News and Information for Members of the Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers' Guild

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## THE GCFCG NEWSLETTER

Editor: Patricia Hammer

Artist: Kathryn Mayer

Contributors: John Flynn, Janet Wilson, Marty Gear, Sue Abramovitz, Bobby Gear Welcome to the first issue of the GCFCG Newsletter! It's been six months since the Guild was formed, and it has taken that long to get organized to the point where this Newsletter is possible. Eventually this will be a monthly publication... eventually!

The primary purpose of this Newsletter is to keep you informed of what is going on in the Guild and and costuming in general. We will have con reviews and Guild meeting notes in each issue. Also, scattered throughout each issue you will find costuming "tid bits": priceless nuggets of information on short cuts, construction techniques, places to find materials, etc.

Most of the contributors to this issue are from the East Coast, because it was easy for me to contact local Guild members for contributions. However, I would like to hear from you folks in the Midwest, West Coast, and Canada. If you've been to a convention — any convention — and attended their masquerade, write a short paragraph or two critiquing it and send it in! You can critique (positively or negatively) the organization, judging, facilities, costumes, etc. Also, if you have any costuming tips which can be described in a brief paragraph, send them in! Without your contributions we can't have a Newsletter.

And now, some pleas for HELP!:

- \* We need a better name for this thing than "GCFCG Newsletter". If you can think of something more original, let us know. Send your ideas to the GCFCG address, attn: Newsletter.
- \* The Costume Con 3 Committee needs your input on programming. You'll find a self-mailer inside this issue with a list of panel and workshop ideas. Tell us what you want to see and do at Costume Con 3!
- \* The CC3 con com also needs bodies! We need volunteers to help at the con, but we also need con com members (see the Committee list on page 6 for vacancies). If you're willing to help, please write to GCFCG, attn: Costume Con 3 volunteers.
- \* The Guild is planning to compile a list of book titles for a definitive costumer's bibliography. We need the names of any books you use for inspiration and guidance in designing and making costumes. You can send them to the GCFCG, attn: Bibliography.

That's all for this issue; see you soon!

Pat Hammer

### CONVENTION REPORT FOR THE EAST COAST

## by John Flynn

The following report is based on the conventions I attended in 1984, and the opinions and comments are entirely mine.

BRAVE NEW CON (January 1984): The Wash-Area Convention Organization (WACO) wanted their convention to be a tribute to Orwell and Huxley and designed special categories in the masquerade contest to reflect this. However, it didn't work. The competition presented little in the way of memorable costumes. The only entry that stands out in my mind was an outstanding one by Janet Wilson that blew everything else off the stage. The contest organization was disappointing, considering the fact that the WACO group were responsible for six August Partys. I hope that next year Teresa Renner (the chairperson) will make Take My Con, Please (a comic reprise of Brave New Con) more interesting and appealing for costumers.

CLIPPERCON (February 1984): Clippercon is primarily a Star Trek convention. The interest in costuming is keen, and through a series of panels and workshops, attendees are encouraged to participate in one of four categories: Fantasy, Science Fiction, Star Trek, and Historical. There was an impressive parade of costumes, numbering fifty or more, and the competition Most impressive among them were two alien costumes (with hand-made make-up appliances) by Doug and Richard Dick from New Jersey. This was their first masquerade, and I have the distinct feeling that as they become more involved in regionals and Worldcons they are going to be tough to beat. The convention is held on the same weekend as Boskone, and it may be difficult for some people to come. However, I encourage all costumers attending Boskone (which ignores costuming for the most part) to give Clippercon a second look.

LUNACON (March 1984): Lunacon, for as long as I've been attending, has not had a formal masquerade competition. This is most unfortunate because there are a number of fine costumers in the New York/New Jersey area. When approached with the notion of a competition, the committee maintains that a) there is not enough interest and b) there is no room in However, the committee did the schedule. provide an hour on Sunday for a panel on costuming (with an impressive group of panelists consisting of Janet Wilson, Richard Hill, jan howard finder, and Pat and Peggy Kennedy). The room was filled to capacity, and that alone should clue the Lunacon committee that the amount of interest in costuming warrants a formal masquerade.

