



# Cactus Needles

15.11 – November, 2015

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

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

Robin and Wally tied the knot in a steampunk-themed wedding at Jean's place on October 10, 2015. Congrats!

## **Officer Contacts**

President Jean Palmer

Vice President Mahala Sweebe

Treasurer Tasha Cady

Secretary, Editor, Webmonster Randall Whitlock

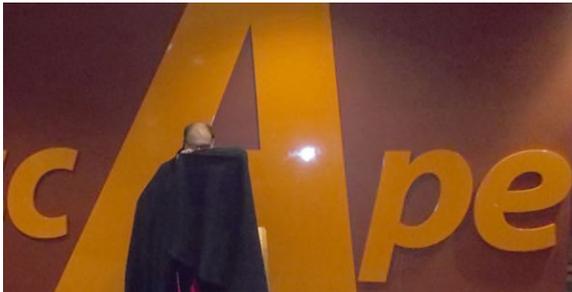
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## **Capes by Chalk and Line**



Randall gave a demo on his chalk and line method of laying out a cape at the Tempe Public Library on October 10, 2015. The lecture handout, previously seen in the August 1999 Cactus Needles and "Randwulf's Ramblings on Costume Volume 2," is attached to this newsletter.

## **Star Wars Reads**



Coincidentally, October 10 was “Star Wars Reads” day at Tempe Public Library. Members of the Mandalorian Mercs Costume Club (<http://www.mandalorianmerc.com>), The 501<sup>st</sup> Stormtroopers (<http://www.501st.com/>) and the Rebel Legion (<http://www.rebellegion.com/>) were present and posing. Opportunity lost. If I had known about the Star Wars themed day, I would have shifted my talk to the similarly cut Jedi robe.

### **Briefs**

Two issues of **The Scarlet Letter** arrived by e-mail from the St. Louis Costumers Guild. The September issue features pix from the Big River Steampunk Festival, new Nerd Plumage awards, Bruce & Nora give a library talk, quilting fabric road trip, new Friday night hall costume contest planned for Archon. The October issue features many pictures from Archon 39, including SLCG’s “Thinking of Drinking” costumes – individual takes on popular beverages.

**International Costumer** 14.6, Nov-Dec 2015 is an issue themed for “Getting involved in the community,” with a pieces from Phil Gust, Vicky Assarattanakul and Stace Feldman. ICG members receive an e-mail with user name and password to download the issue.

### **SWCG Meeting October 25, 2015 at Tasha’s House**

Recorded by Tasha Cady, SWCG Treasurer

In attendance were: Tasha, Jean, Frances, Paula, Sharon, Mahala and Lulu (visitor). Gateaux declined to come out and visit.

No business meeting.

We had a visitor, Lulu, who is Mahala’s son-in-law’s aunt. She is thinking of possibly becoming a member.

We made 8 monster pillows and 2 bags for foster kids.

Next month will be at Tasha’s again as we try to finish charity projects and discuss next year.

### **More Viking Shoes from Tasha’s Travels**

Pix by Tasha Cady

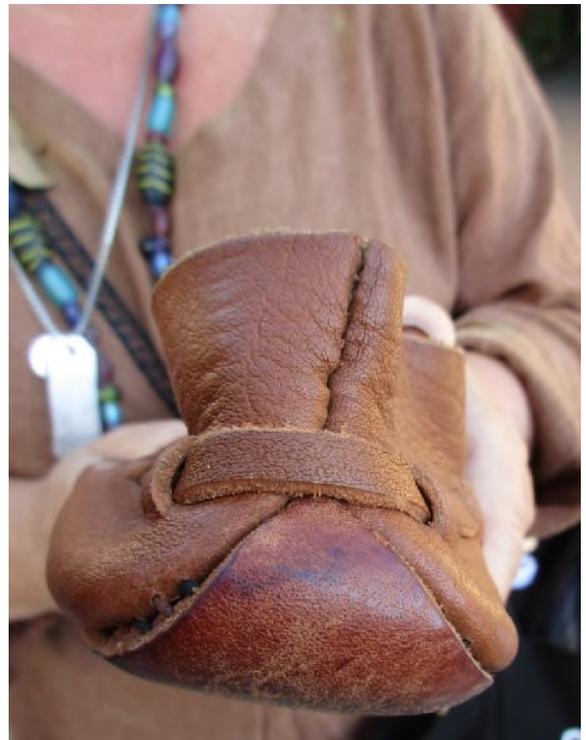


From the museum at the old Viking trading town of Birka, their recreation of Viking garb.



