



Cactus Needles

15.12 – December, 2015

**The Southwest Costumers Guild
PO Box 39504, Phoenix AZ 85069**

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

Robin creepily took Best in the Expert Category at this year's TusCon masquerade. Photo by David Ramirez

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No Sew Costuming

Tasha gave a talk on “No Sew Costuming” at the Tempe Public Library on November 7, 2015.

Here are the bullet points from Tasha's handout:

No Sew Costuming:

What's in your closet?

Look at pictures and find the silhouette.

Italian renaissance, regency England and "Titanic" era dresses are all similar to princess style.

Mix and match pieces. – Do you have a pencil skirt that can be pulled into a flapper look?

Pirates are fairly easy

Camo

A suit can make an ambassador.

What's in your sisters' or brothers' closets? Thrift stores are great!

Wedding dresses and prom dresses make great bases.

Uniforms of all sorts

Sheets are fun as raw fabric.

Accessories – belts, scarves, fur, jewelry

Duct tape is like The Force. – It has a light side and a dark side and holds the universe together.

You can take up a hem or a seam with staples.

Duct tape actually works to hold things together, but it makes them stiffer. It comes in colors

Pins! Safety pins come in all sizes.

Glue – There are all kinds. "Tacky Glue" is common. This works instead of appliqué.

Iron-on backing of all kinds. Comes in an iron-on seamer.

Skin to Win

By Randall Whitlock

Buying a men's dive skin is a lot like buying a Model T Ford. You can have any color you like, so long as it's black. This is not an acceptable answer for a costumer.

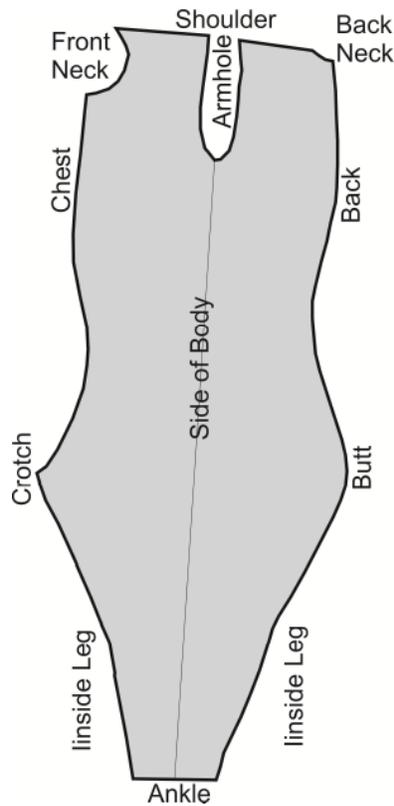
A dive skin is a full-body swimsuit which covers you from wrist to neck to ankle. Made of relatively thin material, a skin has no insulation value and is meant for warm water diving or as an undergarment inside a wetsuit or drysuit. A skin is a good idea when diving tropical waters to protect you from intense sun, jellyfish stings and fire coral scrapes.

My off-the-shelf skin (black of course) served me very well on a recent trip to Mexico, so I was inspired to work up a custom-fitted pattern of my own. Not coincidentally, SAS was running a clearance sale on swimsuit spandex at the time.

I came into this project with some background experience. Creating the skin pattern was mainly a matter of blending my one-piece woolen Victorian swimsuit from many years ago with my renaissance faire tights, then adding sleeves. (See the March 2003 Cactus Needles for the tights pattern at

<http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org/backish/cactusneedles0312.pdf>)

Drafting my skin pattern involves scribing a fold line which represents a straight line along your side from underarm to ankle and measuring distances fore and aft from the line to the middle of your chest and middle of your back at regular intervals. This inseam line switches to the inside of your leg at the crotch. An open oval at top middle becomes the sleeve opening and circle sector



arcs at the top corners become the neck opening. I scribed the pattern onto tough brown wrapping paper for many uses.

