

Cactus Needles

Newsletter of the
Southwest Costumers Guild

Vol 10 #12, December 2003

Contacts

Southwest Costumers Guild www.SouthWestCostumersGuild.org		
PO Box 39504 www.costume.org		
Phoenix AZ 85069-9504		
President Frances Burns	928.284.9860	francesb@sedona.net
Vice President Jean Palmer	623.876.1848	bjeanpalmer@msn.com
Treasurer Kim Martin	623.773.1816	kimlmartin@mindspring.com
Secretary Paula Lary	520.868.5702	jedastarone@yahoo.com
Editor/Webmaster Randall Whitlock	602.995.7514 602.697.0492	randwhit@moirandalls.com
John Autore	480.967.4537	john.autore@asu.edu
Rick Andrews	623.773.1816	Hrafen@cox.net
Stephanie Bannon	602.973.2341	laetitia@doverkeep.com
Jennifer Bohling	602.431.0053	lady_aimi@yahoo.com
Diane Taylor Bunting	602.265.9407	hats@cox.net
Chuck & Tasha Cady	623.582.0540	tasha.cady@honeywell.com
Pat Connors	623.939.7815	pmc@finger-rock.com
Craig Dyer	602.973.2341	dyer@doverkeep.com
Carlos B. Egan	623.487.9518	bright_stallion@yahoo.com
Diane Harris	602.841.1608	Diane.Harris@phoenix.edu
Lyn & David Jeppesen	602.275.3321	rjeppesen7@hotmail.com
Bonnie Love-Svirskas	602.840.2470	robsv@cox.net
Pete Manly	623.876.1848	petemanly@msn.com
Sean Martin	623.773.1816	seansim@mindspring.com
Edouard B. Mesert	602.678.4751	ebmassociates@cox.net
Barbara Stangelo	480.661.0141	herballistic@hotmail.com
Dave Steele	928.535.4993	ldmalcolm@wmonline.com
Moira Whitlock	602.249.0797	moira@moirandalls.com

Please e-mail or mail contact updates to the editor.

Calendar

*Indicates an event organized by SWCG. Unless otherwise noted, SWCG meetings begin at 1:00 PM.

December 13, 2003, 5 PM – **Christmas at First*** SWCG costumed walkabout, starting at Edouard's place. We'll dress Victorian and visit the Dickens Christmas Village at First Christian Church at 7th and Glendale Avenues in Phoenix. See details later in this issue.

December 14, 2003 – **Once More Into the Breeches*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. Learn how to prepare custom-fitted stockings, slops and tights (details in this issue). Annual officer elections.



January 9-11, 2004 – **DarkCon 2004** SF/Fantasy/Gaming convention at the Embassy Suites, southeast corner of Greenway and I-17 in Phoenix, Arizona. Medieval/Ren/Tolkein hall costumes are highly encouraged. Go to www.darkcon.org for details.

January 25, 2004 – **Parasol Covering*** SWCG workshop at Stephanie's place. Learn to build a custom parasol over a standard frame.

February 14, 2004 – **Tour of Historic Florence.** Antique & Collectible Sale, Quilt Show, Exhibits, Food, Shopping
Tour Tix: Adults \$10, call (800) 437-9433 for information.

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

May 7-9, 2004 – **LepreCon 30** SF/Art Con at the Sheraton Crescent Hotel, 2620 W. Dunlap, Phoenix, AZ. Guests of honor include artists Donato Giancola and Sylvana Anderson. Art Show & Auction, Gaming, LARPs, Computer Lan Party, Charity Auction, a Dealer's Room, Con Suite, Video, Anime and more. There will be a Masquerade directed by guildfriend Margaret Grady. Go to www.leprecon.org for details.

July 2-5, 2004 – **ConKopelli (WesterCon 57)** Regional SF Convention at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, Arizona. Guests of honor include authors CJ Cherryh and Diana Gabaldon, artist David Cherry, fan John Hertz, and music guest Heather Alexander. Go to www.conkopelli.org for details. SWCG will host a costumers' suite on Friday and Saturday.

