



Cactus Needles

Special April 1 Edition

Vol 12 #4, April 2005

Vandals Strike Local Clothing Store

by Mae Dupp



Graffiti vandals left their mark on a local storefront late last Friday. Store Manager Dewey Kidd commented, "We were going to get the sign fixed, but it's been good for business. The extra-large evening gowns are selling like hotcakes and those size 12 spike-heel pumps are just flying off the shelves."

Lessons I Learned from Sewing

by Sarah Jones

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~
In an argument between the needle and your finger, the needle always wins.

~
When tempted to toss the sewing machine through the window, don't. It always gets the last laugh when you take it into the shop and pay to replace the glass.

~
When you have a deadline, everything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Six times.

~
The seamripper is our friend. Especially when we want to jam it into something.

~
Sewing implements make great torture tools. Just ask the pitiful fabric scraps huddling in terror in my stash.

~
Our skin is NOT needle/pin/scissor/seamripper proof. Contrary to popular belief.

~
Everything in its place and a place for everything. Does it count when everything is everywhere?

~
It's not a good project until it looks like the fabric monster sneezed in your workroom. It's not a great project until it looks like the fabric monster sneezed in your house.

~
When in doubt, you might as well start over, because you've likely messed up ten times already.

~
Coffee is our friend. However, coffee and fabric are NOT.

~
If you can eat it and make a mess, you're bound to crave it while working on something.

~
Sewing + sleepy = Frankenstein's Monster

~
I am a grouch in the morning. I am a grouch when working. Enter the workroom in the morning at your own peril. Enter the workroom...ever... at your own peril.

~
If you drop a needle, you will find it. With your foot.

~
Say it with me. The iron is hot...

~
When using a water soluble pen on fabric, it's a halfway smart idea not to use the steam setting on the iron afterward...

~
Creativity is a two edged sword. You know, the kind you can wedge between two rocks and fall on?

~
Your dummy is NOT an oversized voodoo doll. Although...

~
Repetition is a good thing.

~
Repetition is... Who am I kidding? Repetition is for the birds.

~
There's always room for error. The trick is leaving room to get it right.

~
When you can't do nuthin right, don't do nuthin at all. Take a break!

~
It's always best to take time to smell the roses. Doing so while in a straight jacket is ever so much better.

~
Relax, have fun. You wouldn't be doing this unless you wanted to. Right? Right!?!

~
Never stop learning and always be able to laugh at your mistakes. Everyone else is...

~
Check out some of Sarah's costume work at www.rivendelldesigns.net

But Seriously Folks.

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Calendar

Know of an upcoming costumed event in Arizona? Please tell your editor. *Indicates an event organized by SWCG. Unless otherwise noted, SWCG meetings begin at 1 PM.

February 10 through June 19, 2005 – **Trench Coat** exhibit in the Fashion Design Gallery of the Phoenix Art Museum at Central & McDowell. Exhibit traces the iconic trench coat from its origins in the 1890s through the present. The exhibit includes Neo's coat from *The Matrix*.

April 10, 2005 9AM to 3PM – **Phoenix Cactus Comicon** at Glendale Civic Center, 5750 West Glenn Drive. Features appearances by comics writers and artists Marv Wolfman, Todd Nauck, Marie Croall, Brian Pulido, and Steve Rude. www.phoenixcomicon.com

April 15, 2005 7PM – **Belly Dance Night** at Sinbad's restaurant, 5004 South Price Road, Tempe. The show is included with your dinner, but reservations are recommended. (480) 491-5588. Look for guildster Paula Lary among the dancers.

April 22-24, 2005– **Arizona Asian Festival** at Heritage Park 115 North 6th Street in Phoenix features ethnic cuisine, arts, crafts, martial arts demos, music. Free admission. www.aaaa-ax.org

April 24, 2005 10 AM- **Capemaking and LepreCon Preparation*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. We'll build some capes and hats to sell at May in the Meadows and prepare for the costume programming track at Lep 31.

April 29 - May 2, 2005 - **Costume-Con 23**: Crossroads of Space and Time. A celebration of fabric, design, and performance in Ogden, Utah. 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/

May 7-8, 2005 - **May in the Meadows Renaissance Faire** in Prescott Valley, Arizona from 10:00am to 6:00pm The show is located at the Prescott Valley Civic Center, downtown Prescott Valley www.devonshirefaire.com/may

May 14, 2005, Noon to Midnight – **Cosplay Cosplay Revolution** Animé costume event at Planet Neo animé and gaming store at 6460 South Rural Road (SWC Rural & Guadalupe) in Tempe. www.planetneoanime.com

May 29, 2005 - **Costuming from Start To Finish: The Frock Project*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. This will be the first in a series of workshops on building and fitting Victorian/Wild West men's frock coats and ladies' riding coats. Easily generalized to SF and animé looks.

