

Millennium Costumers



Glitz & Glitter

Mid-October 2001

FROM YOUR LOCAL PRESIDENT BY MICHAEL BRUNO, PRESIDENT

Well, it's been a very busy month since the last issue. Here's a brief synopsis of my activities since then.

The first weekend after publication was Nan Desu Kan Go! I've written a lengthy report later in this issue. I hope many of you find it enlightening regarding the world of Anime costuming.

The next weekend, I actually spent at home, but I was madly sewing on my new Houppelande to wear to Kingdom A&S in two weeks.

Then came the meeting at Robbi & Curtis'. Those in attendance were myself, Robbi & Curtis, Vandy, Dave, and Rose, her kids and couple of new young adults that's she's working with. I also had a MileHi Committee meeting the next day.

The following weekend was Outlands Kingdom Arts & Sciences Competition. For those who don't know this is an SCA event and the highest level at which you can compete in this Kingdom. I finally finished my new garb after two weeks of completely insane sewing. I was awarded with a Baronial A&S award.

The next weekend was the last MileHi Committee meeting before the convention and I've been dedicated to working on things for the convention since then.

New in this issue is the Member Spotlight. Since many of us have never met, I'd like to feature a different member each month. This month is Susan Lyda from Oklahoma. Since receiving her article I've learned we have a lot in common. Everyone please submit, so I don't have to hound you.

Well, I'm out of space. I hope to see many of you at the Halloween Party at Vandy's on November. Bring a dessert, come in a costume, bring a friend.

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ICG PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR OCTOBER

BY DARLA KRUGER

First, a few words about recent events. The ICG Officers and BOD wish to express our sorrow and grief over the recent tragedy that has befallen the United States and the world. We can only suggest in this dark time that you hold your loved ones near, remember those we've lost, and pray for justice. Remember, you're not alone in these days of sadness. May you and yours all be safe and heal as quickly as your hearts will allow.

On another note, the following is my final report on the minutes of the 2001 ICG Annual Meeting. This is a summation of the report produced by the ICG special committee on membership that was staffed by Ken Warren, Darla Kruger, Sharon Trembly, and Dina Flockhart.

The goal of the committee was first to determine what problems the ICG is facing, and second to try to come up with solutions to those problems. The committee used the ICG insolvency as a starting point, but after some analysis they realized there is only one real problem that the ICG has to deal with at this time. That problem is apathy. The committee felt that ICG members question the relevance of the ICG to their lives. This is especially true as the ICG is sometimes perceived as non-communicative and does not really care about its members. The committee recognized that there are many people who obviously do care, however it seems that a general malaise is affecting all levels of the organization to one degree or another. Other, more obvious problems all have their beginnings in this one. Lack of timely information, unwillingness to forward information or respond to questions, dues that may not have been forwarded – all can be traced back to this apparent apathy.

The committee did suggest some remedies. They rejected structural fixes (e-chapters, reorganizing the ICG as something other than a loose federation of chapters, and the like). The committee did not believe that structural remedies would correct the identified problem. Instead, they chose to examine ways to reach the ICG members and potential members. The committee decided it was important to remind its members that the ICG has value and relevance. There were six recommendations to this end that the committee felt should all be implemented. They strongly felt that these "fixes" would not work individually, but only successfully handle these issues as a complete force. The following are the committee's recommendations:

1. The ICG President should continue to write a "President's message" every month to the chapters.
2. There needs to be a concerted effort to promote the CO and to get that up and running since it is the ICG's best con-

nection with the chapters. The CO is the sole regularly provided way for the ICG to communicate with its members. It is essential that it be healthy. The CO's health helps to defeat the appearance of apathy by providing relevant information in a timely fashion.