I used a close-fitting inset sleeve, trimmed down from “Randwulf’s Quarterly Tunic” this time, but I think the Mk II dive skin will have some kind of raglan sleeve to reduce puckering on the front of the shoulder.

The garment is sewn closed up the back, inside legs, and the lower portion of the front. A zipper is inserted into the upper part of the front seam. I used the low mandarin collar from my “Randwulf’s Doublet” pattern at the neck. Its lines are similar to the collars of commercial dive skins.

I didn’t have a single piece of spandex long enough to do the whole body at once, so I divided the pattern north and south into two colors. This actually simplified inserting the zipper. I just placed the color boundary at the bottom end of the zipper. I went with orange and green,



continuing the theme from last year’s “Aquaman” Halloween costume.

The results are not perfect, but they are practical and I should be able to get several years of diving out of the skin.

This pattern works fine for men and children, where you can approximate the side of the body as a straight line and count on the fabric stretch to do the rest. Women might do better to separate the pattern into front and back halves to allow for a curved outseam between waist and hip.

An online dive forum I visited recently recommends using The Green Pepper’s “Willamette Racing Suit” pattern (originally designed for skiing) as the base for a women’s dive skin. <http://www.thegreenpepper.com/product/408-willamette-racing-suit-pattern/>

All measurements and fitting should be done over top of whatever garments will be worn underneath. Going commando is not recommended for a variety of reasons. For diving, the undergarment will be your most practical swimsuit. I use knee-length Speedo trunks, which fit inside the skin much better than surf baggies. If you build the skin as the basis of a superhero hall costume, some kind of well-fitted camisole or corset might do well. Guys should wear a dance belt if the skin will be used for anything other than swimming. You don’t have to tell the world whether you dress left or right.



The scraps from this project went into several pairs of tube socks. For my foot size, this is just a cylinder about nine inches in circumference and fifteen inches long,

closed at the toe with a gentle arc. Spandex tube socks go well inside your dive boots. When a dive boot is wet, it behaves like a suction cup. A slick sock is a lot easier to slide out of the boot than a bare foot. When wet for a long time, your skin becomes more vulnerable to chafing injuries. The socks help keep you from developing sores as your feet slide around inside your boots and fins.

SWCG Meeting November 22, 2015 at Tasha's House

Recorded by Randall Whitlock, SWCG Secretary



We assembled at Tasha's place to work up some more of the monster pillows and tote bags for kids in the foster care system using the kits brought in by Frances. Present were Tasha, Jean, Mahala, Paula, Randall and Frances.

Business was discussed casually, without even the usual Bob's Rules of Order structure.

Mahala's guild holiday feast plans are coming together and she is making quite an effort for the décor and table setting. Please get back to

Mahala (vicepresident@southwestcostumersguild.org or 602-882-0395) to coordinate what to bring for the potluck. Guild will supply a ham.

Randall described the Tempe Public Library's ComiCon, coming up on January 23, 2016. SWCG has been invited to have a fan table.

(Receiving positive feedback on the topic, Randall subsequently submitted an application to Tempe Public Library. There will be many details to discuss at the December meeting.)

December's Meeting -- Post-Christmas Party

From VP Mahala Sweebe

When I volunteered to host the December meeting, we had a choice of scheduling it for either the week before or after Christmas. The week before is always very busy and stressful. It is the time to do all of the last minute shopping, wrapping presents, cooking and cleaning, decorating, etc. Christmas is on Friday, which makes Saturday a day to recover and clean up the aftermath. Sunday is between two major holidays which makes it a good day to relax and do fun things before going back to work on Monday (except for Tasha :).

Since my daughter and spouse started having Christmas dinner at their house (so all of the relatives can watch the grandkids open presents that morning), I haven't held a big holiday dinner and I miss it. I have all of the china, silver and crystal just gathering dust. So I thought it would be fun to hold a holiday party, elegant but relaxed, break out the good stuff, get dressed up and just sit around the table for a couple of hours surrounded by good friends, to talk, laugh, pass around the food and puns, unwind and have a good time.

