

# Cactus Needles

*In the Merry  
Month of May*

**Vol 13 #5, May 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.

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 8, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha’s Place.

May 6-7, 2006, 10AM to 6PM – **May in The Meadows** on the lawn of the Civic Center in Prescott Valley, Arizona. Single-weekend renaissance faire from the people who bring you the Devonshire Renaissance Faire. [www.mayinthemeadows.com](http://www.mayinthemeadows.com)

May 14, 2006 – **Glove Making II\*** SWCG workshop at Randall’s place in Phoenix. We’ll finish up the gloves started in April.

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

June 3, 2006 – **Cosplay Workshop** at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe, Arizona. See article later in this issue. [www.azcosplay.net](http://www.azcosplay.net)

June 12, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha’s Place.

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 25, 2006 – **Renaissance in the Pines\*** SWCG field trip. Meet at the transit center in the southwestern portion of the Metrocenter Mall parking lot at 8 AM, then carpool to Fort Tuthill for a day at the faire.

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

July 10, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha’s Place.

August 14, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha’s Place.

August 4-6, 2006 – **Costume College** at the Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Avenue in Van Nuys, California. Costume Guild West’s annual costuming arts conference. Tickets are sold out as of this writing. [www.costumecollege.org/](http://www.costumecollege.org/)

August 26-27, 2006, 9AM-6PM – **Mountain View Renaissance Faire** at Veterans’ Memorial Park in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

September 1-4 (Labor Day weekend), 2006 – **CopperCon 26** at the Tempe Mission Palms hotel, 60 E 5<sup>th</sup> St, Tempe AZ. This fan-run local con features author guests, Mark

Zicree, Diane Duane and Peter Morwood, as well as artist Sarah Clemens and filker Seanan McGuire. The masquerade will be directed by your beloved editor. Go to [www.coppercon.org](http://www.coppercon.org) for details.

September 11, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha's Place.

September 23-24, 2006 – **Phoenix Cactus Comicon** at the Mesa Convention Center, Mesa, Arizona. Lots of comic book writer and artist guests. A masquerade is in the planning stages. [www.phoenixcomicon.com](http://www.phoenixcomicon.com)

October 9, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha's Place.

November 10-12, 2006 – **TusCon 33** at the InnSuites in Tucson, Arizona. Fan-run SF convention. Guests to be announced. <http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/>

November 13, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha's Place.

December 11, 2006, 5:30 PM to 9ish – **S&B\*** SWCG personal projects workshop at Tasha's Place.

January 4-7, 2007 – **DarkCon 07** at the Embassy Suites (I-17 & Greenway, Phoenix) anime, cosplay, art demos & displays, parties, computer gaming, costumes, bazaar, LARPs, Star Wars cantina & poker tourney. All chaired by our own Nola Yergen-Jennings. [www.darkcon.org](http://www.darkcon.org) .

**DarkCon needs a Masquerade Director. Contact Nola at [ladycamilla@cox.net](mailto:ladycamilla@cox.net) or 623.435.9700 to volunteer .**

**Cosplay Workshop in June**  
from Deandra Ervin (Honey Bunny)

The Arizona Cosplay Society is dedicated to providing Arizona's cosplayers a place to meet, discuss and plan outside of a competitive environment.

Next Meeting: Sat June 3rd 1:00-4:00 pm.  
Where: Pyle Adult Recreation Center  
655 East Southern Avenue  
Tempe, AZ 85282

Web Addy: [www.azcosplay.net](http://www.azcosplay.net)

Meeting Presentation Schedule:

- Prop Sword Construction
- Resin Mold Making
- Wigs and Wefts
- Editing Audio for Skits
- Machine stitching guide
- Useful Books
- And more...

**Devonshire Luncheon**



Many of us attended the Devonshire Senior Center's annual fundraiser luncheon on April 8, 2006. The featured entertainment was Pat Stark's "The Way We Wore," which was a fashion show of her collection of authentic Victorian ladies' clothing. Pat is seen above at the podium. Her four models are seen at right.



