

Cactus Needles

The Monthly Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild

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Calendar

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

So, what belongs in the calendar? SWCG meetings of course, events featuring people in costume located somewhere that SWCG members can attend, events from other clubs (e.g. SCA, CASFS) that include SWCG members, trade events with good sources of costuming materials/supplies/ideas, and social events hosted by SWCG members.

***Indicates an event organized by SWCG.**

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 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 (602.265.8886) for more information.

February 8 - 9AM - 6PM - **ConRunners Day Long Seminar**. Room 3005 at the Embassy Suites North, 2577 W. Greenway Rd. Membership: \$15. Registration begins at 8:30AM. If you are interested in how conventions are run this is the place for you. If you want to see something at local conventions that you aren't seeing, this is the place for you. During the day we will provide coffee, tea, lemonade, and a few munchies. Feel free to bring some munchies to share. For more info contact Stephanie (laetitia@doverkeep.com)

February 9 - 7PM - **LepreCon Inc Quarterly Meeting** at JB's at I-17 and Indian School Road. For more info contact Mike Willmoth at 480-945-6890 (mwillmoth@compuserve.com)

February 14-16, 2003 – **Estrella War** An annual event of the Society for Creative Anachronism 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 21 - 8PM - **CASFS Meeting** at JB's (I-17 and Indian School) Meeting at 8PM with dinner and conversation starting at 7PM - for more info contact Stephanie (leigh@casfs.org)

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 22 - **Open house** - NOTE DATE CHANGE due to CASFS moving. Craig and Stephanie's monthly open house on the third Friday of each month. Conversation, cordials, games, movies, and who knows what else.... 6PM til ?? We'll provide something, probably lasagna, feel free to bring a munchie to share. **WARNING FOR THOSE WITH ALLERGIES** - there are 8 cats and 4 dogs in the house. For more info contact Stephanie (laetitia@doverkeep.com)

February 23, 2003 - **Post-War Depression*** Guild meeting at Stephanie & Craig's place. Decompress after the Estrella War and plan the SWCG calendar for the rest of the year.



March 13-16, 2003 - **Festival of the West** at Westworld in Scottsdale. (See Tasha's preview later in this issue.)

April 18-21, 2003 - **Costume-Con 21** at the Doubletree Northshore Hotel in Skokie, Illinois. A full weekend of costuming workshops and masquerades. Site of the ICG annual meeting. Visit <http://www.jennifarse.com/cc2003/> for more information.

May 16 -18, 2003 - **LepreCon 29**, a fan-run Science Fiction convention at the Embassy Suites at the southeast corner of Interstate 17 and Greenway Road in Phoenix, Arizona. Guests of honor include author Charles deLint, artist Larry Elmore, media tech guest Richard Coyl and music guest Karen Willson. The con also features a masquerade directed by SWCG Prez Frances Burns. Go to www.leprecon.org for more information.

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.

August 1-3, 2003 - **Costume College** at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, California. A full weekend of hands-on costuming workshops. Visit www.costumecollege.org for details.

"Costume from Start to Finish" Series Wraps

The January 25th meeting on Accessories completed our Costume from Start To finish series of tutorials led by Frances. This has been a very successful series, completing many projects and bringing us several new members. Your editor has received two e-mails in the past week asking if we will offer something similar in the future.

This meeting was also an opportunity to show our recent projects and works in progress, like Paula's kitty gwazi.

Of course a guild meeting on costume accessories can mean only one thing: Guildsters in Hats!



Photos by Bonnie.

A Laurel in Our Midst

Word hath it that SWCG friend/ally/relative Nola (Lady Chameleon) will be elevated to the SCA's Order of the Laurel for her costuming expertise at the Estrella War this month. Could anyone who saw her wedding dress have doubted this would happen?

If you can't make court for the presentation, pray let us visit and pass along our congratulations as she stands vigil on Friday night of the war.

Cloaking Report

We gathered at Jean & Pete's place on Jan 12, 2003 to make some fundraiser clothing to hawk at the Estrella War. By day's end we had assembled 5 dreaded black fuzzy capes 4 dreaded blue fuzzy flatcaps, a blue beret, one DBF flatcap and 14 felt Robin Hood hats of assorted colors.



The SWCG-MKII "Robin Hood" Hat

Random Thoughts From Your Editor

Randall gears up for the Estrella war:

Now that we have all these hats, what do we do with them?

I assembled a six-foot piece of closet rod, some dollar store clothespins, a garage sale christmas tree stand, scrap plywood, and lots of glue. Voila – a portable hat display rack! I made two of them, which can display about 28 hats each.

I just completed a new war chair. I took my canvas folding chair and built a custom set of cushions from foam and some heavy brocade left from other projects. It should keep me way warmer than last year. The chair went over well at the January SWCG meeting, especially when Jean discovered that the cushions fit standard director chairs.

