



**Vol 13 #1, January 2006**

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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.

January 14, 2006, 10AM – **Photography of the Old West** exhibit at McFarland State Park near Florence AZ (520) 868.5216.

January 14 & 15, 2006 – **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the Gunfighters** at Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park. 16 old west reenactment teams perform a 2-day best of the west competition. (928) 783.4771.

January 14, 2006 – **Her Majesty's Royal Court Ball** *We Make History* event. See [www.wemakehistory.com](http://www.wemakehistory.com) for details.

**There are Two SWCG get-togethers in January.**

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, 2006, 3PM – **Calendar Planning\*** SWCG business meeting at the Bookman's Book Store, northwest corner of 19<sup>th</sup> Ave & Northern in Phoenix. We'll do our annual officer elections and plan out guild activities for 2006. Bring ideas! [www.bookmans.com](http://www.bookmans.com)

February 11 – April 2, 2006 (weekends plus Presidents' Day) **Arizona Renaissance Festival** on Highway 60, east of Gold Canyon, Arizona. Large professional renaissance fair. <http://emol.org/azrenfest/>

February 4 & 5, 2006 – **The Battle of Winchester.** *We Make History* civil war re-creation event.

From the press release and the web site at [www.wemakehistory.com](http://www.wemakehistory.com) :

*On Saturday and Sunday, February 4th & 5th, 2006 we will step in with creativity and imagination to "transform" Pioneer Village of Phoenix, Arizona into Winchester, Virginia - Civil War Crossroads in the Spring of 1862. Expect a highly interactive and dramatized event featuring an invited cast of living historians in which not only the soldiers but civilians as well will play a central role.*

*And there is more: Though in modern attire, YOU will be treated as a citizen of Winchester, 1862!*

*Admission will be only \$8 per person at the door for this "rain or shine" event. Children age four and under as of the event date may enter at no charge with no ticket required. Alternately, advance tickets (good for either Saturday or Sunday at the holder's discretion) may be purchased for only \$5 each in batches of 10 or more. Please note: We will not accept advance orders for less than ten tickets.*

February 11 – April 2, 2006 (weekends plus Presidents' Day) **Arizona Renaissance Festival** on Highway 60, east of Gold Canyon, Arizona. Large professional renaissance fair. <http://emol.org/azrenfest/>

February 11, 2006 10 to 5 – **Tour of Historic Florence** at McFarland State Historic Park. (520) 868.5216.

February 14-20, 2006 – **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](http://www.estrellawar.org).

February 18, 2006 – **George Washington's Birthday Ball** *We Make History* event. See [www.wemakehistory.com](http://www.wemakehistory.com) for details.

February 25 & 26, 2006 **Arizona Scottish Highland Games and Clan Gathering** at Mesa Community College. Adults \$12 [www.arizonascots.com](http://www.arizonascots.com)

March 10, 2006 – **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the Gunfighters** at Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park. Yuma's old west gunfight teams show how the west should have been. (928) 783.4771.

March 8-12, 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](http://www.winterrange.com)

March 11-12, 2006 – **Battle of Picacho Peak** Annual civil war reenactment at Picacho State Park, Arizona at I-10, Exit 219. [www.azstateparks.com](http://www.azstateparks.com)

April 8, 2006 – **1861 Remembrance Ball** *We Make History* event. See [www.wemakehistory.com](http://www.wemakehistory.com) for details.

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](http://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. Guildster Margaret Grady will produce a masked ball. [www.leprecon.org](http://www.leprecon.org).

May 26-29, 2006 – **CostumeCon 24** at the Hotel Fort Des Moines in Des Moines, Iowa. This year's theme is "Epic Movies." Memberships \$85 until Dec 31, 2005, \$95 until the con. <http://cc24.dmsfs.org/>.

June 24 & 25, 2006 – **Renaissance in the Pines** at Fort Tuthill off of I-17, just south of Flagstaff, Arizona. A fine one-weekend renfaire.

June 24, 2006 – **Buccaneer's Ball** *We Make History* event. See [www.wemakehistory.com](http://www.wemakehistory.com) for details.

#### **From Your Editor: Stuff For 2006**

Okay, okay, I'll do the newsletter for one more year. Here are some policies and other announcements:

--Please send stuff! Reviews, calendar items, links to cool web sites, cartoons, pictures, household hints, tricks of the trade, what-I'm-doing pieces. E-mail or other electronic formats are best, but I'm willing to scan or retype if needed.

