



Cactus Needles

Newsletter of the Southwest Costumers Guild

Volume 15, Number 9 - September 2008

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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.

September 27 & 28
10 a.m.—5:30 p.m.

*Navajo County Fairgrounds
In Holbrook, Arizona.*

GAMES!
SHOWS!
MARKET!
ART CONTEST!
COSTUME CONTEST!
SWORDEPLAY!

1 day pass:
Adults ~ \$7
Children 6-12 ~ \$4
5 and under free with an adult

2 day pass:
Adults ~ \$12
Children 6-12 ~ \$6
5 and under free with an adult

Advance tickets available at the Holbrook Public Library.

**Medieval
Fantasy Festival**
www.holbrooklibrary.org/festival.html

Sponsored by the Friends of the Holbrook Library, Navajo County Fair, Inc. and the City of Holbrook.

September 20, 2008 - [SunaCosu Steampunk Group Workshop](mailto:sunacosu@gmail.com)
sunacosu@gmail.com

September 27, 2008, 9 AM - [SunaCosu Picnic/Photoshoot](#) at Kiwanis Park, Ramada 7 in Tempe.

September 27 & 28, 2008 – [Medieval Fantasy Festival](#) at the Navajo County Fairgrounds in Holbrook, Arizona. E-mail <mailto:holbrookinterlibraryloan@gmail.com> for more information.



September 21, 2008, 10 AM – **Faerie Sweatshop*** at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. We'll get together to build some fundraiser items to set out at the Phoenix Faerie Festival.

Saturday, October 4, 2008, 10 AM – **Sweatshop Part Deux*** at the Glendale Cascade Mobile Home Park

community center, 5747 West Missouri Avenue, Glendale. Continue with fundraiser sewing.

October 18, 2008 – **Guild at the State Fair** Tentative. Look for details next issue.

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 1, 2008 – **SunaCosu Halloween Party** (Date tentative, location to be announced)

November 7-9, 2008 – **TusCon 35** at the InnSuites Hotel, 475 North Granada, Tucson, Arizona. The best little SF Con in Arizona. This year's guest of honor is Diana Gabaldon. <http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/>

November 8, 2008 - **Kikikon** at Arizona State University West. The Otaku Club's experiment in the Anime' convention scene. It's free! Go to <http://kikicon.ourotakuclub.com/> for more information.

November 15, 2008 - **SunaCosu Steampunk Group Workshop** (TBA)

November 15, 2008 – **Phoenix Faerie Festival** at Estrella Mountain Park in Goodyear, Arizona. Look for your editor's "MoiRandall's" costume pavilion amongst the crafters. According to the festival's web page at <http://www.westerngatesfaerierealm.com/PhoenixFaerieFestival.htm> :

The Phoenix Faerie Festival, is a celebration of the myth and fantasy of the enchanted realms of Faerie right here in beautiful Arizona. Where all are invited to step merrily into the faerie ring and discover a magical place where legendary creatures of myth and fantasy become flesh and imagination takes flight.

Don your faerie finery and join us for unique crafts, artistry, music, dance, live performance theater and storytelling, in a fancifully themed atmosphere of delightful revels suitable for the entire family.

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 13, 2008 – [SunaCosu Renaissance Faire Workshop](#) (TBA)

December 28, 2008 – [Holiday Party*](#) SWCG Social and annual officer elections. Location to be announced.

January 11, 2009 – [SunaCosu Steampunk Group Photoshoot](#) (TBA)

January 18, 2008 – [SunaCosu Steampunk Group Final Workshop](#) (TBA)

January 23-25, 2009 – [Phoenix ComiCon](#) at Mesa Convention Center. Media guests include Marina Sirtis, Gil Gerard and Erin Gray. <http://www.phoenixcomicon.com/>

April 9-12, 2009 – [AniZona](#) Anime convention at the Embassy Suites Paradise Valley, 4415 East Paradise Village Parkway South in Phoenix, Arizona. <http://www.anizona.org/>

May 1-4, 2009 – [Costume-Con 27](#) at the Crowne Plaza Baltimore North in Timonium, Maryland. A whole weekend dedicated to costuming with multiple masquerades. This year's theme is "Vampires, Villains and Vixens." <http://www.costume-con.com/cc27/INDEX.HTM>

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 .

January 15-17, 2010 – [DarkCon](#) at the Grace Inn Phoenix, 10827 South 51st, Phoenix. <http://www.darkcon.org/>

Costume Design

by Marian Brock-Andersen

Any type of design has three principles

Form: The space the design functions in or on.