Sad News

We regret to report that November saw the deaths of two more local fen and friends to costuming.

Jim Cryer succumbed to a massive heart attack on November 19 at age 60. Jim was a former CASFS President, Chair of local SF conventions, and official Videographer of masquerades and other convention events for many years.



Cris Martin died in an automobile accident on Sunday, November 30. Cris was a past SWCG president and the father of SWCG member Sean Martin.

Meeting Highlights

We did duct tape mannequins at the November meeting.



Left: Jean completes Anna's wrapup. Barbara is finished.



Right: Carlos cuts Barbara loose from her wrappings.



Photo by Pete Manly

We completed five duct tape mannequins – A new record!

Tights: The Tree Method

by Randall Whitlock

At the December meeting, we'll be playing with designing stockings, tights, and slops. Here's a new version of an article that has previously appeared in Randwulf's Ramblings, Tournaments Illuminated, and Connotations:

Men's costume in western Europe through most of the middle ages and renaissance included close-fitting leggings called "trunk hose" in period and "tights" in modern parlance. In order to achieve this look, most of us settle for dance tights purchased off the rack.

The dance tights have many disadvantages for historical reenactors. They are usually made of synthetic materials, which look like plastic, run easily, and have next to no insulation value. Most importantly, they rarely fit right. To get the legs long enough, I have to buy an extra large size whose waistband rests somewhere in the nipple zone. To keep the crotch from migrating to knee level, you may have to wear a "dance belt," which is a glorified thong that can raise your voice by an octave.

The solution to all of these complaints is to make your own individually-fitted tights. This is surprisingly easy and can often be accomplished for under five dollars a pair. Described below is a method for drafting your own hose pattern:

Measurements

Each of these measurements has two components: A circumference around your leg or trunk and its vertical distance above the floor. Tack a yardstick or tape measure to a convenient wall to measure the vertical component. Use a very flexible tape measure for the circumferences. Do not add any seam allowance. The stretch of the material will be adequate for that. Take the measurements and fill out the table below:

Measurement	Circumference	Vertical
A. Ankle just above joint		
B. Calf below muscle		
C. Calf middle of muscle		
D. Knee		
E. Middle of thigh		
F. Thigh just below crotch		
Body at hip joint		
G. Front 1 / 4		
H. Rear 1 / 4		
Body at waist		
I. Front 1 / 4		
J. Rear 1 / 4		
K. Inseam	N/A	

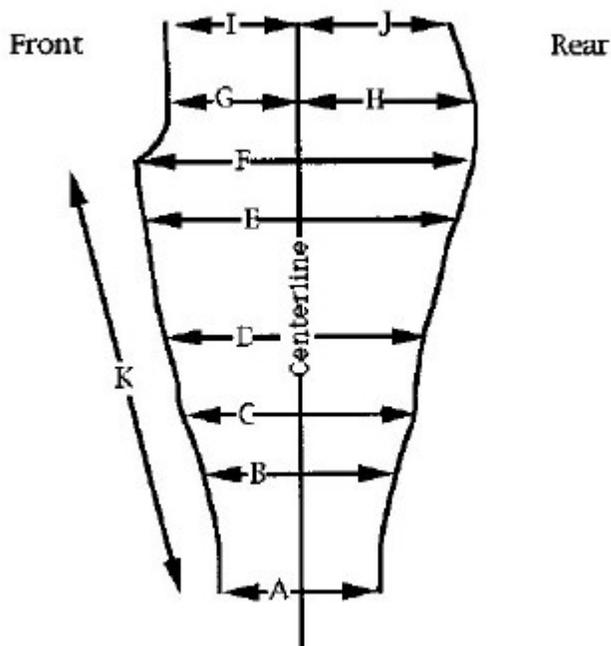
Measurements A through F are complete circumferences around your leg. Measurements G through J are measurements halfway around the body, divided into front and rear components to allow for the shape of belly and buttocks. G and I are measured from a point plumb with the navel around to the middle of the outside leg (where the outseam of your jeans would be). H and J are measured from the middle of the outside leg to the spine.

