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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

5-1990

The Cutting Edge, May/June 1990, Vol. 1 Issue 3

The Society of American Fight Directors

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THE CUTTING EDGE

Volume 1, Issue 3

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

May/June, 1990



It's Not Too Late!

Those of you who have been considering the National Stage Combat Workshop, but let time get away from you—for the first time, late registrations are being accepted for both the basic and advanced levels right up to July 1. Contact Linda McCollum, On-Site Coordinator at 702-739-3662 for details!

Certification Tests

This is the busiest time of year for SAFD Certification Fight Tests. As of this writing, the SAFD has adjudicated 20 Fight Tests in four weeks! Many thanks to teachers and Fight Masters for their understanding and cooperation during this very busy time.

The Board of Directors

Did you know the SAFD has a Board of Directors? It does. And what's more, we have two new Board members: Dr. Robert Hobbs, head of the acting program at Duke University; and Kim Zimmer, Emmy award winning actress from *The Guiding Light*. Thanks to them both and welcome aboard.

Laundry

Okay, okay. We admit it. There *were* a couple of bloopers in the last issue. David Woolley's name was misspelled (sorry, David). And, to set the record straight on the newly renegotiated COLT (Chicago Off-Loop Contract): It's really the CAT (Chicago Area Theatre) contract. COLT is defunct, replaced by CAT.

USAir offers discount on fares to the 1990 Las Vegas NSCW

USAir is pleased to offer members and friends of the SAFD attending the 11th annual National Stage Combat Workshop the following air travel discounts:

- 45% off the full coach fare
- 5% off the lowest promotional fare

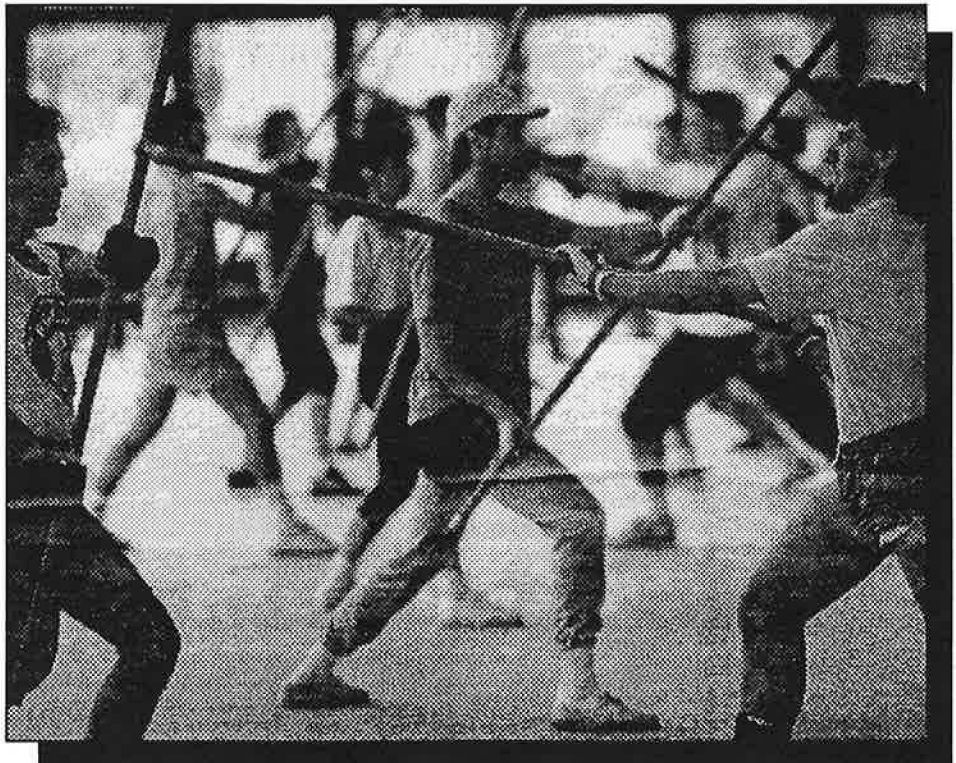
In order to qualify for these discounts, call USAir at 1-800-334-8644 to book your reservation. Mention Gold File #216531

—this identifies you as a participating member and gets you your discount.