In keeping with the theme of the program, we attended in Victorian-style clothing. The organizers were kind enough to let us set up a display table in the lobby and give out our new recruiting flyer. We were warmly received. I believe most of the attendees thought we were part of the show.



Here are some thoughts about the event from our members:

*Thank you all for coming - I hope that you had fun! We looked fabulous, didn't we? Thank you to all who contributed to the display table and for your input on the pamphlets and bookmarks. All looked very "Victorian". I can't wait to see the pictures from the event.*

*I received a very nice thank you from Cindy McCabe for our donation of \$25.00 and for our greeting the guests that attended. –Diane Harris*

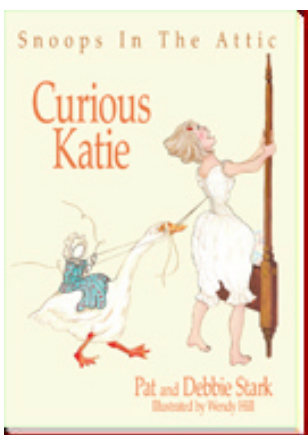
*As one of the very few men at the event; it was fun to watch the women's fashions (our fashions were better). It was great to get best table. This was a fun event for the guild. I hope we can do it again.*

*We always have a good time as a group. We just need to have more events to socialize. –Edouard B. Mesert*

*I was thrilled to attend and participate in the Victorian luncheon at the Devonshire Senior Center. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to show off Diane Harris' late Victorian dress. Our table setting was in character for the Victoria era, with a rose garden theme including china rimmed in gold with red roses on the dishes. The presenter of 'The Way We Wore' displayed and modeled lovely vintage 19th century clothing. I also enjoyed and learned a lot from her remarks regarding historical details about the couture and social culture of the times. – Kathleen Fulton*

*The most outstanding impression I got was how restrained the costumes were compare to what we recreate. There was not a lot of trim and frou-frou. The one I liked best was the red one with the monkey fur accessories. I really liked the lines. The whole event was fun. The food was so-so, but the price wasn't too bad with the show and for a fund raiser. I think we should look at making this an annual guild event. –Tasha Cady*

*The thing I was most amazed by (aside from the 'Fashion Show' which was great) was the decorated tables. (Food was good, too.) There was a 'St Patrick's Day' table, a 'festival' done in bright colors, a Southwest in desert colors, and a Red Hat table. There were about a dozen tables. Some seated six and some 12, all different. Oh yes, an Easter one, and a Spring one, & & & . . . The whole effect was so bright and cheerful it was fun. – Jean Palmer*



Pat Stark has written a children's book based on her vintage clothing collection. It tells the story of a curious girl who finds many wonderful and mysterious

garments in her grandmother's attic. The illustrations by Wendy Hill are meticulous drawings of the same garments we saw at Pat's presentation. You can purchase the book through [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com).

### **And Now For Something Completely Different: Three Yarns About Yarn. . .**

#### **The Sockulator**

Reviewed by Frances Burns

I'm not a knitter but. . .

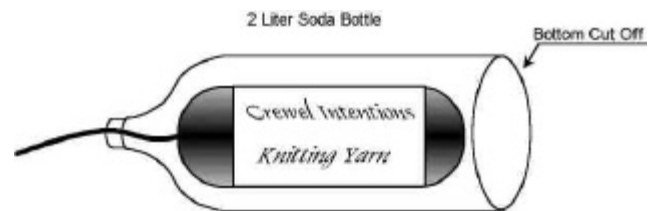
For those who knit and want to knit socks consider the Sockulator – it calculates your sock pattern for you! To access this marvel of the modern age go to [www.thediety.com/blog/lucia/530](http://www.thediety.com/blog/lucia/530). They also have links for tutorials.