What are the body type, size and shape of the person who will be wearing the costume? Are they male or female? Fabric has certain properties as far as stretch and flow of the grain lines, these properties will interact with the curves and planes of the body that will wear them. This goes for non fabrics as well such as plastics and fiberglass.

Function: What the shape does how it works and how it interacts with its surroundings.

What is the costume doing? Are we altering the shape of the body? Do we need to be able to get in and out easily? Is it supposed to look like armor? What is the purpose of the costume? Does the wearer have special needs, likes or dislikes that should be taken into consideration such as being able to use the bathroom in a small hotel stall, should be taken into consideration?

Aesthetics: How it appeals to the user, wearer or observer.

Not everything we design should be appealing to the eye, for some the point of the design is to provoke emotions or thought, other times it's to present an image, sex appeal, power, strength, wealth. What is the costume going to tell you about the person who is being portrayed?

Sources of Inspiration

Find what inspires you, for some people an object, fabric, pattern, music or almost anything else can inspire them to design. Gather things you like when you see them, photos of flowers, color patterns or movements and keep them in a scrap box to look at later when your brain storming. Go through magazines, art books, photographs and other media and find things you like. Cut out that picture of that skirt with the amazing hem line, or what ever it is and save that as well.

Taking elements from other existing designs does not detract from the originality, after all there is almost nothing new in fashion. Originality continues to exist when taking an existing element and using it in a new way, or changing it to suite your personal vision or aesthetics. How many times have you seen a hideous outfit but there is just one thing that you love about it, if everything else was missing?

Every once in a while you will find a piece of fabric that screams to you. Take a swatch if you think it will be there later home with you for your inspiration box, if you're not sure it will be there; buy it if you can afford it. I can not emphasize how many times I have found a perfect material failed to buy it and been unable to get it, or get more of it.

Research

You might not know it but most of the designs in modern fashion and in anime are inspired by historical designs. The gown that the empress and other nobles wear in Last Exile are all based on Renaissance Fashion, and the flight suits are real flight suits from the early 1900's. I don't even need to talk about traditional Asian clothing that shows up in almost every anime.

So... go to the internet and research historical costumes go to the library and pick out some books from famous painters and look through them, study the shapes, silhouettes and colors that were used in the times. Make copies of elements you like and add them to your scrap box.

Putting it together

When you're in the mood to start designing grab your scrap box and sit down with it go through it and pull out things that you find interesting or if you already have a concept in mind things that meld well with that concept and set them aside. You might even want to build a collage with these visual images and set it in front of you, or pin it up on the wall or bulletin board in front of where you plan to sit down and sketch, look at it often.

Keep in mind fabric

If you already know what type of fabric you want to use keep it in mind when designing. Each fabric has different properties, some are stiff and good for structured (lots of seams) garments and others are good for loose and flowing ones. Will you need foundations to create the shape such as a corsets or a hoop skirt? If your fabric is stretchy it will function completely different

then if it is a non stretch and as one of our members has already discovered different degrees of stretch cause you a lot of grief when trying to design.

Solution for the “I suck at drawing people” challenge

Some of us get distracted when trying to design because we are not skilled at drawing the human figure. Don't let this bother you, simply get some tracing paper and trace off figures you like from magazines or pattern fronts. As much as you might be tempted to use manga to get figures I personally discourage this, most drawn figures are completely unrealistic in their proportions and you may have trouble translating from the inhumanly perfect shape of an art figure to the real body. (Not that I think modern fashion figures are any more realistically shaped, but I never designs to them by choice, only by force when I was in college.)

Sketch

Let your creativity flow, sit down with a sketch book and just start drawing, loose and free, do up as many ideas as you can with out critiquing any of them, if you're not happy with one, just move on to another one, don't hesitate to go back and play around with ideas you have already drawn. It may help you to set a time frame, say an hour to free draw. Now that your hour's up, walk away, go eat lunch, watch TV, do something else for half hour. Every once in a while you will sit down and it all comes together. You end up with one design and it seems perfect. Still, walk away for a half hour, come back to it later and look at it with fresh eyes.

Edit

Look through your sketches/designs, some of them may be terrible, some may be good. On a fresh paper, start refining the designs you like, or putting together elements from several designs into one. This is the time to refine your ideas and hone in on the three basic principles; Form, where are your seams going to need to be to fit the body? Function, how is it going to be put on and taken off, does it have moving parts such as wings? And Aesthetics, what are you trying to communicate with the design? This is also the time to ask yourself, what am I missing? Do I have too much? If the shapes are simple then should your fabric or decoration be fancy? Is there a single element that you want to emphasize?