--Submissions deadline is the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month for that month's issue. The newsletter will be mailed between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. IMHO, an on-time but thin newsletter is better than a late but feature-packed one.

--Copyright is a sticky issue these days. I won't reproduce third-party material without permission of the author. If you receive something cool in your e-mail or find it on the web, please write a review with directions on how to find the piece. This month's Kilt Yardage article is an example of such a review.

--Copyright for this newsletter as a whole belongs to the Southwest Costumers Guild. Feel free to forward an unaltered electronic copy to anybody who might enjoy it. The current issue and several back issues will be posted to the web site. Copyright for signed articles remains with their authors.

--The SWCG web site is now hosted at <http://members.cox.net/costumers>. The new host provides five times the space of the old host, so we'll be able to post more stuff. There are already three back issues of Cactus Needles posted and several newly added How-To articles. Please continue to tell people about our registered domain of [www.southwestcostumersguild.org](http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org), which points to the new server space.

--I've posted an information web page for the CopperCon 26 Masquerade to <http://members.cox.net/coppermask>. Right now it's mainly a picture review of last year's masquerade, but I'll be posting stage tech and other information as it becomes available this spring.

#### **Of Kilts and Yardage**

by Matthew A. C. Newsome, GTS, FSA Scot.

<http://kilts.albanach.org/yardage.html>

Reviewed by Randall Whitlock

Frances found this interesting article on the history of kilt making. Just how much fabric went into a historical kilt? The author suggests that the "eight yard kilt" is a modern exaggeration stemming from a misunderstanding of the widths of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century looms. Surviving kilts from this period actually contain about four linear yards of a much narrower fabric than is weaved today. This agrees with my own kilt making experience from the 1990s. I found I really had to force the pleats to get any more than four yards into a kilt.

The author is Curator of the Scottish Tartans Museum in Franklin, North Carolina ([www.scottishtartans.org](http://www.scottishtartans.org)), whose collection includes some of the oldest kilts in captivity. Mr. Newsome is a skilled kilt maker. You can see his work at <http://kilts.albanach.org/index.html> along with several other good articles on highland dress.

### **Working with Silk Taffeta**

by Diane Harris

I recently had an opportunity to work with silk taffeta for an Edwardian dinner gown project. This is what I discovered. I hope it will help you when working with this or similar fabrics.

#### **Cutting**

Place low tack tape along cutting line – I used 1-inch wide blue painter’s tape. Cut through the tape. This ensures that the cut edge of the taffeta will not spread. It doesn’t razzle as we conventionally know types of fabric do. It spreads. This spreading occurs in the 1<sup>st</sup> inch from cutting line and can make a lovely (not) ripple effect on the seams.

#### **Sewing**

Leave tape that was not cut away on the fabric. Sew as close as possible next to the tape. Peel off after sewing. Use a walking foot.

### **Beads—Vintage vs Contemporary**

Notes by Kathleen Fulton

I attended the presentation on “Beads—Vintage vs. Contemporary” held at the Cave Creek Museum on Sat. 12/10/05 and here is a summary of my notes.

The first speaker was Bonnie Clewans who owns BEADGALS and she gave a slide presentation on contemporary beads. It was interesting to learn that the technical parts of bead jewelry are called “findings”. The Cloisonné style of jewelry making started in France and migrated to China. Thailand is known for pillow beads which are ethnic silver coated with hair dye to look antique; or they can be silver with gold coating. Indian (from India) glass beads are soft glass which is difficult to work with and it is not as clear as new glass. Bones and horns of water buffalo used to make beads are white and they can be dyed with tea or coffee to make them look darker. Millifiore beads are African trade beads. They started in Italy and then went to Africa. A true millifiore bead is smooth. The batik style of bead has a wax design put on it and then it is dipped in dye and after you pull the wax off the bead you have a batik design on it. Metalized beads are acrylic and are coated with metal. Crystal beads are 33% lead, which gives better clarity and color. The lead softens the glass. Czech or Bohemian glass beads are pressed glass from a mold. They are high quality, hard beads from

Czechoslovakia. Turquoise is the Arizona state bead. Real turquoise is becoming difficult to get.

Marla Gassner spoke about vintage beads and showed some of her collection. There is a bead society in every state. To tell the difference between Ivory and bone; Ivory has a fine grain and bone has a bigger grain. Older bead jewelry is strung on a metal chain (gold or silver). Mourning jewelry is always black in color. Red coral is rare, and sometimes common coral is dyed to look red. Steel cut bead were made in France around 1900 or before. Third world countries have good bead-work pieces.

