



# Cactus Needles

15.10 – October, 2015

The Southwest Costumers Guild  
PO Box 39504, Phoenix AZ 85069

<http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org/>

## Shoot the Moon

Randall's photo of last month's lunar eclipse. Would have been even cooler on Halloween. Aroooo!

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## Frances presents "From Concept to Pattern"



Frances gave the first of three invited lectures by SWCG members at the Tempe Public Library on September 19, 2015. Eleven persons were in the audience, including SWCG regulars Paula, Tasha and Randall, as well as Rolf from the library staff.

The meeting venue is a clean carpeted room with ample space, rolling tables, a digital projector and two fixed monitors – very well suited for this sort of presentation. Rolf tells us a newly formed cosplay club meets here every Saturday afternoon.

Frances spoke on the process of converting your idea into a real costume, with much information on how to adjust published patterns to your particular body form and the look you wish to achieve. Her lecture notes are attached. From this base, discussion moved to audience members' upcoming ideas, from a beautiful sketch of an asian-inspired flowing dress to a whimsical ostrich ballerina for Halloween.

After the talk, Frances, Tasha and Randall repaired to Café Lalibela at University and Hardy in Tempe for a satisfyingly exotic lunch featuring a variety of Ethiopian dishes presented as a family-style sampler over the distinctive "injera" bread, which serves as tableware as well as part of the meal. Your editor intends to explore this cuisine again when work schedules take him to Tempe.

The next talk will be Randall's "Capes by Chalk and Line" on October 10 at 11 AM, followed by Tasha's "No Sew Costuming" on November 7.

## **SWCG Meeting August 30, 2015 at Mark & Mahala's House**

Recorded by Randall Whitlock, SWCG Secretary

This was a relaxed potluck snack social at Mark & Mahala's house. Mark showed us his extensive collection of costume photographs on the living room TV.

A brief business meeting was called at 3:35 PM.

Present were Sharan, Mahala, Mark, Randall, Frances, Paula and Tasha.

Frances and Mahala gave an update on President Jean's recent auto accident and condition. She is recovering from broken bones at a rehab facility in Glendale. Accordingly, the August and September meeting locations were swapped. Mahala offered her home as a backup meeting location if Jean is not well enough to host in September.

We have received an open invitation to host an all-day fan table at TusCon. A brief poll of persons present indicates too few of us will be in attendance to make this practical this year.

Randall will prepare new SWCG bookmark flyers in time for TusCon and hopefully in time for the upcoming costuming presentations at Tempe Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.

## **SWCG Meeting September 27, 2015 at Jean's House**

Recorded by Randall Whitlock, SWCG Secretary

This was a social with conversation celebrating Jean's return home from rehab after the recent vehicle mishap and the new arrangement of her sewing room. Present were Jean, Paula, Sharan, Mahala, Frances, Nyki and Randall. Conversation ranged from the Cottlington fairies to recall elections to a new swimsuit design.

No business meeting was called but Randall asked for permission to use some black twill from the SWCG fabric collection as part of his cape cutting demo at Tempe Public Library. The resulting capes will become part of the SWCG clothing collection for potential fundraiser sales or presentation as a masquerade prize. All present agreed.

Frances described next month's charity quilting project. Mahala mentioned recent "Sewing with Nancy" episodes that taught a method called, "Quick Column Quilts," but we were unable to play the video. A bit of Google-fu revealed that the episodes can be viewed at <http://www.nancyzieman.com/blog/sewing-with-nancy/quilt-patterns-from-nancy-zieman/> These are also available through the PBS streaming channel.

Mahala brought out some fabric from her storage space and a discussion on how best to use it ensued. Some will go into the quilt project and some into the ongoing pet beds project.

## New Bookmark Flyer



**SOUTHWEST COSTUMERS GUILD**

PO Box 39504  
Phoenix AZ 85069

[www.southwestcostumersguild.org](http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org)

The Southwest Costumers Guild is a society for those who love historical, science fiction, fantasy, anime' and cultural costume.

SWCG is central Arizona's chapter of the International Costume Guild.

Visit our web site for a calendar of events and e-mail [editor@southwestcostumersguild.org](mailto:editor@southwestcostumersguild.org) for directions to events.

