

## **The Astronomicon 13 Masquerade**

Byron Connell, Masquerade Director

The Astronomicon masquerade will be held in the Seneca Room at 8:00 PM on Saturday, October 30. We encourage members of Astronomicon to show their fellow fans their costumes on stage and, if they wish to do so, compete for awards from our judges. No experience is needed; we'll show you the ropes and help you on and off stage. There will be experienced judges to review entries on stage. Registration is required to appear on stage; it is not needed to be in the audience.

We welcome original designs as well as cosplay and other recreation costumes, on science fiction, fantasy, or historical subjects.

The following information is very important. Please read it carefully. The Astronomicon masquerade rules are similar to those of other masquerades; however, they are not identical to them.

### **Entrants' Registration**

Please print and use the accompanying registration form to register. Paper copies will also be available at the on-site masquerade registration desk, which we expect will be open from about 4:00 p.m. until about 6:00 p.m. on Friday and from about 9.00 a.m. until about 3.00 p.m. on Saturday.

All members of each entry must check in at the masquerade registration desk during those periods and each individual must sign the masquerade release appended to the registration form.

### **Presentation**

Stage: Information about the dimensions of the stage will be posted when it becomes available.

Green Room: The room we will use as a green room will be posted at masquerade registration. We expect it to be open from 4:00 PM on. Entrants may use it to relax, refresh their costumes, and for other activities. However, we do not plan to staff it before about 7:30 PM or to provide resources for your use. Please be in the green room and ready to go on stage no later than 7:45 PM so you can be lined up in the order you will appear on stage.

On Stage: We need to know how much assistance you need going on and coming off the stage, especially if your vision is obscured by a mask or by not wearing your glasses, or if your costume limits your range of movement. The more assistance you need, the earlier you should let us know (preferably at the masquerade desk).

If you dance, run, hop, skip, or jump on stage, you are responsible for your own safety.

The young fan entries (see below) will appear first during the masquerade and the judges will immediately make their decisions before the adult entries appear on stage.

*Constraints on Presentations.*

PG-13. The masquerade is PG-13; there are likely to be children in the audience. Flagrant nudity is not permitted; remember, “No costume is no costume.”

Safety and Weapons. **Safety is our paramount concern.** There will be absolutely no flame, fires, sparks, or other flaming on stage. If you are a dragon, plenty of fake and safe “flame” is welcome. Other special effects must be clearly described to the Masquerade Director in order for us to determine that they are (1) legal and (2) safe. Strobe lighting, for example, has the potential to be harmful to members of the audience. Smoke or fog machines could set off the fire alarms.

If your entry includes displaying a weapon, the Masquerade Director must clear it ahead of time to ascertain that it will not harm other entrants, the judges, or the audience. No sharp edges or points will be permitted. Weapons that shoot or eject projectiles will not be permitted. If you intend to point a weapon at other members of your entry or at the judges or audience, you must demonstrate in advance to the Masquerade Director that the weapon DOES NOT WORK.

Weapons permitted in the masquerade that otherwise are not permitted at the con must be carried into and from the green room in secure wrappings and be peace bonded except when in line to go on stage or when coming off stage.

Finally, entrants may not throw anything at the audience.

Presentation Time Limit. *Astronomicon has allocated one hour (8:00-9:00) for the masquerade. We must finish by 9:00 to enable the Cosplay Ball to begin.* That means that we need to limit both the number of entries and the time allotted for each entry. Each entry is limited to one minute (60 seconds) on stage. After one minute, we may use a large hook to remove you. Entries with three or more participants are asked to discuss their presentation plans with the Masquerade Director in advance. Fen tend to be easily bored. Taking too long on stage can ruin a good costume and presentation. A good presentation takes sufficient time for the judges and audience to see your whole costume and then ends.

Recorded Material. We have no provision to play recorded sound for any entrant in any form. Entrants are encouraged to provide a brief written script to be read by the MC.

No Live Microphone. There will be no microphones available to entrants; the only person permitted to speak from the stage is the MC. The MC will be happy to read a short script or to interact with you during your presentation; remember, however, that you have only one minute on stage. The MC will have only a small light on the lectern under which to read scripts. Please provide your script in black double-spaced type on

white paper using at least 18-point letters in a plain and easy-to-read font. Put the title of your entry and your name at the top of the script.

Other Constraints. Entrants may not use substances, including make-up or costume elements, that could turn rancid or be smeared on or stain other costumes. All parts of your costumes must leave with you. This is known as the “No Peanut Butter” rule.

We discourage use of radio controlled or other wireless devices as part of an entry. We do not know what sort of interference will exist in the hall during the show. It would be unfortunate to base your entry on something that doesn’t work when you are on stage.

Each person may appear in only one entry. If you have more than one entry, you must find other Astronomicon members to present the other one(s).