Designing outside of your skill range

This is a particular challenge that most of us face at one time or another. This challenge is in limiting our designs to fit our skill level at sewing. This can impede our growth in both design and construction. Creating your design in muslin or another cheap fabric where you can work out all the problems and make as many mistakes as you have to is one way to deal with designs our of your skill level. Another is to find someone who is more experienced then you are and ask for help.

Ultimately if you design to your skill level you will never progress and run the risk of stifling your creativity, take the risks once in a while and try something harder, you may surprise yourself, and you will always learn something new.

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CopperCon 28 Masquerade Quick Review

The CopperCon 28 Masquerade on August 30, 2008 enjoyed a high degree of participation, with 27 persons on stage as 18 costumed presentations. The show opened with an “awww” with our young fen presentations and closed with a bang, with a decidedly grown-up display-only presentation of Mark Greenawalt’s body art modeled by Renee and Kevin as a green Orion dancer and her Romulan companion. Halftime was ably entertained by our visiting belly dancers, sometimes known as Suatura (a gypsy word meaning Legend).

All are winners because the audience was delighted, but these awards were presented:

Young Fen Division

Julie Pdegimas as “Kelly Sparrow” for How Not to Use a Sword

Felicia Langholz as “Queen of Hearts” for Best Transformation

Arcana Yanez as “Zombie with Head Wound” for Best Living Dead Girl



Judges’ Special Mentions

John Autore as “Santa’s Little Helper” for Most Eye-Burning

Jessica Demer, Jason Estes and Ryan Billingham as “Hare Hare Yukai” for Best Choreography

Paula Lary as “Desert Queen” for Best Costume on a Budget (*Photo at Left*)

Dixie Austin, Madison West, Gabby Kaster, Lauren Null and Danielle Schultz as “Death Note Crack” for Most (anime) In-Jokes

Rachel Pierce, Jake Banister and Theron Pierce as “FF1: The Mule” for Best Punchline

“L and L” (from the two “Death Note”

presentations) for Cutest Couple



Special Award from AniZona for Best Anime’ Costume

Bianca Williams (AKA Owl Depot) as “Kallen Kozuki” (*Photo at Right*)



Best in the Novice Division

William Hearter as “Shrubbery, the Dwarf Ent” *(Photo at Left)*

Best in the Experienced Division

Theresa Contos as “Lt. Gay Ellis” (Purple-Haired Moon Lady from “UFO”) *(Photo at Right)*



Best In Show

Melissa Kaylor as “Autumn, The Colors of Change” *(Photo Below)*



Prizes were donated by Southwest Costumers Guild, AniZona and Mike & Theresa Contos.

Special thanks to our stellar crew. Technical problems which might have been show-killing disasters under other circumstances were solved before I even knew they existed. Unfortunately, my paper records don't include the name of the gentleman who lent his laptop computer to solve our sound crisis. Like a digital Lone Ranger, he rode off into the sunset after saving the day.

The Crew

Master of Ceremonies – Jack Mangan

Sound Director – Gary Swaty

Photographer/Videographer – Michael Contos (including the photos used in this writeup)

Judges' Liaison – Margaret Grady

Judges – Nyki Robertson, Shane Bryner, Greg Weisman, David Hedgecock

Backstage Manager – Sharan Hoyle

Den Mothers – Jean Palmer, Marian Brock-Anderson

Stage Crew – Melissa Tribble, James Tomassoni, Tiffany Jeffords, David Jeppesen

Dancers – Raveena, Kate, Sabrina, Sophia, Clara, Harper Ann, Lady Brianna, Tasneem, N-Sha, Lavona

Dancers' Sound Guy – DJ Dilo

Randall Whitlock

CopperCon 28 Masquerade Director

From the Mailbox

Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild *Finery* 6.10, Sep/Oct 2008

“I Love You Margaret DuMont” by Frannie Germeshausen gives a brief bio of Groucho’s best straight-lady. “Underneath the Romance: 1830s Skirt Supports” by Catherine Scholar. President’s Column by Diane Habra. Upcoming events include Wives and Daughters Picnic, Gatsby Afternoon and Marx Brothers Mini-Golf Madness.

Go postal with the contents of the Guild mailbox at our next meeting.

To finish out the issue, here are a couple of Tobar’s pictures of Theresa and Nyki from our August photo shoot meeting.



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September 2008