

	<h2 style="text-align: center;"><u>Cactus Needles</u></h2> <p style="text-align: center;">25.07 July</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Southwest Costumers Guild 2320 West Seldon Lane, Phoenix AZ 85021 http://www.southwestcostumersguild.org</p>
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Recent Events

Nothing of note



Briefs

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A Klingon Hamlet – A review

When Chancellor Gorkon said, “You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon,” during the dinner party scene of “Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country,” the film makers could have had no idea what an explosion they had just detonated. Klingon speakers have done highly creative things with the idea ever since.

An enjoyable bit of fallout from that explosion precipitated upon Arizona this spring as Ronin Theater Company presented “A Klingon Hamlet” at the Irish Cultural Center in Phoenix and later at Stage Left Productions in Glendale.

The play opens with the dramaturge presenting a speech in the original Klingon, but the universal translator soon engaged and the rest of the performance was presented in fluid Shakespearean English, perfectly capturing the spirit of the work and providing atmosphere and numerous Easter eggs for Star Trek fans. There are indeed more things in Sto-vo-kor and on Qo'noS, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. Shout-outs for Trek fans included the Gravedigger singing “Maiden Wine” as he worked and a brief glimpse of Vina the Orion dancer as Polonius admonished naïve Ophelia as a “green girl.” The stage was indeed illuminated with FOUR LIGHTS.

My traveling companion expressed some worry that this production could feel like high school drama, but her fears were soon put to ease. The play does emphasize the humorous aspects of the play (that Hamlet guy was a real smart aleck in any version) but the performance has the proper gravitas for the Bard of Stratford. Many of the players are veterans of the Southwest Shakespeare Company. Seen below are Keath Hall as Hamlet (he also directed), Kate Haas as Ophelia and Osric, and Benjamin Donnel as Guildenstern (also fight choreographer). Not in the picture, but giving impressive performances were Wes Martin as Claudius (and makeup designer) and CD Macaulay as the Ghost, Player King and Gravedigger.

Costumes were kept simple and recognizable to anyone with passing familiarity to the original cast films and Star Trek: The Next Generation. There are nods to General Chang's riveted eyepatch worn by Claudius and Hamlet's jacket resembles the one worn by Jadzia Dax as she went on a revenge quest with Kor, Kang and Koloth in an episode of Deep Space Nine. Much use was made of 3-D printing (the closest thing we have to a replicator) to make daggers, phasers and the distinctive trapezoid-shaped buckles. Makeup was also kept simple. This is a play performed twice in a day for several weekends. The players could not be expected to spend hours in a makeup chair as Michael Dorn endured for so many years.

I left thinking loudly, "Yes! Yes! Now do MacBeth!" Of course I did not name the Scottish Play while I was still inside the theater.

--Randall Whitlock

Check out The Ronin Theater Company at <https://ronintheatrecompany9.godaddysites.com/>



Facebook finds

Shoes <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19Buro4Vh4/>

XLarge Roman shoes

https://www.sciencealert.com/ancient-roman-bigfoot-unusually-large-shoes-puzzle-archaeologists?no_cache=1&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR7BzX6T8oPxtrc1hoc1wuWrhNM78eKnTV3k-KJxqNgLDBk257yglf18unLDKg_aem_78Lw49uj7OXbmLQMsCyG0Q&sfnsn=mo

Iron age tunic from Norway <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EpiV5Y7ZK/>

In otter news – the Otterman Empire <https://www.facebook.com/share/1AiqRga3ww/>

A history of women's bathing suits

https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:History_of_Women%27s_Bathing_Suits,_Liangyou,_1927-03-30.jpg?fbclid=IwY2xjawLFbb5leHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHqbujSQ6Me9CTKw4b0vVi2FQ-Z70bi_xJhSc5NOG7H5D4qVHs-GdE3TNO3-o_aem_hllicLhaOQQuMqlzk-pyXjA&sfnsn=mo

The General Rises Again From Randall Whitlock

Throw the switch, Igor! Let electricity flow! Bring my creation to life!

Okay, it wasn't that dramatic, but I am still proud of my work.