ATLANTICON (April 1984): Working from a secure basis in Star Trek, Atlanticon offered one of the year-to-date's better competitions. There were more than fifty entries, and the contestants were well-prepared after having attended a panel on costuming and a workshop on costume presentation, both of which I chaired. variety and workmanship of the costumes in the There were Star Masguerade were impressive. Trek costumes, but the major awards went to a couple of science fiction entries and one to an This was most outstanding historical entry. encouraging to me as one of the judges. I have watched costuming in the Southern states improve dramatically over the last four to five years at three key conventions: Rovacon, Scicon, and Atlanticon. Should these costumers continue to excell, they will offer a serious challenge in the future (perhaps in Atlanta in

BALTICON (April 1984): This year's masquerade at Balticon was comparable to one at a World-It provided an evening of entertainment with an impressive display of talent. competition relied on the category system of Novice, Journeyman and Master, and previewed a new crop of Novice and Journeyman costumers eager to offer the Masters future competition. A number of costumers chose Balticon as a proving ground to work out the kinks in their efforts for Worldcon. The masquerade contest on Friday night was followed (on Saturday night) by a party/ball sponsored by the GCFCG. Additionally, the convention program allowed two 1-hour costume panels: "Hall Costumes vs. Competition Costumes" and "Making Costumes without a Sewing Machine." There was also an unofficial hall costume competition, with Master costumers circulating in the crowd and awarding buttons. On the whole, Balticon is one convention that serious costumers should not miss.

DISCLAVE (May 1984): Disclave has maintained over the years a stance similar to Lunacon's toward costuming: the con com doesn't see the local interest or have the time. Last year, under the leadership of Nancy Handwork (a vastly underrated costumer) a costume ball was held along with an unofficial competition. This year, they had a '50s Sock Hop and encouraged costumers to come dressed from the '50s time period. Strange idea, but maybe there's hope for Disclave yet.



# BALTICON'S MASQUERADE COMES OF AGE

## by Janet Wilson

Good news for East Coast costumers! Balticon's masquerade has finally arrived as the showcase regional competition for the East Coast. For years Westercon has served this function for the western half of the country, giving costumers a high level of encouragement and a place to demonstrate their art amid worthy competitors. The result has been a series of ever-improving masquerades. A win at Westercon is considered a costuming accolade.

Now we can say the same of a win at **Balticon**. This year **Balticon** brought together most of the key ingredients needed to produce an important masquerade:

- 1. A concom willing to support a major masquerade: Many East Coast concoms view masquerades with suspicion, if not downright hostility. The **Balticon** concom is to be congratulated on its couraage in striving to become one of the biggest and best conventions east of the Mississippi. Staging an important masquerade makes **Balticon** a "must attend" for East Coast costumers.
- 2. Facilities that encourage major efforts: Balticon gave costumers an elevated stage with runway, follow spotlights, stage lighting, and taped audio capability. This said to us "This is a significant competition go for it!" Marty Gear, who ran and MC'd the masquerade, made sure that potential competitors knew the comittee was going all out for them. This gave the masquerade its final essential element:
- 3. Costumers who came to Balticon to compete seriously: There was top notch competition, not only in the Master division but in Journeyman and Novice as well. There was a clear differentiation in technical skill between the winners in each division. The division system encouraged more people to compete because it allowed them to decide which skill level they were comfrotable with. The system also enabled the judges to award a number of meaningful prizes.

There were areas that could use improvement: backstage handling of contestants, stage layout and dimensions, the keying of audio tapes, and the entrance area to the stage itself. All of these should be corrected next year; this concom cares! My only serious quibble is one that was also expressed after Con-Stellation by several experienced mas-querade-goers: there didn't seem to be much innovation. The costume community has clearly done an excellent job of passing on techniques; there was work at Balticon done by

Novices that Masters would have been proud to own a few years ago. But most of the costumes were the same old themes: noble couples, dragons, pretty ladies, Star Trek, Star Wars, warriors, and gods (and Gary and I were just as guilty!). Only three costumes stood out for me as refreshingly different; The Nuclear Family for its paper rockets (cheap to make and very effective on stage; Captain Klutz for a great execution of a little-known character; and Victorian Fantasy for bringing its own set along.

It seems to me that a good regional competition should be the forum for trying out new ideas; only a few of the costumes I saw at **Balticon** seemed really different. I do hope that next year we see some fresh concepts, new materials and, at the minimum, the exploration of new characters and themes.

