

CACTUS NEEDLES

Monthly Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild

Volume 10 Number 1 – January 2003

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Calendar

This is provided as general news. Please verify times and locations with the organizer of each event.

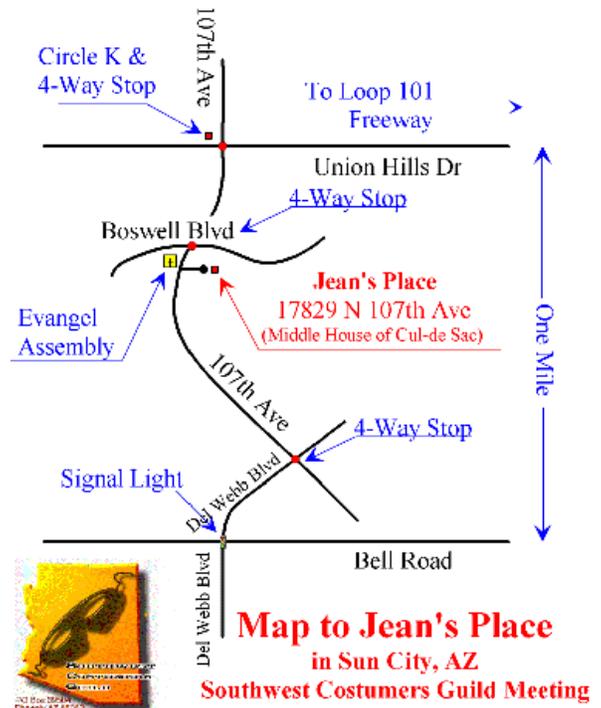
Special thanks to Bonnie and Jen for digging up some interesting events.

*Indicates an event organized by SWCG.

- December 8, 2002 through February 23, 2003 - **Gloria and Miseria - Old Masters Visit the Old Pueblo** is a museum display that features scenes of coronations, religious life and military exercises from the 16th and 17th centuries which provide extraordinary glimpses into every day life in Central Europe some 500 years ago. From the collection of the City Museum of Bratislava. **UA Art Museum (520) 621-7567**
- January 11 & 12, 2003 - **11th Annual West Valley Invitational Native American Arts Festival** in Litchfield Park, Arizona features two days of authentic Native American arts, including more than 200 exhibiting and demonstrating artists, musicians, dancers,

storytellers, children's activities, and delicious fry bread. A juried art competition and a week of educational programs precede the weekend activities.

- January 12, 2003, 10 AM - **Cloaking Session*** Guild meeting/workshop at [Jean's](#) place (See Map). We'll build some of our signature "Black Fuzzy" capes and flatcaps as our semi-annual fundraiser. Bring your sewing tools. This is a



good opportunity to learn to cut a 4-panel cape.

- January 23-25, 2003 - **Phoenix Craft and Sewing Festival** at the Arizona State Fairgrounds on the northeast corner of 19th Avenue and McDowell Road in Phoenix, Arizona. The flyer says, "See and buy the latest supplies, fabrics, notions, patterns, and tools . . . all under one roof!" Pick up a coupon for discount tickets at any greater Phoenix fabric store.
- January 26, 2003 - **Costuming from Start to Finish V - Accessories*** Guild meeting/workshop at [Jean's](#) place (see map). We'll discuss how accessories complete your costume and discuss shoes and other items to go with your costume.
- January 26 & 27, 2003 - **Yuma Lettuce Days** in Yuma, Arizona. "Lettuce celebrate in the "Nation's Winter Vegetable Capital" during Yuma's busy produce season. One can't go

wrong with all the yummy Yuman activities including the Lettuce Box Car Derby, Cabbage Bowling, Produce & Citrus Display, Mr. Lettucehead contest, arts & crafts, farm equipment displays, live entertainment, tasty food items and much more!"