Way back in 1984 at the dawn of my costuming career, I found an old sewing machine at a garage sale and picked it up for five dollars. The machine is a "General," a Japanese copy of a Singer Model 15 design apparently dating to the early 1950s, though it may be even older. The mechanical parts were good, but the wiring was deteriorated, with the original pedal lost. The garage sale hosts threw a generic rheostat pedal into the deal. After an hour with a soldering iron, some used appliance cord and a lot of black tape I had it up and running.

My quick and dirty repair held for 41 years, during which I made enough clothes to cover my sewing room floor to a depth of several feet. With its all-metal construction, I never had to do maintenance more complicated than oiling and cleaning out the lint now and then. Heck, the machine still has its original belt.

In recent years the control pedal has worn out, with its row of little copper contacts slowly ground away. I obtained a generic electronic pedal online and re-did the wiring, much as I had before. This time I had more advanced materials on hand. I used heat-shrink tubing in place of black electrician's tape. The rejuvenation worked very well and the machine drives better than ever.

There are more of these machines around than I realized. Several are for sale on eBay in the \$200 range. Check out the link below to a ten-minute YouTube video of a sewing machine dealer demonstrating a nearly identical specimen and its features.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz856VYeH1U>



Some notes from John A

I can understand why they (Chicagoland Costumer's Guild) need to disband. Everyone is aging, having grandchildren, and there do not seem to be any small, intimate, friendly, local cons like we would attend, visit, wear or display our local efforts in the hallways or in the art shows. There were before COPPERCON, LEPRECON, DARKCON, PHRINGECON, and WESTERCONS.

I bought a lot of my original and limited edition SCI-FI art and pocket dragons from Randal Spangler, that other Pocket Dragon Master Real Musgrave, Peacock, "Twigs & Berries", and Katrine Cady. I still have some of her originals, such as a pocket dragon going Trick or Treating, another dragon trying to catch his tail in a rare circular piece in a blue square frame. Mary Hansen Roberts had interesting pocket dragon "looks" but as a buyer, they look like they were pages pulled from a coloring book and filled in by a child with a large box of Crayola Crayons. But I bought a lot from the early CONS, as they never ever taught students in school the techniques of HOW TO DRAW & PAINT. It was just: go outside with a blank art book and draw what you SEE. Even those art supply store FOSTER books do a better job of how to make 2 dimension art. So, I would buy if an artist struck me, as talented when they had a great technique, humor, use of color, use of imagination, or a wonderfully balance gathering of mixed, favorite colors like some of those space galaxy pieces.

I also have what probably was the first and only International Costumers Guild calendar, when our current Guild President was in a "FIRE and ICE" duo costume photo for one month, and looked like more of a "teenage virgin". Also in my early photos at many cons, Kevin was a HALL COSTUME, a skimpy dressed Greek God with Greek Hallway attached to his back. Also other great ones, by Gail Wolfendon. Did they ever have a newer UCG calendar??

I always remembered you (SWCG editor) showing the art pieces at the local art auctions. These days, everything is A HUGE TO DO CON Gathering, or a teen Japanimation or gaming fest. In all of the old local cons, I mentioned above, the seminar presenters were knowledgeable and knew their shit, so you learned techniques from them or how to make an accessory or a DARTH HELMET character.

I stopped going a while back to PHOENIXCON or whatever they called themselves THIS MONTH. There were too many panels going on at the same time, and an overall total LACK OF KNOWLEDGE by the presenter. They were just a FACEBOOK WANT-TO-BE, trying to get enough followers, to become "an INFLUENCER", so they could get \$\$\$'s coming in to help pay for "THEIR HOBBY", so that they don't have to work at Hancocks or Cloth World to get an employee discount for their craft hobbies.

So, I enjoyed the dealer's room and picked up quality light sabers, 50's Sci-Fi tv serials now on VHS tapes, quality leather goods belts/pouches, sword/dagger holsters, and accessories from "Twigs & Berries" when your costume was medieval, and needed the "piece", when one was wearing tights.