### **From the Mailbox**

*The ICG Newsletter Vol IV Issue 6 – December 2005.* ICG Guidelines for International-Level Masquerades and Competitions Revision Committee Latest Update, In Memoriam: Kelly Turner and Bobby Gear, Stacey Jenkins review of “Dressing A Galaxy: the Costumes of Star Wars,” Linda Wenzelberger’s review of “Artwear Fashion and Anti-Fashion” exhibit, Part 4 of Animal X’s “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Glue But Were Afraid to Ask,” Costume Calendar, News & Reports from ICG Chapters, ICG Board Minutes, Poems in memory of Kelly and Bobby.

*St. Louis Costumers Guild “The Scarlet Letter” 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2005.* Presidential message from Bruce Mai, Birth announcement of Sheila Lenkman and Scott Corwin’s son Ethan Scott Corwin, events calendar, Odds & Ends for the Odd & Demented, Interesting online links, Karen Heim’s review of Archon masquerade, Meeting Minutes, many clever photo cartoons, Bruce Mai’s “A Home-grown Anime Con at Last?,” Ramona Taylor’s “Thank You to Archon!”

*Beyond Reality Costumers Guild “Notions” Winter 2005.* Pet costume cover, Kate McClure’s “Pooh Bah’s Prattles,” News from Around the Guilds, Snips from the Editor, Eric Prill’s interview with former pooh bah & ICG Prez Joy Day, meeting minutes, Costumers In Action photos, Richard Stevens’ “Costumer Resolutions,” Sewing word search puzzle

*Greater Bay Area Costumer’s Guild “Finery” January/February 2006* Sally Norton’s “Sewing Hints: Vintage Patterns” and “The Traveling Costumer,” Upcoming Events



Guildsters at our Holiday Lupper at Mimi's Café.

**The Costume Closet**  
**Get Medieval on Your Pop-Up**  
 by Randall Whitlock

Okay, this column is as much about renfaire home improvement as it is about costumes. Think of a tent as your outermost layer of clothing.

Pop-ups are those simple open-sided pavilions you see at every kind of picnic and street fair. They are based on easy-to-assemble aluminum, plastic or steel frames. The most sophisticated frames collapse along pantograph joints into compact bundles. One person can pop one up in a few minutes, hence the name. They are marvels of modern materials technology. That's the problem.

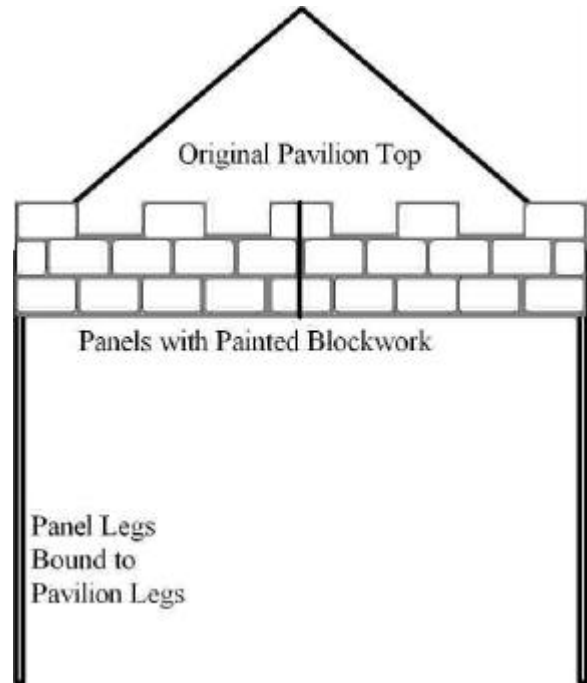
As a costume crafter, I participate mainly in renaissance faires and medieval reenactment events. Modern is not the right look. With a little work, however, a pop-up can be made into a proper medieval pavilion.

Open-sided pavilions were used in period. A noble couldn't be expected, after all, to be exposed to the hot sun while enjoying a tournament or directing a battle. What is it about pop-ups that makes them look too modern for the rennies? I see three condemning characteristics – overly sharp or square lines, modern framing materials, and synthetic fabric tops. All of these are fairly easy to disguise.

