

Event Report



Costuming at the Estrella War Samantha Hirsch

A personal report on costume-related activities at the 2014 Estrella War, sponsored by the Society for Creative Anachronism.

The [Society for Creative Anachronism](#) (SCA) is a non-profit organization that recreates European history before the 17th century. Unlike a Renaissance Faire, which is more like a show, the SCA encourages participants to pursue their personal interests. Some people choose to participate in war games and others are artists or artisans. There are also performers and teachers of a wide variety. In the SCA, there are 19 world-wide kingdoms ruled by Kings and Queens. In Arizona, we are part of the [Kingdom of Atenveldt](#) under the rule of King Morgan and Queen Livia.



The Estrella War encampment with knights in armor.



Making Viking weave earrings by braiding copper wire.

Earlier this year, I attended one of the many events run by the SCA, called [Estrella War](#). It took place at Schnepf Farms in Queen Creek, Arizona from February 25th through March 2nd. There were many events to participate in for kids and adults of all ages. Estrella was mostly camps, as always, with a small merchants' area in the middle of the camp, and battle fields off in the woods. Many school tours came by on Friday.

I participated in three classes this year. One was creating Viking weave earrings from braided copper wire. It was a long, tedious process that was still fun and turned out great in the end. I took the class with my grandmother, and the teacher was very nice. I got distracted a few times so I took a little longer to finish, but the earrings turned out pretty well. The only problem is that I've forgotten almost everything about that class!



Stick weaving involves hand-weaving yarn around sticks to create decorative patterns.

Another one of the activities I did was stick weaving. It may sound simple, and it kind of is, but the first few steps are the hardest. I used sticks, yarn, and my hands. The sticks were actually chopsticks with tiny holes drilled in the ends for the yarn. I wove the yarn around the sticks and pushed the yarn through the holes. There really isn't that much to do, but it does take a while. I've made a few now, and I may feel like an expert, but I'm anything but.

My final arts activity was learned at Estrella, but I actually made it at home later. It was a Norse/Rus coat. The project was challenging and definitely time-consuming, but everything was worth it. In the eight hours that I took to make my coat, I made an art piece, as well as a new piece of clothing for myself.

The class was taught by "Lady Rannvaeig orramr Eskilskona." She provided a simplified six-piece pattern. The design is based on a historical one, a *Senmurv Kaftan* from the 8th-9th centuries. She made [complete instructions](#) available online. They include links to historical background information.

Very few materials were required, and they were all inexpensive. All you really need is a blanket for the body, matching thread to sew, your body measurements, and bias tape, embroidery thread, and/or trim of any kind for the trim on the cuffs, neck, hem, and inside.



Blanket folded with bound edge to the center.



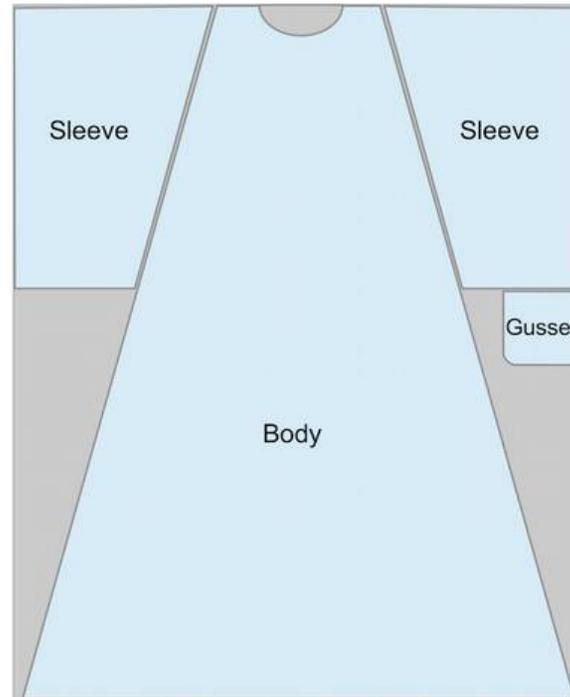
Body of coat drawn on blanket in white tailor's chalk.



Body pieces with neckline cut out.

I used a blue polar fleece blanket from Goodwill for the body, and purple bias tape for the neck line, as well as a tie to keep it closed. I started by laying out the fabric. The blanket had a bound edge, so I decided to use that as the center front instead of hemming it (left, top)

After using my measurements to fit the pattern (below), I drew the cut lines for the body on the fabric with a white tailor's chalk (left, center) My grandmother helped me cut out the body and neckline (left, bottom) She also help me to mark and cut the sleeves from the portion of the fabric left over after cutting the body. (right)



Pattern pieces laid out on blanket.



Marking and cutting the sleeves.



Under-arm gussets.

The last pieces that we cut were the under-arm gussets. (above) Here are all the pieces of the coat, laid out and ready to be assembled.



Pieces of coat cut out and ready to assemble.



Sewing machine I used is (mostly) mine.

The Pfaff sewing machine I used (above) was one that my grandmother bought for my mom when she was in college. Now it's (mostly) mine! I used navy blue MaxiLock serger thread (right, top) to sew the pieces together.

My grandmother sewed on the bias tape for the neckline because it was going to be more difficult than my level of experience. (below) She also helped



Neckline bound with bias tape.



Navy blue MaxiLock serger thread to sew the coat.

me pin the pieces so I could sew them together. First we marked the center of sleeve for matching with the shoulder seam of coat body.



Marking center of sleeve to match shoulder seam.



Sleeve pinned to shoulder seam.

Next, we pinned the sleeves to the shoulder seam (above), and finally, we pinned on the underarm gussets. (below)



Arm gussets pinned to sleeve (above). Inside showing gussets installed (below).



Once I had sewn everything together, I tried on the coat (below). The underarms were a little tight, but that is easily overlooked for now. All that's left to do is embroider the cuffs, hem, and inside. For being the first time I'd ever sewn my own clothing, the coat didn't turn out half bad.

More than just crafting and learning, I did other things too. When I got to Estrella, the first thing I did was go to the youth Archery field. For the first time ever, I was finally able to shoot my own bow and not just the one at summer camp. Also I got a henna tattoo designed by an amazing artist.

Estrella was fun! The classes were amazing, as was the archery. Spending time with my grandmother was also great. Next year will obviously be different, but I hope to see many attendees again.



Samantha Hirsch is an all-star cheerleader who lives in Arizona. She started costuming when she was seven years old, designing her Medusa costume for Halloween. She has entered some of her designs in the Future Fashion Folios of various Costume-Cons since #28, and attended and competed on stage at her first Costume-Con when #30 came to Tempe, Arizona in 2012. She also attends SCA events like Estrella War and Pennsic War with her mom, brother, and grandmother.

Visiting the Estrella War



Estrella War XXXI will take place from February 24 to March 2, 2015 at Schnepf Farms, located in the southeast corner of Phoenix, Arizona.

Unlike a Renaissance Festival, where performers are paid to entertain attendees, this is a "hands-on" event where attendees are encouraged to dress in the clothing and armor of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and to take part in activities that feature middle ages style tournaments, arts exhibits, classes, workshops, dancing, feasts, and more. Many of the activities are handicap accessible depending on level of mobility.

Pre-registration is open, and being a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism is not required to attend. For more information visit their [website](#).