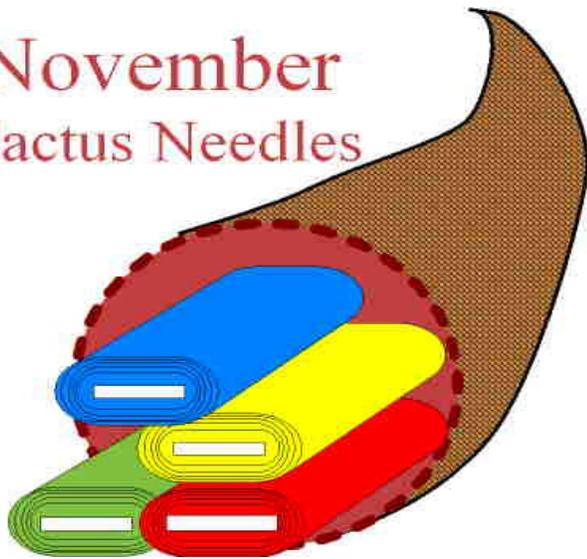


November Cactus Needles



Vol 12 #11, 2005

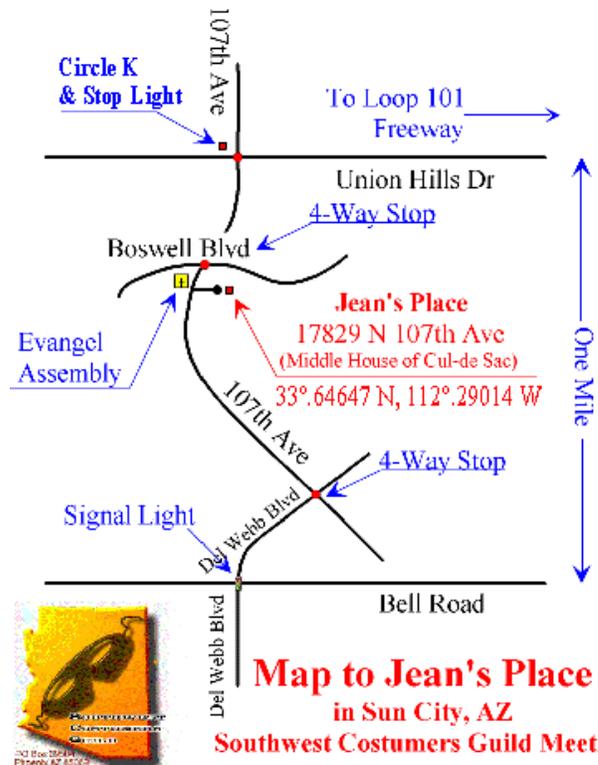
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Calendar

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.

Saturday November 12, 2005, 10AM – **Sweatshop*** SWCG workshop at Jean's place. Note Change of Venue. We'll build some capes and other items to sell at Devonshire as our semi-annual fundraiser. Bring your sewing tools.



November 12, 2006 through April 2, 2006 – **The Fabric of Jazz** at the Mesa Southwest Museum, 53 North MacDonald, Mesa, Arizona. This exhibition features quilts, fabric wall hangings and poetry inspired by jazz musicians and their work.
www.mesasouthwestmuseum.com

November 18-20, 2005 – **TusCon 32** at the Innsuites Hotel Tucson. Fan-run SF Con featuring guests of honor David Brin, Theresa Mather, Edward Bryant, and Bill Winski.
<http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/>

November 20, 2005, 11AM to 6PM – **Discover India Diwali Festival** (a festival of lights) at Heritage & Science park, 115 North 6th Street, Phoenix. Experience the vibrant, rich, diverse art and culture of one of the world's most ancient civilizations. Enjoy the music, dance, food and traditions of this ancient land. Free admission.
www.azindiaassociation.com

November 19-20, 2005 10 AM-6PM – **Devonshire Renaissance Faire** at Los Olivos Park, north of the northeast corner of 28th Street and Indian School Road in Phoenix. www.devonshirefaire.com

November 24, 2006 – January 8, 2006, 6-10 PM – **Zoolights** at the Phoenix Zoo, 455 North Galvin Parkway, Phoenix. General Admission \$8. Come celebrate your holidays at Zoolights. Experience a tropical jungle in Rainforests of the World, stand back when passing the three dimensional, 18-foot lighted rattlesnake in the desert

of the Arizona Trail and delight at the animated display of lighted penguins in the Antarctic. Discover the diversity of homes we all share through the magic and music of ZooLights!

