

Cactus Needles

The Monthly Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild
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Please send corrections by e-mail or mail to the editor.

Cleaning the Mailing List

More and more e-Cactus Needles have been coming back undeliverable. It's high time to thin out the electronic mailing list. If you wish to keep receiving Cactus Needles, please e-mail editor@southwestcostumersguild.org to let me know your address is still good (and pay your dues or subscription).

You should be receiving Cactus Needles if you are: (1) A current SWCG member or subscriber, (2) The editor or designated receiver for an ICG chapter or other allied club which swaps newsletters with SWCG (3) The masquerade director of a local or southwest-regional con.

Calendar

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

December 18, 2004 to February 16, 2005 – **Elizabeth: Ruler and Legend** This traveling exhibit at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library investigates the the cultural and political worlds of the late 16th Century, Elizabeth's life, court, and legacy as queen. Display includes Tudor embroidery exhibit.

January 15, 2004, 4:30 PM – **Glendale Glitters and Glows*** Special SWCG Social. Meet at Pete's Fish & Chips (northeast corner of 55th Drive and Glendale Avenue) for a snack then walk the Glendale Glitters and Glows street fair together. <http://www.glendaleaz.com/Festivals/GlitterandGlow.cfm>

Our recent costumed visit to the Christmas at First festival proved to be so much fun that it bears repeating. Soon! It was suggested and discussed during the Dickens Walk that we get together again for the final night of the Glendale Glitters and Glows festival on the Glendale town square. Costume is encouraged, but not required. Try something wintry. I'll probably go with my top hat, a scarf, and a long coat.

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. Annual Officer elections – Please volunteer!



Incoming Newsletters

February 14, 2005 (Statehood Day) – **History on the Mall** 10AM-2PM at the Arizona State Capitol. Displays by more than two dozen museums and heritage centers, historical reenactors, craft demos.

February 5 – March 27, 2005 (weekends plus Presidents' Day) **Arizona Renaissance Festival** on Highway 60, east of Gold Canyon, Arizona. Large professional renaissance fair. <http://emol.org/azrenfest/>

February 16-20, 2005 – **Winter Range** at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility on Carefree Highway, just west of Interstate 17. The Single-Action Shooting Society's annual tournament of cowboy action shooting and mounted shooting includes a sutler's row with all manner of wild west costume items. www.winterrange.com

February 16-21, 2005 – **Estrella War** at Estrella Mountain Park in Goodyear, Arizona. The Society For Creative Anachronism's annual enjoyable conflict between kingdoms Atenveldt and Caid features armored battles, archery, arts and sciences competitions, and a merchant's row to rival any renfaire. www.estrellawar.org.

Note: for the first time in 15 years, MoiRandall's will not be doing business at the Estrella War. Can we find another outlet for our fundraiser cloaks and hats?

February 27, 2004 – **Calendar Girls & Guys*** SWCG meeting at Paula's place (note change of venue). Annual calendar planning.

March 25-27, 2005 – **AniZona**: Arizona's first Anime convention at the Embassy Suites North, SEC, I-17 & Greenway in Phoenix. www.anizona.org

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/

May 6-8, 2005 – **LepreCon 31** at Carefree Resort, 37220 Mule Train Road, Carefree, AZ GOHs include Kevin J. Anderson, Dave Dorman, Bear Burge, and Sarah Clemens. Featuring an independent film festival and a masquerade directed by Margaret Grady. www.leprecon.org/lep31/

Embroidery Hoops

Stephanie recently aquired a pair of embroidery hoops, one 14-inch and one 18-inch. \$5.00 will purchase the both. laetitia@doverkeep.com

Silicon Web Costumers' Guild, *TheVirtual Costumer* Vol. 2, Issue 4. This issue features lavish pictorial articles about the costumes of Burning Man (the annual arts festival in the desert of Black Rock, Nevada) and SiW member/Cirque de Soleil cast member Jaron Hollander. You can download the issue at www.Siwcostumers.com At more than eight megabytes, brace yourself for a long but worthwhile download.

Beyond Reality Costumers Guild, *Notions, Winter 2004* welcomes new editor Erik Prill and features Jean Christensen's inside view of costuming the Bolshoi Ballet, BRCG meeting minutes, Lauryn MacGregor on mask making, pix from Orycon 26, Kate McClure's tips on transporting fabric from Canada, and Audrey Schmidt's product reviews of cat-mess cleanup products.

Random Thoughts from your Editor

by Randall Whitlock

Please send me your stuff!

Cactus Needles is **YOUR** newsletter. If you want to see more than just a calendar every month, please share your knowledge, skills, opinions and spy network with your fellow guildsters. This is my third year as editor, so I'm starting to run out of my own articles.

Calendar items, personal announcements, pictures, reviews of stores, products and catalogs; book reviews, movie reviews, event reviews, reviews of other people's reviews, editorials, how-to's, etc. are good. I'm looking for any information of interest to costumers in general and SWCG members in particular.