#### **Bottle Up Your Troubles**

Illustrated by Randall Whitlock

Lyn showed me a trick she learned at a recent craft show:

To keep your knitting yarn from tangling, cut the bottom off of a 2-liter soda bottle and slide the skein inside. Run the end of the yarn out from the middle of the skein through the neck of the bottle.



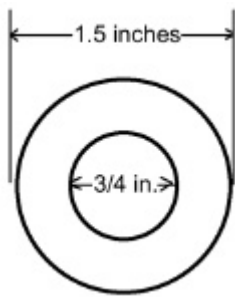
#### **Rah-Rah for Pom-Poms**

by Randall Whitlock

Pom-poms, sometimes spelled "pom-pons," are balls of yarn used in many craft applications. I make a lot of tams and glengarry bonnets (where the yarn ball on top is properly called a "toorie"), so I consume prodigious quantities of pom-poms.

The good yarn pom-poms have been difficult to find in craft stores for several years. They have been supplanted by cheap ones made from pressed fibers. The solution has been to make my own toories.

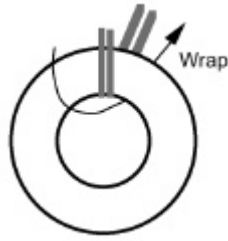
There are several pom-pom kits on the market. The simplest are pairs of flat, hollow disks. You can buy the kit or improvise these from cardboard. Here's how I explained it in my [Randwulf's Round Hats](#) pattern:



You can improvise a toorie maker by cutting two disks out of light corrugated cardboard. The disks should be 1.5 inches in outside diameter with a 3/4 inch inside-diameter circle cut out of the center. The finished disks will resemble fender washers.

Measure out three yards of knitting-weight yarn. Double the yarn over by matching the two ends together.

Hold the two cardboard disks flat sides together so that the center holes match up to one another. Wrap the yarn through the center holes (around the outside of the disks) and back through the center holes. Keep wrapping until all of the yarn is consumed and you have created a donut of yarn all around the cardboard disks.



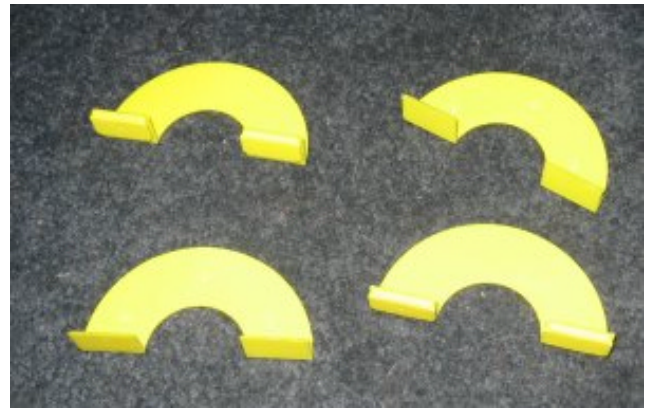
Slip one blade of a pair of scissors between the two disks and cut the yarn all around the disks. You now have a bundle of yarn sticking through the middle of the two disks.

Take a few inches of yarn and tie it tightly between the two disks, binding the bundle of yarn together. Remove the disks by slipping them off the ends of the bundle.

Shape the bound bundle of yarn into a spherical toorie by rolling it gently between your hands. A few drops of Dritz Fray Check (or equivalent product) will help to prevent the toorie from unraveling in the future. Use the two ends of the binding yarn to attach the toorie to your cap. Use a scratch awl or other smooth, round smooth to gently open up two small holes in the top of the hat body. Slip the ends of the binding yarn through these holes and tie inside the hat. This should be done before the lining is applied to the hat.

The two-disk system, however, is not very efficient if you need to make lots of pom-poms. You have to estimate in advance how much yarn will be needed, then feed the end through the disks again and again.

I recently acquired the "Susan Bates Easy Wrap Pom-Pon Maker." This widget consists of sets of four C-shaped pieces in different sizes for different size pom-poms. You get four different sizes with the kit.