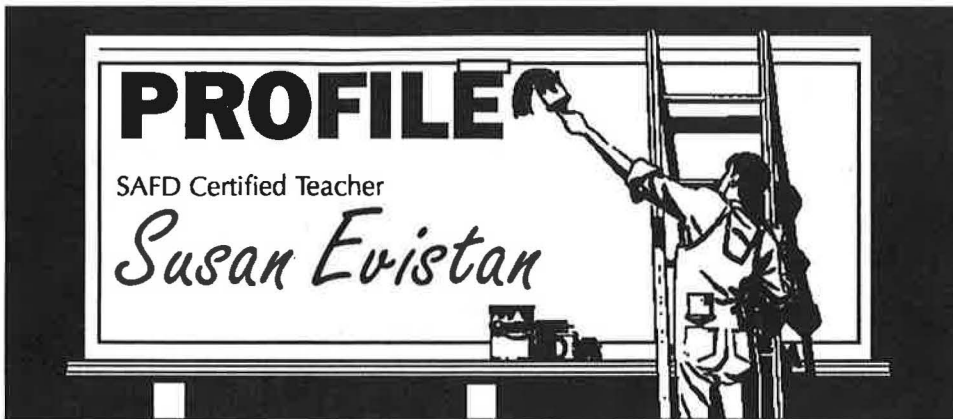
Then call AIR EXPRESS at 1-800-237-8995 and ask for John Rivera. Your tickets will be printed and sent to you without delay. Have your credit card number ready when you call. If you are paying by cash or check, contact your

local travel agent. However, you *must* make your initial reservation directly with USAir. See you in Las Vegas!

★ ★ ★



A quarterstaff class drill at the 1989 National Stage Combat Workshop in Las Vegas.



Profiles is a regular feature in The Cutting Edge saluting SAFD members of every level across the U.S.

"It was David Leong—1981. To be honest, I thought he was insane!" Susan Evistan reflects on her introduction to stage combat.

"He taught stage combat at Northern Kentucky University where I was an undergraduate. He encouraged me to pursue it."

Initially, Susan knew little about the SAFD, had no idea that swinging a sword could ever provide gainful employment, and had no female role models to emulate. "I thought being a woman would work against me—I had never worked with a female Fight Director and there seemed very few parts written for a female combatant. But, thanks to David's persistence and faith in me, I am still learning, growing and working in this field."

Susan is back at Northern Kentucky University, but as a faculty member these days. This follows a stint heading up the movement program at West Virginia University, teaching classes in acting, stage combat, theatre dance, movement for the theatre, and more.

As far as competing with the guys is concerned, "I find, at times, I have an

advantage over some of my male comrades, in that I can be hired to choreograph both dances and fights, saving the Theatre Company money. At first, there may be disbelief due to my small size and sex, but all of that goes away after the first rehearsal."

Susan took her certification test as an Actor/Combatant in 1984 and followed up by

becoming of the one of the first SAFD



Certified Teachers in 1987.

Her credits as Fight Director range over such diverse assignments as *Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *True West*, *West Side Story*, *Three Penny Opera*, *The Tempest*, *Wild Oats*, and *As You Like It*. During the past autumn, she worked as assistant to Fight Master Drew Fracher in staging the duel in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at the Cincinnati Playhouse.

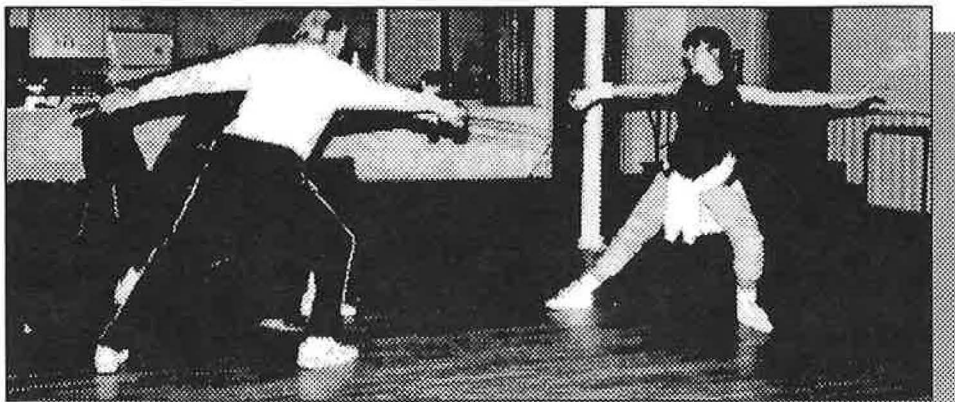
Susan has kept her skills up to date by continuing to study and work. At SAFD National Workshops in Memphis and Las Vegas Susan assisted Fight Masters Martinez and Fracher and also studied privately with Patrick Crean, Fight Master at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada.

Susan feels strongly that stage combat is a field women can and should pursue. "Any woman who is a dancer, a choreographer, or a movement specialist should definitely seek out stage combat training."

As for problems working in a primarily male-dominated field, Susan is quick to affirm, "I am taken seriously. I would hope that my work is what matters, not my size or sex! It is important that I mention how supportive my teachers and comrades have been. They have always treated me as an equal. And my biggest fan is my husband, Patrick! We celebrate our first wedding anniversary on June 3, 1990!"