**The Castle**

One of the easiest disguises to build (especially if you don't sew) involves making your pavilion look not like a pavilion at all, but a castle tower. Simply cut panels of lightweight plywood to cover the lower portions of the tent top. The upper edges of the panels are cut into square crenellations like a castle wall. Paint the panels to resemble stonework, apply faux bricks, or start out with faux brick paneling. Support the panels somewhere above the bump-your-head level with wooden legs and bind the legs to the legs of your

pavilion, helping to conceal the metal. Since most pop-ups are about ten feet wide, it will be most convenient to make the panels in two sections (left to right) for each side of the pavilion, for a total of eight panels on a four-sided pavilion. These flat side panels make a good surface to display signs and heraldry for your business, guild, or performing company.



**The Drape**

Another no-sew option is to drape your pavilion with cloth or greenery pinned together. I've seen a belly dance performing troupe do this with bright colored lamés and satins on the outside of the pavilion and carpets and cushions inside. The result looked kind of like the inside of Jeannie's bottle. Very effective.

Another performing troupe created a faerie bower effect by wrapping the pavilion legs in flower and leaf garlands and draping the top with artificial leaves and flowers.

The most extreme example of the drape disguise I've ever seen involved a merchant who had no pavilion at all. He had signed up for the faire at the last minute and had never done a medieval event before. Fortunately he was a dealer in oriental rugs. He covered his van and tables with the carpets. I don't think the guests knew he was hiding an entire vehicle. On the other hand, I don't think the park staff were very happy with the wheel ruts.

## The Over-Shell

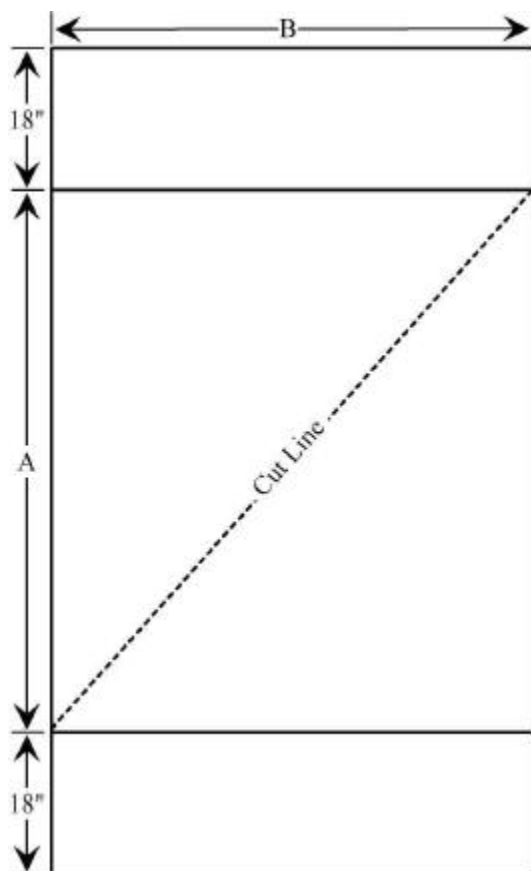
My favorite disguise method is to build a new cloth outer shell which covers the original tent frame and shell. To build this over-shell, mimic the pyramid shape of the original shell by building four triangular side panels.

First, measure your pavilion. You'll need the total width of each size. Surprisingly a nominal 10-foot pavilion is only about 117 inches on a side, three inches short of ten feet. This is a good thing – it makes suitable fabric easier to find. Take this figure, divide it in half, and add one inch for seam allowances. Call this the base B. On my tent  $117 / 2 + 1 = 59.5$  inches, conveniently just less than a standard 60-inch bold of fabric. I rounded my B figure up to 60 inches to make cutting simpler.

Measure the distance up the middle of a side panel from its base to the peak of the tent. Call this the altitude of the triangle A. On my tent this is 67 inches.

Measure the length and circumference of the legs. Save these figures for later.

Lay out four layers of fabric. Each layer's length should be equal to A plus one yard. The extra yard allows the panel to hang down below the edge of the triangular portion of the tent roof, completely concealing the original tent roof.

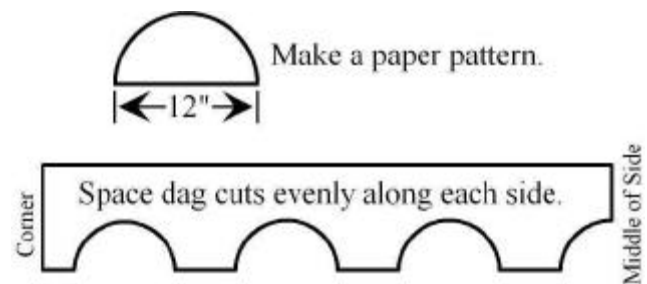


Measure one-half yard from each end of the fabric and draw a diagonal line as shown. Cut through all four pieces of fabric along the diagonal line as shown. You now have eight pieces of material shaped like a triangle with one extended side.