Also it used to be good for "people watching". It took me much more than three hands, to count the many teen costume misadventures male and female. They are so CLUELESS on proper foundation garments. It would be such "a kick" to show their teen pictures at their 25th high school reunions. There were the male high schoolers, trying to be "Spiderman" but wearing crew socks and boxer shorts under their tight Spandex costume. There were also female "MY PINK PONY" fans wearing tight costumes way above their "load limits" and exposing their "thunder thighs". You would think that by now there would be "DOES and DON'T" costuming websites. It makes even their best efforts go HORRIDLY WRONG !

Now that I am getting older, starting to see way too many doctors and all their meds, I don't get out much, wear costumes, sew or go to the far west valley. How can Metrocenter, Paradise Valley Mall, Thomas Mall, TriCity Mall, Los Arcos, Papago Plaza, Park Central, and Fiesta Mall, as well as JoAnn's, Hancocks, Cloth World, and Hooters all be gone. I went to PARTY CITY next to my doctor's appointment. It was only 20% off unless it was Halloween or Christmas at 50% off so you could get tights, belts, hats, capes and make them better.

I still have photos that I took of early Con costume embroidery patches on this computer to email you for Newsletter material. God knows when they are now maybe with the jewelry, but I saw the photos here on computer such as "measure twice, cut once, and then go out and buy more fabric" and ones about vampires too.

Minutes

SWCG Meeting June 14, 2025

Reported by Randall

This was a quiet get-together on a very hot day at Tasha's home. Present were Tasha, Paula, Mahala and Randall. Conversation was wide-ranging.

Mahala debriefed us on what she learned last meeting during our experiment to make boot forms using medical casting gauze -- what worked, what didn't and what we will try at the next session.

For next meeting we decided to visit the Arizona Heritage Center museum at 1300 North College Avenue in Tempe (just north of Curry Road). We'll gather at noon on July 12, walk the museum, then grab lunch at one of the nearby restaurants. <https://arizonahistoricalsociety.org/facility/arizona-heritage-center/>

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.*

July 11-13 Phoenix Mad Monster Horror con –(<https://madmonster.com/az25/>) **Err on the side of creepy** - Renaissance Phoenix hotel, Glendale 9495 W. Entertainment Blvd., Glendale, AZ 85305
\$80 for 3 days **FRI 6PM-11PM SAT 11AM-7PM SUN 11AM-5PM**

July 25 Promises, promises

Ye editor *should* be closing on a house with a pool. The placed will probably not be in shape for a pool part in August. But – next year the annual themed guild pool poaries should be able to re-commence. Start thinking about a costume theme for 2026

August 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Demented Dolls 7: New Blood – an AZ Haunters event **OR**

August 22, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. NIGHT of the Demented Dolls – an AZ Haunters event

HeatSync Labs 108 W Main St Mesa AZ 85201

\$15 gets you a vinyl baby doll or a delicate porcelain doll, and a the materials to do unspeakable things to them. NEW! Add sound to your creations with a Recordable Sound Module - \$12.50 (Subject to change based on availability) Registration ends Monday, August 11 at 8PM AZ time.

Notes on Tuscon and Loscon to come.

Saturday, January 17, 2026, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The Tempe Public Library is hosting its 2026 Tempe FanCon

Comic and cosplay fans grab your capes and superpowers and come to the Tempe Public Library for a celebration of comics and pop culture. Join us for free family fun including costume contests, authors and artists, entertainment, activities for the kids, photo ops with characters, fandom related items for sale, and food trucks. There is no table fee for exhibitors and the event is free and open to the public.

The event will be held outdoors in the Library Plaza. All exhibitors are required to supply their own tables, chairs, and optional canopy with weights. The library will supply a 10' x 10' space for each exhibitor. External gas generators are prohibited. Battery packs are fine. Please leave all pets at home or you will be asked to remove them from the event.

Responding to Jill Brenner's invitation, your veep has reserved a space at Tempe FanCon, to be held on the Tempe Public Library grounds at SWC Rural Road and Southern Avenue on January 17, 2026.

We'll put up a canopy and table as a meet and greet booth, as we have done for the past several years. Last year's presence was a great success, gaining us three new members. Please join in!

I suggest you bring a project to work on and demonstrate while hanging at the booth. These always draw welcome attention.

Ye editor does not have much data further out

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