3. ICG BOD members should be required to write three articles per year for the CO. This will support the health of the CO by ensuring a constant flow of articles. Board members are singled out because they are officers of the ICG, or chapter presidents, and as such are already known to the members of the organization. Also, as officers, they have taken responsibility for the organization.
4. The ICG Annual should be rolled into one issue of the CO for the next two years (i.e., instead of two ICG publications, they become one). It is also recommended that the two not be separated until the CO is on better footing. This will also support the health of the CO. Administration of the ICG Annual issue of the CO should be a cooperative effort between the CO editor and the Annual editor, until the two are separated.
5. A "tickler" system should be created/continued to remind the chapters of deadlines (i.e., membership, dues, CO submissions). However, instead of these reminder duties being performed by the interim "Guido" appointee, they should be completed by the corresponding secretary of the ICG. The tickler will help combat apathy by providing another avenue of communication, reminding chapters that the ICG is not an organization separate and distinct from the chapters; instead, it is the chapters.
6. A committee for member relations should be established. That committee's task should serve to examine how the ICG currently relates to its membership, and how it can improve those relations.

"ICG BOD members should be required to write three articles per year for the CO. This will support the health of the CO by ensuring a constant flow of articles."

Those were the recommendations of this special committee. I have already implemented a few of these suggestions and will be working on the rest. This won't be a instantaneous turn around, but we will eventually reap the benefits of this plan if we stick to it.

Sincerely,

Darla Kruger

President, ICG



A REPORT FROM NAN DESU KAN GO!

BY MICHAEL

Note: These are my personal perceptions and opinions and do not reflect those of the ICG or the Millennium Costumers Guild.

To start, I have never seen so many people in costume at any convention before. I have also never seen so much cardboard, duct tape and felt, used in costumes. But, I must give anime costumers credit in their use of those materials and their ability to do some really amazing things them. I suppose that if their knowledge and skill base were expanded to other materials and techniques, the results would be unbelievable.

For those of you who do not know anything about Anime or Cosplaying, let me explain. Anime is Japanese Animation, whether it is animated or manga (the Japanese equivalent of comic books.) The Japanese guest at the convention gave a description/history of Cosplaying at one of the panels. Basically, costuming in Japan used to be very much like that in America. They used to hold Masquerades at their conventions. Then, someone in the Anime business in Japan came up with the idea for "Cosplay" or "Cosplaying". He saw people dressing up as their favorite characters, but all they did was dress up. The idea behind Cosplaying is that you become your favorite character; you emulate your favorite character. Cosplaying comes from the combination of "costume roleplaying."

Therefore, Anime costuming is very much about recreation of the costumes of your favorite characters. Cosplayers often band together to form Cosplay Groups in which they will participate

as a group of characters all from the same Anime.

They will wander the halls as a group and will also enter the Cosplay Contest as a group. People who are not in a group when they arrive at the convention will often band together with other characters from the same Anime that they meet at the con. These groups often last the duration of the convention, but can create lasting friendships and permanent Cosplay groups for future conventions.



As Anime costuming is drawn from animation, the costumes can often be quite fanciful, and at times, gravity defying and nigh impossible to recreate. There are also many characters in Anime who wear modern street clothes or historical Japanese clothing. At a convention and in the contest, you will see people portraying characters in

all three areas.

You will not see hardly anyone wearing original costumes at an Anime convention. I was wearing on original costume; that happens to look very Anime. People were constantly trying to figure out which Anime my costume was from. As there is a plethora of Anime from which to draw your inspiration, many fans are dedicated to a select few, and assume that your costume is from something they've just never seen. Some do not quite grasp the concept of an original costume, but they do understand if

you tell them that you are doing your own character. Despite not knowing what my costume was, many people still took my picture, because I had a neat costume.



Guild members, Andrea, Chris and Kimberly as characters from "Sera Myu"

As with SF costumers, hardcore Anime costumers will bring a variety of costumes; so that they can Cosplay several characters or the same character in different outfits over the course of the weekend.

I suppose that's enough background, so onto the actual report of the convention activities.

Friday: I arrived at the con at about 7pm. I knew there wouldn't be too much going on, but I wanted to get registered and pick-up a schedule so I could make sure not to miss anything early on Saturday. There were lots of people in costume in the halls. I mostly just hung out and talked to people and put Guild flyers on the flyer table. There was Karaoke and a J-pop dance. I also did some gaming before leaving at 11:00 pm to drive home.

