

Cactus Needles

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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.*

Third Saturday of Every Month, 10 AM – **Personal Projects Workshops*** at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. Bring your current project, socialize, pick our brains, Stitch and B. . . . Contact VP Nyki for details.

February 6 thru March 12, 2010 (weekends plus prez day) – **Arizona Renaissance Festival** Highway 60 east of Gold Canyon, Arizona. <http://www.royalfaires.com/arizona/>

February 6, 2010, 7AM to 2PM – **Phoenix Faerie Festival Rummage Sale** at Midtown Primary School, 4735 N. 19th Ave, Phoenix.

February 8-15, 2010 – **The Estrella War** at Canyon Moon Ranch in Florence, Arizona. The Society For Creative Anachronism's annual festival of armored combat, arts and sciences with a merchants' row to rival any renaissance faire. <http://www.estrellawar.org/>

February 24-28, 2010 – **Winter Range** at the Ben Avery Shooting Range, NWC I-17 & Carefree Highway north of Phoenix. Cowboy Action Shooting event with a fine sutlers' row and a costume contest at 5PM on Saturday evening. <http://www.winterrange.com/costume.html>

February 27 & 28, 2010 – **Matsuri: A Festival of Japan** at Heritage and Science Park in downtown Phoenix. <http://azmatsuri.org/>

February 27 & 28, 2010 – **Arizona Highland Games** at Steele Indian School Park, 300 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix AZ. Admission \$15 for adults, \$5 for children 15 & younger. <http://www.arizonascots.com/05games.shtml>

February 28, 2010 – Japan to Scotland* – SWCG field trip. Meet at Burton Barr Public Library at 1221 N. Central Avenue in Phoenix (E side Central Avenue, 1 block south of McDowell) at 9:30 AM to walk the Matsuri Festival and Highland Games together.

March 13-14, 2010 – The **Battle of Picacho Peak** at Picacho Peak State Park. The new visitor center is finished and the annual reenactment of Arizona's only civil war battle is back. <http://azstateparks.com/parks/pipe/index.html>

March 18-21, 2010 – **National Festival of the West** at Westworld in Scottsdale. Features films, celebrity appearances, music, reenactors, merchants, chuckwagon cooks, mountain men and, of course, a costume contest. Adults \$14. <http://www.festivalofthewest.com/>

March 20, 2010 9-12 – Day of the Spanish Horse at Estrella Mountain Park. <http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/estrella/EventsDetailPublishers.aspx?EventID=10581>

March 26-28, 2010 – **Con-Nichiwa** at the Holiday Inn Palo Verde in Tucson, Arizona. A new Animé convention from the creators of Phoenix Cactus ComiCon and Saboten-Con. <http://www.con-nichiwa.com/>.

March 28, 2010 – **Screen Printing*** – SWCG Workshop at Jean's place in Sun City. Gail Wolfenden-Steib will show us a novel screen printing technique.

Saturday, April 24, 2010 – **Apache Dress*** - SWCG Workshop at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. Cindy Trail will show us some basics of traditional Native American clothing.

May 7-10, 2010 – **Costume-Con 28** at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. <http://www.cc28.org/>

May 14-16, 2010 - **LepreCon 36** at the Phoenix Mesa Marriott Hotel in Mesa, Arizona features guests of Honor George R.R. Martin, Charles Vess and James A. Owen. <http://www.leprecon.org/>.

May 27-30, 2010 – **Phoenix ComiCon** at the Phoenix Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel. Guests include Jonathan Frakes and Jim Steranko. <http://www.phoenixcomicon.com/>

May 30, 2010 – **Duct Tape Dummies*** - SWCG Workshop at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. Build a custom dress form using packing peanuts and the handyman's secret weapon.

June 27, 2010 – **Corset Fitting*** - SWCG Workshop at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale.

July 9-11, 2010 – **RandomCon** Arizona's Gaming Convention at the Windemere Hotel, 5750 E. Main Street, Mesa, Arizona. <http://www.randomcon.org/>.

July 25, 2010 – **Sweatshop*** - SWCG Workshop at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. We'll build some cloaks and other garments for a fundraiser.

