



Cactus Needles

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.

Heard of a costume-related event? Please tell your Editor!

*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.

March 8-9, 2003 - **Battle of Picacho Peak** Civil War reenactment at Picacho Peak Park. See Paula's preview later in this issue

March 13-16, 2003 - **Festival of the West** at Westworld in Scottsdale. This local wild west festival promises music, films, log home show, film celebrities, chuck wagon cook-off, shooting events, merchants. Admission is \$12.

March 30, 2003 - **Guild in the Park*** SWCG potluck picnic at Los Olivos Park, north of the northeast corner of 28th Street and Indian School Road in Phoenix, Arizona.



April 13, 2003 9AM to 3PM - **Phoenix Cactus Comicon** at the Glendale Civic Center, 5750 West Glenn Drive. Featured events include writer and artist guests, door prizes, panel discussions, auction, art contest, and COSTUME CONTEST. Admission is \$6 (\$5 with flyer). go to www.phoenixcomicon.com for details.

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.

April 27, 2003 - **Basic Seaming and Chemise Layout*** SWCG workshop at Stephanie's place. Learn how to cut a basic medieval/renaissance underdress and practice some basic stitches and seams.

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 25, 2003 - **Comfort Caps*** SWCG workshop at Stephanie's place. We'll sew some comfort caps for chemotherapy patients. Design to be determined. Bring your basic sewing supplies.

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 (Including your Editor's *MoiRandall's* pavilion).

June 22, 2003 - **Chemise II***. SWCG workshop at Stephanie's place. Finish up the chemises started in April.

July 20, 2003 - **Mask Molding*** SWCG workshop at Tasha's place. We'll practice using plaster gauze to make fitted mask forms.

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.

August 24, 2003 - **Swim Party*** SWCG social at Tasha's place. This is our annual in-the-pool costume party. Theme to be announced.

September 5-7, 2003 - **Coppercon 23**. Fan-organized SF/Fantasy convention at the Embassy Suites on the southeast corner of Interstate 17 and Greenway Road in Phoenix, Arizona. Guests of honor include Author Connie Willis, Artist David Mattingly, and Musician Larry Warner. The con includes a masquerade directed by your Editor. Go to www.coppercon.org for more information.

September 28, 2003 - **Mask Making*** SWCG workshop at Tasha's place. We'll build some masks using the forms built in July.

October 26, 2003 - **Fabric Burning*** SWCG workshop at Randall's place. Learn to use burn tests to distinguish different fabrics and fiber blends.

November 30, 2003 - **Duct and Cover*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. Learn to make a dress form of your body using duct tape and stuffing.

December 14, 2003 - **Parasol Covering*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. Learn to build a custom parasol over a standard frame. Annual officer elections.

January 25, 2004 - **Tights and Leggings*** SWCG workshop at Stephanie's place. Learn how to prepare custom-fitted stockings and tights.

February 29, 2004 - **Leap Into Leap Year*** SWCG meeting at Stephanie's place. Annual calendar planning.

The Battle of Picacho Peak Rages Again
by Paula Lary

On March 8-9 (Sat/Sun) will be the annual re-enactment of the Battle of Picacho Peak, the only Civil War battle fought in Arizona. In addition, they do re-enactments of

other Civil War battles-just so they aren't doing the same one 4 times each day! They have an actual encampment, vendors, etc. that are based on the Civil War era and the military of the time. It's like a Civil War SCA "Estrella War". The cost is \$6.00/carload with up to 4 people in the car, each additional person in the same car is \$1.00.

Picacho Peak is on I-10 just East/South of Casa Grande (I am directionally challenged, but it's I-10 heading toward Tucson). Lois and I attended a couple of years ago and it is well worth going. You can take a picnic lunch or buy food there. In the past, besides the battles and the encampment--which is where the "actors" actually camp, just like SCAdians at their events--they've had a fashion show with clothing of the era, a Union military band playing music from copies of actual music scores of the era, weapons demonstrations, food demonstrations, etc. The vendors sell everything from the era clothing to weapons, music and instruments, camp gear (of the era), books, tapes and CD's (so the vendor's a time traveler?)