Saturday: Saturday, much like any other convention, is the big costume day. There were many more people in the halls, and many more in costume. Registration for the Costume Contest and Cosplay Contest opened at 10:00 am, about the time that I arrived back at the con. I heard that the first person was in line at 7:30 am. To elaborate, there were two separate contests, Costume and Cosplay. The Costume Contest is basically a costume parade designed to best show off your costuming skills and is limited to a walk across the stage and a few lines or a pose as your character. The Cosplay Contest is designed to best show

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SUSAN LYDA

BY SUSAN LYDA

[Editor's Note: This will be a new, monthly column each month. As we have members in several states, many of whom we have never met, and know even less about; I felt that we could all benefit by learning more about each other, if only in writing.]

[Susan resides in Enid, OK] I'm not sure where to begin about myself. I'm married and I have two children (my boy-the oldest and my girl-the youngest). I began sewing in high school. Once I got the hang of sewing, I really liked it because I could make what ever I wanted. (these were modern clothes not costumes). I went to college and of all things majored in Vocational Home Economics. I really liked to sew and it was probably my strongest area out of the other areas of Home Ec. Still no costuming. I did create Halloween costumes for my son.

Meanwhile my youngest brother would bring me projects to create for his color guard activities. I did flags, props, and even a very unusual prom dress for a friend of his.

Then in 1993, I discovered the SCA. I was thrilled to discover that I could play one of my favorite childhood games (Let's Pretend) and sew clothing from that era for it. I was hooked and knew that if I had found it sooner I would have been doing this sooner.

I joined the Millennium Costumers Guild about two years ago because I wanted the opportunity to create garb or clothing from fantasy or other eras. I still have yet to do that like I had hoped, as I live so far away. I had the opportunity to select the group in the St. Louis area or in the Denver area. I picked Denver because I felt it was closer to me than St. Louis. I don't know that for certain, but I deeply appreciate how well the other group members have sent me info about the group's activities. I like to read about the different activities that the group is involved in and I DO plan to come to Colorado to participate in one of the activities eventually. Hey, I've traveled 8-10 hrs for an SCA event, why not a Millennium Guild Activity?

I am also involved in a belly dance troupe. I also have to create my dance clothing. My troupe wears what we call caber/ethnic style clothing.

So, I've never costumed professionally, but I am definitely a costuming hobbyist.

Professionally, I've taught school in the area of special education, taught aerobics(floor,step, and water), and currently work at a center of independent living.

Susan Lyda

Oklahoma Outpost

MILEHI CON 33 OCTOBER 26-28

BY MICHAEL

Well, I don't know how much more I can say considering that you're probably reading this as the convention starts.

Here is a schedule of costuming related activities at the convention.

FRIDAY

7 PM to Midnight COSTUMERS PARTY — MY ROOM
8 TO 9:30 PM GUERRILLA COSTUMING — CITY LIGHTS

SATURDAY

10 AM to 3:30 PM MASQUERADE REGISTRATION—LOBBY
10 AM to 4 PM MASK DECORATING — LOBBY
10 AM MASKS AND HEADRESSES — RED ROCKS
11 AM COSTUMING FROM ARTWORK — ART SHOW
7 PM MASQUERADE — MORRISON/GOLDEN

SUNDAY

10 AM NEEDLES & SEQUINS — RED ROCKS
11 AM ANIME COSTUMING 101 — RED ROCKS

We'll have a full report next month.



NAN DESU KAN GO!

