

Southwest Costumers Guild
PO Box 39504
Phoenix AZ 85069

www.southwestcostumersguild.org

Officer Contacts

President Frances Burns
Vice President Nyki Robertson
Treasurer Ros Lyn Jeppesen
Secretary Diane Harris
Editor/Webmaster Randall Whitlock
Archivist Jean Palmer

president@southwestcostumersguild.org
vicepresident@southwestcostumersguild.org
treasurer@southwestcostumersguild.org
secretary@southwestcostumersguild.org
webmaster@southwestcostumersguild.org
archivist@southwestcostumersguild.org

Calendar

Do you know an event of interest to Arizona costumers? Please contact your editor with the details. Red text and an asterisk designate an SWCG-sponsored event. Unless otherwise noted, our monthly meetings start at 1PM.

June 12-15, 2008 – **Phoenix Con Games** – Four-Day Annual Gamers Convention Gaming / Anime / Parties at Mesa Convention Center. There will be a costume contest with cash prizes. www.phxcongames.com

June 21, 2008, 7 PM – **Can't Stop the Serenity: Tucson** at The Loft Theater in Tucson. Special showing of Joss Whedon's shiny film "Serenity" for the benefit of Equality Now (<http://www.equalitynow.org/>). Sponsored by the Arizona Browncoats. These showings usually feature costume contests and other fan participation events. Best to buy your tix in advance. The Tucson Serenity screening will be double-featured with "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." <http://www.azbrowncoats.com/>

June 28, 2008 – **Sunacosu Workshop** Sunacosu, the new local cosplay group, is having an open workshop and steampunk brainstorm on June 28th at Marian's home in Peoria from 10 am to 4pm. Bring any of your costume projects at any stage to work on and get help with. In addition, come prepared for a steampunk costume discussion. Go to <http://www.sunacosu.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=45> for more information.

June 28, 2008 – **Can't Stop the Serenity: Greater Phoenix** at Chandler Cinemas 2140 North Arizona Avenue (Part of East Valley Mall, south of Target store). Special showing of "Serenity" for the benefit of Equality Now (<http://www.equalitynow.org/>). Sponsored by the Arizona Browncoats and Bookman's. There will be two screenings of the film, with special events between. The special events will include a Firefly costume contest hosted by your editor. Best to

September 28, 2008 – **Fabric Field Trip*** (tentative). Some of our members have a lead on a fabric inventory for sale in the far east valley. If this pans out, we'll go have a look. If not, we may do another fundraiser sweatshop.

October 19, 2008 – **Not All Dummies are Duct Tape*** (tentative) at Jean's place in Sun City. We have a lead on an alternative method to build a personally fitted dresser dummy, but more research needs to be done to see if it's practical. Keep watching this space.

November 30, 2008 – **Evening in the Garden*** at the Phoenix Botanical Gardens. Get together in the evening to walk the annual "Las Noches de las Luminarias" event. Wintry costume highly encouraged.

December 28, 2008 – **Holiday Party*** SWCG Social and annual officer elections. Location to be announced.

July 2-6, 2009 - **FiestaCon** (WesterCon 62) at the Tempe Mission Palms hotel in Tempe, Arizona. Guests so far include author Alan Dean Foster, Analog editor Stanley Schmidt and artist Todd Lockwood. Sponsored by www.lepreCon, Inc .

September 4-7, 2009 - **North American Discworld Convention** in Tempe, Arizona. The first convention in the United States for fans of Terry Pratchett's Discworld, featuring guest of honor **Terry Pratchett** himself. www.nadwcon.org Sponsored by www.lepreCon, Inc .

The Halfling Pavilion

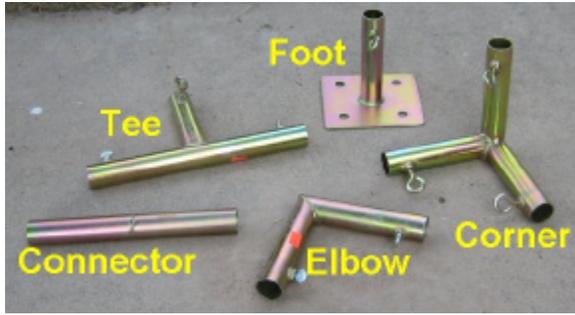
by Randall Whitlock

A couple of years ago, I composed a web page titled "Get Medieval on Your Pop-Up," with many tips on how to disguise your portable shade canopy for use at renaissance faires and SCA events. You can view the page at <http://members.cox.net/popup/>.