For more info, contact: Picacho Peak State Park (520)466-3183, Arizona State Parks Tel. & TTY (602)542-4174 or their web site: www.azstateparks.com. This event is held every year, so if you don't make it this year, keep it in mind for next. It's always on a weekend in March, but the actual one may vary.

Also, when we've had enough rain at the right times of year, the Mariposa poppies are in bloom out there--it's recognized as one of THE places to photograph wildflowers in this state by Arizona Highways and other nature and photography organizations.

Secretarially yours,
Paula



Left - Jen in costume at the recent Samurai Comics Cosplay Contest in downtown Phoenix.

Random Thoughts
From Your Editor
by Randall Whitlock

Participation is a good thing! You'll see this issue contains articles from several guildsters. I'm starting to enjoy this job!

War Profiteering. We sold six capes, two mantled hoods, five hats, and one of the awful

green rug shawls at our annual Estrella War fundraiser. Not too shabby. These sales raised a gross of \$406 to support our activities for the next few months.

Renaissance in the Pines. I've decided to set up my *MoiRandall's* pavilion at the new renaissance fair in Flagstaff. As always, costume consignments from guildsters are welcome. We should build some more guild hats & capes before then.

Coppercon 23. Choosing a convention masquerade director is like a game of Whack-A-Mole. The first person to put his head up gets it! *I'm the mole this year.* I'll be asking for volunteers, ideas, and prize contributions from the guild at upcoming meetings.

Below, Lyn regards her work-in-progress at the February SWCG meeting.



Bedouin Jewelry Exhibit at the Bead Museum
submitted by Kim Martin

I have found the Bead Museum flyer I picked up in December. Here is the basic info; I'll remember to bring the flyer to the next meeting.

--Kim.

"A Woman's Treasure: Bedouin Jewelry of the Arabian Peninsula", opening March 6, 2003, through February, 2004. The Bead Museum, 5754 W Glenn Dr, Glendale AZ; www.beadmuseumAZ.org; Contact: Susan Fitzgerald, Bead Museum Director, 623-931-2737. Museum hours are Monday - Saturday: 10a-5p; Sunday: 11a-4p; Open late on Thursday evenings until 8p.

Per the flyer: "Drawing upon the collections of Frances Meade and Gabrielle Liese, "A Woman's Treasure: Bedouin Jewelry of the Arabian Peninsula" features over one hundred pieces of jewelry, headdresses, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, coffee urns, incense burners and other examples of traditional Bedouin jewelry, most of it collected during thirty years of Meade's residence in Saudi

Arabia. Most of the works are of Yemeni manufacture, but also include outstanding Nejdi and Omani pieces, as well as gold, silver, brass, and other metalwork from all over the North, South, and Central Arabian regions."

Guided tours, Educational Programs, and art-making activities for children, youth, and adults are also available as part of the exhibition. Please call the museum for more details.

ICG Member Survey

Posted to ICG-D by Betsy Delaney
ICG Newsletter Editor

Hi, folks!

There's been some recent discussion on the BOD list about what your ICG membership should do for you, and how much it should cost.

In response to the discussion, I have framed a questionnaire which will be circulated in print by at least one chapter. The survey is now available online at: <http://www.hawkeswood.com/samples/survey.html>

Chapter reps should let their members know about the survey. It should be possible to print it out and fill it out on paper. If you aren't a member of the ICG but you might be interested in joining, please go ahead and fill out the survey - your opinion matters too!

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Cheers,
Betsy R. Delaney
Web Mistress at large
WebInvent.com, Inc.

From the Mailbox

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

Millennium Costumers Guild *Glitz & Glitter*, March 2003
The cover story is "Revolutionary Couture" by Sharon Trembley, summarizing the fashions of the French Revolution.

Arizona Monster Make-Up Club Newsletter This is an electronic newsletter edited by David Ayres, host of FX Makeup workshops in the greater Phoenix area. This issue includes a feature story about Tony Randall and his best film for makeup – *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*. David also announces he will give makeup demos at LepreCon and gives a plug to the Masquerade and Art Show.

Costume College & CGW Newsletter, March 4, 2003
Distributed by e-mail, this is a progress report for this year's Costume College (See Calendar). There are articles describing planned events like the Time Traveler's Gala and the Sunday Fantasy Tea. Subscribe on the web at costumecollege.org or www.costumersguildwest.org.

