

Primary documentation consists of actual garments and photos of garments from any given era. Descriptions of garments from costume scholars such as Janet Arnold (*Patterns of Fashion*) and Nancy Bradfield (*Costume in Detail: 1730-1930*) also count as primary documentation.

Patterns of clothing that were published in many Victorian women's magazines and tailor's books from the 1500's have been republished; such books are good sources. I also include engravings from catalogues of stores which sold the garments. Those engravings may be slightly idealized, but people bought the clothing with the expectation of wearing what they saw in the catalogue.

Secondary documentation can be found in fashion plates, which are very idealized, in engravings found in stories printed in the time period (if they refer to that time, not to history), in portraits and paintings of living (at the time) subjects, and in some post-era books devoted to clothing and paintings. Each of these sources have a



distinct bias, but that bias can be determined and compensated for.

Unfortunately, the bias may not be easy to see unless you have studied the clothing involved. A bustle on a medieval dress will show you the Victorian influence, but mild Georgian panniers on a Victorian dress were a real Victorian fashion. With a bustle.

So, drawings of earlier clothing done during the later Victorian era tend to look corseted with curves (pre-1800 corsets look stiff and straight), and often have a bit of a bustle. The Edwardians liked to add the pouter pigeon bust. The Roaring Twenties artists often "simplified" the lines of the clothing into straight, flapper-like frocks. Redrawings of clothing done in the 1960's tended to be lithe and willowy. These are all generalities, but they

give you points to watch for.

When you get redrawings of redrawings ... at that point you are in trouble. With each "interpretation," new inaccuracies creep in. The Victorian and Edwardian costume historians were firm believers in using redrawings to create their new works, probably because it was so hard for them to get access to the original work. I'm told John Peacock's drawings are of that genre, but I don't own any of his works to double check for you.

Whenever I find I am dealing with a redrawing, I add it to the Rumor category unless I can compare it to the original source.

Rumor, more politely known as tertiary

documentation, consists of poorly researched or heavily biased redrawings of old portraits and statuary.

Victorian versions of medieval clothing can be

(Continued on Page 4)