Because we will have just had a big meal two days earlier, I thought something a little lighter, more like a New Year's party, might be appreciated, not the traditional heavy turkey and dressing dinner. We talked about some of this at the November meeting and kicked around ideas for food. There were a lot of suggestions and Frances proposed a Honey Baked spiral cut ham, which was met with unanimous approval.

I will make the first and last courses, fresh mushroom soup and Baked Alaska, and Tasha has volunteered for appetizers. I will e-mail everyone a sign up list as they let me know what they definitely want to bring, maybe an old favorite or something new and different that you'd like to try. Please call or email me with your choices soon and I will mail out updates and suggestions as I get them.

I'm ending this with a poem I wrote last year when I sent everyone their monthly meeting reminder for December. I reworked it a little for this year. I'm not a poet, so feel free to groan. With profuse apologies, here it is.

*Dressed in our festive best, to see and be seen,
Whether it be red, or blue or green,
Maybe black or white, purple or cream,*

*Diamonds and pearls, jewelry and rings,
Silver and gold, glitter and bling,
Silks and satins, velvets, ribbons and things.*

*Feathers and fur, leather and lace,
Oh my, sequins all over the place.
We'll wear it all with panache and grace.*

After all, we're costumers. Let's get this party started!

Briefs

A New Community Issue of Virtual Costumer is Online! Volume 13 Issue 3, August 2015 - Community issue "The Wild West" features articles on cowboy hats, the history of blue jeans, out of this world chaps, and costuming icons of the old west. Go to [http://http://www.siwcostumers.org](http://www.siwcostumers.org) and select Virtual Costumer, then Current Issue. Look for the Community issue on the lower half of the page. Enjoy! - Phil Gust, Editor

The Scarlet Letter November, 2015, newsletter of the St. Louis Costumers Guild has been reformatted into an e-mail message. This allows for lots of pictures and easy clickable links to costume-related YouTube videos. The issue includes pix from the recent "Shop Hop," upcoming events, new acquisitions for the ICG archives, Costume-Con bids, and news from the net.

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.*

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>

December 4-6, 2015 – **Phoenix ComiCon Fan Festival** at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. <http://phoenixcomicon.com/>

December 12, 2015 – **Star Wars Costume Contest** at the Maricopa County Southeast Regional Library 775 N. Greenfield Road, Gilbert AZ. Come and dress up as your favorite Star Wars character in this family friendly costume contest. Celebrating the new Star Wars film "The Force Awakens" There a photo booth where you can take your picture with the infamous Darth Vader. Trivia quizzes throughout the day to test your knowledge of the films. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED, NO Weapons of Any KIND AND NO SLAVED PRINCESS LEIA COSTUMES. (*Emphasis in the original*) <http://evanced.mclaz.org/evanced/lib/eventsignup.asp?ID=81232>

Editor’s Note: Other venues have followed this no-gold-bikinis-for-cosplaying-fans policy too. When asked about it a couple of weeks ago, Carrie Fisher commented,

“What am I going to tell my kid about why she’s in that outfit? Tell them that a giant slug captured me and forced me to wear that stupid outfit, and then I killed him because I didn’t like it. And then I took it off. Backstage.”

Ms. Fisher’s comment has gone viral on social media. Leave it to our favorite freedom fighter space princess to stand up for all cosplayers’ freedom of expression.



December 27, 2015 – **Holiday Potluck*** at Mahala’s place – 14633 N 60th Avenue, Glendale AZ. Mahala is planning a lavish kind-of-Victorianish table setting with fine comestibles. Contact her regarding what to bring (vicepresident@southwestcostumersguild.org or 602-882-0395) Annual elections will be held, of course.