BY MICHAEL

(Continued from page 3)

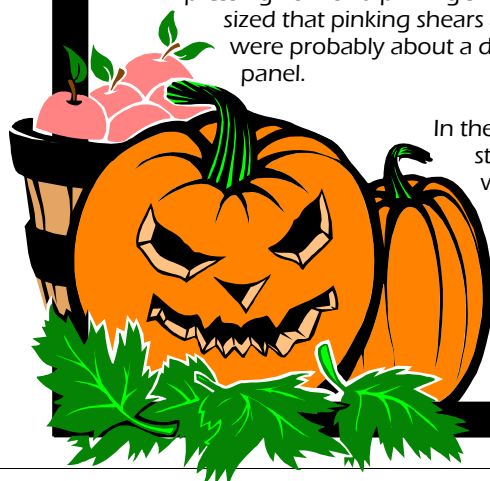
off your presentation/skit skills and has a time limit of 3 minutes. Due to the abundance of costumes at the convention and the over abundance of lengthy entries at last years convention, this year, the Costume Contest was limited to 75 entries and the Cosplay Contest was limited to 5. Costumers could enter either contest, but not both as had been done in the past. I went by the Registration area before it opened and it took me a minute to figure out why there were all these people standing in line. I'm sure that there were people still in line until 1:00 pm or later. The registration process was very slow as all the information was being entered into an Excel spreadsheet as people entered. Also there was only one line for both contests.

At some point, can't remember what time, there were two costuming panels. The first was on "Fabric for Costumes." In this panel, the presenter had brought her scrap box, which she dumped out on the table. She then proceeded to pull pieces of fabric from the pile, tell what kind of fabric it was, and what it was good for. These descriptions corresponded to a hand-out which had different types of fabric categorized by use, ie Utility, Fashion, Bridal, etc. Needless to say, the piece of "shantung silk" was actually an old piece of Antique Satin and the "linen" was most likely poly/cotton linen look. Each sample was then passed around the room. After the panel, attendees were invited to take a swatch home with them. About 18 people attended the panel.

The second panel, immediately following the first was "Tools, Tips and Tricks for Costumers." In this panel, the presenter passed around a handout, which had a breakdown of which sewing supplies you would need, based on how many costumes you produced a year, 1-2, 3-4, 5 or more. She had brought many of supplies from the list with her and proceeded to tell what they were and how they are used. She also had a few of the more advanced items, such as a pressing ham and pinking shears. It was emphasized that pinking shears are not pink. There were probably about a dozen people in this panel.



Some children as characters from "Card Captor Sakura". They won the Audience Favorite vote.



In the afternoon, I was stopped in the hall by a woman; who insisted that I needed a Hall Costume Button. For the Hall Costume Contest, they had made up 4 different buttons. Each staff member at

the convention had one button to give out. The first person to get 4 different buttons was the winner. Anyways, she had already given out her button, but she loved my costume even though it wasn't anime and since she was running the Hall Costume Contest, she could give out more than one button, if she could find another one. So, we got to talking and I gave her one of the Guild business cards that I printed up. She asked if it was published in the Program Book and if we were doing anything at the convention. Unfortunately we weren't, as this was the first time that anyone from the Guild had attended this convention and I didn't know that the possibilities were. I did however, have flyers on the flyer table, which by this time were

gone. She said that she would keep the card, so that she could definitely contact us for next year. We've got our foot in the door and a person to contact.

The Costume Contest started at 7:00 pm. I was sitting in line in the hall at 5:30, so that I could get a good seat. They started seating people about 6:30. As Guild members were the seating ushers, they saved me a seat on the front row. However, a snarky staff member came by and insisted that the first three rows were for guests, so I moved back to an empty seat in the fourth row. I then counted 120 seats in the "reserved" rows,

many of which were empty. The MC came out on stage to start getting things going. It was the same woman I had talked to earlier that afternoon in the hall. Seeing so many empty seats up front, she asked that people in costume come up and fill them. Seeing me in the audience, she specifically told me to come take a seat, front row center. Who was I to argue with a great seat.