Take a pair of the Cs and wrap the yarn around them. Since the shape is open on one side, you can whip the yarn around directly from the skein and quite rapidly. Do the same with the second pair of Cs. Slide the two pairs of Cs together along a special joint to form a closed ring similar to the two-disk kit described above. Cut the yarn between the disks and tie the bundle in the same way described for the two-disk kit.

The jointing between pairs of rings could be improved, but the Easy Wrap system is much more efficient than the two-disk system. You could build your own version of this kit using light cardboard and snaps or Velcro.

### From the Mailbox

SLCG The Scarlet Letter, First Quarter 2006 – News Roundup, Message from El Prez, Zoot Suit Vader, Anime St. Louis review, Tartan Days review

Received newsletters are passed around at the next meeting, then given to our archivist for safe keeping.

### Coming of Age in AniZona by Randall Whitlock

I had the pleasure once again to serve as a cosplay judge at the AniZona 2 fan-organized animé convention on April 14-16, 2006 at the Embassy Suites North in Phoenix.

There were more than 75 costumed units in the masquerade and many of them were group entries. It took the panel two 3-hour shifts on Friday and Saturday just to do the workmanship judging.

Having gained access to Cartoon Network, Nicktoons and EWAM by digital cable in the last few months, I was much better educated on the popular animé series and their characters. I'm still hopeless at recognizing video game characters.

The masquerade had some interestingly creative twists and picking winners was particularly difficult. I gave my "Judge's Choice" award to a winged she-angel built entirely of duct tape and plumbing pipe. She'd make a fine pinup picture for the Possum Lodge.

The masquerade contestants represented maybe one-fourth of the persons in costume. Animé fans are heavily into hall costumes based on their favorite characters. There was at least a full squad of soldiers from "Fullmetal Alchemist" and many from the increasingly misnamed "Final Fantasy."



I learn new things at every convention. Fellow cosplay judge and noted manga artist Katie Bair (left) introduced me to "Lolita."

Lolita is a Japanese fashion style with lots of puffy lace and crinolines and parasols – like a living doll or Shirley Temple in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has nothing to do with that book by Nabokov. Sometimes the style takes on a gothic edge with lots of black.

This fashion style has influenced the design of many animé and manga characters. Think of the short, puffy skirts worn by Sakura during her magical duels or the school girl uniforms seen in any of a zillion different series.

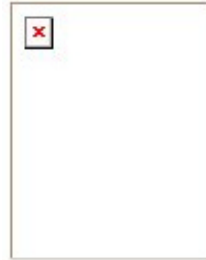
The Lolitas held a tea party and photo shoot on Sunday of the convention (below).



Even if you aren't into animé and manga, you should check out an animé convention sometime. Think of yourself as an anthropologist exploring a fascinating culture. Sort of like Margaret Mead with sake instead of mead.

## And Now to Put On My Other Hat. . .

### We Need a Logo!



The Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society (CASFS) is looking for a graphic logo to use on letterhead, business cards, web pages, etc.

The logo should:

#### Tell the world what we do.

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to promotion of science fiction and fantasy literature. We host fan-run conventions including the annual CopperCon SF convention and HexaCon gaming convention. We publish the fandom newspaper "Connotations."

Graphic possibilities include spacecraft, planets, monsters, wizards, books, etc. Our name or initials should be in there somewhere.

#### Tell the world we're in Arizona.

Possibilities include AZ outline, cactus, roadrunners, etc

#### Be scalable.

The logo should look good and be easy to recognize at all sizes, from business cards to posters. Line art is better than anything that depends on colors or gradients. Simple is good.

The winning designer will receive a free membership to any CASFS-sponsored convention and the right to boast "That's my design!"

Send your designs by August 1, 2006 to:

Attention Logo Contest  
Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society  
PO Box 62613  
Phoenix AZ 85082  
or by e-mail to [randwhit@casfs.org](mailto:randwhit@casfs.org)

#### Coming Soon:

Consider the Cooler Cover  
Donutics: The Science of the Round Hat  
The 42-Year Old CostumeCon Virgin