

CACTUS NEEDLES

Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild
Volume 14 Numbers 5 & 6 – May & June 2007

Contacts

Southwest Costumers Guild PO Box 39504 Phoenix AZ 85069-9504	www.SouthWestCostumersGuild.org www.costume.org
President Diane Harris	602.841.1608 calliebelle@earthlink.net
Vice President Frances Burns	928.284.9860 francesb@sedona.net
Treasurer Lyn Jeppesen	602.275.3321 rjeppesen7@hotmail.com
Web Master Randall Whitlock	602.995.7514 602.697.0492 randwhit@moirandalls.com
Secretary Kathleen Fulton	602.787.8768 kfulton@fclaw.com
Editor Archivist Jean Palmer	623.876.1848 bjeanpalmer@msn.com
John Autore	480.733.2745 creativelympls@yahoo.com
Courtney Black	darkladyofavalon@aol.com
Chuck & Tasha Cady	623.582.0540 tasha_cady@honeywell.com
Anna Caggiano	annamc@ix.netcom.com
Mike Cassidy	blunc@att.net
Sue and Angie Clayton	480.759.0199 sueclayton@cox.net
Cat Devereaux	www.alleycatscratch.com
Duane & Kathryn Elms	dkelms@cybermesa.com
Margaret Grady	602.796.1229 mgrady@eigi.com
David Jeppesen	602.275.3321 rjeppesen7@hotmail.com
Susan Kirk	602.510.7916 susank1@mindspring.com
Paula Lary	480.784.5901
Edouard B. Mesert	602.678.4751 ebmassociates@cox.net
Shayna Muckheide	480.586.1442 shaynananardi@yahoo.com
Elisabete Phipps-Jeppesen	Fittzwm@hotmail.com
Barbara Ratti	602.723.0464 b.ratti@att.net
Jessica Swatij	evilynnyheart@yahoo.com
Mahala Sweebe	602.938.9319 sweebeclan@aol.com
Laurie Taylor	480.560.7016 laurie@mazarineblue.com
Nola Yergen-Jennings	623.435.9700 ladycamilla@cox.net

We have a new member as of 6/6/07. Shayna Muckheide 480-586-1442 Welcome shaynananardi@yahoo.com

Calendar

This is provided as general news. Please verify times and locations with the organizer of each event. Know of an upcoming costumed event in Arizona? Please tell your editor.

*Indicates an event organized by SWCG.

Tuesday, June 5, @ 6:00pm Tudor Wardrobe Ninya Mikhaila & Jane Malcolm-Davies. Join 'The Tudor Tailor' for a lively look inside the clothes presses of ordinary and middle class people in sixteenth-century England. Discover what evidence there is for their

clothes, where their garments came from, and how they were made and maintained. This dressing demonstration compares and contrasts everyday wear with Sunday best and explains other clothing conventions of Tudor society. It also discusses some of the challenges of recreating historic dress for 21st century wear. This discussion and demonstration will be led by England's foremost scholars of Elizabethan and Tudor dress formerly in charge of creating the reenactment clothing at Hampton Court Palace. For more information see www.tudortailor.com.

They will be selling books and merchandise afterward. P.S. Admission to the Museum is **free** on Tuesday evenings! The auditorium is not that big, so be sure to come early!

Dennita Sewell, Curator of Fashion Design

Thursday, June 21, 2007 Serenity screening 7 p.m. at Harkins Centerpoint 11 at 730 South Mill Avenue, Tempe, Arizona 85281. Tickets on-sale at all Arizona **Bookmans** locations

This special charity screening of the film "Serenity" is hosted by the Arizona Browncoats. <http://www.azbrowncoats.com/> Festivities will include a Firefly costume contest.

***June 23, 2007, 8:30 AM - Run to the Ren** meet at Tasha's to carpool for SWCG outing in the Pines. Wear walking/comfortable shoes & Ren Faire garb. It will be a fun day in the cool pines.

June 23-24, 2007 - Renaissance in the Pines at Fort Tuthill County Park near Flagstaff, Randall will have his/our garb tent there. www.renaissanceinthepinesinc.com

Changing Hands Bookstore is having a special *Harry Potter* event on July 21st for the release of the next book. Call the store for details.

***Sunday, July 29--3 PM - Pirate Pool Party** at Tasha's. Later than 1 because of sun. Say, 3ish? Theme: In honor of Pirates of the Caribbean 3. Food: PotLuck.

August 3-5 **Costume College** in Van Nuys CA. Airtel Plaza Hotel. Costume College is a recurring educational event, held every year. It is a how-to, hands-on event with tons of other costumers, finished off with a trip to the "FABRIC DISTRICT" in Downtown LA the last day. You will find anything and everything you need for fabric, trims, etc at very good prices. If you haven't been to Costume College yet, you need to consider going. Membership for 2007 is sold out. However, if you want to go next year, please let one of the following persons know. They will be glad to buy your membership for 2008. Frances Burns, Diane Harris, Lyn Jeppesen Jean Palmer

Those who are driving will leave PHX Aug 2 and return Aug 8 or 9th.