Members receive our newsletter, "Cactus Needles." You can view a sample issue on our web page.

Following up on conversations at the August meeting, I have updated the SWCG bookmark flyer.

You can view and download the flyer as an Adobe Acrobat .pdf file from the web site at [www.southwestcostumersguild.org](http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org). This means you can print off a few of them if you have a chance to promote SWCG in a public place, but not enough time to grab some hard copies from your editor.

The new design is much like the last generation, but with some changes.

- The masthead is now in a western font called, "Rio Grande" to look more southwesty.
- References to Costume-Con 30 as an upcoming event have been removed.
- We are now "central" Arizona's chapter of ICG (Love you guys, LACE).
- Cactus Needles is referenced, but no longer as a monthly newsletter. My successor may be following a different schedule.

I had a hundred bookmarks printed, which should last until the end of the year. It will be worth shopping around for better deals on printing larger quantities.

While you're visiting the web page, please look at the three fold-over flyers. These are definitely in need of updated language or replacement with something else. I still like the idea of a flyer with an informative or humorous article in the middle to make it worth picking up and keeping.

### Calendar

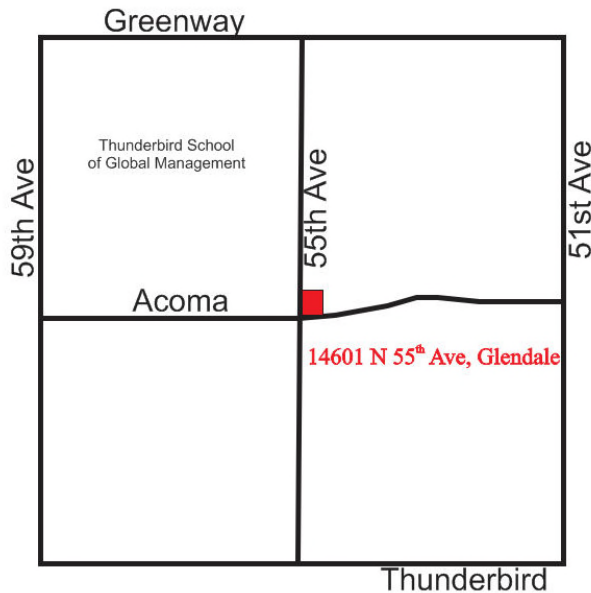
Do you know an event of interest to Arizona costumers? Please contact your editor with the details. **Red text and an asterisk\*** designate an SWCG-sponsored event. *Unless otherwise noted, our monthly meetings start at 1PM.*

October 10, 2015, Noon-4 PM – **LibraryCon 2015** at the Southeast Regional Library, 775 North Greenfield Road in Gilbert, AZ. Come to the Southeast Regional Library for LibraryCon 2015! Join us to celebrate all of the stuff that you love including: comics, graphic novels, anime/manga, cosplay, cartoons, artists, horror movies, Sci-Fi/Fantasy books & movies, and games of all types. Costumes encouraged! Show off your amazing style in the costume contest. Learn something new in one of our panel sessions. There will also be photo booths, crafts, tabletop and video games, prizes, and giveaways! <https://www.facebook.com/librarycon>

October 10, 2015 11AM – **Capes by Chalk and Line** at the at the Tempe Public Library, 3500 South Rural Road, Meeting Room A. Many historical and fantasy capes are constructed as circles or portions of circles. Cactus Needles Editor Randall Whitlock will demonstrate a simple way to cut a cape using chalk and string that will get you the broadest possible cape from a

given piece of fabric, gently fitted at the neck and shoulders.

<http://www.tempe.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/28466/1588?curm=10&cury=2015>



October 16-18, 2015 – **Helldorado Days** in Tombstone, Arizona.

<http://www.tombstonehelldoradodays.com/>

October 18, 2015 – **Quilts for Kiddos** at Bernina Connection, 4219 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix. Come sew a quilt top to be finished and given to a foster child. No sewing experience necessary - we'll help you! Lots of experience? We welcome your giving hands and heart too!

<http://www.berninaconnection.com/module/class.htm?classId=77710> (The web page gives the date for the previous session of this class/charity project.) Register online or call 602-553-8350

October 25, 2015 – **Quilting\*** at Tasha's place. Frances has found a charitable organization which provides quilts to children in the foster care system. Let's build something for the cause.