- February 1 - March 23, 2003 - **Arizona Renaissance Festival** near Gold Canyon, on US 60, east of Apache Junction, Arizona. 16th Century European Village celebrating romance & revelry of Renaissance Europe, music theater, comedy, hearty food & drink, crafts, games & knights jousting. Weekends 10 am - 6 pm. (520) 463-2700
- February 3-9, 2003 - **13th Annual Chinese Week Culture & Cuisine Festival** in Phoenix, Arizona. Sponsored by the Phoenix Sister Cities Commission. Food, arts & crafts, music & dance performances, mah-jongg booth, martial arts demos, photo exhibit, free, hands-on activities, 5K "Wok" and Run. (602) 534-2664 or (602) 534-3751
- February 8, 2003, 1 PM - **Cosplay Contest** at Samurai Comics, 5024 North 7th Street in Phoenix. Cosplay is part masquerade, part role-playing as players re-create their favorite manga, anime, and RPG characters. Awards for most creative, most original, most in-character, best homemade, best group, and best overall. Look for a cosplay workshop in January. Contact Moryha at [Samurai Comics](http://SamuraiComics.com) (602.265.8886) for more information.
- February 8, 2003, 10 AM to 3 PM - **Territorial Day Festival** at the Sistine House Museum in Mesa, Arizona. Hands-on experience of the forgotten arts and traditions used by Arizona's pioneers. Demonstrations include needlecraft, spinning, weaving, wood carving, butter making, blacksmithing, dutch oven cooking and old fashioned ice cream and root beer, trolley tours of historic Mesa, re-enactments and musical entertainment. Admission is free. (480) 644-2760
- February 14, 2003, 10 AM-2 PM - **History on the Mall - Celebrating Arizona Statehood Day** at the Arizona State Capitol Museum. Museums & organizations across the state provide booths & historic demos, Polly Awards will be announced. Admission is free. (602) 542-4675
- February 14-16, 2003 - **Estrella War** An annual event of the [Society for Creative Anachronism](http://SocietyforCreativeAnachronism.com), held at Estrella Mountain Park in Goodyear, Arizona. Armored combat, arts & sciences competitions, and a merchants' row to rival any renaissance fair.
- February 21-23, 2003 - **10th Annual Trail Dust Days** in Tucson, Arizona showcases authentic cowboy gear-makers, artisans, western craftspeople and dealers in cowboy collectibles from around the West, live entertainment, concerts, wild west stunt shows, period costuming, Trail Dust Town (520) 296-4551
- February 22, 2003 10 am - 2 pm- **Fiesta! & Downtown P'Art'Y** in Casa Grande, Arizona is an art party especially for families. Free hands-on children's crafts, food, entertainment, historical re-enactments. Admission is free. For more information visit www.cgvhs.org or call (520) 421-8677 or (520) 836-2223
- February 22-23, 2003 - **Arizona Scottish Gathering & Highland Games** on the Mesa Community College athletic fields, east of the southeast corner of Dobson Southern in Mesa, Arizona. Pipers, Bands, Country Dancers, Athletic Competitions, Kilts, and interesting things to do with a used telephone pole.
- February 22-23, 2003 10:30 am - 4:30 pm - **19th Annual Matsuri: A Festival of Japan** at Heritage Square in Phoenix, Arizona highlights Japanese culture with entertainment, authentic crafts, food & fine arts, includes martial arts demos, Taiko drums & audience participation in traditional Japanese folk dances. Visit www.ci.phoenix.az.us/parks/heritage or call Heritage Square (602) 262-5029 for details.
- February 22-23, 2003 10 am - 5 pm - **9th Annual Southwest Indian Art Fair** in Tucson, Arizona is an invitational show & sale by 150+ of the SW's finest American Indian artists. The fair features award-winning hand crafts, storytelling, music, dancing, Native fashions, and Native cuisine. Admission is \$7. Contact the Arizona State Museum at (520) 621-6302 for details.
- February 23, 2003 - **Post-War Depression*** Guild meeting at [Stephanie's](http://Stephanie's place) place. Decompress after the Estrella War and plan future activities.
- May 31 & June 1, 2003 - **Renaissance in the Pines** at Fort Tuthill in Flagstaff, Arizona. This renaissance faire moves from Williams to Flagstaff this year. Jousting, Beer Garden, Swordplay, Comedy, Music, Merchants.

From the SWCG President

Well hello again, it appears that I am president for the coming year. I am happy that we have some new members and hope that they enjoy the SWCG. I would like to see us develop a fun and interesting schedule for the coming year. Please be thinking about what you would like to see the guild doing and what you want to be learning in the coming year. At the February meeting we will be finalizing the schedule for 2003.

There a few things that I would like to propose for the coming year. Going to a tea-shop or someplace else in costume as an event outside our normal meetings. Doing something for a charity during the year - maybe making layettes for premature babies or simple hats for patients who have gone through chemotherapy or something else that you suggest. In creasing our contacts with other groups that include costuming activities. Getting incorporated as a 501-C organization.

I am hoping that with your input we can make the guild what you want it to be, because the members make the guild.