Don't miss Jengo, the talking giraffe, 2.5 million lights and nearly 400 light sculptures. Carousel rides, the aroma of Kettle Korn and music around every corner will add to the holiday fantasy as the Phoenix Zoo once again transforms itself into one of the largest lighting events in the southwest. Closed on Christmas. www.phoenixzoo.org .

November 25, 2005 - December 23, 2005 - **Las Noches de las Luminarias** at Desert Botanical Garden, 1201 N. Galvin Pkwy, Phoenix. (480) 941-1225 www.dbg.org
Members: Adults \$14, Children \$7 (ages 3-12) Non-Members: Adults \$16, Children \$8 (ages 3-12)

Experience a unique Southwest holiday tradition, *Las Noches de las Luminarias*. Each night of *Luminaria*, the Garden is transformed into a place of enchanted beauty when thousands of hand-lit *luminarias* light the pathways and cast a soft glow on the Garden's world-renowned plant collection.

This year the Garden will offer 22 nights where you can stroll the *luminaria-lit* paths, savor a glass of wine or hot cider, stop to take in the sounds of musical performances, enjoy a delicious dinner by Arcadia Farms *Taste of the Desert*, and complete your holiday shopping in the Garden Shop.

November 26, 2005– **Victorian Christmas Ball** in Mesa, Arizona, hosted by We Make History. See press release later in this issue.

December 10, 2005, 2PM - **Vintage Beads. . .Trash or Treasure** at Cave Creek Museum, 6140 E. Skyline Drive, Cave Creek. (480) 488-2764 Admission is free A lecture and demonstration on how to tell a new bead from a vintage bead. www.beadgals.com

Saturday, January 14, 2006 – **Glendale Glitters and Glows*** SWCG field trip. We'll meet at the Pete's Fish & Chips on Glendale Avenue at 4:30 PM for a light and greasy supper, then tour the street festival. Costume encouraged.

January 29, 2005, 3PM – **Calendar*** SWCG business meeting at the Bookman's Book Store at the northwest corner of 19th Ave & Northern in Phoenix. We'll do our annual officer elections and plan out guild activities for 2006. Bring ideas! www.bookmans.com

April 14-16, 2006 – **AniZona 2** at the Embassy Suites Phoenix North (SEC Greenway Road & I-17) Arizona's own Anime and Manga convention www.anizona.org.

May 5-7, 2006 – **LepreCon 32** at the Embassy Suites Phoenix North (SEC Greenway Road & I-17) Fan-run SF Con featuring guests of honor Alan M. Clark, John Vornholt and Bill Blair. www.leprecon.org.

Christmas at First Cancelled

From the www.christmasatfirst.com web site:

“Due to the overwhelming human needs and material devastation caused recently by Hurricane Katrina, the Christmas At First Dickens Festival for 2005 has been canceled.”

“We are currently using all of the resources that we would have used to put on Christmas at First to help rebuild the community of Bogalusa, Louisiana. We hope you will understand our decision and join us in praying for and working to help those who have suffered such great loss. For more information, please go to www.fccphx.com .”

This, of course, scrubs the plan for SWCG's December activity. Let's cook up something else at the November meeting. Suggestions so far include a potluck supper or doing the Dickens walk at another venue, like Zoolights or Las Noches de las Luminarias at the Desert Botanical Gardens.

We Make History Proudly Presents Our 5th Annual Victorian Christmas Ball **November 26th, 2005 Mesa, Arizona**

The Victorians certainly loved Christmas and so do we!

Join us for our 5th annual Victorian Christmas Ball as Arizona's finest and merriest society gather to celebrate the season with warmth and joy aplenty. Expect the fine fashions, etiquette, music and dance of the grand Victorian era circa 1840-1900. This family-friendly gathering welcomes all generations and will include a separate dance set especially for children under 13 who possess the manners and social skills to attend.