October 30 – November 1, 2015 – **TusCon 42** SF convention at the Hotel Tucson City Center in Tucson. This year's con features guests Seanan McGuire and Bridget E. Wilde. <http://tusconscificon.com/>

October 31, 2015 – **Dark Ones Dead Man Party** at Jean's house (7742 N. 32<sup>nd</sup> Drive, Phoenix). This year's theme is, "A Game of Thrones."

November 4, 2015-January 18, 2016 – **The White Shirt According to Me, Gianfranco Ferré** Exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum. Known as the "architect of fashion" and the purveyor of "power dressing," Italian fashion designer Gianfranco Ferré never ceased to view the white shirt as the archetypal expression of his approach to design and style. The exhibition includes a selection of 27 of Ferré's most significant white shirts created over the course of his career (1982-2006). Sketches, technical designs, photographs and videos from the archives of the Gianfranco Ferré Foundation will offer visitors the chance to go beyond the confines of fashion and examine the methods, techniques and precision Ferré applied to each of his designs. <http://www.phxart.org/exhibition/ferrewhiteshirt>

November 6-8, 2015 – **Tucson Celtic Festival** at Rillito Park. <http://tucsoncelticfestival.org/>

November 7, 2015 11AM – **No Sew Costuming** at the Tempe Public Library, 3500 South Rural Road, Meeting Room A. (Taught by our own Tasha Cady.)  
<http://www.tempe.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/28945/1588?curm=11&cury=2015>

November 22, 2015 – **Further Quilting\*** at Tasha’s place. Continue the project begun in October.

December 20, 2015 – **Holiday Potluck\*** at Mahala’s place. Annual elections, of course.

January 31, 2016 – **Wrap Up\*** at Tasha’s place. Let’s finish up some of the various garment construction projects began in 2015.

February 28, 2016 – **Mardis Gras\*** social at Tasha’s place. A bit early, but do it in costume please.

May 6-9, 2016 – **Costume-con 34: The Wonder of Nature** at the Marriott West in Madison, Wisconsin <http://www.costumecon34.com/>

April, 2017 – **Costume-Con 35** at the Hilton Mississauga/Meadowvale, 6750 Mississauga Road, Mississauga (near Toronto), Ontario, Canada <https://www.facebook.com/costumecon35>

Summer, 2017 – **WesterCon 70** at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel. Keep watching for more details.

April, 2018 – **Costume-Con 36** in San Diego, California

### **Copyright Statement**

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Remember – costuming is suppose to be FUN and  
There is ALWAYS more than one way to build a costume!

## **First you have a costume design idea!**

Suggestion either draw it out or if it is from an established get pictures of it from the front, back and side. You will use this information to look for design lines, refresh your memory, and look for details like hair, shoes, jewelry, makeup...

## **When design meets the real world – in no particular order**

Budget

Where are you going to put your cell phone...

What climate will you be in? Otherwise know as the dust and the dirt and the mud or air conditioned comfort(?)

Shoes – how much to walking around in 5” platforms do you really want to do?

Hair or wig, maybe hat

How much help will you need to dress, walk .....

How much space does the costume need to travel?

Can you drive a car in it – heck can you even get into a car in it?

Space to change

Wash ability

Time and budget – how much of each do you have?

Personal comfort and heat stroke

Compensating for fur suit or foam padding heat stroke

Do you need a crew to manage your costume?

## **Pattern sizing**

### **Determining your pattern size.**

**Your sewing pattern size is NOT the same size as a purchased garment. Always work from your actual measurements and the measurements the pattern uses for a size!**

Looking at the chart on the next page and you can see that for one current ready to wear Garment Company a size “0” is a size 8 for the major sewing pattern companies.

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	Bust size in inches	29.5	30.5	31.5	32.5	34	35	36	37	38	40	41	42	43	44	
Garment Size Based On Bust Measurement	Simplicity	4	6	8	10	12		14		16	18		20		22	
	Vogue		6	8	10	12		14		16	18		20		22	
	McCalls		6	8	10	12		14		16	18		20		22	
	Butterick		6	8	10	12		14		16	18		20		22	
	Burda		6	8	10	12		14		16	18	20		22		
	Ready to Ware - Sears			0	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16		18	20	

**Major Commercial Pattern companies design for a B cup in Misses sizes.**

This is important because your neck, shoulder and armhole size do not significantly change from an A to a DD cup. But there is a one-inch difference for each cup size on the front of your body!