August 29, 2010 – **Pool Party*** - SWCG Social at Chuck & Tasha's place. Our annual costume party by and in the pool. Theme to be announced.

September 4-6, 2010 – **CopperCon 2010** at Windemere Hotel and Conference Center 5750 East Main Street in Mesa, Arizona. The Guest of Honor is Stephen R. Donaldson. The con features a masquerade directed by our veep, Nyki. <http://www.coppercon.org/>.

September 26, 2010 – **Fabric Swap*** - SWCG meeting at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. Sure, that piece of fabric, notion, or tool seemed like a good idea at the time, but it's been sitting around for years. Maybe someone else has a better use for it. Maybe they have something you can use. Let's barter!

November 12-14, 2010 - **TusCon 37** at Hotel Tucson, 475 N. Granada in Tucson, Arizona. Guest of Honor is Jim Butcher, Author of the Harry Dresden novels. <http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/> or <http://www.tusconscificon.com/>.

November 20-21, 2010 – **Phoenix Faerie Festival** at Estrella Mountain Park in Goodyear, Arizona. <http://www.westerngatesfaerierealms.com/PhoenixFaerieFestival.htm>

January, 2011 – **MythosCon** at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel in downtown Tempe, Arizona. This is a convention for fans of H.P. Lovecraft and his works, hosted by local author and fan of note, Adam Niswander. <https://www.mythoscon.org/>

From the Costume-Con Founder

Dear Friends and Costume-Con 30 members:

At the time I bid for Costume-Con 30, I made certain assumptions about the state of my life and my ability to run the convention. Sadly, those assumptions were not accurate, and over the last 9 months, my life has been thrown into such disarray that I have no business chairing a convention, let alone a "milestone year" convention such as Costume-Con 30.

For the good of the convention, and exercising my prerogative as the Costume-Con Founder and Service Mark Holder, I have made the difficult decision to hand over the running of Costume-Con 30 to different stewards. Elaine Mami has agreed to chair the convention, with the backing of the SouthWest Costumers Guild (SWCG) chapter of the ICG. The venue will move from Pittsburgh, PA to the Phoenix, AZ area. Theming may change, as the new committee should have free rein to run their convention their way. This is an experienced and competent committee, and I have no doubt that they will run an excellent and fun-filled Costume-Con.

If you already have a membership for Costume Con 30, you need do nothing-it will be honored. If you joined the convention between Costume-Con 27 and this announcement and would like a refund, it will be cheerily given.

Hopefully, at 2+ years out from the con, disruption will be minimal. Thank you for your patience during the transition.

--Karen Dick

First Thoughts from Your Costume-Con 30 Chair

OK, let me start at the beginning. Frances & Jean had approached me to chair a bid for CC 32 or 33, and I agreed. Karen Dick was set to do CC30 in Pittsburgh in 2012, but, due to major personal problems that arose suddenly, she asked me and the SWCG to take it over. Since we don't seem to be wrapped all that tightly, we have accepted, as of DarkCon. Several meetings were held at DarkCon, and we came away with a concom and most of our staff - some of these positions were already in place by Karen, and those folks have agreed to stay on.

Currently, our hotel liason, Jo, is searching locations for us, armed with data from previous CCs. We are aiming for March or the first week in April.

Meantime, my brain is whirling feverishly, and I have been sending all of those odd thoughts to Frances and Jean for their ideas. They are my eyes and ears in Phoenix, because I don't know the area or the fan base at all.

Here's how I see my position as chair: I'm the one out front to take the shots and ultimate responsibility for any problems. I will NOT take the credit for the things others do well. I believe that the best way for me to be "in charge" is to find all of the best people for the jobs, and let them do those jobs. My job is then to check to see how they are managing, and if I can do anything to make their jobs easier.

So far, most of the jobs have been filled, but there are still some major openings, and some positions that could use a second person. Once our banker can establish an account for us, we will get the current funds transferred from Karen, who has already provided us with a logo and membership lists. We are very well begun, and I am excited! I'm waiting to hear from 2 people who are each deciding whether they want to take on our web site, which is currently the biggest opening in the staff.