The show started about 7:15. Many people moved across the stage very quickly, despite being told to "walk up the stairs and follow the arrow on the floor to the 'X' (center stage), turn around, follow the arrow to the microphone, say something, go down the stairs and follow the arrows on the floor, to the back of the room." The MC, who was standing on the corner of the stage as the contestants entered, would occasionally, physically stop people and walk them back across the stage and around in a circle, so that their costume could be seen. The audience would also shout directions such as "stop", "go back", "spin around" so that we could get a better look at the costumes. I don't recall any entries that stayed too long on stage. Most of them were just too fast. We saw 83 entries in about 1 hour 15 minutes. We then had to mark our vote of "Audience Choice" on a small piece of paper, which was collected before moving on to the Cosplay Contest. I think that there were 6 judges. Each presented a Judges Choice, along with the Audience Favorite and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. There were also two special

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NAN DESU KAN GO!

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awards, one for Traditional Japanese Dress and the other for Best Video Game character. There were a plethora of prizes to be had by the winners.

Comments on the Costume Contest. I had already seen many of the costumes as they had been worn in the halls all day. There were very few surprises, but the ones which had not been worn in the halls, were quite nice to see. All of the costumes in the contest were recreations. Many were fanciful, some were street clothes, some were traditional Japanese dress. Also, I have never seen so many people in costume wearing dirty, old sneakers. The judges were sitting at the foot of the stage and the stage was just about eye level with the audience.

The Cosplay contest was next with a total of 4 entries. Entries may either use live mics or something from a CD. I have heard that when Cosplaying first started, most entries re-enacted their favorite Anime scenes, the trend then moved to acting out new, original scenes for the characters and has since moved into cross-genre, original anime skits. The first entry was "Anime Survivor" where a variety of Anime characters were all voted off. It was amusing, well organized and made references to both Anime and popular American culture. They effectively used the live mics in their presentation. They had about nine people on stage. The second group was from "Ranma 1/2". They lipsynced to a song from the popular series. Most of the characters just sort of stood in the background. Their music volume was very low and difficult to hear. The third group probably had about a dozen people running around the stage all trying to talk at once. I remember the Anime they were portraying, but I'm sure it was a new and original situation for the characters. The MC and assistant did their best to keep the mics pointed at whoever was talking. The presentation seemed very long and disorganized. With that many people running about, the stage seemed a bit unstable. The fourth entry was another "Ranma 1/2" group. They had about six people onstage. I think that they were recreating a scene from the series, but with an original twist. There was one winner in the Cosplay Contest and the Audience Favorite. Both awards went to entry number one.

Comments on the Cosplay Contest. The costumes in all of the entries displayed varying degrees of skill. Within each group, there were excellent costumes and some good attempts. I think that the winning entry was probably completely organized before the convention. It is possible that the very disorganized



First Place in the Costume Contest. Padudu from Mahou Yuugi (Macial Witchland)

entry was formed, and perhaps even written, at the convention. The rules for the Costume Contest did allow for SF/F or Comic Book costumes, but there weren't any. When asked why I didn't enter, my response was that since the entries were limited, I would rather see people doing Anime characters enter, than me in my original costume. It also gave me a better feel for the convention by not entering my first year.

The two Contests were run pretty much back to back, with all awards being presented at the end. Things were over by about 9:00 pm. After the awards, the stage was made available for a photo shoot. Contestants and others in costume took a turn on the stage. As the winners were collecting their prizes, some of them did not make it back onto the stage for photos, before the room had to be cleared for the next programming item.

I spent the rest of the night hanging out and talking to people. There was a Masquerade/dance, but it was really dark when I stopped in, so I didn't stay. I ended up talking costuming in a friend's hotel room until 1:00 am, before making the hour drive home.

Sunday: I arrived at the con at about 10:00 am. The first thing I did was restock the flyers. The first costuming panel of the day was at 11:00 am, titled "Costuming for Guys." This panel had the same panelist as the last two. There was no handout this time. The panel started with, "Anime provides many costuming opportunities for guys. There are all kinds of uniforms to choose from." [Note: Anime in general is very focused on young girls. There are few main characters who are male. Many of the supporting male characters in female based anime will often wear street clothes. There are a wealth of costuming possibilities for women with very fanciful costumes. Anime also illustrates many different uniforms.] To continue, "... for example Dragonball Z which illustrates that superheroes don't have to wear spandex." The next topic was how to select which costume you should do. It was expressed that you should consider your own personal physical traits as the starting point for your decision and work from there. The panelist pointed to me and said that I had nice, long brown hair. I should find a character that has nice, long brown hair and work from there. If this were adhered to, most cosplayers would have to be anorexic, teenage girls with abnormally large heads and eyes the size of dinner plates, and purple hair. The panel went on to discuss opportunities for wearing your costumes at the convention, such as in the halls and in the contest. Some good points brought up were examples of costumes, which might not make good halls costumes, and that you might want to consider, not wearing your contest costume in the halls before the contest. It went on to briefly discuss make-up and how a cover-