***August 19 – Ice Cream Social** at Mary Coyle's (5521 North 7th Avenue, Phoenix) (7th Ave & Maryland).

September 7-9, 2007 - CopperCon 27 at Embassy Suites (I-17 and Greenway Road, Phoenix). Fan-run Science-Fiction Convention featuring guests of honor Author Charlaine Harris, Artist Sean Martin, and Musicians Heather Stern and Alison Stern. Masquerade Directors are Diane Harris & Frances Burns.
www.casfs.org/cucon/index.html

***September 30, 2007 - Drape & Lace** SWCG workshop at Kathleen's place. Practice French drape fitting technique and corset lacing.

October 21, 2007 Victorian Tea Glendale

November 18, 2007 –Bring Turkish garb for finishing at Jean's place.

December 16, 2007 - Glendale Glitters Walk the street festival together. Garb encouraged.

SWCG Special Workshops - Saturdays at Bookman's book store, NWC 19th Avenue & Northern in Phoenix. Come on in and join us for stitching and conversation.

6-30-07	9-2
7-28-07	9-2
8-25-07	9-2
9-29-07	9-2
10-27-07	9-2
11-24-07	9-2
12-29-07	9-2

Note from Lyn (treasurer)

All Members: We discussed our activities for last half of 2007 at the May meeting. If you'd like to schedule a specific "to do" item, please get your suggestions to us. We can use all the suggestions we can get, and this is not our organization, it is yours. If we cannot use your idea this year, we will consider it again for 2008.

More info from Lyn RE Pendleton Woolen Mills - We're going through Pendleton again mid June, home in late July, but for sure in time to get to Costume College early August. That's a long time to carry stuff around but we will purchase yardage for anyone who wants us to (NO tax in Oregon). The yardage is 60" wide, and \$8 to \$10 per yard (100% wool - suiting weight). If you're at all interested in one or more yards, we need: (1) swatch for color match, (2) number of yards wanted, and (3) cash deposit. If you want us to ship yours, the cost of that will be in addition. If we cannot get what you want, deposit will be returned in full. We will not attempt to guess at substitutes. If you'd like to see a sample, get to a meeting soon. We will be at Bookman's again two or three times

in addition to the regular meetings and I'll bring at least a sample of my wool yardage with me.

We need content! Please send news items, even if they are just one sentence. Notes about something you've seen, done, read, or heard about. E-mails, preferred, but will take anything /anyway I can get info. Thanks to Frances, Randall, Paula & Lyn for their input this month. Submittal Deadline for *Cactus Needles* will continue to be the 5th of the month and the newsletter will theoretically be printed on the 10th. Anything received after the 5th will probably go into the next month's issue.

Copyright Policy: Copyright for *Cactus Needles* as a whole belongs to Southwest Costumers Guild. Signed articles belong to their authors. Anything in the general news sections may be reproduced in the newsletters of the International Costume Guild and its chapters. ICG chapter editors should contact the *Cactus Needles* editor regarding use of individual signed articles.

Sharing Policy A hard copy of *Cactus Needles* will be sent to any ICG chapter that sends SWCG a hard copy of their own newsletter. After distribution to our local members, a .pdf copy of the newsletter will be posted to www.southwestcostumersguild.org for the enjoyment of everyone.

From the Mailbox:

St. Louis Costumer's Guild "The Scarlet Letter," 1st Quarter 2007 - Best quotes from SLCG List, SLUTs' experiences at the "Who Wants to be a Superhero" auditions, Photos from many years of St. Louis costuming history, President's announcements, plus more cartoons and photos.

Greater Bay Area Costumer's Guild 'Finery' Vol 5 No 3 May/June 2007 - This issue features costume hints for several upcoming GBACC events:

1. San Juan Bautista Early Days and Victorian Ball by Jana Keeler June 16, 2007.
2. Wizarding Fashion Report by Trystan L. Bass for the June 23 GBACG Hogwarts End-of-Term Celebration.
3. Surviving the GBACC Guillotine Picnic by Kendra Van Cleave for the July 14 French Revolution Picnic.

SWCG - Tally from sweatshop

On Saturday , April 14 our sweatshop session produced a total of 31 hats, one nap-all-down long cape, one nap-both-ways cape, and one 34-inch radius full-circle half-cloak with hood.

I haven't broken out the proportions of muffins to flats, but I've affixed price labels at ten dollars for plain hats and fifteen for ones with trim. I called the coordinated nap cloak \$75 and the up&down nap \$60, same as last session. I've priced the half-cloak at \$45.