From the Copenhagen National History Museum

From Sigtuna, a Viking trading town. These are what our guide wore (normally). The other one is being repaired. She does nice recreation garb overall.





From the museum at Uppsala, a Viking religious center, their recreation of Viking garb.

From the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, from the ship graves.



## New Book List for CASFS Book Social

The CASFS Book social meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7PM at Samurai Comics, 1051 East Camelback Road in Phoenix. Meet unlike-minded people to discuss classics and new releases of SF and Fantasy. Look us up at [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com).

November 17, 2015 - Divergent by Veronica Roth  
December 15, 2015- Anathem by Neal Stephenson  
January 19, 2016 – Lord of Light by Roger Zelazny  
February 16, 2016 – Robocalypse by Daniel H. Wilson  
March 15, 2016 - The Warrior's Apprentice by Lois McMaster Bujold  
April 19, 2016 – The Aeronaut's Windlass by Jim Butcher  
May 17, 2016 - Ananzi Boys by Neil Gaiman  
June 21, 2016 – Rendezvous with Rama by Arthur C. Clarke

## 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>

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 (14601 N. 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Glendale). Continue the project begun in October.

December 27, 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

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Like what you see? Consider becoming a paying member or subscriber to support the cause. Details and a sign-up form can be found at <http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org/>.

Better yet, send us some content for the next issue. We’re always open to costuming news, how-to and other feature articles, reviews of books, film, television and web, and calendar items of interest to Arizona costumers. Send your submissions [editor@southwestcostumersguild.org](mailto:editor@southwestcostumersguild.org).

Maybe even consider becoming the next Cactus Needles editor. The pay sucks, but it’s a fine opportunity to show off you part-time creativity in prose and pictures.

*This article became the basis for Randwulf's Collection of Capes.*

## **Cape Cutting: The Mark of Zorro by Randall Whitlock**

I've worked out a method of cutting a four-panel cape that will get you the fullest cape for a given piece of fabric. By "fullest" I mean the greatest portion of a full circle possible.

### **Measurements**

Start out by measuring the distance down your back from the nape of your neck to the level at where you want the cape hem to ride. Neck to ankles works well for a practical field cape, though you may want a half-cloak down to your hips for an Elizabethan gentleman or a floor-dragger for a medieval lady at court. I'll call this number "L" for length.

Measure the width of your shoulders from the tip of the left shoulder blade to the tip of the right shoulder blade. Divide this number in half, add an inch for fudge and call it "S" for shoulders. On me this comes out to  $18/2 + 1 = 10$  inches.

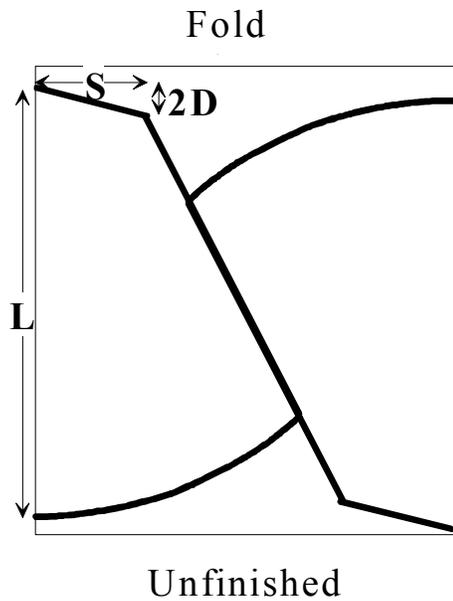
Measure the distance your shoulder drops from the nape of your neck and call this, "D" for drop. On me this is two inches. Squarer shoulders have smaller numbers, more sloping shoulders have higher values for D.

You will also want to know roughly the circumference of your head and the distance from the bony V of your throat at the joining of the clavicles and breastbone up and over the top of your head, back to the neck. The head circumference, "H," will be used to make a neck opening full enough to go over your other clothes. The up & over distance, "U," will help to determine how big to make the neck opening and hood.

### **Fabric**

You will need a piece of fabric at least twice as long as L. More fabric will allow the cape to be fuller, up to a limit of 4L (which makes a full circle). I wouldn't go any narrower than 45-inch wide fabric. 60-inch fabric is better. Wider fabric also allows for a fuller cloak.

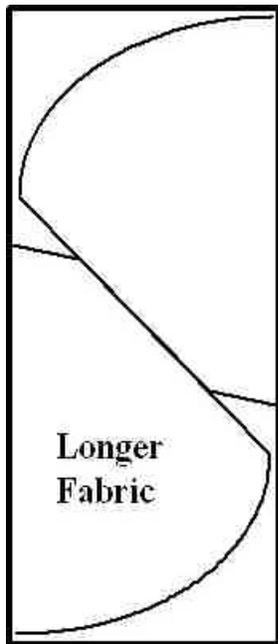
The best fabrics for this purpose will not have a direction of nappe, unless you don't mind having the front of the cape run downhill while the back runs uphill. It's okay for the fabric to have a right and a wrong side, but it should not be too stretchy.