Measurement K is a straight line measured from the ankle along the inside leg to where the crotch of the tights will be formed. This crotch point should be just below the level of the genitalia. Do not make the line too long or too high, or you will create tights with a permanent wedge.

The Pattern

Obtain a sheet of paper long and wide enough to plot all of the measurements as shown below. Brown wrapping paper works well, or leftover Christmas wrap. Newspaper pages taped together will do in a pinch.

Begin to draw your “tree” with its trunk. This is a vertical line drawn up the middle of your paper. You will use this centerline as a base for plotting all of the dimensions, measuring the vertical position of the dimensions along this line.



Plot measurements A through J as branches at right angles to the centerline. Measurements A through F will be centered on the tree trunk. G through J will have their endpoints on the centerline.

Measurement K is not actually plotted, but will be used as the basis for choosing a crotch point on the front aspect of

the pattern. The crotch point lands at the end of F on the illustration, but it does not always work out that way.

Draw smooth curves connecting the endpoints of the branches on the front and rear aspects of the pattern. The curve along the front aspect should have a corner at the crotch point, determined by the endpoint of K. The front aspect should be concave outward while the rear aspect should be convex outward. Cut out your pattern along the outline.

Cut and Assemble

Lay the pattern out on fabric which has been folded right sides together. Make sure that the principal direction of stretch is at right angles to the centerline. Chalk around the outside of the pattern and cut along this outline. This will create two pieces of material that are mirror images of each other, one for the right leg and one for the left.

Fold each piece along the centerline, right sides together to bring the front and rear aspects together. Close each leg by sewing from the (now joined) endpoints of line A up to the crotch point.

Join the two legs together with a single curved seam running through the crotch, joining the endpoint of line I on each leg to the endpoint of line I on the other leg and likewise joining the endpoints of line J on opposite legs.

Form a hem at the end of each leg. If you will be wearing low shoes with your tights, you may wish to sew a stirrup of cloth or light strapping from one side of the leg to the other, under your foot. For tights with built-in feet, refer to the following article.

Form a hollow waistband by turning under the top of the garment and sewing. Thread a drawstring through the waistband. Your tights are finished!

As a side note, I used my tights sloper, extended up to shoulder level, to design my Victorian bathing suit and the infamous killer whale suit.

Particoloring

A popular practice in the 14th century was to divide tunics and hose into two or more colors. This was called “particoloring.” The tree pattern works well for particoloring. Just cut the pattern in half along the centerline. You now have a four-piece pattern with separate front and rear panels. Cut one front and one rear panel from each color and sew them together so the colors alternate around the body.

Fabrics

The easiest material to work with is single-knit jersey or T-shirt material that is at least 30% cotton. This material stretches well, has a natural-looking finish, breathes well, and is quite inexpensive. You can often find remnants for as little as two dollars per yard. This pattern will require about 1.5 yards of 60-inch material.

Jersey is also available in 100% wool. If you don't have wool-sensitive skin, this can give a very medieval look. Pure wool shrinks like crazy, so wash it a couple of times before you cut your tights. The prewashing also thickens the material and increases its insulation value.

Cotton/Lycra blends work well. The price on these has steadily declined over the past few years.

Duct Tape Goes South

by Randall Whitlock

Fitted tights can also be made using the same sort of duct tape method we used to build mannequins at the November meeting.

Put on a pair of cheap, throwaway panty hose and have a friend cover one foot and leg with a single layer of duct tape. The tape should also cover your waist, crotch, and one ham.

Cut through the tape around the outside of the foot, along an inseam and outseam line, between the buttocks, and up the middle of the crotch. Be Careful!

The result is a three-part sloper consisting of front and rear panels and a sole. Press these pattern pieces flat onto folded T-shirt material, draw and cut around them. The result is a pair of tailor-fitted tights with built-in feet.