-Randall

Rocky Horror Returns to Phoenix

The Spectrum Mall Cinema now runs a Rocky Horror Picture Show viewing with a live pre-show every Saturday night at 11PM. There is also a lingerie/fetish wear contest on the last Saturday of the month. Admission is \$6. Is this worth a group visit or what?

The theater is inside Phoenix Spectrum Mall (Christown by any other name) at the southwest corner of 15th Avenue and Bethany Home Road in Phoenix, above the food court.

For more information, contact Matt Yenkala at mmyenkala@yahoo.com.

Way Out West: SASS Winter Range

by Tasha Cady

SASS (Single Action shooting Society) is a late 1800s recreation group. Winter Range is one of their main yearly events. It was held at Ben Avery the weekend of January 31st through February 2nd.

This is a fine event from a costumer's perspective, for two reasons:

First, SASS members are all in costume. Men range from mountain men types in trade shirts, breech-cloths and leggings, through cowboys, up to dandified card sharps, with various soldiers and the occasional bandito thrown in. Most of the women are very lady-like in elegant gowns and elaborate hats. There are a few working women - both ranch women in practical divided skirts, packing iron, and saloon girls and soiled doves. Some women wear Indian-style leather dresses.

There is a costume competition. I didn't attend, so I'm not sure quite how it works, but there is a strong emphasis on historical accuracy. SASS members take a 'shooting alias'. They are encouraged to research it, and dress the part. One lady didn't place in one of the contests, despite a gorgeous gown with hand dyed and hand made piping, because she wasn't wearing a corset, only a merry widow, and didn't have on the right kind of stockings.

But - this can be remedied at sutlers' row!

This is the second great thing. There are lots of merchants. You can buy period garb (including ladies' chemises and pantaloons). You can't buy fabric, but you can buy patterns to make your own. And trim. And buttons, and leather, gloves and guns, jewelry

Next year, I'll try to get a notice in the November and December newsletters. For a cheap parking fee, this is a fun, fairly close-in event. Take your cameras and your wallets!

Festival of the West

by Tasha Cady

Festival is to Winter Range as the Ren Faire is to Estrella War.

Festival is March 13-16 at West World. It promises:

- Music
- Films
- Log home show
- Film celebrities
- Chuck Wagon cook-off
- Shooting events
- MERCHANTS

This one is a bit more pricey (\$12), but, like the ren faire, it will have more entertainment, and will be (partly) inside.

The Dryer Trick

by Randall Whitlock

Many of the garments you will find at MoiRandall's are not suitable for machine washing. These might be made of 100 percent wool (which tends to shrink) or cotton velvet (which loses strength when wet and may pull away from the seams). The SWCG "Dreaded Black Fuzzy" capes are a prime example.

Eventually, these garments will need to dry-cleaned. In the meantime, you can keep them fresh and clean for quite a while using Mom's old dryer trick.

Moisten a clean bath towel with water and a splash of liquid fabric softener. The towel should be damp, but not soaked.

Toss the towel and your garment into a dryer. Set the dryer to "fluff" or the equivalent non-heat setting. Set the timer for about 90 minutes and turn it on.

The garment will flop around in the dryer, shaking off the dust and lint. The softener-moistened towel helps to brush off the dirt, absorb odor, and reduce static. You might add a dryer fabric softener sheet or a spritz of fabric deodorizer to enhance the effect. Place your more delicate garments inside a mesh bag. These bags are available in the laundry aisle of most supermarkets. The moistened towel goes outside the bag.

The dryer trick is particularly effective against dry dust and dead grass, which are unavoidable at Arizona's outdoor events. You will be amazed at the amount of lint that will

come off of a wool, corduroy, or velveteen garment. Dried mud should be brushed off as much as possible before you try the dryer trick.

Unfortunately, the dryer trick won't help much with food or chlorophyll stains.

The dryer trick has come of age. A couple of years ago a commercial product based on the principle, reinforced with a spot remover, became available in grocery stores. I haven't tried it yet.

-Randall

News from other ICG Chapters

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

Millennium Costumers Guild *Glitz & Glitter*, February 2003

The cover story is "Let's Go to the Movies" by Michael Bruno. Upcoming film releases are discussed and rated by their potential for group attendance in costume. (Your editor is particularly interested in the new Russell Crowe film based on one of Patrick O'Brien's Aubrey/Maturin sea novels)

The issue also features pictures from Halloween, convention news, and profiles of two new MCG members.

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

I Dream of Genealogy?

John passed along some information recently for researching your ancestry online. His notes recommend www.surnames.com, which has a mega search engine for finding family members online; <http://familysearch.org> for finding genealogical work by others; <http://CyndisList.com/surnames.htm> to find web pages about your surname; and the Ellis Island Immigrant Index at <http://ellislandrecords.org>.

John's notes also recommend the Mesa Regional Family History Center at 41 South Hobson, Mesa, Arizona 85204. (480) 964-1200. It's a branch of the LDS Family History Library with many resources open to the public Monday & Saturday 9-5 and Tuesday-Friday 9-9.

There are many other useful sites on John's note sheet. There's a copy in the *Cactus Needles* monster file.