June 19, 2005 - **Chainmail Demo*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. How to wind, clip, and knit wire links to form chainmail armor and jewelry. Also Part 2 of the Frock Project.

June 25 & 26, 2005 – **Renaissance in the Pines** at Fort Tuthill off of I-17, just south of Flagstaff, Arizona. A fine one-weekend renfaire. Adults \$9, Seniors, \$7, Children \$5, Under 5 Free. info@renaissanceinthepinesinc.com

July 24, 2005 - **Photo Shoot*** SWCG workshop, location to be announced. Bring your favorite costume and pose for documentation photos. The best pictures may become part of an SWCG 2006 photo calendar.

July 29-31, 2005 – Costume College at the Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Ave. in Van Nuys, CA. A whole weekend of costuming classes. www.costumecollege.org

August 28, 2005 - **Summer Swim*** SWCG social. Our annual costume party in the pool. Location and theme to be announced. Calendar planning for the next several months.

September 9-11, 2005 – **Coppercon 25** at the Embassy Suites Phoenix North (SEC Greenway Road & I-17) Fan-run SF Con featuring guests of honor Robert J. Sawyer, Greg Keyes, Escape Key, and Larry Nemecek. www.coppercon.org

From the Mailbox

The ICG Newsletter Volume IV Issue 2 March/April/May 2005. Tentative ICG Annual Meeting agenda and voting proxy form, Bruce & Nora Mai's crash course in animé, Carolyn Kayta Barrows' pattern idea, costume calendar, treasurer's report

Beyond Reality Costumers Guild *Notions* Spring 2005. Cover is a 4-panel illustration on how to wrap a sari. Review of History Channel's "Worst Jobs in History," meeting minutes, photo of Kelly Nary's 18th century costumes, Richard Stephens' editorial "Design is a Choice," meeting minutes, Kate McClure's Sari Safari, movie reviews.

Greater Bay Area Costumers' Guild *Finery* March/April 2005. Kendra Van Cleave's "The Effect of WWI on American Fashion," Fabulous Hats event, calendar.

Examine these newsletters at the next SWCG Get-Together.

AniZona

Reviewed by Randall Whitlock

Do you remember that special feeling at your first SF convention - that moment when you first realized other people really are into this stuff and want to play? Now imagine a con where two-thirds of the attendees are having that feeling right now! That was the atmosphere of AniZona, Arizona's first full-scale animé convention, held at the Embassy Suites in Phoenix on March 25-27, 2005.



Animé and Manga, the uniquely Japanese incarnations of animated serials and comic books, respectively, were already a well-established sector of fandom when I came to Arizona in the middle 1980s. Up to now, the animé fans have largely kept to their own viewing rooms at general SF cons. This time they owned the whole show.

Judge Yaya Han in her mermaid hall costume.



An integral part of the animé fandom phenomenon is *cosplay* - costumed portrayal of animé characters (See Cactus Needles 12.3 for more detailed discussions.) The AniZonans were enthusiastic cosplayers. There were 48 units in the Saturday evening masquerade with many of the units including two or three people. By my visual estimate, the costumes on stage were maybe 20 percent of the total costumed persons. Hall costumes were everywhere!

Masquerade Director CJ "Kyo" Sellards as Piyoko from "DiGi Charat."

I was invited by the organizers to serve as a judge in the delightful company of Katie Bair and Yaya Han, who were among the con's artist guests of honor.

The nuts and bolts of the masquerade were much like the convention masquerades we're accustomed to, except there was no big Contestant Meeting and five-minute pre-judging interviews were mandatory. With Masquerade Director CJ "Kyo" Sellards filling in for one of the shifts, it took us more than four hours just to do these interviews.



Contestants wait to line up for the Masquerade.



Contestants were offered the opportunity to do a 60-second sketch in character on stage. Relatively few contestants actually did sketches. This looked like a shyness issue to me and I expect to see more sketches at future cosplay masquerades.

The masquerade was held in the tent near the tennis courts, which is usually used as gaming space for Coppercon. This outdoor venue had several advantages for the masquerade, including much greater seating capacity. The overflow crowd formed a standing room only space around the outside of the tent's fence. The physical layout of the tent with its steel frame allowed for efficient hanging of lights without freestanding trees. On the downside, there was no real contestant green room and the tent would probably be too hot a venue to use in the warmer weather of September for Coppercon.