When: The evening of Saturday, November 26th.

Where: We have a bit larger of a ballroom to enjoy as we have secured the use of a spacious facility in central Mesa. Directions shall be sent along with your tickets.

What to Wear: Dress as per the Victorian era circa 1840-1900 or alternately, modern formal or semiformal wear (tuxedos, suits with ties and jackets, evening gowns) are welcome. Dress standards for children are the same as those for adults.

What to Expect: A cheerful assembly of the best and most pleasant society which our state has to offer, along with music, dancing, caroling and more as per the early decades

of the Victorian era. We will utilize fairly simple historic dances and do some teaching so that all may enjoy. Light refreshments will be served.

Admission is open to well mannered persons of grace and respect. Ages 13 and up are welcome in the adult dance sets while a special set will be arranged for those younger. We attract a very gracious group of people who know how to properly conduct themselves according to our House Standards

(<http://www.wemakehistory.com/HouseStandards.htm>)

Tickets: In advance we ask \$25 for adults and \$20 for those under 21 to participate in this evening of elegance. Advance ticket orders will be welcome until Saturday, November 19th or we are full, whichever may come first.

Please send your check with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: We Make History P.O. Box 12874 Scottsdale, Arizona 85267. Alternately you may use your credit card to pay via PayPal.

Coppercon 25 Memories Disk Complete

Your editor has composed a CD ROM with pictures from the Coppercon 25 Masquerade, credits to the contestants, and a few articles about hall and stage costuming. It includes all of the masquerade documentation photos. If you participated in the masquerade as a contestant or crew member, pick up your disk from Randall, or send a mailing address to editor@southwestcostumersguild.org.

Some of the pictures from the disk are posted to <http://members.aol.com/coppermask25> The coppercon.org site has been updated with information about CopperCon 26, so it no longer links to my page.

From the Mailbox

Take a gander at these publications at the next SWCG meeting:

St. Louis Costumer's Guild, *The Scarlet Letter*, 3rd Quarter 2005. SLUTS tartan?, SLUTS Say the Darndest Things, Con & event listings, Various costumed pets.

The ICG Newsletter Vol IV, Issue 5, October/November 2005. Intro to the ICG internet listserves, Glue Part Tue, Fashion In Film traveling museum exhibit schedule, Financial news – new considerations for ICG's nonprofit tax status.

This was Betsy's final issue as editor. Cactus Needles extends sincerest thanks for her years of service!

The Pause: **A Random Thought from your Editor** by Randall Whitlock

These days everybody and his dog has a digital camera. (I'm a bit behind the technological curve – my dog's camera is only 1.3 megapixels.) This creates a new set of problems and opportunities for the SF convention masquerade.

First off, anybody with a lick of sense knows that flashes are naughty. It's as rude to fire a flash from the masquerade audience as it is to talk on your cell phone during a movie. At its worst, the flash can dazzle the person on stage and cause a nasty accident. Flashes are completely ineffective beyond about 15 feet and won't help your pictures anyway.

Even after the MC's ask people not to take flash pictures, the flashes still pop. I suppose some of these people don't understand their cameras well enough to disable the flash.

Rant ended. What follows is for the rest of us.

I've been looking over some CopperCon 25 Masquerade photos shared by David Jeppesen and Tee Morris, who kindly switched off their flashes. Both gentlemen had excellent working positions, with David at house right and Tee at house left.

The striking thing about both sets of pictures is the subject motion problem. There was not enough light on stage to allow the cameras to use a short exposure time. David was using a camera with a small lens mounted on a tripod. His backgrounds are rock-steady while the subjects blur out, often into fast-moving steaks. Tee's camera had a wider, faster lens, but he was holding the camera in his hands. These pictures have less subject blurring, but there was more camera motion, causing some of the backgrounds to go out of focus.

What can we do about it?