When I participate as a merchant crafter in weekend renaissance faires, I prefer to sleep right behind my booth, in case bad weather, marauding orcs, or other emergencies require immediate attention to my display and goods. For this purpose, I use a small dome tent, just big enough for my bunk, spare clothes, chuck box, and a few other necessities. This tent is made of nylon and fiberglass. It is ample protection from the weather, but has a frightfully mundane appearance. Up to now I've had to collapse it and hide it under my trade tables (or a big pile of tablecloths) during faire hours.

It occurred to me that the same sort of disguise I use on my trade pavilion could be applied to the dome tent. I call this my "Halfling Pavilion." The goal is to create a medieval-looking tent cover, but scaled down to hobbit-size.

My secondary goal was to make the tent as simple as possible. I'm a stitcher, not a blacksmith or carpenter; so I wished to build the frame out of prefabricated parts, without having to create any complex custom joints. I didn't quite succeed, but more on that later.



At swap meets, you will see shade canopies built out of galvanized steel electrical conduit. This material is suitably tough and much more rigid than PVC or any plastic. It looks plenty mundane in its raw state, but can be painted. The real advantage is the variety of prefabricated joints available to fit conduit of all the standard diameters. You can find dealers in these connectors at many outdoor swap meets and at tent & awning suppliers. Locally, these include

Phoenix Tent & Awning or Mark's Nuts & Bolts. Online suppliers include Creative Shelters at <http://www.creativeshelters.com/>.

My dome tent is eight feet wide, seven feet deep and 4.5 feet tall in the middle. I decided to give the frame an eight-foot square base with a pyramid top to mimic the shape of my trade pavilion. For ease of transport, I divided the longest frame members into four-foot lengths.

These standard connectors are really designed for tents with flat tops or ridge poles. I had to do some adapting to make them form a pyramid shape. I used a corner joint at the juncture of each



leg with a corner of the pyramid. I used a tee joint in the middle of each wall to attach a sloping roof support, which runs up the middle of each face of the pyramid. This arrangement would make the corners droop, so I added support ropes which run from the peak of the pyramid to its corners. I used bungee cord for these support ropes, but plain rope with a sliding tension-adjustment would work fine too.

The galvanized steel conduit is sold in ten-foot lengths. For simplicity, I made the legs of the frame 30 inches long (one-quarter of a conduit piece) and the sloping face supports of the pyramid top five feet long (half of a conduit piece). I had to muck about with the Pythagorean Theorem a bit before I convinced myself this would work.

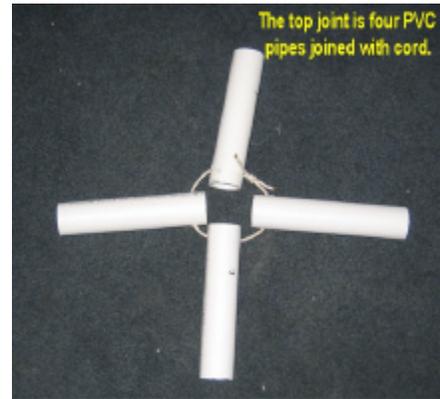
Do yourself a favor. Get a plumber's pipe cutter before you begin work. This is a circular carbide blade mounted in a metal frame with a thumb screw. You rotate the frame around and around your pipe, slowly tightening the thumb screw as you go. This cuts the pipe neat and square. It's a lot less work for much better results than using a hacksaw. A pipe cutter suitable for 3/4-inch nominal pipe costs about ten bucks at a hardware store. Twenty dollars will get you a larger cutter, suitable for wider pipe.





The tricky part was to create a top joint which would bring the four side poles of the pyramid together with the four corner ropes.