I've never done the full length version of this process, but I've done the duct tape wrap from the knee down. This yielded a pattern I have used to build stockings for use with knee britches and kilts, as well as particolored felt buskins for my jester costume. The buskins were made by cutting the duct tape off along lines vertically up the shin and the middle of the calf.

Lets's try a demonstration of at least the buskins at the December meeting.

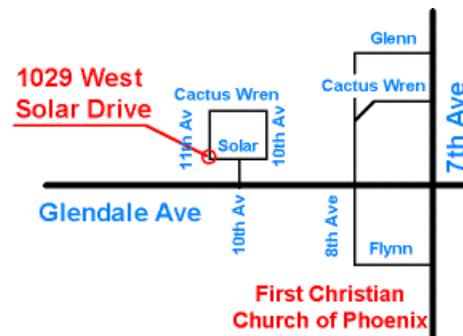
Dickens Night for SWCG

The First Christian Church of Phoenix at 6750 North 7th Avenue (just south of Glendale Avenue) will host their annual Christmas at First Dickens Festival on nine nights - December 5-7, 12-14, and 19-21. The display features

hundreds of lights, a gingerbread village, a city of Bethlehem, and an olde english village. There will be performances by ventriloquists and illusionists. You can see details at www.christmasatfirst.com.

In keeping with the event's Dickens theme, Edouard Messert has invited the guildsters to gather for mulled cider and to tour the Dickens Festival in Victorian garb (Anything remotely 19th century festive is fair game). No historical garb? – Come anyway!

The game plan is to meet at about 5 PM on Saturday, December 13 at Edouard's place, which is at the corner of 11th Avenue and Solar Drive within the Marrakech condo complex. Enter the complex by turning north onto 10th Avenue from Glendale Avenue. The address is 1029 W. Solar Drive, Phoenix. Edouard's phone number is (602) 678-4751.



Edouard's place is a 5-minute walk from the church.

I've booked a ticket for ten on December 13. Please RSVP. I can modify the ticket online if needed.

Seen Along the Way



This triptych poster was displayed at Phoenix City Hall during a multicultural festival on Friday, December 5, 2003. The festival included display tables from many local ethnic heritage societies. Photo by Randall Whitlock.

January Parasol Covering Workshop

by Diane Harris

This e-mail arrived from Diane just as I put the last staple into the paper Cactus Needles! – RW.

I am trying to get ahead for once. Supply listings and information regarding parasol frame covering are detailed below:

Parasol frames (six-gores) with period ring closures are \$10.00/each. They are available in white, black or red. I can also order in light pink, blue and/or yellow. Let me know 3 weeks ahead (by Monday 1-5-04) to order any color other than white, black or red.

If you have your own parasol (or umbrella) that you wish to cover, bring it. Don't take off the existing fabric even if it is in terrible shape. It can be recovered and then the existing fabric can be pulled out from underneath. If you take off the existing fabric, you may have a dickens of a time getting the tension set into the bare frame.

Bring 2-3 yards of fashion fabric for six-gore parasol (all gores are cut on the bias). If you bring a larger parasol (more than 8 gores), you may need more fashion fabric. The fabric should not be too thick - no heavy tapestries. Taffeta, moire, satin, are all very good for weight - I covered one in cotton batiste - it required flatlining. Any broadcloth weight is excellent.

Trim - 2 1/2 yards (gimp, fringe or pre-ruffled) (if flat lace, need 4-5 yards)

If you want to put trim on the stays of each gore, allow 2-3 yards more trim.

Sewing machine, Thread, scissors, pins, etc.

Tape measure, small T-square.

“Portable Hole” or something else to hold the parasol up while pinning on the new fabric. Your knees will get tired holding the parasol between them.

I will have 4 long tables available for sewing machines and cutting if needed. For anything else, just email me.

Diane Harris

Corporate Admissions Counselor

University of Phoenix

Online Center for Professional Development

3157 E. Elwood,

Phoenix, AZ 85034

Phone: 1-800-366-9699 ext 3085 Fax: 1-602-383-2864