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NAN DESU KAN GO!

BY MICHAEL

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up stick is your best friend. The panel continued with "Ways for guys to get costumes. 1) Date a costumer. 2) Purchase it. 3) Make it yourself." Personally, I was appalled at the "date a costumer" comment. The panel concluded with "Costuming considerations", such as "package your package, what to wear under tights and spandex," among others. I was not impressed with the panel and by now, even less impressed with the panelist.

The next panel was the "Anime Cosplaying Roundtable" at 2:00 pm. This panel had originally been planned to be hosted by a Japanese guest, Nov Takahashi, a Cosplay reporter who invented the word "Cosplay." However, he was unable to attend the convention and some friends and new Guild members had been asked to take it over. They had asked me the night before to be a panelist, so I'd brought a few things for show and tell, as well as, the costume I'd worn the day before, and some Guild information. I'd say that about 24 people attended the panel. After introducing the panel, we opened the floor to questions. Many of the questions asked were, "How do I make _____." The ones I recall in particular were wings and armor. This reinforced my thought that the anime costumers need more skill/technique based panels. They don't know how to make these things, so they do the best that can; which brings us back to the duct tape, cardboard and felt. We also made a point to bring up wearing dirty, old sneakers, and how simple shoe/boot covers can be made. At this point about 3:00 pm, someone from the committee came in and informed us that the Japanese guest in attendance would like to join the panel to discuss Cosplaying in Japan. Had this not happened, I'd planned to move the discussion from construction towards presentation.

Besides the history of Cosplaying in Japan, he also enlightened us on the restrictions on costuming in Japan. Costuming and Fandom in general is not generally viewed well by the general public. Even at the conventions, cosplayers are often restricted

to a small area where the contests are held. Photographs may only be taken in a specific area. Also, cosplayers may not have any part of their costume that projects more than 12" from their body, including wings, wands, or armor. Costumes that do not meet this restriction may only be shown in the contest and oversized pieces may not be worn/carried in the cosplay area. Some of these restrictions have arisen as the result of media influences. There were cases in the past where crimes have been attributed to fans. Also, when photography was not restricted, people were taking pictures of young girls in costume and publishing them in adult magazines, without consent. These connections between fandom and criminal activities have led to the current restrictions on costuming in Japan. Many fans in Japan do not let their friends/family/coworkers know that they are fans. SF/

Fantasy/Anime are seen as the pursuits of children and to admit that you engage in such activities is admitting that you are still a child.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable and enlightening weekend. I had a great time at the convention, saw lots of costumes and talked to lots of costumers. I also wasn't working the con. I only put out a few flyers at a time and had to restock them several times over the weekend. I'd say that I went through about 75 flyers. I also made some great connections with

anime costumers and got a foot in the door with someone on the committee. I'll definitely be prepared with an anime costume for next year and it will be fabulous. Even if you are not into Anime, I definitely recommend that you check out your local Anime convention, for the costumes and panels. As a note to local Guild chapters, I definitely recommend getting involved with your local Anime conventions. It is definitely a large untapped source of members, as well as, an excellent opportunity for costuming outreach by providing needed panels on skills, techniques and presentation. Remember, the ICG is an educational organization.