-Frances Burns

From the New Cactus Needles Editor

December's SWCG meeting brought a couple of changes in the officer slate. Frances is President once again and, following a secret backroom deal that everybody knew about, I took over as *Cactus Needles* Editor. Stephanie left me a fine foundation to build upon. You will notice that I have retained most of her basic layout. I will do my best to match her record of on-time newsletters.

Cactus Needles Anniversary

Hey, This is Volume 10, Issue 1. That makes this Cactus Needles 10th Anniversary Issue! Can you believe it? Here's a toast to emeritus editors Jean and Stephanie (clink of glasses).

We need content! Please send news items, even if they are just one-sentence leads about something you've seen, done, read, or heard about. E-mails, hard copy, gum wrappers – it's all good. Personal announcements are very welcome, as are upcoming public events, questions for the peanut gallery, etc. Lets try to get four or five pages of content per issue!

Submittal Deadline for *Cactus Needles* will continue to be the 5th of the month and the newsletter will theoretically be printed on the 10th. Anything received after the 5th will probably go into the next month's issue.

Copyright Policy: Copyright for *Cactus Needles* as a whole belongs to Southwest Costumers Guild. Signed articles belong to their authors. Anything in the general news sections, or with Randall Whitlock's byline may be reproduced in the newsletters of the International Costume Guild and its chapters. ICG chapter editors should contact the *Cactus Needles* editor regarding use of individual signed articles.

Sharing Policy A hard copy of *Cactus Needles* will be sent to any ICG chapter that sends SWCG a hard copy of their own newsletter. Overseas chapters may receive these in quarterly bundles. All other chapters and those chapters who state a preference for it will receive the electronic version of *Cactus Needles*, so long as an active e-mail address is provided to the editor.

E-Version Therapy Prevents the D.T.'s*

*Dead Trees that is.

Please consider subscribing to the electronic version of *Cactus Needles*. This will arrive as an Adobe Acrobat file attached to an e-mail from randwhit@aol.com. *E-Cactus Needles* will arrive faster and have brighter color than the dead tree edition. The fewer paper copies we have to print and mail, the further the budget will go.

Electronic editions of other chapters' newsletters should be sent to editor@southwestcostumersguild.org

-Randall

New Membership Category

Pete had a brainstorm at the December, 2002 meeting. He and Jean took out the SWCG's first Household Membership. A household membership receives one copy of the newsletter (though I'll bend this for the e-version), but may include several members. The local dues are \$10 for the first person, plus \$3 for each additional member in the household. Chuck Cady and Moira Whitlock were also immediately added to the rolls this way. With one thought, our census gained about 20%!

Have you paid your dues for 2003?

Here is Jean's work-in-progress, seen at the December, 2002 meeting. →



Meet our New Member – Edouard B. Mesert

In his own e-mailed words:

“Edouard B. Mesert is a brand new member of SWCG. His first piece of costuming is twenty-three years old. He started when he was eighteen in 1975. At this point, he has a whole closet devoted to various costumes. At last count he has attended over 80 costumed events, over half various Renaissance Faires.”

Edouard has a few thoughts about cons, con guests, and hall costumes:

“Darkover, in MD is a costumers dream. Darkoverians tend to dress in Hall Costumes all weekend. Add to that, Regency Dancing (in Costume), the Masquerade (in Costume). All together, I wore costumes of one sort or another all weekend, and felt totally comfortable. Katherine Kurtz is a regular attendee.

Katherine Kurtz is available for any con that will pay for her airfare and hotel, the only catch is you need to find a sale on flights from Ireland to the con city. transcontinental airfare can be a little pricey.”

“If you are looking for hall costumes, go to the Chinese Cultural Center. Interesting Chinese clothing. or there is a store on Camelback (between 7th Ave and 15th Ave) on the South Side next to a Camera Store. It sells caftans, and other Islamic clothing that would be a great hall costume with little or no alterations. Any ethnic clothing store is probably a good place to buy odds and ends.”

Bonnie’s Ideas for Upcoming Activities

At the February 2003 “Postwar Depression” meeting we will set up the guild activity calendar for the rest of 2003. Bonnie recently e-mailed me a wish list of the sort of activities she’d like to see. What do you think?

“I will probably miss the next meeting because of family obligations. Frances said that we will be discussing things that we want to do for the coming year like classes. So my ideas in no particular order are as follows:

1) Another class like this one [the Costume from Start to Finish Series-RW], although not the same because Frances deserves a break. It has been very popular and brought out members that haven’t come in a while.