Catch Randall at the next SWCG meeting to read or borrow the newsletters.

Kids and Costumes

Musings and Memories of a Masquerade Mommy

by Tasha Cady

Kids and costumes comes in three flavors: For, With and By.

Costuming for kids is perhaps the easiest. Decide what you want them to be. Make the costume. Persuade them to wear it on stage. See them get their prize.

There is more to it than that. First is deciding on the costume. Costuming to body type applies to kids as well as adults. A corollary is costuming to age. "The young xyz" works quite well. I've seen Princess Leia done successfully by a six year old girl, with the white dress and the coiled braids. Personally, I like to add humor. My older son did a young Darth Vader when he was about three, but he was carrying a potty chair as well as a light saber and it was "The early (potty) training of Darth Vader". (That one didn't take much sewing. All he wore was a black cape and a diaper). Another costuming to age was "Executioner's Apprentice" when we made him an executioner's outfit. He pulled a little wagon draped in purple on stage. On the wagon was a doll, who's head had been severed from the body, but the two pieces were lying so you couldn't tell. Chet had a wooden sword. He stopped in front of the judges, said, "Time to practice" and flipped the head off of the wagon. (He won his first "most violent child" for that.) That one was a full fledged costume, but it could have been done with bought pieces if you don't sew - buy black shorts, tee-shirt and simple Halloween mask. An example of costuming to size was a World Con when I dressed both my boys as Hokas (from

Poul Anderson's 'Earthman's Burden'). That took more sewing to make teddy-bear hoods and pants. We did make up rather than masks so they could see and breathe easier. They wore the bear-feet slippers that were popular at the time, and commercial-bought cowboy hats and shirts. I was told that they were 'terminally cute'. (They were about 6 and 3).

Next is costuming with children. This one has two subtypes. Is the emphasis on the child (entered in the young fan competition) or is the child just part of a group (entered in the regular masquerade)? I have seen a beautiful Arthurian group with a little boy as young Mordred. Here, the emphasis was the group - done by Master Level costumers. Another very effective presentation, in the regular masquerade, was a father and baby daughter as Pappy Jack and Little Fuzzy (From H. Beam Piper's 'Little Fuzzy'). The size difference was perfect. Personally, we have done several over the years and ages, but always in the young fan category. The youngest was with an infant in a sling by my husband's side. I had stitched two shirts together, so there were two neck holes but only two arms and one body. They went as "Zaphod Beeblebrox's Older and Younger Brother" (From 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy'). Another one, that required more actual costuming work, was from the Asterix and Obelix comics - Husband was Obelix (costuming to body type there - he is chubby), carrying a stuffed Dogmatix; younger son was Asterix, (perfect size difference at the time!) and older son was a Roman, Precipitous Departure (we had to get him into the group).

Last is costuming by children. Definitely in the young-fan category. It can overlap costuming with children. This works quite effectively as part of Children's Programming -having them make themed costumes. One that worked well was an alien field trip. The adults were adults, taking the (alien) kids on a field trip to earth. The kids made the costumes in children's programming. Another one was Odysseus and the Cyclops. My husband was the Cyclops. A group of little boys made Greek tunics out of cheap scrap fabric and helmets and swords out of tin-foil. Here, we were taking advantage of the size differential again.

As kids get a little older, they can begin to do their own costumes more independently, either sewing or assembling. This is a good way to introduce kids to sewing. It's a lot more fun to make a con-costume (hall or masquerade) than something in a home-ec/sewing class at school. Kids also start having their own ideas for costume concepts. One where they needed me was "Barbarian Barney Hunters". I had to be Barney. They recycled parts of some of their old costumes. I remember Chet's second "most violent child" award costume: he pulled together a mercenary/bounty hunter outfit on his own, and we made a simple hat and set of white pants for

his little brother. Sam was a smurf and Chet was a smurf hunter. This was all their own idea.

So, as a veteran 'masquerade mom' my advice is "go for it". Most of the adult rules apply: keep it short; humor is good; costume to body type. Most kids are hams, with a little encouragement. Solicit their ideas; gently guide with your own. And most of all - Have fun.