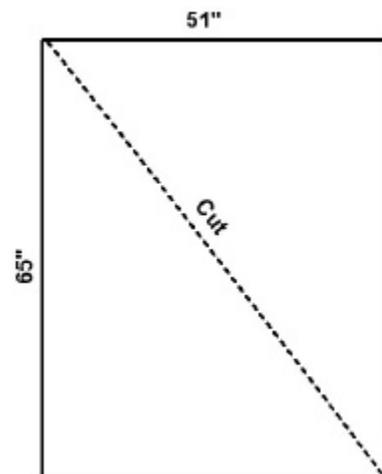
To repair one of my old pavilions whose top joint had broken, I once constructed a bent X shape of PVC pipe. I placed two lengths of pipe in an oven to soften, then bent them to the approximate angle using oven mitts. I connected the two bent pieces of PVC with a bolt. It worked, but my workmanship was less than spectacular. The result looks like a deformed sea creature from an H.P. Lovecraft story.



For the halfling pavilion, I went with something simpler. I cut four 6-inch lengths of PVC pipe, drilled through them, and connected them with a loop of nylon cord. The pyramid supports insert into the PVC pipes and the bungees hook to the cord between the pipes.



Now that my frame was assembled, I took measurements for a reality check. Sure enough, the joints had added a bit of length to the walls. I needed four triangular faces for the pyramid that were 100 inches on the base and 65 inches in altitude. For



particoloring, I divided each pyramid wall into two pieces – left and right. After adding seam allowance, these could be constructed by dividing a rectangle 65 inches high by 51 inches on the diagonal.

Make the cut on two layers each of two different colors of fabric, oriented right side up. I used cotton twill, which is available in many colors and is easy to work with. Poplin or duck should work too.

The sidewalls are rectangles 30 inches high and a bit longer than eight feet. I chose to divide each of these sidewall panels into two colors to continue the particolored theme. The wall panels are centered on the corners of the pavilion and overlap each other in the middle of each wall. This creates a door flap in the middle of each side of the pavilion, so it doesn't matter which direction you set it down over the frame. – The door flap will always be lined up with the door of the dome tent. I mounted metal grommets at regular intervals along the bottom edges of the sidewalls so that they can be tied down if needed.

To enhance the medieval look of the pavilion, I inserted dags into the seam between the pyramid top and the walls. These dags are simple equilateral triangles twelve inches on a side, with their exposed edges hemmed by turning under or using a serger.



To set up the halfling pavilion: Pitch the dome tent, assemble the frame around it, lower the pavilion skin over the frame, adjust its position, then tie down the tent sides with stakes. If you expect significant wind, you can use foot pieces at the bottoms of the legs and stake the foot pieces to the ground.

I look forward to Highlands War in July to give the Halfling Pavilion a field trial.

The first Saboten-Con animé convention was held over Memorial Day Weekend 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Phoenix – ed.

Saboten-Con

Reviewed by Marian (Wyldbratling)

Overall, on a scale of 1 (suck) to 5 (awesome), I would give it a solid 3, and for the first year with most of the people running it fairly inexperienced, that's pretty good. If I was a little younger, I'd probably give it a 4 as I would have had lots of people my age to run around and be hyper with. I did not spend much time in panels or the dances, but a lot of time socializing and attending the major events.

Please keep this the following in mind as you proceed:

- Saboten con came to be in the span of 5 very short months.
- It fell on the same weekend as Fanimé which had already been announced over a year before.
- Several people backed out of helping run the con at the last minute.

Pros!:

- HUGE! I don't have an exact number but a lot more people showed up than were expected.
- Almost everyone was in costume that weekend.
- Impromptu game of red rover with at least 30 people playing in the courtyard.
- Everyone I saw was having fun.
- Iron Cosplay was so popular they had to turn people away.
- The gaming room was set up very well, lots of room to move around and plenty of space to work with.
- The hotel was pretty quiet in the rooms at all hours.
- Very little if any glomping!*

* *“Glomping” is the practice of running up and giving strong hugs to complete strangers, whether they want them or not. – ed.*

- They had an on-site photo booth set up for people to get pictures in their cosplays.
- The “Price is Right” game during halftime was surprisingly fun. This might be a good idea for a general panel.

