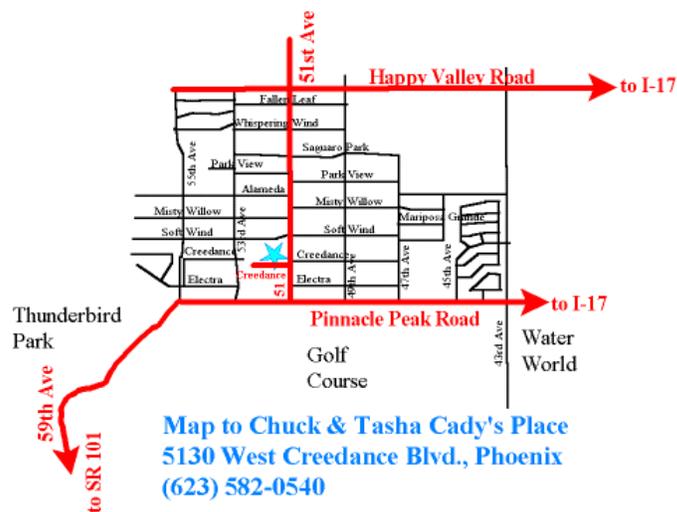


Cactus Needles
 Monthly Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild
 Vol 11 #7 July 2004



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Please send corrections by e-mail or mail to the editor.

Calendar

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

July 25, 2004 – **Splashdown*** SWCG social at Chuck & Tasha's place (See Map). Our annual costume party in the pool. Make a costume you can swim in. This year's theme is "Aliens."

July 30-August 1, 2004 – **Costume College** at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, California. A whole weekend of costuming workshops and classes presented by Costumers Guild West. Go to www.costumecollege.org for details.

August 29, 2004 – **Chemises and Shirts*** SWCG workshop at Randall's place. Learn to build a basic underdress or shirt. Bring muslin or other suitable fabric.

September 26, 2004 – **Buckram Hats II*** SWCG workshop at Carlos' place. Put finishing touches on the hats we started in March.

October 24, 2004, 10 AM – **The Cloaking*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. We'll build some capes and other items to sell at Devonshire as our annual fundraiser. Bring your sewing tools and try to find some of the "Dreaded Black Fuzzy" fabric.

November 28, 2004 – **Bustle Off to Sedona*** SWCG workshop and potluck at Frances' place in Sedona. Bring food to share. Bustle material list to be posted later.

Saturday, December 18, 2004, 5 PM – **Dickens Walk*** SWCG social at Edouard's place. Assemble in Victorian or other winter costume, then walk the Christmas at First festival together.

January 30, 2005 – **Duct Tape Mannequins*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. Build a custom dresser dummy around your body using the handyman's secret weapon.

February 27, 2004 – **Calendar Girls & Guys*** SWCG meeting at Stephanie's place. Annual calendar planning.

April 29 - May 2, 2005 – **Costume-Con 23**: Crossroads of Space and Time. A celebration of fabric, design, and performance in Ogden, Utah. Memberships are \$75 US until September 12, 2004. www.crossroadsutah.org/

Margo Offers Millinery Classes in Tucson

Hi there. Thought I'd let you know what I'm doing here in Tucson. This summer (and fall and winter) I'll be offering millinery classes through the Pima County Parks and Recreation. They have a wonderful new facility on the northwest side. (Not too far from I-10.)

The first class (June) is already in progress and going well. I've thrown together a quick website and the information here can also be found at www.margonickel.com.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy receiving and reading Cactus Needles. – Margo

Millinery The Art of Hat Making offered by Pima County Parks and Recreation / Northwest Art Center 7770 North Shannon Road Tucson 85741 (corner of Shannon and Magee next to YMCA)

Instructor Margo Nickel is a professional milliner with 18 years experience in NYC theatre, film, and custom millinery.

Millinery – off the top of my head New Class! Step out in a new hat that you make using professional millinery techniques. This class will take you from beginning to completion of a pillbox or sailor style hat. You will be shown the basics of pattern drafting, buckram construction, millinery stitches, and covering the hat frame in a fabric of your choice. Students will learn the basic finishing touches of lining and trimming to complete their millinery creations. A materials fee of \$15 is paid to the instructor at the first class. Students must bring own scissors. Email for class information margonickel@comcast.net.

111c	\$59	NWAC	Mon	8/2-8/23	9-12n
111c	\$59	NWAC	Thur	8/5-8/26	6-9pm

Millinery Secrets Unveiled New Class! Walk down the aisle wearing an elegant bridal headpiece you've created using professional millinery techniques. You will learn how to sculpt a wire frame and embellish it with hand crafted flowers, ribbon, or beads. Learn methods to cut and attach veiling to complete your beautiful creation. A materials fee of \$15 is paid to the instructor at the first class. Students must bring own scissors. Email for class information margonickel@comcast.net.