Never Surprise the Crew. Entrants should surprise the audience. Never surprise the crew! No exceptions to the “never surprise the crew” rule will be permitted and entrants who attempt to do so will be disqualified.

No Constraint on Hall Costumes. We want to see your costumes. There is no prohibition against presenting on stage costumes worn in the halls before the show or at other conventions. If you have won an award at an international-level competition (a Worldcon, Animé North, or Costume-Con competition), we ask that you use your best judgment about whether to enter in competition or out of competition. If you’re not sure, ask us. However, entries that have won Best in Show or Best in [Skill Division] in an international-level competition, or that present rented or wholly purchased costumes other than assembled costumes must appear Not in Competition.

#### *Categories and Skill Divisions.*

The masquerade will use two entry categories, *Re-creation* and *Original Design*, and the four skill divisions recommended by the International Costumers’ Guild: *Young Fan*, *Novice*, *Journeyman*, and *Craftsman*.

#### Entry Categories.

*Re-creation* costumes are duplicates or design adaptations of the published work of someone other than the entrant. Their design is copied from a film, TV show, theatrical presentation, illustration, comic, work of art, or other medium showing at least one good view of the work copied. Examples of re-creation sources include yet are not limited to games, graphic novels, Japanese media, paintings, photos, movies, and TV shows.

Some judges may not be familiar with your source. Therefore, re-creation entries require documentation of the source in the form of at least one image of the work being copied or adapted, which must be turned in at the masquerade registration desk with your registration form. Please do not submit original images, books, DVD’s, thumb drives, or any valuable items.

*Original Design* costumes are costumes whose design is the creation of the contestant, even though it may be inspired by an SF, fantasy, mythological, or other source. A costume designed from a written source and the entrant's imagination is not a recreation costume. It's an original costume.

### Skill Divisions.

Skill divisions protect new costumers from having to compete with experienced costumers. They are not intended to provide recognition; the awards themselves do that. They exist merely to promote fairness. Outside of any single competition, division ranking is meaningless.

Astronmicon's skill divisions are as follows:

- *Craftsman*: Any entrant may compete in the Craftsman division.
- *Journeyman*: Professional costumers may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has competed and won in the Master division at an international competition (Worldcon, Animé North, or Costume-Con masquerade) or in the Craftsman division at a regional convention may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has won "Best in Show" or "Best Journeyman" at an international competition may not compete in the Journeyman division. An entrant who has won more than three major awards in the Journeyman division in international competition may not compete in the Journeyman division. Anyone else may compete in the Journeyman division.
- *Novice*: Professional costumers may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has competed and won in any division other than Novice at an international competition may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has won "Best in Show" or "Best Novice" at an international competition may not compete in the Novice division. An entrant who has won major awards in the Novice division at international competitions is encouraged to enter in the Journeyman division.
- *Young Fan*: An entrant who is under 13 years of age on the day of the masquerade (i.e., born after October 30, 2008) and who is not part of an adult entry may enter the Young Fan division. This division is for costumes designed and/or made by the young fan, either in their entirety or with assistance from adults (such as parents). A child wearing a costume designed and built entirely by an adult should be entered either in the adult's appropriate skill division or Not in Competition. A young fan may choose to enter one of the adult categories.

Group entries should compete at the level of the group's most experienced member(s).

Any entrant may choose to compete in a division that expects higher skill levels. If in doubt about which division to enter, consult the Masquerade Director.

## **Judging**

The judges will consider both entry categories and skill divisions in making their awards. The Astronomicon masquerade's philosophy is "excellence deserves award"; there are no predetermined minimum or maximum number of awards the judges may make.

The judges will be at the front of the audience watching the entries as you present your costumes. They will look at the costumes as well as how they work with the presentation, and/or script. Judging by them is mandatory for all entries except for costumes entered "not in competition".

Awards. Awards will be presented when the judges have reached their decisions. Their deliberations usually take some time; this is not like "Dancing with the Stars." If you're competing, we urge you to stay in the area and be prepared to be called on stage for an award. Awards will be announced by skill division.

## **Photography**

Fan Photography: During the show, members of the audience may take photos from their seats, using available light (not flash). For the safety of those on stage, use of flash photography from the audience during the show is strictly prohibited. The Masquerade Director will stop the show and have the house lights turned on until those using flash have been ejected from the hall.

## **Tips for a Successful Masquerade**

Before the show, get some sleep!

Before the show, please eat. If you want to pass out after you've been on stage, fine; however, we don't want you to faint from hunger or low blood sugar in the green room or on stage.

Before the show, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

Remember, this is a costume show, not a talent competition. Never bore the audience.

Don't forget to enjoy yourself. Have fun!

We look forward to seeing you at the Astronomicon masquerade.

Byron Connell, Masquerade Director