AniZona Winners:

The convention presented five awards in the form of gift certificates donated by cosplay.com. Unfortunately, I was not in a position to get many pictures.

3rd Place: SongJa Haas (or Chi) as Lucifer from "Angel Sanctuary." This was a black faux leather-clad fallen angel with a single wing.

2nd Place: Whitney Grant as Gaiant Beast Vincent from the video game "Final Fantasy VII." This was a well-done fursuit of a purple werewolf with an articulated jaw and teeth built with parts from a taxidermy supply shop.

1st Place: Marissa Sripracha as Medusa from "Petshop of Horrors." The costume featured long sculptured braids, lots of detailed bead and jewel work and a remarkable snake tail.

Best in Craftsmanship: Amanda Hosler as Kirara from "InuYasha." This was a fursuit of the heroine's cat-like

companion, played to the hilt on all fours with feline body language.

Best in show/performance: Travis & Ariana as GoGo & Celes from the video game "Final Fantasy." This involved an incredibly complex and detailed appliquéd robe for a gambler/trickster character.

Katie awarded a special mention to Honey Bunny for her detailed molded-fiberglass armor-plate bikini. Katie donated a gift certificate to her "Katie Bair's Art Emporium and Petting Zoo" online store for the prize.

We awarded a Special Mention for Special Effects to Michael Griffith for his portrayal of Colonel Roy Mustang from "Full Metal Alchemist." The costume resembles a 19th Century military greatcoat with silver piping, but the skirting is actually a separate garment from the jacket. The



special effect allowed Michael to shoot flames from his fingertip. Since the masquerade was held outdoors, the hotel safety regs allowed this to be performed on stage. The award is a one-year local membership in SWCG. I hope we see Michael at a meeting soon!

Michael demonstrates his flame finger special effect.

It is high time we established SF/Fantasy costumers got together with the rising generation of cosplayers. They have so much energy and enthusiasm. We can offer our experience at construction, pattern drafting, and masquerade organization, including our library of masquerade sign up and tech forms.

Coppercon Chair Wally Sanville indicated to me that he intends to restructure the masquerade this September's con to make it as friendly as possible for cosplayers. In practice, this will mainly be a matter of reaching out to the players and publicizing the con.

Jennifer Bohling Begins Naval Career



Bon voyage to Jennifer Bohling, who ships out sometime in the next few weeks to begin training in the US Navy's nuclear program. Jennifer introduced SWCG to the cosplay phenomenon with her entries at the Samurai Comics cosplay event and LepreCon. Jennifer is seen at left in her costume from Final Fantasy 8 at AniZona. You can reach her at lady_aimi@yahoo.com

Civil Expedition



Diane, Randall, Jean, and Paula gathered on March 13, 2005 to attend the "Battle of Picacho Peak" civil war reenactment at Picacho Peak state park. The weather was perfect, the battle was loud, and a good time was had by all.

There we met.

The 5th Texas

scouted by Randall Whitlock

Having received a warm welcome in their encampment at the Battle of Picacho Peak and because they were gathering near my home, I visited the Bookman's book store at 19th Avenue and Northern on April 2 to attend the monthly meeting of the 5th Texas, a Confederate civil war reenactment group.

The 5th Texas Company D portrays two different historical Texas Confederate units. In their "southwestern impression," seen at Picacho peak, Glorieta Pass, and other events in the southwest they portray *Company D, 5th Texas Mounted Rifles, Sibley's Brigade, Army of New Mexico*. In their "eastern impression," played when they travel to other parts of the country, they portray *Company D, 5th Texas Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Hood's Texas Brigade, Longstreet's Corp, Army of Northern Virginia*.

These rebels are a friendly bunch. I felt right at home in the meeting. It was so much like other reenactment groups I've associated with in other historical periods. A good third of the folks there were active or ex-SCA. Discussions at the meeting included a kind of debriefing or post-mortem of the recent Picacho Peak event, adoption of a different manual of arms more appropriate to the early part of the war, upcoming events, and plans to provide an honor guard to fire salutes for the Confederate dead at local cemeteries on Confederate Memorial Day (April 23).

Check out the web site at www.5thtexas.com. The group generally meets at 10:30 AM on the first Saturday of the month at either the Phoenix or Mesa Bookman's book store locations.

I never got around to admitting my family were dyed-in-the-wool bluebellies.



Some Confederate forces at Picacho Peak

Nola is DarkCon Chair

Guildster Nola Yergen-Jennings announced to your editor on Saturday evening of AniZona that she has been elected chair of the next DarkCon. This gaming and fantasy convention is tentatively planned for January, 2007 somewhere in the greater Phoenix area. Stay tuned for more information about DarkCon.