### Layout and Cutting

1. Fold your fabric over right sides together with the cut edges together. Lay the fabric out flat. This is a lot of material, so you will need a big cutting table or a wide floor.

2. Measure out the distance L from the cut edge of the fabric along one side (this is a selvage edge). Mark this point with chalk. Measure and mark another L distance along the opposite side of the fabric from the fold line.

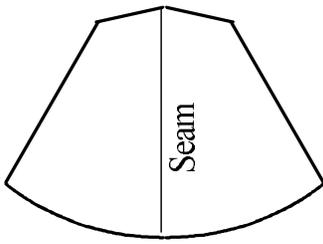


3. From the end of the “L” line nearer the middle of the material, scribe a line of length S at right angles to the fabric edge, in toward the middle of the fabric. From the inside end of this line, draw a line down toward the cut edge or the fold line of length twice D. Connect the end of this line with the end of L at the edge of the fabric. This sloping line defines the shoulder of the cape. A cape drapes better if its top edge has a bit more slope than your shoulder, hence the use of twice D for the shoulder drop. Repeat this step for the other L line on the other side of the material.

4. Connect the ends of the two shoulder lines drawn in Step 3 with a straight line that runs diagonally across the material. The fabric now bears the z-shaped Mark of Zorro. This zigzag line defines the shoulders and sides of the cape.

5. Cut a piece of string of length L. Use the string as a compass to scribe an arc from the outward end of L to the diagonal line scribed in Step 4.

6. Cut through both layers of fabric along the arcs from Step 4, the diagonal line from Step 5, and the shoulder lines from Step 3. You now have the four body panels of the cape.

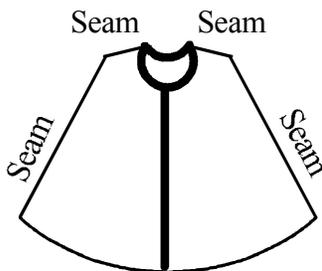


*Sew two panels together to form the cape back*

### Assembly

7. Choose two of the panels in which the fabric nappe runs the same direction. I prefer the nappe to run uphill for backs and downhill for fronts. Pin these two panels right sides together along the straight selvage edge and sew. This straight seam is the middle of the cape's back. Unpin and open up the panel.

8. Pin the remaining two panels to the back panel (right sides together) along the shoulders and the sides. Sew together along these seams. The basic shape of the cape is now defined.



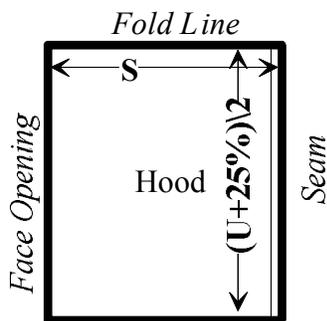
*Sew the sides and shoulders of the front panels to the back panel.  
Cut a circular neck opening.*

9. Cut a neck opening. This works well as a circle of circumference  $H$  (diameter  $H/\pi$ ), which partially overlaps the shoulder seam, with most of the circle cut from the two front panels.

### The Hood

10. Prepare a hood. This can be a rectangle whose length is equal to twice  $U$ , plus 25 percent and whose width is equal to  $S$ . Fold the rectangle over right sides together, halving its length. Sew along one side, beginning the seam at the fold and ending it at the unfinished end. This unfinished end is the base of the hood. Gather the base of the hood to the cape's neck

opening in pleats. This will make a shoulder-wide hood much like those of Jedi robes.

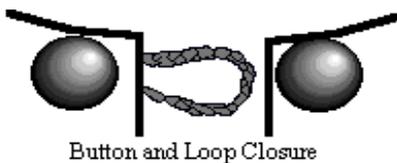


*Unfinished Edge  
(Gather to neck opening.)*

### Finishing Up

11. Finish the edges of the cape by folding over and sewing, or by concealing the edges within a trim. I prefer to run an overlock serge around the edge first. Works fine if you have the machinery.

12. Attach a clasp or closure to the front panels, just below the neck opening. There are many ways to do this. One of my favorites is to sew a loop of cord to one side and a button to the other. I usually attach a button to the loop side as well for symmetry.



Button and Loop Closure

Your cape is finished!