Innovation and logistics aside, Balticon can be proud of its masquerade this year. Its audience was treated to some fine work (and reacted with appropriate appreciation!). Even now, as I write this, I can effortlessly recall the beautiful color work in The Lady of the Peacocks, the unified design execution of The Gods of Darkover, the clever melding of design elements in staff, headpiece and dress in Magma Pele Volcano. The audience enjoyed the witty characterization of Mr. Jones of Darkover, the richness of the decoration on The Court of the Festillic Kings, the "wow" effect of Venjer's snap-out wings and the incredible complexity of Morgana - Regina Draconitis.

All in all it was a good show. And I can say, along with a lot of others who are already planning ahead - just wait until next year!

## **TIDBITS**

If you are looking for accurate color pictures and descriptions of military uniforms, Osprey Publishing Company of London has a series of over 100 books in their "Men-at-Arms" series. You can probably find them in the better stocked wargaming stores where they are sold as sources for the painting of military minatures. The general headings listed on the back of "Saxon, Viking and Norman" are: The Seven Years War, Napoleonic Wars, Other 19th Century Campaigns, World War II, British Regiments, American Subjects, and Miscellaneous Subjects. There are a multitude of titles within those groupings. Cost: about \$10.00 per volume/title.

### COSTUME CON 2 IMPRESSIONS

Janet Wilson: Summed up, it was three days of perpetual costume lust. I kept seeing things that were fabulous and craving them (or the knowledge of how to make them myself). And lust was satisfied, not only in the formal workshops and classes. but also in the seemingly endless willingness of the experts to share what they knew. And there was the wonderful visual impact: a Victorian lady seated at the lunch counter calmly eating a hamburger; the majesty of a Louis XIV ballgown (so that's how they got through the doors in side hoops!); four spectacularly-endowed ladies in late-nineteenth century garb devastating the bus boys (so that's how you sit down in a bustle!); waltzing with a most handsome puppydog magician; aliens, admirals, and fairy godmothers. It was a weekend of rhinestones and corsets, papier mache and beads. Boy, did I learn a lot! Boy, did I have a lot of fun! Boy, do I want next year's to hurry up and get here!

Marty Gear: Overall impression of Costume Con 2 was that it was neither as exciting nor as much fun as Costume Con 1. The judges for the Science Fiction/Fantasy Masquerade were stingy in their awards, especially in the Novice and Journeyman divisions. The Future Fashion Show, with only a few notable exceptions, was really rather mundane. Only the Historical Masquerade seemed to surpass Costume Con 1. My impression was that there were fewer historic costumes than last year (which could be wrong as I was a judge last year and part of a "cast of thousands" this year), but that the costumes covered more cultures and periods. The judges also seemed to be willing to find suitable award titles for all those costumes deserving of recognition.

I missed out on a number of panels that I would Ike to have seen either because I was on a panel, or because it was scheduled opposite another panel that I attended. This is not the fault of the con com. Starting the panels at noon on Friday was not really a good idea as a number of the attendees either hadn't arrived or were picking up others. Unless the attendance increases, I suspect that three tracks are too many unless one of them consists of hands-on workshops that require more than a single hour and will have limited attendance. One final John Trimble, Pat Kennedy, and I know how to MC masquerades, and nobody else seems to care. I am sure that I speak for the other two gentlemen when I suggest that none of us would really mind if "How to MC" was dropped as a programming item from future Costume Cons.

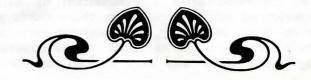
Bobby Gear: Not having attended Costume Con 1, this was my first experience with being among a large group of costumers for an extended period of time. As a gathering of individuals with a mutual interest, it was great! In my novice status, I picked up information on a multitude of techniques to use in both costuming and mundane sewing. I found it very gratifying to be able to approach perfect strangers with queries of "How did you ever do...?" and get complete, pleased and gratified answers rather than strained stares.

The programming, however, was a problem for me as well as for Marty. There were two panels on Friday that I would have given my Viking sewing machine to have seen, but I was in a big silver bird at the time. On Saturday and Sunday I kept wishing that I could stick one head in one panel and put another head in on another panel while my hands took notes at a third. I suppose that's what a good con is all about, but I became a victim of acute frustration very rapidly. Perhaps next year we can achieve a better division of interests among the programming tracks so that simliar interests are not scheduled opposite one another.