2) A guild event where we come in costume like the costumers guild in San Francisco does (they have a Victorian picnic and maybe a tea) where it’s themed far enough in advance for complicated costumes yet a

consistent time period or theme so that people will plan for next year too. We could start off easy and do western like they use to do in the 50’s in Scottsdale. For complicated, think Seminole quilting and Navajo patchwork or even Spanish dancers. Let’s face it, we all have western boots and have some vision of the true or old west.

2 ½) Themed outings (not a guild planned or sponsored event but something that a group of us, that were interested, could do) where we can go in costume. Examples would be a dinner murder mystery, a Victorian teahouse, or even Rocky Horror.

3) Lets take more pictures of members in costume and post them (I’ll volunteer to take pictures, but more than one of us should be designated or it won’t work). This should get people more interested in the guild and its activities. I found the guild thru the website. Do we have the room (web space) for a photo album or virtual scrapbook and someone to do the work?? Look at what some of the bigger guilds have done as well as links to member homepages with scads of event pics.

PS I do know that having people able to do this with the time available can be the limiting factor! Frankly, I don’t have the skill despite having some free time.

4) Lets set up guildster days and meeting places at costumed events so that people like ME don’t have to go by themselves, or worse beg an unwilling spouse to attend. This is one of the reasons I joined the guild, and so far I still have to beg Rob to go to the Renaissance Festivals. Just forget the Irish Scottish or German fests.

4 ½) We should also include the location and time of events that the guild has at the cons (or any other non-guild function we participate at) in our newsletter like the cape making or the tea. I had no clue how to go since I wasn’t involved in the con.

5) If you make the ½’s whole numbers I am already at 6 ideas, suggestions, or gripes (depending on how you look at it) so it’s gotta be someone else’s turn! I hope that the meeting has a good turnout.

Thanks for your consideration!”

The Editor/Webdude comments:

Re #3 The SWCG web pages live on the server space connected with one of my AOL screen names. We have two megs to play with. Along with the current content, we can probably support about two dozen photos at one time. I have a scanner and an HTML editor, and I’m not afraid to use them. Send me pictures! I can scan and return your prints. You can also e-mail or disk me .jpg format digital

pictures. Recent SWCG activities and member projects would be good subjects for the photos, like the infamous Fish & Chip picture currently on the page.

Links to SWCG members' home pages are included in the "Meet the Guildsters" area of the page. Right now that's me, Pete, and Becky Lee. If you know a web page that includes pictures of you and your projects, please send me the URL. I no longer post members' mail links on the page (except for the officers' aliases) because it was drawing down too much spam.

Re #4 ½Get me the information by the fifth of the month, or just send me a fifth of something, and it will be on the calendar!

Good Spam?

I just received an advertising e-mail for a new book on natural dyes. Interested?

"Guide to Dye Plants for Dyeing Wool & Textiles" is a great gift for those who love weaving and spinning, fabric arts and crafts. The Guide includes details on more than 450 common dye plants and trees; which dyestuffs (berries, leaves, roots) give which colors (amazing range!) Simple preparation and mordanting instructions & recipes. Color library of more than 170 dyeing plants. Available in hard copy or cd-rom, just \$18.95. Buy online now at: www.genoshare.com/dyeguide.htm"

Stuck at the Prom

For years I've facetiously suggested "Best Use of Duct Tape" as a special masquerade award. Now someone has actually done it! John forwarded an F-Costume posting about Duck brand duct tape's "Stuck at the Prom" contest. Contestants were challenged to create their prom wear entirely from duct tape. The winners of substantial college scholarships are a couple who created a marvelous tudor ensemble. It's sort of Red Green meets Henry the Eighth. Check it out at www.ducktapeclub.com/prom/

Virtual Masquerade

The Costume Gallery & Costume Classroom hosts a "Virtual Costume Ball" every fall. Participants e-mail in photos of themselves in their masquerade costumes to be posted on the web site. Check them out at www.onlinecostumeball.com

John, who pointed out the site, suggests this might make a good meeting project. We could get together and take pictures of some of our work, then e-mail them to the virtual costume ball host.

Star Stitchers?

John recently forwarded an F-Costume article describing Costume Designer Trisha Biggar's quest for couture-level stitchers for the new Star Wars film. Applicants would, of course, have to move to Sydney for the duration. Start swimming!

You can view Garry Maddox's full write-up at: www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/12/13/1039656217578.html

Former SWCG President Tom Vincent Sends Greetings from his New Home

Hey, Guildsters!

I just thought I'd send you a note of hello...and goodbye. I moved to Delaware a few months ago.