The tag is Sands of Time, with themes of steampunk and wild west. Marty Gear is MD for the SF/F masquerade, and Frances Burns is MD for the Historical. Bruce & Nora Mai are doing the Future Fashion Folio and show. Byron Connell is our Green Room person. Sandy Swank is running the Friday Night Social (How the West Wasn't) and Lisa Ashton is doing programming. If we get the dates we are aiming for, tech will be handled by Les Roth and the Trans-Iowa Canal Co. Richard Man is our official photographer, and Eric Cannon is our videographer.

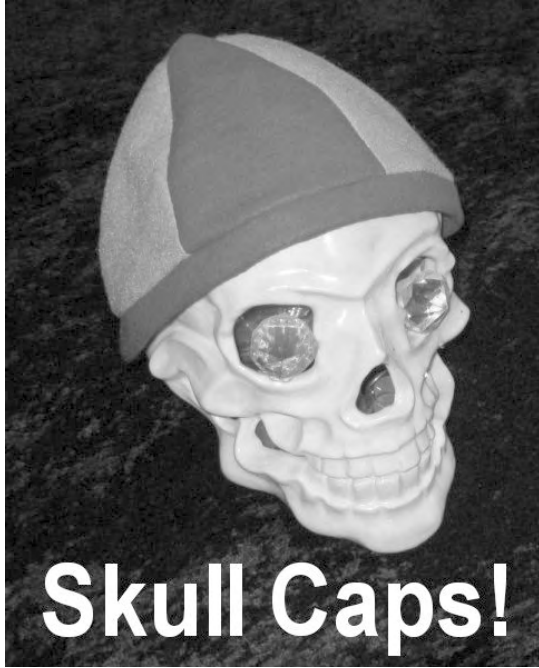
What we need most right now is ideas and input. Also, if there's something you particularly want to do for the con. Please contact me at ecmami@hotmail.com, because sometimes my 'puter has problems with yahoogroups. I can't send mail to the guild from hotmail! Contact me or Frances at any time.

Thanks
--Elaine

The ball is in our court now. Let's throw our support behind Elaine and the concom – Editor.

From the Mailbox

Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild Finery, Vol 8 No. 1, Jan-Feb 2010. Carol Wood details the successful Women's Institute of Domestic Arts & Sciences correspondence course from the early 20th century. Lisa Vanderberghe describes her Adventures in Costuming in Paris



Skulduggery

by Randall Whitlock

A skullcap is just what it sounds like – a close-fitting brimless cap that mimics the shape of your cranium. Skullcaps have been around for thousands of years and have come to be associated with several of the world's major religions. A generic term for these might be “prayer caps.” Roman catholic priests wear the “zucchetto,” which is color-coded by rank, with red for cardinals, white for the Pope, etc. Muslim men wear the “Taqiyah” or “Kufi,” which is also worn by west African men and Americans of African descent to celebrate their heritage. The most familiar prayer cap to many of us is the Jewish cap called a “yarmulke” in Yiddish or a “kippah” in Hebrew. These range in style and tone from carefully knitted or embroidered family heirlooms to bright and whimsical novelty caps featuring cartoon characters.

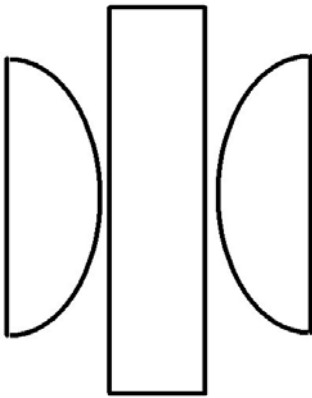
Skullcaps in recent history include the beanie (with or without a propeller) and stretchy caps designed to be worn underneath sports helmets. Leather skullcaps are popular among motorcyclists for similar reasons. Some of these are a clever design with an extended crown and headband that ties behind the neck. This design is also seen in sports caps made of high-tech terry cloths to dissipate perspiration. The all-American baseball cap is nothing but a skullcap with a bill.