The Web or Bust?

Stephanie just told us about a cool interactive web page at <http://costume.dm.net/custompat/index.html>. Just feed in some basic measurements and the web page walks you through how to draw a simple corset pattern, complete with scaled drawings. The finished pattern is a pointy-front strapless arrangement with seams up the back and front with no side seam.

This is part of Drea Leed's *Elizabethan Costuming Page* at www.costume.dm.net, which is worth a large article by itself.

Dark Fantasy

by Tasha Cady and Frances Burns

Dark Fantasy is the theme of the upcoming LepreCon 29 Masquerade. Here Frances & Tasha reveal a bit of what constitutes Dark Fantasy and a good (or evil) Dark Fantasy costume.

Dark Fantasy turns "heroic" fantasy on its head. The people/things normally considered "bad guys" become the heroes.

Dark Fantasy should not be confused with normal fantasy that has dark elements. Tolkien is not Dark Fantasy. Sauron and the orcs are definitely evil. They are not sympathetic characters at all. Neither would the *Thomas Covenant* series be considered Dark Fantasy, despite the fact that the protagonist could be considered something of a "bad guy". He is not heroic. We don't admire him. Sterling's *Draka* series could be considered Dark Science fiction. He calls it a dystopia. The "bad guys" definitely win.

There is overlap between Dark Fantasy and other sub-genres. Because the protagonists of Dark Fantasy are often the creatures of nightmare, there is an overlap with Horror. The elements of the fantastic/unearthly in Dark Fantasy overlap with Gothic. However, the emotions evoked by Dark Fantasy are not necessarily scary, terrible or horrific. Neither is the setting limited to the ruinous castles in remote locales so prevalent in Gothic tales.

Where you draw the line between Dark Fantasy and other types of fantasy partly depends on your own world-view.

Dark Fantasy takes the normally repressed side of our nature and brings it to the fore. How comfortable are you with the story's hero/heroine engaging in "forbidden" sex? Should the protagonist be (relatively) pure? Does the end justify the means when the "good guys" use coercive magic? or is coercion always bad?

Having given some idea of what Dark Fantasy is, and isn't, we can try to describe how to costume in the genre. This is as difficult as the original definition. Dark Fantasy can be "period", contemporary, futuristic, or simply "other". It is easiest if you try to recreate a specific story. That will define the setting, and thereby the fashions of the story. Ann Rice and Laurell Hamilton come to mind as eminent authors of Dark Fantasy. What is your skill level and interest for making a costume? Do you feel up to panniers or cravats? Rice's vampires, and their friends and victims, exist in many eras: the French Revolution to modern times. Movies based on her books include *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *Queen of the Damned*. Hamilton's stories all have modern settings. Her descriptions of what her characters wear is very detailed in places, if you want to do a recreation.

However, given the previous caveats, a few ideas on generic Dark Fantasy costuming are possible. First, this is Dark Fantasy. Go for dark colors. Not just black. Purples and deep blood reds evoke a similar atmosphere. Think of white, for an innocent victim, or a predator pretending innocence. Another option would be a pale green, possibly with yellow overtones. Green is the traditional color of magic and poison. The Queen of Elfland is usually described as dressed in green. In Dark Fantasy there may be elves, but Tolkien's elves would deny any kinship with them. Elves in Dark Fantasy tend to be evil, erotic or both.

Erotic is another aspect of generic Dark Fantasy. Given the strong puritanical residue in our culture, blatant eroticism is "bad". But Dark Fantasy lets us enjoy the "bad". Figures of fear – vampires, were-wolves, shape changes, etc become sympathetic characters or even heroes. The fascination with the "forbidden" is at the heart of dark fantasy and Dark Fantasy costuming.

The Core Seeks Costumes?

Lee Whiteside posted a message to the United Federation of Phoenix listserv that promoters of the new film, *The Core* are working on a promotion which may involve folks in SF costumes viewing an advance screening of the film in a Scottsdale night club setting. This would probably be done just before the film opens on March 28.

Your Editor has left a phone message with Barry Bard to ask for more information. I'll send out details in an e-mail as they become available.