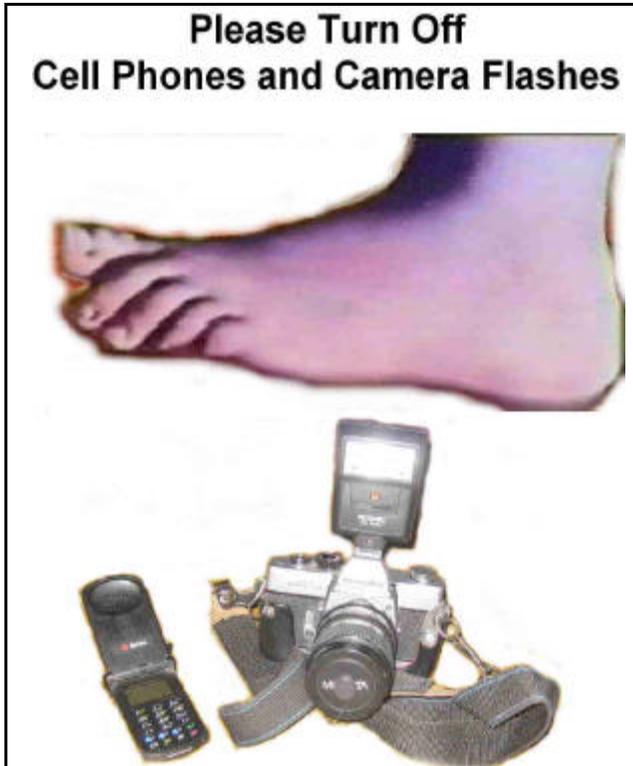
In my opinion, the audience should be allowed and encouraged to continue taking pictures. I wish to help them.

First off, we can throw more light on the stage. I currently use four 300-watt par units for a typical hotel-size stage. This is good enough for the human eye, but not enough for good pictures from a consumer-grade digital camera. I have some more par cans and I'll acquire more powerful lamps for them between now and next CopperCon.

The other part is up to you, the masquerade contestants.

---Pause in the middle. ---

If the dynamics of your presentation allow, please pause for a couple of seconds in the lighting “hot spot” at center stage. Maybe count to five. This will allow just enough time for an autofocus to set and the camera to expose. Your reward may be a fine photo of your costume on stage.



A new sign for the auditorium door.

Truly Victorian French Vest Bodice - TV 463

Reviewed by Diane Harris

First of all, I have made a great number of my clothes from the TV patterns, and have figured out how they fit me. I highly recommend that you get a measuring buddy to take accurate measurements of you; then do a muslin mock up before you cut your fashion fabric. TV patterns offer a good basic period line that you can “tweak” to custom fit you. Keep in mind (just as the pattern tells you) you are not working with modern sizing. There is no ease for sizing in the Victorian period. With all the grading for sizes, careful measurement will get you a very good fit.

The period shoulder line is not at all where you expect it to be – it really does slant from neckline at an angle to armseye in the back. This is the period line – it makes the armseye fit very smooth. I usually have to trim excess around the armseye because I have a narrow shoulder. The armseye line for this time period is a modern armseye – the TV patterns show a slope over the shoulder – do your research before you decide if the armseye is correct for the



period and adjust accordingly. The armseye slope changed in the 1870's to become what we know as the modern armseye.

Left: Diane models a costume made with TV463 at Coppercon 25. Photo by Frances Burns.

Other fit problems for me occur in the side back piece where it joins the armseye. It can form a bubble on the center back piece side. You may have to draft out some of the width on the center back piece. The line is supposed to be a true princess curve into the armseye. You may also want to pin a dart in your pattern on the front piece so that you don't get a bubble on the armseye in front. This

will cure the “gaposis” problem, and is an easy problem to fix when you fit your muslin.

I usually fit my front darts separately, not relying on the dart lines. This gets me a custom fit.

I have never bag lined – instead I flat-line the pieces for extra structure. I also use rigilene on all seams and sometimes darts – depending on weight of fabric (do not use on front seam where vest is joined for this pattern) for a wrinkle-free fit. It is available at your local craft store. I sew “in the ditch” on the inside after I have trimmed and notched the seams.

The beauty of the TV patterns is once you get the correct measurements and pattern pieces cut accordingly, you can get a period fit that can be put together in a day, literally from start to finish. The instructions are straightforward. If you get totally lost, you can contact Truly Victorian – they usually get back within 24 hours. (Try that with Simplicity or McCall's).