Skullcaps are connected with a variety of SF and fantasy characters, including Buck Rogers, Lord Vetinari, Ming the Merciless, Merlin (as played by Nicol Williamson in “Excalibur”) and a bunch of old-school Time Lords.

A skull cap can be made using any pattern that creates a segment of a sphere, or something close to it. Knitters and chainmail artists can simply form a spiral or series of concentric rings with the diameter of the outer rings adjusted to map over the sphere. It's not as complicated as it sounds.

Kufi and sephardic kippah are often formed with a circular or oval flat crown and straight sides, like the pillbox hats favored by ladies in the middle 20th century.



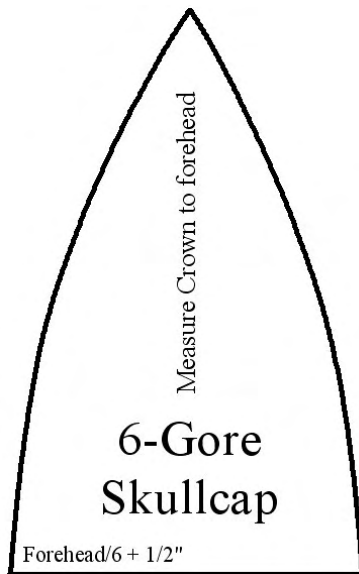
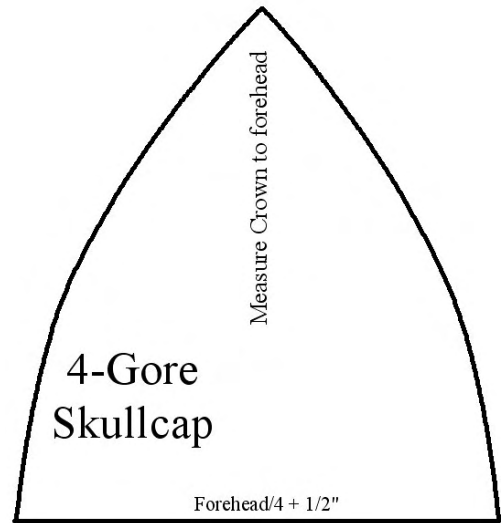


The biker skullies mentioned above usually have side panels shaped like half-ellipses, a roughly rectangular center panel and an extended headband to form the ties.

My favorite way to build a skullcap is to cut it from a number of gores shaped like triangles with their sides bowed outward. I usually work with four gores (a common cut for a yarmulke) or six gores (as seen on baseball caps). Zucchettos traditionally have eight gores.

To form the gore pattern, measure the circumference of your head and divide this measurement by the number of gores, then add a half-inch for seam allowance. For me this comes out to 6-inch wide gores for a four-panel hat or 4-inch wide gores for a six-panel hat. The height of the triangle equals the distance from the cap rim to the crown of your head.

Getting the curvature of the sides right can be tricky. A good cheat is to take a sheet of aluminum foil, lay it against the side of a baseball cap, and rub it with your thumb to pick up an impression of the seams of one gore. (An aluminum foil skullcap is, of course, great for screening out those nasty alien mind-control rays.)



The two gore patterns seen here are correctly proportioned. Just copy and enlarge them until the base is the proper length for your forehead measurement. You may have to do some math.

Cut four or six gores from your favorite fabric. Craft felt and felted wool are easy to work with. If you use a stretch fabric, make sure it stretches across the gore instead of along its length. Alternate panels of contrasting colors for a 1950s college beanie look, like Yorick is wearing at the top of this article.

Sew your gores together using as narrow a seam as your fabric will allow. A quarter inch works well in most cases.

Finish the rim of your cap. To turn under and sew is probably good enough, but your cap will be stronger if you stitch on a bit of ribbon or elastic and roll it into the inside of the cap. When making a generic cap for my renfaire booth, where I don't know the exact size of the potential wearer, I add a hollow headband with a drawstring (again, look at Yorick).

Fantasy skullcaps sometimes have complicated shapes to their rims. These might include an exaggerated widow's peak in the middle of the forehead, arches over the eyebrows, or extended ear flaps.