Winning group in the Cosplay Contest. A variety of characters playing "Anime Survivor"

FROM THE EDITOR

BY MICHAEL

Article contributed by Susan Lyda. Clipart by Microsoft. NDK photos provided by Beverly Alliss—www.fairiewings.net
Anime Club Laramie Chapter—www.uwyo.edu/anime/main.htm

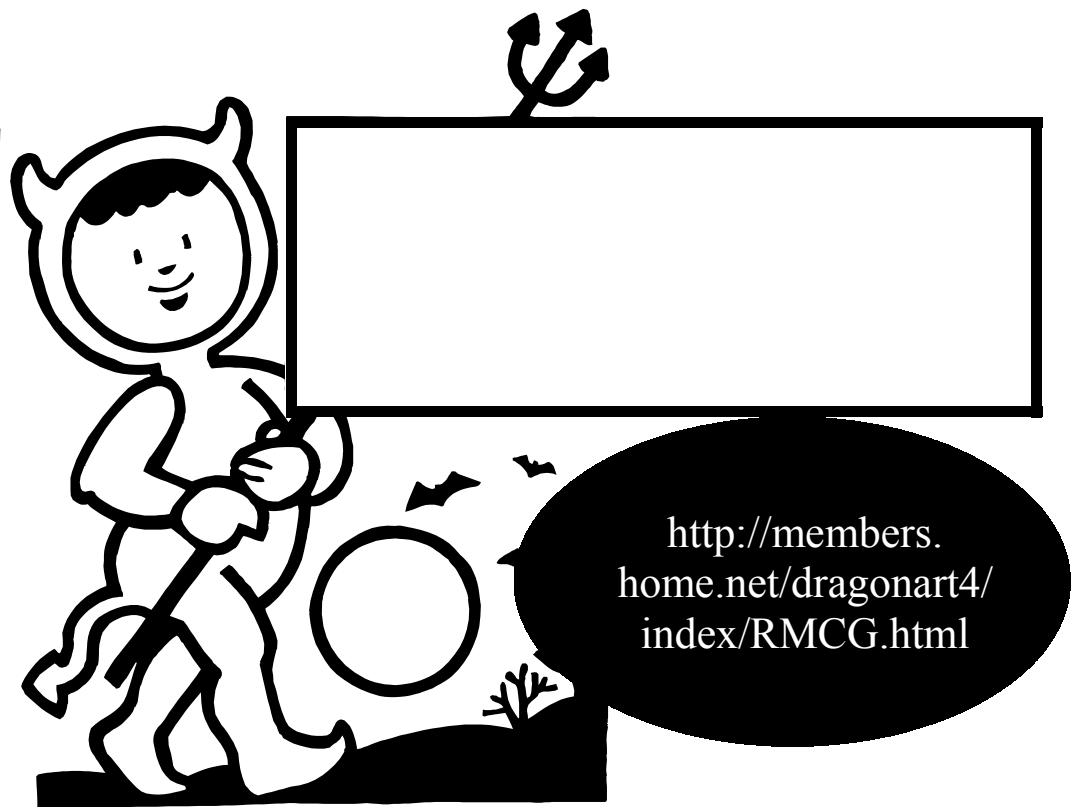
Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Just imagine what the newsletter could be like if more people contributed.



MILLENNIUM COSTUMERS GUILD

2854 Tincup Circle
Boulder, CO 80305-7143

Phone: 719-321-8651
Email: bruno@armyofdorkness.org



The Halloween Party

BY MICHAEL

The Guild Halloween Party will be held on Saturday, November 3 at the home of Vandy Vandervort. The festivities will begin at 4:00 pm and continue into the night. We will not have a specific theme this year; however, we would like everyone to dress up in something. Also,

BBQ will also be available if anyone would like to cook. Everyone is encouraged to bring a dessert for the "Most Horrendous Dessert" Contest, as well as things to drink and anything else you'd care to share.

In the event that things wind down early, I'll also bring some recent Costume Con Videos.

Vandy Vandervort
2854 Tincup Circle
Boulder, CO 80303
303-494-4194
dragonart4@home.com

as we would like to have more than a handful of people attend (as is normal for our meetings), you may bring guests with you. Please be sure to RSVP for yourself and any guests.

Vandy will make some deli and veggie platters available. Her