I really enjoyed meeting all of you and my time with the guild!

For those whom I met doing Regency Ballroom Dancing, I thought you'd like to know that I'm calling an 18th century ball for New Year's at an 18th century building (flyer attached)! I hope to put up some photos next week or so and let you drool over the costumes people wear to these things! Philadelphia, I am told, has a fabric district to die for, though I have yet to venture into it.

I've been meeting a lot of wonderful people in the SCA, Adrian Empire, English Country Dance groups (which is really was 'Regency Ballroom Dancing' is) and assorted English Civil War, Revolutionary War and Colonial recreation groups. Lots of wonderful historical sites, museums, gardens and mansions around here...really fun to teach dancing or do sword-fighting on or near 17th/18th century sites. Perhaps I'll even make it to Pennsic so I can compare it to Estrella.

Delaware is very beautiful...a bit cold right now, but the summer was wonderful: I had the top down on my convertible for months! Spring was stunning and so was fall. We had a bit of snow a couple weeks ago and it snowed last Tuesday night and a bit on Wednesday...really pretty.

Anyway, I'll miss you all and am glad to see that the guild is still going strong...I enjoyed our activities and wish you all a happy 2003!

-Tom Vincent

ICG E-Mail List

The International Costume Guild maintains an e-mail listserve discussion group. Here's how to subscribe:

ICG-D is the Yahoo Groups based discussion group for, but not limited to, members of the International Costumers' Guild.

*Via email send a blank message to:
ICG-D-subscribe@yahoogroups.com*

*Via web (requires signing up for eGroups):
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ICG-D>
Then click on the {subscribe} button.*

On initial subscription, the moderator is willing to switch your delivery option to Daily Digest. Beyond that, I don't have a whole lot of control over your personal settings.

If you wish to access the files sections, message archive, set a posting alias, or use any of the other features of Yahoo Groups, you must sign up for a Yahoo account.

If you subscribed to ICG-D via email, you will need to "link" your email address to your Yahoo account to access the ICG-D group features.

To unsubscribe, see the bottom of any message posted to the list.

News from other ICG Chapters

We have newsletter swap arrangements with several of the other chapters of the International Costume Guild. Here's what we've received since last issue:

Millennium Costumers Guild Glitz & Glitter, January 2003

The cover story is "Sergers 101" by Andrew Trembley. This is an excellent piece on how to shop for an overlock machine, complete with reviews of the various manufacturers.

Your editor carries recent newsletters around in his grungy green Con Bag. You can read or borrow them at any SWCG get-together.

The Versatile A-Line Robe

By Randall Whitlock

Wizards, Jedi Masters, monks, and alien ambassadors with uncounted legs all seem to wear long, flowing robes. This is one of the simplest and most versatile garments you can make for your hall costumes.

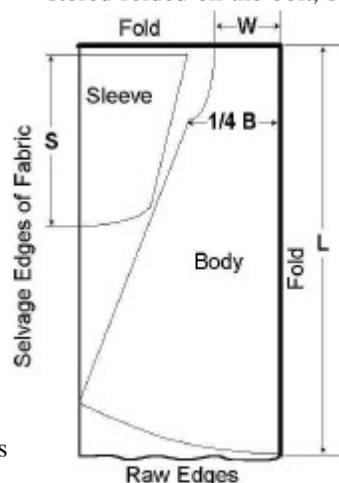
Described below is a simple A-line robe you can lay out without a pattern, using a yardstick, chalk, and string. Add features and details as appropriate. As the name would suggest, an A-line robe follows a straight sideline from the underarm to the hem, with no defined waist in itself. You can create a waistline by wearing a belt or sash.

Material: Your choice of fabric will depend upon the costume you wish to create. Monk and Jedi costumes work best with coarse-textured materials like linens, thick wools, and cotton calcutta. Wizards may dress bright or dull, according to fantasy culture of their origin. Aliens might wear bright colors and shimmery textures. Desert dwellers (like AZ con goers) may favor lightweight, breathable fabrics. I've made monk robes of cotton terrycloth for the walk to the showers at camping events. Use bargain rack flannel for an extra-full bathrobe.

Any robe fabric should drape well. Stiff fabrics are not practical. 45-inch wide fabric will do for most of us, but use 60-inch wide where possible. You will need twice as much fabric as the distance from the nape of your neck to the floor, plus an extra half-yard for a hood. On my bod this works out to five yards. You can get a simple sleeve from the material left over from cutting the body. Other sleeve styles will need more fabric.

