

▶ APRIL WALKER, who maintains a number of characters on various realms to keep up with her friends, but mostly plays as Mighthykiwi ("one of those elusive female dwarves") on the Staghelm-US realm, has also found crafting to be a great way to combine her two passions of art and gaming. "I love *World of Warcraft*, and I love making custom toys, so a *World of Warcraft*-themed one was bound to come along sometime," April says. "I have all different kinds of hobbies, but making custom toys is probably

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one of the most rewarding." April has a number of real-life friends who share her dual passions of gaming and custom toy creation. "It's fun to share experiences both in-game and about our projects," she says. "And it's super-fun to surprise them with your newest *World of Warcraft*-inspired project." While some of her toys have ended up as gifts for her friends, she's designated the majority of them for a unique project. "I have kept most of my customs for my own collection and display, and am planning on basing a gallery around them next year as part of a senior thesis for college," she says. "Now if only I can get an achievement for finishing a custom!"



While there aren't any achievements for

out-of-game crafting, there are innumerable rewards for newbie and grand master crafters alike. Role-players, for example, find that crafting can help them get deeper into the game and into the mindset of their characters. Or, in the case of role-playing enthusiasts, LIANE BEHRENS, into the mindset of a character's minion. "I was really getting into playing my warlock," says Behrens, whose level-74 warlock, Antigone, resides on the Sentinels-US realm. "Antigone's voidwalker was her only friend, really, so I was spending a lot of time with him out while Antigone hung out in inns and taverns and the like."

While she played, she started noticing the simple design of the creature. "I thought about how easy it would be to make a little felt voidwalker, so one afternoon I set to work," she says. A short time later, Antigone's in-game friend took physical form. Since that first minion, she's made half a dozen purple plushies — and one hand-crafted felt ghoul — for other warlock friends. "All of my *World of Warcraft* crafts have been made into gifts," she says. "Most of my friends expected their voidwalkers, but they were still always so excited to get them. I started adding individual nametags, and one voidwalker even had a felt pineapple attached to it. There's also a voidwalker in California and one in Washington state."