Kathryn Mayer: Costume Con II? It was terrific! Nothing beats getting together with fellow costumers and talking and talking and talking... Things I learned there this year will once again find their way into my Worldcon costume! The most striking thing to my eye this year, same as last, was the historical costuming, done on a scale I haven't seen back East yet. I always come back from this con full of ideas, and this year was no exception.

That's the mark of a really stimulating experience!

The Masquerades, though short, were of exceedingly high quality. Personal favorites of mine in the SF masquerade were the Lips from Rocky Horror, and Barb Schofield and Caroline Julian's vampire costumes, The Summons. And, of course, the Sanders' lizards. In the Historical masquerade Madam Pompadour, the lady who struggled into her French ballgown by herself, was terrific! I always wondered how those gowns worked! And it was both an honor and great fun to have been one of the Cast of Thousands in the Attack of the Master Cliche. I can't wait until next year!



## by Marty Gear

It was a warm pleasant Sunday night in San Diego. I was basking in the glow of the first Costume Con and feeling impossibly handsome in full Dracula when three beautiful ladies made a rather kinky request... how could I refuse? The ladies were Sally Fink, Pat Hammer, and Kathryn Mayer, and the request was, "Ask them if we can put on Costume Con 3 in the east!"

The scene now shifts to a November day in Maryland. I am still trying to recover from ConStellation, and it occurs to me that I don't have the faintest idea how to start to put on a convention but I am committed to do so in a year and a half. Then I remember who got me into this. Several telephone calls to a few friends with a sneaky invitation to a party, and I have gathered a crew of people who are more or less interested in costuming, and who have worked on more conventions than I have attended. With all doors locked I spring this problem on them and cry for "HELP!"

Somewhere in the middle of the discussion, someone suggests that we form not just a group to put on Costume Con 3, but an ongoing group of people who are interested in all aspects of costuming and who are willing to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others. Out of this discussion and several more was born The Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumer's Guild, and the response from costumers and "interested parties" all over has been most gratifying.

Both the Kennedys and the Trimbles have asked for an explanation of the name. "Columbia", Maryland, is where I live, and where we held the meeting that started this whole thing. Columbia is, however, the original name proposed for this country (District of Columbia, Columbia - the Gem of the Ocean, etc.). "Greater Columbia" to indicate that we were not just a local club, but welcomed members from all over. (And, as Kathy Mayer pointed out, we would soon have some Canadian members - the Merciers and Joe Aspler to mention the first "Costumers" is obvious, and "Guild" because in discussion with various interested parties we sensed a desire for a group that would promote standards and possible rules for use by others as well as information and education. "Fantasy" is perhaps somewhat misleading, since we are as interested in accurate historical and ethnic costuming as we are in fantasy, science fiction and theatrical costuming; it is a "tip of the hat" to the Fantasy Costumer's Guild of San Diego who put on Costume Con I - which is how this whole thing started. That, my friends, is the story.

## **GUILD MEETING NOTES**

The GCFCG held its first official meeting in January 1984. There were only a handful of people, but we began to lay the organizational foundations for the Guild. We reviewed By-Laws that Marty Gear had adapted from those of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society (BSFS) and also Articles of Incorporation. (From this session came our mascot, the lawa, but that's a story for another issue.) We made some minor changes to the By-Laws, and Marty agreed to have an amended set ready for the February meeting. We also elected Guild officers: Marty Gear as President; Bobby Gear as Vice President; Dorsey Flynn as Treasurer; Sue Abramovitz as Corresponding Secretary; and Pat Hammer as Recording Secretary.

At the February meeting we approved the By-Laws. Marty Gear said he had filed for incorporation in the state of Maryland but had not yet received a reply.