111c	\$59	NWAC	Wed	8/4-8/25	9-12n
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Millinery a la Mode New Class! During this 3 hour workshop you will learn fun and fanciful milliner's techniques to revamp and revitalize an existing hat. Students will use purchased ribbons, flowers, fabrics, and straw to transform a tired hat into a sleeping beauty. A materials fee of \$15 is paid to the instructor at the first class.

Students must bring in a hat and scissors. Email for class information margonickel@comcast.net

111b	\$39	NWAC	Fri	7/9	9-12n
111c	\$39	NWAC	Sat	8/7	9-12n
111c	\$39	NWAC	Fri	8/20	9-12n

Westercon 57 Masquerade Crew & Winners

Compiled by Dawn Mullan

At-Con Directors: Sandra Manning and Jan Howard Finder (Wombat)

MC: Cary Riall

Judges: Janet Wilson Anderson, John Hertz, Diana Gabaldon

Workmanship Awards

Anti-Workmanship Award: "Kokopelli and the Jackalope"

Attention to Detail: "The Crone"

Belt Construction: "The Ultimate Male Fantasy"

Millinery: "Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster Commercial"

Clever Cheats & Recycling: "Fog"

Best Workmanship in Show: "Chrysalis"

Junior Class

Most Menacing: "The Littlest Bad Wolf"

Best Improvisation: "The Cheetah Girls & Sir Tom"

Novice Class

Honored For Excellence in Hat & Weapons: "Torvald of Gor"

Best Presentation: "The Ultimate Male Fantasy"

Best in Class: "Legolas of Rivendell"

Journeyman Class

Most Mystical: "The Crone"

Best in Class: "Kokopelli and the Jackalope"

Master Class

Best Re-Creation: "Fog"

Most Commercial: "Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster Commercial"

Best in Show: "Chrysalis"

Open Letter to the Guild

by Carlos Egan

Rumor has no doubt reached you that there were some disturbances connected with the Westercon 57 masquerade. Others points of view have been expressed through other media. Here is Carlos' side of the story - RW

What is it that distinguishes a simple situation from a complicated one? A few months ago I was asked to take over the position of Masquerade Director for Westercon 57. To me that was the thrill of a lifetime. I've been in both fandom and costuming since the 80's and since the first day it has been the most enjoyable, fun and exciting aspect of my life. Now I was being asked to run the Masquerade, WOW.

Soon after I started I encountered problems in organizing the Masquerade. The masquerades back east where I participated were run differently from the western masquerades. This caused me a great deal of conflict, frustration and tension. For the most part my decisions were being made for me and I was being told that is the way we do it here. It wasn't really anyone's fault. It was just what happened. I began to consider whether or not to continue as director. I called the Con Chair to resign but he wasn't home. Before I could call again I reconsidered the issue and decided I had to continue. I had accepted the responsibility and out of dedication I had to complete it. I did have a chance to communicate this to him before the con so he was aware of my concern.

However, the internal struggle I felt did not go away so easily. Once the con started I encountered more issues that pushed my stress level over the edge and I realized I simply could not continue as director. At that time I went straight to the Con Chair to tell him. That was the simple part. In essence, as everyone states, I quit.

Now for the complicated part. What happened to the fun? As I said fandom and cons have always been the most enjoyable part of my life. As Masquerade director I was put in a position where there was nothing enjoyable about it. Did anyone else feel tense or overwhelmed about their Westercon experience? I was probably the only one honest enough to stop complaining and stand up to say, I give up, I can't take it any more, I'm walking away. At the same time I was conscientious enough to seek out the new masquerade director and carefully lay out all the plans I made so she could more easily pick up the masquerade where I left off. I also encouraged several people to join the Masquerade and

then attended the Green Room as a Guild member to support them. No one has mentioned that. I didn't want to hurt the Masquerade or the Con. I just wanted to avoid the conflict involved.

Someone commented on how my actions cast a bad light on the Masquerade Guild. The Guild wasn't running the masquerade, I was. The Guild didn't quit I did. I was not asked to represent the Guild and I was not serving as their agent so please do not cast a dark shadow over them because of my actions. I extend my deepest apologies to the Guild as a group and as individuals for any problems they may experience because of my decision.