It is much easier to adjust the fabric needed in the front of the garment for your bust than adjust the arm scye, neckline, shoulders and back.

Example: Four women with the same full bust measurement and different cup sizes.

Bust Measurement	Cup Size	Adjusted Bust Measurement	“Best” Pattern Size
31.5”	A	32.5”	10
31.5”	B	31.5”	8
31.5”	C	30.5”	6
31.5”	D	29.5”	4

Only the woman with the B cup would have the best-sized starting pattern, everyone else would be 1 to 2 sizes off!

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If the bust measurement is not adjust for cup size the person with an A cup would have a garment that is too tight across the back with extra fabric hanging in the front. The C and D cup would pull across the front and have extra fabric in the back.

*A simple rule of thumb is:*

If your garment is too tight across the back of your shoulders you need a larger pattern.

If your garment is too loose across the back of your shoulders you need a smaller pattern.

NOTE: Many women do not wear the correct size bra because no one has told them how to determine it. One of easier ways is to use the Flattering Me Tape Measure/Bra Tape Measure. (2 web sites that sell it are: [http://www.flattering.com/pricelist\\_fm.html](http://www.flattering.com/pricelist_fm.html) and [http://www.wardrobesupplies.com/store/m2\\_measuring.html](http://www.wardrobesupplies.com/store/m2_measuring.html) for additional sites that sell them Google the “flattering me tape measure”.)

There are many books showing/explaining how to make this simple alteration.

Finding your waist measurement: Tie elastic around your waist, bend back, forward, and side to side. Where the elastic lands is your waist.

## **Fit Models**

All Garment and Pattern Companies design to a fit model with the main measurements listed on the pattern or in the pattern catalog. (A fit model is an idealized body shape and everyone is different.)

But even if the main measurements are the same – the fit models are slightly different. In my opinion – Simplicity’s seems to fit a broader back. Butterick and Vogue tend to fit a narrower back. McCall’s is somewhere in the middle. The subtle differences are why many people develop a preference for one pattern-company over another.

Independent pattern makers often use themselves as their fit model. This can be either very good if you have their shape or very bad if you don’t.

## **Design lines**

What are design lines and why do you care?

Design lines are the seam lines and darts on a garment, each additional line gives you an additional fitting opportunity to make the garment fit you – occasional they are the same lines that are used for color blocking. Darts, vertical seam lines, and gathering are usually your design lines. A boxy suit jacket or lab coat doesn’t really have fitting lines. A fitted jacket will either have darts or princess seam lines and sometimes both. A tight fitting T-shirt will depend on the stretch of the fabric to fit your body. Many super heroes depend on spandex for the fit of their costumes. (Guys if you are making your pants out of spandex – get a dance belt or build in support – you will look much more polished.) (Gals pass the pencil test, wear or build in a bra if your top is spandex.) {Yes, I know, I sound like I am channeling your mother, or is that grandmother.}



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Spandex adds stretch to a fabric – this can be a good or a bad thing (sometimes both at the same time) – really see how you look in it.

Find your design lines on your costume – a general rule of thumb is the tighter the fit and the fewer the design lines the more stretch you will need. Example: a tank style swimming suit – side seams only and extremely tight fit = spandex. A 1950's fitted ball gown – lots of darts and tight fitting bodice = woven fabric. A boxy jacket – no darts but very loose fit = woven fabric.

Besides telling you the type of fabric to you can use they also help you find a pattern because a pattern will have the design lines for the pattern on the back of the pattern envelope.

Note: when combining multiple patterns it is easier if you stick to one pattern line and choose patterns that call for the same type of fabric – they play together better that way.

A pet peeve: if you a wearing a hoop skirt always make sure your skirt is at least 10 to 20 inches bigger around than your largest hoop. And the lighter the fabric the more inches bigger your skirt needs to be.

Always remember costuming is suppose to be fun – enjoy both the making and the wearing of your costume.

And the more you do something the better you will get to be at it – don't expect to be perfect at it the first time.