By March we were incorporated but still waiting for a federal identification number as a nonprofit organization. By March we also discovered our group had grown too large for meetings to be held in someone's house or apartment. Marty said he would check into using the BSFS clubhouse for future meetings. We established committees for Guild Publicity, Membership, and Programming, and discussed the need for Education and Costume Con 3 committees. We made arrangements to get flyers to several upcoming conventions and started planning the Guild Newsletter. We also discussed ways we could interact with the community to increase awareness of the Guild and costuming in general. Some suggestions were: a "press night" (where the press is invited to a meeting to talk to the costumers); costume parties sponsored by the Guild; and visitations to hospitals/nursing homes in costume (especially at Christmas). We also began generating ideas for Costume Con 3 panels (see the list on page 7).

The April meeting was held at **Balticon** on Saturday night. Dorsey Flynn reported our checking account had a balance of \$300.00. Marty Gear talked about **Costume Con 2** and the overwhelming support the Guild received there. We then began discussing **Costume Con 3**, focusing on the fashion show. Sally Fink volunteered to do the prelminaries -- publicity, compilation, and judging (with Kathryn Mayer) of the designs. Sally said she wanted the folio in the mail by January 1, 1985. There was a lengthy discussion about whether we should solicit entries from fandom or from art and design schools; we finally decided to do both.

Joe Mayhew talked about his idea for the costume exhibit area. Not only would there be costumes on manequins, but also sketches which would show the evolution of each costume's design. Also, Joe planned to have a series of lhour demonstrations where Master Costumers would discuss their evolution as costumers and explain how they conceived, designed and made some of their award-winning costumes.

In May the Guild met at the BSFS clubhouse. President Marty Gear reported we had 105 people, both Guild members and "interested parties," on the Guild mailing list. The bulk of the May meeting was spent forming a skeleton Costume Con 3 Committee (a list of which appears on page 6). Dorsey Flynn reported the Guild had \$380.00 in the bank, after spending money for the party at Balticon and on service charges for the checking account. She also told us she had become a member of the Board of Directors for the Washington Area Convention Organization (WACO) and had volunteered the Guild to run both the masquerade and costume programming at two upcoming WACO cons. We agreed to set up committees for the two cons at a later meeting.

Katherine Condon showed us some of her books on historical costumes, and we all decided the Guild should compile a comprehensive bibliography of reference books on costumes and costuming techniques.

We scheduled the first meeting of the Costume Con 3 Committee for July 8th, with time and place to be announced. We also scheduled the next two Guild meetings: one at Unicon 84 (July 21) and one on August 12th. The time and place for both meetings will be announced in the near future.

### **TIDBITS**

If you sew from patterns, a handy gadget to have is called an "OLFA Rotary Cutter." It looks like a small pizza cutter, with a very sharp tungsten steel blade, and it's great for cutting the pattern and the fabric at the same time. To use, place fabric and pattern on top of a cutting board (insulation board works wonderfully, and you can often find a piece about 3'x6' used under matresses for a couple of dollars) and pin in place with map tacks or push pins. Then run the Olfa around the cutting line This works particularly well of the pattern. with stretchy fabrics and double knits. the fabric remains flat while you are cutting it there is no distortion. The Olfa comes in two sizes and is available along with replacement cutters in the notions section of most fabric stores.

## COSTUME CON 3 COMMITEE

Chairman: Marty Gear

**Treasurer:** Dorsey Flynn

Registration: Sue Abramovitz

Exhibits: Rikk Jacobs

Publicity: Pat Hammer

Programming: Bobby Gear (Chairman)

Nancy Handwork
Janet Wilson
Pat Hammer
Linda Sweeting
Donna Zuchelli
Katherine Condon

Nancy Fees

Dealer's Room: Mitch Botwin

Security: Ray Stevens

Con Registration: Marty Gear (Chairman)

Pat Hammer (Registration) Linda Sweeting (Photog) Janet Wilson (Den Mother) Larry Schroeder (Lighting)

Carl Ginter (Sound)
Gary Anderson (Repair)

Program Book: John Flynn

Con Suite: ????

Fashion Folio: Sally Fink

Kathryn Mayer

Fashion Show: ???? (Chairman)

Janet Wilson (Den Mother)
Gary Anderson (Repair)

Hotel Liaison: ????

Con Ops: Gary Anderson

Gophers: ????

Information Booth: Ted Hammer

Balticon Liaison Bobby Gear



## PANEL IDEAS FOR COSTUME CON 3

The Guild has held many discussions about topics for workshops and panels at Costume Con 3. Our intention is to schedule a variety of hands-on activities as well as informative panels and demonstrations. Among the topics presently under discussion are those in the following list. Some will no doubt be among the ones used and there may very well be suggestions which will be added in the future.