This pattern is beautiful and very figure-flattering with the shaping of the front center piece. If you are small-busted or large-busted, using contrasting fabric for this piece can enhance or reduce. I used a gorgeous blue taffeta with a black velvet stripe for the jacket, contrasting the vest front, collar and the sleeves with a black cotton brocade. The skirt was also the black cotton brocade. For this pattern, I fit my mock-up over my duct tape mannequin that was corseted and clothed with grand bustle petticoat and small bustle pad. This is the only way to see how the pattern

will actually fit you. When you fit your muslin, leave the shoulder seams open – do not sew darts in either – just the center back, side back and side seams. This allows you to pin in the shoulder seams and darts that will give you a “custom fit”. I put it on the mannequin inside out, rough fit and then turn outside in for second adjustment. The final adjustments are made on the fashion fabric (again fitting over mannequin) or if I can get my fitting partner, with her. With this pattern, I fit everything prior to putting the vest pieces, collar and sleeves in. Then I put the vest pieces in and fit again, adding the darts, as well as checking the neckline and armseye – you may have to trim some out at the neckline so there is no bubble at the center back. Just rough pin in your collar – you will see what to mark to make your cut if you need to. I make the closures at this time. My final step is the sleeves, doing all trimming, etc., then setting into finished garment. If there is any hand or machine sewn trim, finish now.

You do not want this garment to be skin tight – you want it to follow the lines of your body very closely like a well-made glove. When you stand, there should be no wrinkles at the neck, waist in front or back or around the shoulders. When you sit, there should be no bubbles around throat or breast area or at waist.

Center front vest piece - I drafted the curve of the front center piece where it joins the front piece from the waist to edge so that it was slightly wider and created a more flattering fit for my figure. I have an abdomen – this fools the eye. You will need to narrow the front piece accordingly.

Collar - I only used one collar – the narrower one – I have a short neck – I corded and trimmed it for some “pop”. If I use both collars, I will have to draft down a little.

Pleats are an issue - if you want deep pleats that meet in the middle, you will have to adjust this by drafting a deeper angle to the outside edge of the pleat on the center back and side back piece. You will get a beautiful pleat that will lay flat. On this pattern, the pleats actually begin a little lower than your natural waist – this is good. I was using a heavy bullion fringe and wanted a deeper pleat that would not pull out with the weight of the trim. Also, after you have tacked your pleats in place, take grosgrain ribbon or twill tape, secure in center seam, cover the entire pleat at top of both sides with tape, hand stitch in place over top of pleat – tack to flat lining fabric to hold in place. This will keep the pleat in place.

Center back waist - I use grosgrain ribbon attached to the center back at the waist on the inside and bring it around to snap in center front – this keeps the back laying snugly to your body over your bustle and gives a crisp 1880’s “shelf” look. Otherwise, it tends to pull away from the body at the small of the back. This is a period technique.

Armseye – I usually cut it a bit deeper under the arms than period – I find this helps me a little with movement of my arms – especially if the sleeve is smooth fitting, rather than a gathered sleeve head.

Sleeves - I do not like the sleeves in any of the TV patterns – there is too much width at the back of the upper sleeve from the shoulder to the elbow – this period shows a narrow sleeve. Draft it out if you have the same experience – if the sleeve has a gathered sleeve head, remember to add a little for what you have drafted out. A good muslin mock-up will cure this problem and give you a nice sloper to work with. You also want to pay attention to where the curve is set in for your elbow – you can draft the curve differently. If you have sleeves from this period that work for you, use them. Make sure the armseye will line up.

I hope this helps you. The TV patterns are one of the best basic period patterns that I have found – notwithstanding drafting my own.

Editor’s Note: You can purchase the pattern on the publisher’s web site at <http://trulyvictorian.netfirms.com/latebust.html>

Here’s their description of the pattern:

TV463 - 1884 French Vest Bodice

This bodice has a simulated, hourglass-shaped "vest." The back is finished with pleats below the waist. Double military collar and center front button closure. Two-piece sleeves with fullness at the shoulder, and choice of 3 lengths. Fits over a bustle. \$11.00



Cooking with the Corpse Bride.

Anna in costume at the Dark Ones Halloween Party.
Photo by Randall Whitlock.