Longer pieces, particularly how-to articles, might be published in the "Costume Closet" column of *Connotations* as well as in *Cactus Needles*.

Articles may be submitted in person, by mail, telephone, smoke signal, the Anhk-Morpork Semaphore Grand Trunk, or candy-gram. E-mail is best of all, since I won't have to retype the article.

Don't be self-conscious about your writing. I'm not Conan the Grammarian and there's no grade riding on your term paper.

When enough good material has been gathered, I'd like to publish a "Best of Cactus Needles" omnibus volume to be sold as a fundraiser.

Carry On at Conventions

by Randall Whitlock

One of the nagging little details about wearing hall costumes at cons is the question of, “*Where do I put my stuff?*”

No matter what character you portray, you’ll still need to carry a few mundane necessities around the con – room key, driver’s license, essential medicines, etc. It’s also nice to have room for a digital camera, cell phone, sunglasses, pen, and note pad. Your con badge takes care of itself with a clip, but these other things need room. Many historical looks and media characters do not include their own cargo space.

Here are a few cheats I’ve used over the years:

Around the Neck. This works fine for small items like room and car keys. Just loop them through a cord and drop them down inside your shirt. Plastic ID Badge holders from work and school are now readily available, which allow drivers’ licenses and credit cards to be stowed this way. This method does not work well for costumes with low necklines

Belt Pouches are a natural accessory for military, medieval and renaissance looks, and are even included in pre-empire Jedi outfits. These work particularly well for phones, wallets, and small cameras. You can buy a pouch at a renfaire, make your own, or adapt an off-the-shelf camera case. If your costume includes a decorative belt, it may not be practical to attach your pouch. The weight of the pouch may cause the belt to droop on one side. Try hanging the pouch from a separate strap. If your pouch does not go with the costume, it might be slung behind your back, concealed by a coat, cape, or robe. One variation on this is a traveler’s money belt, which can be hidden under a tunic.

Shoulder Bags, Handbags, and Backpacks offer the greatest capacity, but are particularly hard to match to a character costume. Some characters, like Indiana Jones, carry bags normally. A Man In Black might reasonably carry a briefcase, but his suit has pockets anyway. Try making your bag look like something else, say a tricorder.

Concealed Pockets are particularly useful, though they must be designed into a garment from the beginning. My Jedi robe has them, as do several of my capes. You can hide a pocket inside the side seam of pants or a skirt using snaps or Velcro to close the seam. Patch pockets can be blind-stitched to the inside of a vest or bodice. Pockets are easy to hide between the shell and lining of coats, robes, and capes.

Shoulder Harnesses, like those used to hold a plainclothes detective’s holster, have their uses. These consist of a loop of cord or strapping that passes in front of the shoulders, under the arms, and behind the back and neck. A pouch or

holster hangs from this harness under one arm, allowing it to be hidden inside a coat. My old digital camera was bulky and this arrangement worked quite well to hide it inside my robes and capes.

Inside the Boots. This trick will work if you are wearing boots with loose tops. With one of my old Starfleet uniforms, I could unfold my wallet, wrap it around my calf, and slide it down inside the boot. Some police officers use ankle holsters to conceal a backup weapon. An ankle harness might work for a small pouch if you wear long, loose pants.

Inside the Hat. This is has limited uses, but may be good for credit cards and other thin things. A customer once had me sew a business card pouch into his beret.

I’ll leave out other, more painful possibilities, like duct-taping things to your skin. Never having tried the cross-dressing thing, I have no experience with down-the-bra concealment or thigh holsters.

Randwulf’s Jester Hat Published

by Randall Whitlock

I completed and printed the final version of “Randwulf’s Jester Cap” over the Christmas and New Year holidays. A prototype was included in the October 2003 Cactus Needles. We have made many of them from light felt at SWCG capemaking sessions to sell at local faires as a steady, if small, fundraising source for our chapter.

The publication version includes four-panel and six-panel patterns to make jester hats with two to six horns in forehead sizes from 14 to 26 inches. Without the horns, the pattern makes a close-fitting skullcap suitable for medieval ecclesiastical skullcaps, contemporary yarmulkes, or retro-1950s propeller beanies.



Randall, Carlos, Anna, Paula, Diane and Edouard at "Christmas at First" December 18, 2004.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January 2005						1
2	3	4	5 <small>Cactus Needles Submissions Deadline</small>	6 <small>ICG Treasurer Report Due</small>	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 <small>Glendale Glitters & Glows</small>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 <small>Duct Tape Dummies at Jean's</small>	31	<p>As a cooperative project for 2005, what if we were to collect photos and produce a 2006 calendar? The calendar could be published as a Cactus Needles supplement, or a standalone volume as a fundraiser.</p>				