--Randall

The Costume Closet
Dealing With Mal-Wear

Being Part One of
An Introduction to Costuming the Firefly 'Verse
by Randall Whitlock

Over the last few years, one of the most active and growing segments of SF fandom has been the 'Browncoats', those of us who love Joss Whedon's brilliant but too short-lived television series 'Firefly' and its sequel film 'Serenity'.

Firefly is set in a distant solar system of terraformed frontier worlds in a difficult future unencumbered by aliens or FTL drives. The 'verse is recovering from a devastating civil war. Consequently, much of the culture and clothing is metaphorically connected to the American west in the post civil war reconstruction period. Stirred into this is a heapin' helping of Chinese and other Asian cultural influences. It's a rich universe full of mostly poor folks, rightly inspiring to SF convention hall costumers.

The show revolves around nine principal characters who travel together in the transport ship Serenity. They're called the 'Big Damned Heroes' (BDH's for short) by Browncoats. Any of the BDH's make fine fodder for hall costumes.

Certainly the most western-looking of the BDH's is Captain Malcolm Reynolds. Mal is usually seen in cavalry trousers with suspenders, tall brown boots, and a coarse work shirt with sleeves rolled halfway up the forearms. The good captain is the basis of my favorite hall costume, so I'll dedicate the bulk of this article to his garb.

The pants, with their distinctive high waist, back adjustment buckle, and lack of a belt, can be purchased off the shelf from stores which serve wild west reenactors. Manufacturers of suitable pants include Wah Maker and Frontier Classics. These can be purchased locally at Wild West Mercantile in Mesa, Arizona. You can also find lots of suitable clothing at wild west festivals, such as Festival of the West, the Single-Action Shooting Society's Winter Range, and the annual reenactment of the Battle of Picacho Peak. There are, of course, many online dealers.

Mal's boots are tall, brown, and close-fitting. The originals have zippers up the side and a look reminiscent of both cowboy boots and motorcycle boots. I faked my boots by purchasing ordinary oiled leather western work boots and sewing extended leather cuffs to the tops.

Mal is the wearer of the original 'Browncoat', the coarse three-quarter length leather jacket that has given our fandom its name. It's lines are similar to a late 19th century frock coat, but it is fuller in the body, has turned-up cuffs on the sleeves, and has vents in the sides for a

fast draw. There is a detailed drawing in "Firefly: The Official Companion, Volume I," which shows the locations of all the seams. This book is well worth the purchase at any price.

Not having the budget for leather, I built my browncoat from synthetic suede, borrowing the sleeve from Laughing Moon's frock coat pattern and laying out the body by eyeball. The coat is closed with distinctively shaped brass spring buckles, not unlike those used on old-fashioned 'slicker' raincoats. I found some close-but-no-cigar buckles at a local fabric remnants store. One of these days, I'll build the real thing out of sheet brass stock. You could probably assemble something fairly convincing out of brass conchos and narrow strips of brass to hook the pairs of conchos together.

Mal's sidearm is a true work of art. The detailed description of its making is another good reason to read the Official Companion books. It mystified me for years before I saw the writeup. Turns out the prop was built around a Taurus double-action revolver with molded bronze side panels and a faux magazine added to imply a semi-automatic action, while allowing the original revolver to fire blanks for action scenes. Quantum Mechanix has released a highly detailed replica. Lesser plastic replicas can be found on the net.

Mal's costume was changed a mite for the 'Big Damned Movie'. The trousers were darker brown and somewhat closer fitting, the new shirt featured small metal clasp buckles in place of buttons, and the suspenders were much heavier and more detailed. The browncoat and pants had heavy patches on one shoulder and one leg. I suppose these were meant to imply padded bracing points for a heavy battlefield weapon.

I've yammered on long enough about the Captain. I'll pick up again next time with some hints about costuming the rest of the BDH's and other memorable characters from the Firefly 'verse.

Before closing, I'd like to introduce you to some good friends, The Arizona Browncoats. Check us out at www.azbrowncoats.com. We have a very active e-mail discussion group and forums. We get together for a 'shindig' on the first Saturday evening of each month at the Bookman's entertainment exchange at the northwest corner of 19th Avenue and Northern Avenue in Phoenix.

The Browncoat Knitters Guild gets together at the same Bookman's location on the third Tuesday evening of the month to teach general knitting, like Jayne's cunning hat.

With the generous sponsorship of Harkins Theaters, The Loft Theater and Bookman's, the Arizona Browncoats are participating in "Can't Stop The Serenity", a series of public screenings of 'Serenity' for the benefit of the women's rights advocacy charity 'Equality Now.' Additionally, some of the proceeds from the Arizona

screenings will go to GIFT (Growth Improvement for Female Teens) and The Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona.