Please take the time to complete the mailer included in your copy of the Newsletter. We want all of the input we can get!

Dressing to be yourself (persona vs. costumes)
Life Maskmaking
Stage Productions (Drama)
Stage Productions (Music/tape)
Designing to body type
Makeup Workshop for Fantasy
Latex Facial Appliance Wkshp.
Glitz & Glitter- How To /Where to
Photographing Costumes
Posing in Your Costumes - Workshop w/ Pictures
Maskmaking Workshop (materials other than those
used in life masks)

Hall Costumes to Knock 'Em Dead Air Brush techniques Dental Additives - Fangs, etc. Sewing with Leather - real & imitation Latex in costuming Beadwork Workshop Draping Patterns the Creative Way Workshop on Costuming with "found" materials The Evolution of a World Con costume Historical Accuracy in Costumes Winging It - making and wearing wings LET THERE BE LIGHT - electronics in costumes Paper Mache Workshop - headpieces, "jewellry", etc. Historical Accessorizing Color on the Stage (and on you) Masters tell ALL (Master costumers tell how they got that way)

Uses of Historical Costumes
Workshop on Costuming without Sewing Machines
Historical Recreation Groups- What are they?
The Division System in Masquerades- Why, What, How
Pattern Making from Scratch Workshop
Makeup for Glamour Workshop
Makeup for Men Workshop
Enlarging and reducing Commercial Patterns
Designing mens' costumes
Wigmaking and Facial Hair demonstrations
What Can You Find at a Flea Market
What Do You Do With an Old Costume?

(preservation and uses)
The Novel Novice (or "Oh my Ghod, not another

Princess Leia !")

Headpieces Panel - too much or not enough
Headpieces workshop
Baubles, Bangles and Beads - application of
sequins, trim, stones, lace, apliques
Fabrics to Fancy - what works for what use
Using Foam Rubber Workshop
Dying, Tieing and Batiking workshop
Making Belts, Boots and whatever in leather
Above the neck - historical hats and their
construction
The Fashion Folio - concept to creation
Magnificent Masquerades - how to run one

The Fashion Folio - concept to creation
Magnificent Masquerades - how to run one
In The Beginning - inspiration to reality - how
to get the idea and make it work
They Come As A Pair - Historically accurate
couple costuming

In The Beginning – demonstration of historical costuming from the skin out

To Bone or Not to Bone – hoopskirts and other hullaballoo

Is That For Real ? - how realistic do you have to be in historical costuming? Shortcuts and sensible ideas.

Out of the Closet - using what you have to create historical costumes.

Yes, Virginia, there WERE Men Back Then - the male historical costume

Respectfully Regency - the era, dances, clothing and culture

Resourceful Resources - Where is the information ?

ATTENTION COSTUMERS: We have received a letter from two people who are looking for

letter from two people who are looking for people to make and/or wear costumes. Here is their letter:

"I am part of an experimental photographic project that is working on creating comic books using stylized still photographs rather than cartoon illustrations. We are looking for people - 3 photogenic female types - to design and/or model 3 different, original, superheroine costumes like those of Wonder Woman, Batgirl, Supergirl, etc., and to pose as their characters for our experiment. "Designers" would retain all rights other than the specified photographic use.

There is, of course, compensation. If someone wishes simply to work as a model, that's ok, too; we're fooling with our own designs as well. We're looking for sleek, colorful, exciting costumes and equally matched models. Write to: Tanya Hayes or Laurie Allen, P.O. Box 28373, Washington DC 20038. Thanks!"

Go to it, folks!

#### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

## By Sue Abramovitz, Corresponding Secretary

As of May 12, 1984, there are 38 members in the GCFCG. Of those, 33 are active members and 5 are associate members. Thirteen members are male; 25 are female. Their interests are as follows:

- Fantasy 24
- Historical 18
- Media 17
- Science Fiction 26
- Theatrical 17

(It's obvious those numbers don't add up to 38; keep in mind people have more than one interest!)

We currently have members in the states of California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.



Greater Columbia Fantasy Costumers' Guild P.O. Box 683 Columbia, MD 21045



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