Sew the pieces together straight-side to straight-side and bent-side to bent-side to form a pyramid-shaped tent top.

Finish the bottom edge of your new tent roof. This provides an opportunity to make the tent look much more medievalish. You can finish the edge with a fringed trim, available from upholstery stores.

My favorite edge finish is to cut the edge along curves to form "dags." There's nothing that looks more medieval. Dags can be any shape and those found on clothing became very complicated indeed. I make my dags by building a half-circle pattern about 12-inches wide, then using the pattern to lay out cuts evenly spaced along the tent edge, as shown. Once the dags are cut, finish the tent edge by turning under and sewing.



Mount grommets in pairs at the corners of the corners of the tent shell. Suitable grommet kits are available at upholstery supplies stores and camping stores. Pass cords through the grommets to tie the tent over-shell to the tent legs.



*MoiRandall's pavilion – particolored with dags*

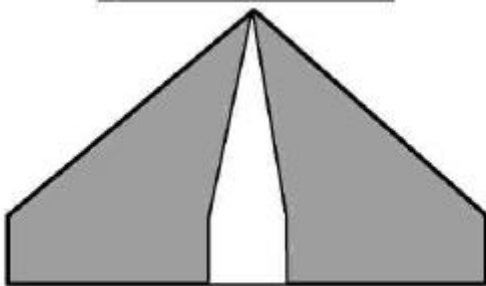
## Fabric Considerations

The pyramid-shaped over-shell described above requires about 11.5 yards of 60-inch wide fabric to make. You have many choices of fabric. If you leave the tent's original shell in place (concealed by the over-shell) your fabric does not have to be very heavy since it does not have to support its own weight. My first over-shells (made from used bedsheets) have lasted for years. There's an old SCA trick that involves building a pavilion from a military surplus training parachute.

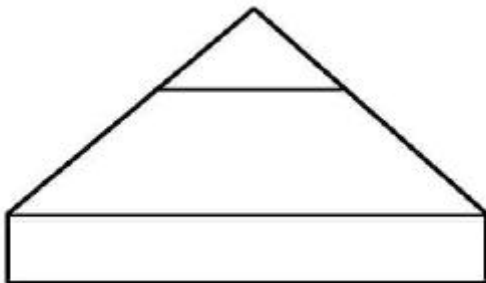
Your fabric should have a natural look. The whole point is to cover up that plastic-looking material the tent came with. Broadcloths, twills, and triggers are suitable. I've done well with the sportswear solids that turn up in spring clearance sales. Your material should be able to take some sun and rain without the colors fading or running.

Machine-washable is good, but may bow to other considerations. For example, I know a greyhound adoption group that uses a beautiful shell built from two contrasting colors of upholstery brocade with the same weave pattern. The use of two or more colors for adjoining panels is called "particoloring." It's another feature that screams medieval. I used alternating panels of blue and yellow to achieve this effect on my own pavilions.

### Fabric Too Narrow?



Add a triangular gusset in the middle.



Divide the tent vertically and run the fabric bolt sideways.

What do you do if your favorite fabric is not available in 60-inch widths? You'll have to alter the pattern. You can insert a triangular gusset in the middle of each side wall, or you can run the fabric sideways and divide each panel into top and bottom portions. This will take a bit of strategy, different for every project.

## Leg Covers

If they look too metallic, the legs of your pavilion will need to be covered. The simplest way to do this is to build "leg warmers." Cut four pieces of fabric equal in length to the legs and a bit wider than the circumference of the leg. Finish the ends of the fabric strips and sew the sides together to form a long tube. Add some cord to one end so the leg warmer can be tied to the tent frame.

Some types of pop-up have long extensions to the shell that run down the legs. If your tent has these, you should mimic their shape by making long rectangular extensions of your over-shell. These are tied around the outside of the legs with cords.

As mentioned above, you can cover your tent legs with leaf and flower garlands from florist supply companies.

*Even though this article will run in Cactus Needles and Connotations, it was really written for the benefit of participants at Devonshire, Renaissance in the Pines, and other ren/medieval events. I'd like to convert it into a web page to run on the SWCG and MoiRandall's site by expanding it with more pictures and more detailed instructions on the alternative patterns. Input and feedback will be welcomed. Do you have a picture of a cool disguised pop-up?*

*--Randall*