From a progress report:

Costume-Con 26 April 25 - 28, 2008, San Jose, California

Sources who prefer to remain unnamed due to the sensitive nature of this report have confided in an exclusive to PR 1.1 that the currently low registration rates are scheduled to rise shortly. After April 30th, registration rates will go up. The public is advised to take cover, store water and duct tape, and tell friends and neighbors to register soon for Costume-Con 26 if they haven't done so already! A registration form can be found on at www.cc26.info.

Act now before it's too late!

Current membership \$75

Supporting Membership \$35

If you want to you can pay on line using PayPal

FYI - The last price increase went from \$50 to \$75

: **[Crofters] Cool link**

Go to this URL and then type the listing /Textile Fiber Atlas /into the search engine to get to the collection: <http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/HistoryCultureCollections/> This gets you to a page about: Werner von Bergen, renowned author/editor of the Wool Handbook (six volumes), also co-authored a small volume of fiber photomicrographs with microscopist Walter Krauss in 1942. This volume, the Textile Fiber Atlas: A Collection of Photomicrographs of Common Textile Fibers, has provided generations of textile students with definitive images of fibers at high magnification, along with careful directions and precise notes. It is an indispensable aid in properly identifying textile objects.

The Textile Fiber Atlas... has been out of print for some time but it remains popular among ethnobotanists, textile conservators, microscopists, anthropologists, and archaeologists in photocopy form. Though modern techniques of photomicrography now permit color and scanning electron micrographic images, the Textile Fiber Atlas remains a classic reference in textiles research. With links to a PDF [among other things] of his book. anthropologists, and archaeologists in photocopy form. Though modern techniques of photomicrography now permit color and scanning electron micrographic images, the photomicrography now permit color and scanning electron micrographic images, the Textile Fiber Atlas remains a classic reference in textiles research.

With links to a PDF [among other things] of his book.

Also looks like it might be a fun site to noodle around in.

--Frances



Participants in the cosplay competition at the Across Plus Anime' Event at Bookman's on April 28, 2007. --Randall

Renaissance, Pirates, Fairies

Reviewed by Paula Lary

In case you haven't seen the magazines Renaissance, or Pirates, or Fairies at bookstores, you might give one of them a try.

Renaissance was the first of the three to come out. The original format of the magazine is based on and is dedicated to the Renaissance Festivals occurring around the country. The ever growing market about the Renaissance Period and the popularity these festivals have created about the period have lead to the publication of this magazine. But you don't have to be a fair goer to get something out of it- in fact, much of each issue is now dedicated to medieval history, art, and culture. Each issue has articles about historical figures-several had articles and sidebars about Anne Boleyn. These were of special interest to a friend and me since She (Bobbie) is a direct great [x many] niece of Anne Boleyn. One article discussed the possibility that Anne was pregnant at the time of her execution (and they knew it) and that's why Henry's advisors trumped up charges to be rid of her on the chance she would produce a living male heir.

The historical articles offer insight to conditions, weather, political, etc., that would have influenced clothing. Also numerous black & white pictures of real clothing or paintings of the era are included.

They also have actual costuming columns and articles geared toward the SCA and the Renaissance Festival circuit. One article described how to make a goblet cover to keep the wee beasties out of your mead/drink at outdoor court activities. Another showed how to make a belt pouch. Both had clear instructions, pictures & diagrams.

Even the ads can be used as a source of inspiration for costuming ideas. The publication is 6 issues per year. I haven't yet subscribed—have been picking up “issues that interest me”, but have realized that in the 1& ½ years I've

seen it (now is in its 10th year of publication), I've bought almost every issue at the newsstand.

One of the best issues for costumes is the Annual Wedding issue which, several months in advance, they call for readers to submit photos & stories of their own Renaissance/Medieval style wedding. The best ones are published in the wedding issue and prizes are given the best articles. The rest of the substantial issue is full of color photos of Renaissance wedding gowns and clothes. Some are by designers, some from patterns such as Simplicity and the use of fabric, trim and other accessories are described to help one duplicate or to use as inspiration for their own creations.

Pirates is a new publication in the same style as Renaissance but is dedicated to the growing Pirate market and focus. I read one really good article about the real Blackbeard the Pirate that was lavishly illustrated with pictures, drawings, & maps.

Fairies I only glanced a little at the fairies premier issue. I was doing the usual Thursday girls' night at the bookstore (we buy coffee and sit & look at magazines). We ran out of time (store was closing) to really go into depth, but the articles & pictures alone made me want to go back for a longer look and a possible purchase.



India in Illinois

I paid a visit to my sister in Chicago at the beginning of June to meet my newborn nephew, Vincent Charles. Laurie lives right off of Devon Street, which is the little India neighborhood. The street is lined with excellent restaurants, sari shops and wedding jewelry stores. Here are a few pictures:
– Randall



Jean at AniZona 3. Photo by Randall