Cons:

- The hotel was too small and poorly set up for the con.
- With such short notice the dealer's room was very small and had only local vendors that you can visit on a daily basis.
- The hotel staff was not unfriendly, but they were not terribly friendly either at the front desk.
- The pools closed early and the indoor pool made the hall humid.
- Several elevators broke down.
- The Karaoke was between panel rooms, making them intrusive to other panels.

Things that went wrong / could be better:

- The hotel did not do a good job setting up chairs for the fashion show. The chairs faced front, the runway ran down the middle and the con staff didn't fix it. :(
- The AV group that committed to running the tech for the con backed out the day before. Cosplay Zone & the volunteers did their best to do it on short notice, but there were a lot of AV issues.
- Rooms where panels were held were changed with no notice being posted in the booklet, or flyers dropped in bags and I could never find a map anywhere to look but in the booklet.
- The artist row was on both sides of the hall outside the panel rooms. This caused huge traffic issues. Unfortunately, the way the hotel was set up there was no place else to put them.
- Registration started an hour before the panels. Not enough time.

The masquerade needed help:

- Contestants were let on stage with their badges on.
- The host stole the show.
- The stage was too low, even four rows back we could not see anything from the knee down. Every time someone dropped a prop or laid down, they were MIA.
- No stage ninjas.
- Several contestants were announced by the wrong name or had issues with their music.
- Lack of finished hems and ironing, on the part of the contestants.
- The overall layout of the room and stage was fairly poor. There were no good seats once you got past the second row directly at center stage.
- Contestants were allowed to enter with hall costumes that were not specifically noted as hall costumes, and were allowed to compete with them.

Things they did right:

- Fast pass – People who rented a hotel room got a little ticket that would let them jump to the head of the line for major events like the masquerade, fashion show and signings.
- Marketing – Ciria and her team marketed the living daylights out of this con, they were everywhere, holding contests, giving out tickets as prizes and making themselves known. If you didn't know about the con you lived under a rock. Long-running cons could learn a lot from her about reaching her target audience and reeling them in.

My suggestions for next year:

- Larger hotel with a better function space layout.
- More lead time for registration and major events to make sure the set up is right.
- Better backup for when AV issues happen.
- Masquerade improvements overall.
- Of course a little more lead-in time for the whole con would help with artists and dealers as well as panelists.
- Video room – Playing Animé and Other Asian movies would have been nice.
- Move the photographer to a better or more prominent location.
- An actual art show would be nice. Drawings, designs, and photos, props etc. could be displayed for sale and juried as well. The artist ally could have lined the walls of the room with the displayed art in the center.
- Cosplay / Costume Museum – A room where past cosplays and costumes could be displayed on mannequins for people to look at; guest cosplayers could be in the room to talk to people about their costume/cosplay. (Stealing this idea from Costume Con.)
- I'd like to see the panels laid out in tracks, Room A has panels on cosplay, Iron Cosplay, wig making, prop making etc.. Room B has AMV, Animé Videos, Asian Movies etc., Room C has Karaoke and Dances, Room D has Video Games, and so forth. This way all the AV equipment can be in one or two rooms and not have to move around; just set up for each panel in the room.
- Not everyone goes to the masquerade; it would be nice to have a few panels or some other activities going on for the people who are not fans of the masquerades.
- The maid café was a great idea, but for me not so good. I can't have a lot of sugary foods. I was told they didn't have anything but desserts so, it might have been better if they could serve small sandwiches and other foodstuffs.

COPPERCON 28

Annual Fan-Organized SF/Fantasy Convention

August 29-31, 2008 At Embassy Suites Hotel
4415 E Paradise Village Pkwy South in Phoenix



Guests

MaryJanice Davidson *Author of Undead (Betsy the Vampire), Wyndham Werewolves, Jennifer Scales & Fred the Mermaid*

Greg Weisman *Creator of Gargoyles, Producer of Spectacular Spider-Man*

David Hedgecock *of Ape Entertainment, Gargoyles Artist*

Anthony Alongi *Co-Author of Jennifer Scales series*

Tom Smith *Filker Extraordinaire*

Membership \$40 thru 07/31/2008
\$45 at the door

CopperCon 28
PO Box 62613
Phoenix AZ 85082
www.coppercon.org