Measurements: Standing, measure the distance from the nape of your neck to the floor. We'll call this the total length (L). Measure L both down your back and your front. Use the longer of the two measurements. It's easier to raise the hem later than to add material. Measure the sleeve length (S) from the back of your shoulder to your wrist. Measure your one-shoulder width (W) from the outside of your shoulder across your back to the nape of your neck. Measure your forehead circumference and divide this figure by 2π to get you neck diameter (N). Loose necks are best for robes. Measure your chest circumference wherever your body is widest, then add 10% for wearing ease to derive your body size (B).

The Body: Measure out 2L of fabric. Fold the fabric over from selvage edge to selvage edge. Most fabrics are stored folded on the bolt, so this fold line may already be pressed into the material. Fold the fabric again, lengthwise. You now have four layers of material L long by half the bolt wide. Mark the point where the two folds cross – it represents the nape of your neck.

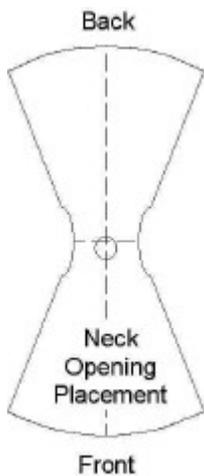


←Figure 1 – Cutting the body and sleeve

Using chalk, mark a point on the top fold line, W from the long fold line. Scribe an arc from this point to a second point about eleven inches down from the top and $\frac{1}{4}$ of B in from the long fold line. This arc is your sleeve inset.

Pin a string to the top of the material at the nape point. Stretch out the string out to the raw edge of the material and use it as a compass to scribe an arc from the bottom of the fold line to the edges of the fabric. This arc is the hem of your robe. Draw a straight line from the high end of this arc to the bottom of the sleeve inset. This line is the side of the robe.

Cut out the body along these chalk lines, cutting through all four layers of fabric.

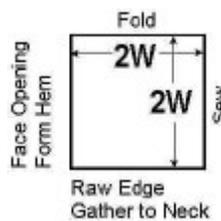


Unfold the body. Use a drawing compass to scribe a circle of diameter N centered on the long fold line, a little down the front of the robe from the nape point, as shown on Figure 2. The circle should extend about an inch above the nape point. The circle is your neck opening. Cut out the circle.

← Figure 2 – Placement of Neck Opening

The Sleeve: There should be enough material left from cutting the body to make a simple flared sleeve, positioned as shown on Figure 1.

Use the same curve you have drawn for the sleeve inset as the sleeve cap. Draw a line of length S from the top of the sleeve cap along the selvage edge of the fabric, then draw a cuff at right angles to the selvage edge as long as the material will allow. Draw a straight line from the bottom of the sleeve cap to the end of this line. Cut the sleeve out through all four layers of fabric. Sew the two parts of each sleeve together along the fabric selvage edge. This forms the top of the sleeve. Roll the end of the sleeve over and sew to form the cuff. Sew the sleeve cap to the sleeve inset of the body.



← Figure 3 –Layout of Hood

The Hood: Most styles of robe call for a hood. You can form a very simple, full hood by cutting a rectangle of length 2W and width W. Fold over and sew one of the long sides to form a hem for the face opening. Fold the rectangle over lengthwise and sew from the fold to the unfinished end to form the back of the hood. The unfinished end will be the

base of the hood. Gather the base of the hood to the cape's neck opening in pleats. This will make a big, draping, shoulder-wide hood. For an open-fronted robe, sew the hood to the neck before you finish the face opening.



Finishing Up: Once the sleeves and hood are attached, finish the robe by forming side seams which run from the wrist, under the arm and down the body side to the hem. Finish the hem of the robe by turning under the edge and sewing. Keep the turnunder small to avoid puckering. For an open-fronted robe, cut the front body panel in half along the fold line, then turn these new edges under and sew.

Other Necks: You can also finish the neck with a standing collar, a circular flat facing, a keyhole neck, or many other possibilities.

Apply a broad, scooped neckline and the robe becomes a practical medieval lady's gown.



Capelets:

An excellent detail to add for a monkish or Cardinal Richelieu look is a circular capelet or shoulder cape. Cut a circle with a diameter between 24 and 60 inches. Cut a circular neck opening on your fabric circle the same size as the robe's neck opening.

This circle should be on the front portion of the capelet, with its edge just touching the center of the capelet. Sew the capelet to the robe's neck opening before you apply the hood. Finish the outside edge of the capelet by turning under and sewing, or by applying a trim.