January 15-17, 2016 – **Taiyou Con** anime convention at the Mesa Convention Center in Mesa, AZ <http://taiyoucon.com/>

January 23, 2016, 10-3 – **Library ComiCon** at Tempe Public Library, SWC Rural and Southern in Tempe, Arizona. FREE EVENT! ALL ARE WELCOME! Fans of Marvel, DC, Star Wars,

Wholocks and even Trekkies are invited to gather at the Tempe Public Library in costume for a celebration of pop culture. Speakers, artists and writers will be present to discuss and sell their work. There will be a costume contest sponsored by Phoenix ComiCon and activities for children too. www.tempe.gov/comicon SWCG will run a fan table.

January 28-30, 2016 – **Phoenix Quilt, Craft & Sewing Festival** at the Arizona State Fairgrounds, 1826 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix. <http://quiltcraftsew.com>

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

February 5-7, 2016 – **Two Rivers Renaissance Faire** Pirate and Faerie Festival at Yuma County Fairgrounds, Yuma AZ. <http://www.tworiversfaire.com/>

February 6-March 27, 2016 (weekends + Presidents' Day) – **Arizona Renaissance Festival** on US 60 east of Gold Canyon, Arizona. <http://www.royalfaires.com/arizona/>

February 12-14, 2016 – **Phoenix Chinese Week** at the Chinese Cultural Center, 44th Street and the Red Mountain Freeway, Phoenix <http://www.phoenixchineseweek.org/>

February 12-17, 2016 – **Amazing Arizona Comic Con** at the Phoenix Convention Center <http://amazingarizonacomicon.com/>

February 22-28, 2016 – **Winter Range** at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility, 4044 W. Black Canyon Blvd., Phoenix, Arizona. The Single-Action Shooting Society's annual cowboy action shooting shindig. First-rate sutler's row to stock up on your wild west/steampunk costume supplies. <http://www.winterrange.com/>

February 23-29, 2016 – **Estrella War** at Schnepf Farms, Queen Creek, Arizona. The Society for Creative Anachronism's annual week of medieval arts, sciences and whacking each other with sticks. <http://estrellawar.org/>

February 27 & 28, 2016, 10-5 – **Matsuri Festival of Japan** at Heritage & Science Park, 7th Street & Monroe in downtown Phoenix. Free admission . www.azmatsuri.org

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

March 12, 2016, 10 AM – **St. Patrick's Day Parade** in downtown Phoenix Staging Area Location: 3rd St. from Virginia to Sheridan Route: 3rd St. South from Sheridan to Moreland. <http://stpatricksdaysphoenix.org/>

March 18-20, 2016 – **Con Nichiwa** anime convention at the Tucson Convention Center, 260 S Church Ave Tucson AZ 85701. <http://www.con-nichiwa.com/>

March 19-20, 2016 - **52nd Arizona Scottish Gathering & Highland Games** at Steele Indian School Park, 300 E Indian School Road in Phoenix. <http://www.arizonascots.com/05games.shtml>

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

June 23-26, 2016 – **LepreCon 42: The Meaning of Life, The Universe and Everything** at the Embassy Suites North (SEC I-17 & Greenway Road) in Phoenix. <http://leprecon.org/>

June 2-5, 2016 – **Phoenix ComiCon** at the Phoenix Convention Center <http://www.phoenixcomicon.com/>

November 11-13, 2016 – **TusCon 43** at Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, 4550 S. Palo Verde Road, Tucson, AZ 85714. This year's guest of honor is George RR Martin. <http://tusconscificon.com/>

April 20-24, 2017 – **Costume-Con 35** at the Hilton Mississauga/Meadowvale, 6750 Mississauga Road, Mississauga (near Toronto), Ontario, Canada <http://costumecon35.com/>

July 1-4, 2017 – **WesterCon 70** at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel. Guests include Julie Dillon, Larry Elmore, Gini Koch and Weston Ochse. www.westercon70.org

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

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