The skullcap makes an excellent base for designing a special hat for your character. Add curved felt horns with bells for a medieval jester or a comic Viking helmet. Wings, antlers, a rooster's comb, etc. make for comic fun. Appliqué or embroider mystic symbols for a wizard. Add gears, lights and electrodes for a mad scientist or his Igor.

Flesh-colored and textured skullcaps, often molded from latex, make excellent bases for creature costumes or when you simply want to hide your natural hair. Stretchy skullcaps (they probably have a special name, but I'm out of research time) can be used to hold down your hair under a wig.

A Costumer's Guide to 20th St and Camelback by Cathie Yankovich

When Nordstrom's opened at Camelback Fashion Square a few years ago, folks familiar with the company's policies predicted the Last Chance outlet store at 1919 E Camelback would close. Happily for all of us, they were wrong. If you enjoy searching for treasures, shopping the aisles of Last Chance is for you. To add zest, management offers irregular specials, like the 35% off boots at my last visit. Of course, no one can guarantee that you'll strike discount store gold, but it's definitely worth a try. For example, during my time in the shoe racks, I discovered some over-the-knee fringed boots (discounted from \$49), tan knee-high cuffed boots on 4" heels - perfect for pirates or steampunk (discounted from \$29), short boots with buttons (ditto) and several pairs of low-heeled cuffed boots (also discounted from \$29). At other visits I've found long sweeping skirts and lacy shirts for \$9.99 and under. Warning - check the merchandise thoroughly before buying. I had to set down a lovely pair of fringed boots due to a tear in the leather and set down a pair of cuffed boots because the stitching was coming out. Much of the merchandise is returns - and Nordstrom's has a generous return policy.

Marshall's (1801 E Camelback - just around the corner from Last Chance) isn't worth a special visit; nothing distinguishes this one from a store in Chandler or Peoria. However, if you're already in the neighborhood, check it out just in case. Shoes were on sale when I stopped and I fell in lust with some ultimate steampunk/goth boots. Chunky brown boots with buckles and an overlay of pyramidal brass nailheads (at \$69, over 75% discounted.)

For a final stop, head east to My Sister's Closet (2033 E Camelback) and its brother store Well-Suited (2035 E Camelback). My Sister's Closet is now a chain with 10 consignment clothing and furniture (My Sister's Attic) stores in Scottsdale, Phoenix and Chandler. Each location has a different specialty. For western, head to the north Scottsdale store. This pair of stores offers vintage clothes and accessories in very limited quantities. Still, if you're nearby, stop in and browse. Over the years I've brought home enough clothes to fill a closet. For example, last year I found a Double D Ranchwear bolero jacket in black velvet and some Ralph Lauren shirts for \$12.99. This time there were fake-lace leather shoes appropriate for Victorian or steampunk at \$49, Tony Lama cowboy boots and a whole rack of hardware-laden belts suitable for either goth or steampunk at \$59. Prices tend to be higher here than at Last Chance, but most of the merchandise is in better shape. Part of the problem/blessing is the clientele - mostly younger folks, more concerned with being cool than shopping wisely. Keep an eye out for quality and you'll do fine here, even in the designer racks. Ditto for Well-Suited. My husband is walking around in a \$800+ pair of Paul Bond boots that I snagged for \$40 - less than they were charging for a \$150 pair of Justins.



Lyn teaches measurements for basic pattern drafting at our January 2010 meeting. The measurement system is based on "Pattern Making for Fashion Design, Fourth Edition" by Helen Joseph-Armstrong.

Dues Are Due!

Our treasurer asked me to remind you that for most of us, SWCG and ICG dues were due for renewal in January. If you haven't ponied up yet, please write your check to "Southwest Costumers Guild" and pass it to Lyn at the next meeting or mail it to the PO Box address in the newsletter masthead. If you think you may have a different renewal date, please ask at <mailto:treasurer@southwestcostumersguild.org>. The rates for assorted membership combinations (Local, ICG, Household) are explained on the signup form at the SWCG web page <http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org/>.

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*Seen
Around
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