All weekend I listened to people point a finger and talk about con problems and fandom "POLITICS." I heard others proclaim, "I'm NON-POLITICAL." I heard others talk of being slighted and ignored. The fact that anyone made these statements at all clearly indicates that a bigger problem exists beyond my actions. Guess what, I am non-political. I wasn't doing it because I wanted to be leader or because I wanted to enhance my reputation. I've achieved that in my personal life. I was doing this because I liked the people involved, all of them, and wanted to have fun with them.

I remember a time when I saw people laughing and playing together at the Costume Guild meetings. Those same people are now bearing their teeth at each other and many are threatening to quit the Guild. I remember sitting at a table laughing and drinking cordials with two leaders of Phoenix fandom. Now I wonder if the three of us will ever sit down at the same table together again. I continue to welcome their friendship and I hope we can all enjoy each other's company again.

I will apologize once more for walking away from the Masquerade. If my reputation is darkened so be it. I can live with that. But, what about everyone else? Please do not use my actions to whip your old friends with. Please do not use me as a rallying point for your crusade. I quit as Masquerade director because it became totally unenjoyable. I quit to escape the tension and yet it is still persisting after the con is over. Everyone involved with this con made mistakes. Please drop it and move on.

We are all facing some serious challenges right now. For me it is simply continuing in Phoenix fandom. For others it is the survival of individuals and organizations. I beg everyone to remember the successes, forget the conflicts and move forward. There are a lot more cons and masquerades to come. I will be satisfied to go back to being an attendee. That has been my role for over 15 years and I enjoyed it immensely. I encourage everyone else to enjoy the cons with your friends and make them a success.

Afterword
by Randall Whitlock

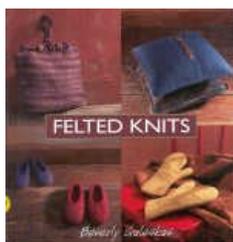
When an activity becomes very confused, it is sometimes called a "circus." When the Westercon 57 masquerade became a circus, all of us clowns, geeks, and freaks pulled together and The Show Went On. It would have been good enough for Barnum. It should be good enough for us.

From the Mailbox

GBACG Finery, Vol 2 No. 4, July/Aug 2004: A Costumer's Guide to Yard Sales, The Elizabethan Costumer's Guide to the Home Depot, ICG Updates, Upcoming Workshops, Baycon Winners.

Peruse the incoming newsletters at our next meeting.

Two Book Reviews
by Frances Burns



Two new books have come out on knitting and then felting the knit fabric to make a felted finished product. They are *Knit One, Felt Too* by Kathleen Taylor and *Felted Knits* by Beverly Galeskas.

What? You don't knit, so why would you be interested? Think boiled wool.

Boiled wool is essentially felted wool fabric and is usually a royal pain to find. Both of these books give very good directions on how to felt wool using your washing machine and how to control your felting process. Yes, it's only one chapter in each book, but you can get the books from the library. The directions are clear and written in different styles, so you have two perspectives on the process.

If you do knit, there are directions for several useful items in each book: socks and mittens; purses and hats. In *Felted Knits* there is a pattern for felted beret that looks like a good starting point for a beret to be used with a Scottish clan costume.

Keep checking your local library for interesting books that might have some costuming application.

Quick Store Reviews
by Randall Whitlock

A 2 Z Beads
5117 West Thunderbird Road, Glendale

This is a small, neighborhood bead store distinguished by their prompt and friendly customer service. Remember those metal Kokopelli charms on the Westercon 57 Hall Costume ribbons? Not only did these folks have them; they were able to get me 100 of them in one day, with a professional courtesy discount! The literature indicates they offer evening classes too.

Sportsman's Warehouse
SEC 27th Avenue & Yorkshire, Phoenix

This one's a little tricky to get into. Take the Union Hills/Yorkshire exit off of I-17, go west, then turn immediately into the complex it shares with Costco and In N Out Burger. You may need more than one try.

What does a costumer want with an outdoor sports store?

--Most of us are also historical re-creationists with an insatiable need for good camping gear. At Sportsman's Warehouse you can buy a proper wild west wall tent right off the shelf, along with a fitted wood-burning stove and other accessories.

--Really thick wool socks in several varieties I hadn't seen for years.

--Fly-Tying Materials: Fly-tying is the art of making lightweight lures by binding all manner of feathers, yarns, and tinsels to fish hooks. (Fly-tying was one of my major hobbies in high school and deserves its own write-up). In other words, a fly-tying supplier is a fine source of DYED FEATHERS.



--They even had some novelty faux coonskin caps for the "King of the Wild Frontier" in all of us.

Family Heirloom

Shown in close-up is the silver head of a cane awarded to my great great great grandfather, Reverend George Clinton Whitlock when he completed a stint as a visiting professor at a university in Canada. The cane head detaches, revealing a secret compartment for coins.