SAFD Certified Teacher Susan Evistan is proving every day that fencing and fisticuffs being "no job for a lady" is clearly a thing of the past.

★ ★ ★



Susan parries a lunge from the Dean of stage combat, Fight Master Paddy Crean.



What's Happening?



J. David Brimmer reports in from the Big Apple, where he is choreographing forty-something fights for the New York Renaissance Festival. Two other plays are currently showcasing his work, a Grand Guignol piece at the 91st Street Theatre and *The Brass Jackal*, your basic 1920s gothic werewolf operetta.

On the West Coast, Erik Fredericksen recently choreographed *Macbeth* for Des McAnuff at the LaJolla Playhouse, another *Macbeth* for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, a national tour of *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As You Like It* at Cal Arts.

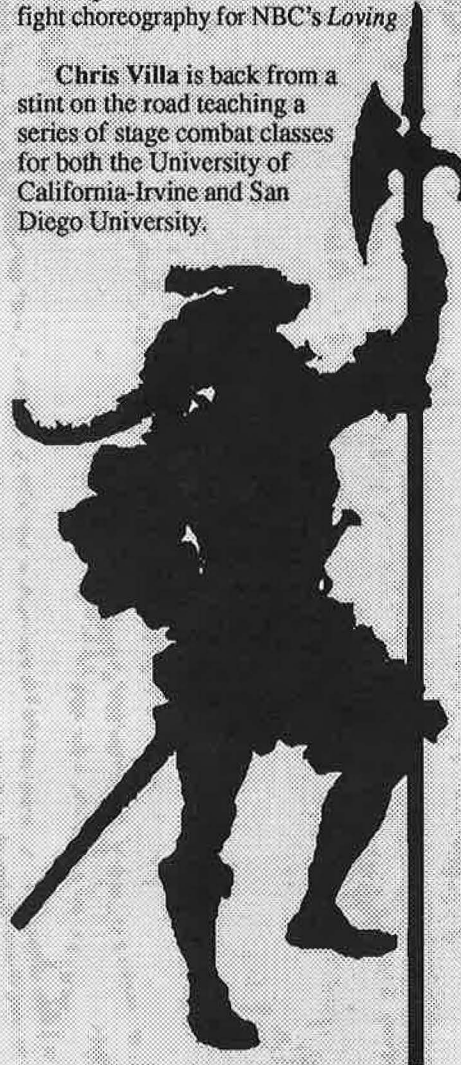
Still another *Macbeth* was choreographed by Greg Michaels, along with *Romeo and Juliet* and the new He-Man spectacular for Mattel which premiered at a Hollywood gala and will tour the U.S. this summer. Greg continues as the Double Swordsman in Universal Studios' live *Conan the Barbarian* show and co-stars in *Time Barbarians*, a new sword and sorcery feature film.

Since moving to Texas, Nicolas Sandys has been in perpetual motion it seems: *Les Liaisons* and *R & J* at Dallas Theatre Center; *Moonshadow* and *King Lear* at Stage West in Fort Worth; *Macbeth* for Fort Worth Shakespeare in the Park; *Henry IV* for Southern Methodist University, along with fellow SAFD member and spouse, Patrice Egleston; and, this summer, he tackles both the Dallas (*Pericles*, *Twelfth Night*) and Fort Worth (*R & J*, *As You Like It*) Shakespeare Festivals.

Good luck to David Drobot, who is leaving Wilmington, Delaware to become the new Artistic Director of Thunder Bay Theatre, a small year-round theatre in northern Michigan.

Our President on the move! J. Allen Suddeth heads for Wisconsin to stage fights for *Macbeth* at American Players Theatre, on to *Hamlet* at North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, and, back in NYC, fight choreography for NBC's *Loving*

Chris Villa is back from a stint on the road teaching a series of stage combat classes for both the University of California-Irvine and San Diego University.



David Woolley's Chicago activities include fight choreography for *Othello*, *Ragged Dick*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Les Liaisons*, *Singing in the Rain* (where he did the fight direction and also performed in the silent films *The Royal Rascal* and *The Duelling Cavalier* with SAFD members David Engel and David Skvarala), *The Sacrifice* (a world premiere opera), and *Falstaff*.

Douglas Mumaw is Guest Professor at Ohio University teaching a certification course. Then he's off to Kentucky to work with Drew Fracher and *The Legend of Daniel Boone*. He then reunites with David Woolley in Chicago for the summer tour of their stage combat show, *Guido Crescendo and Dirk Perfect: The Swordsmen!*

Rick Sordelet acted as Fight Director for Bonnie Franklin and Tony Musante in *Wait Until Dark* at the Birmingham Theatre. Rick is finishing up his first term as President of Actors in Action (formerly Fights R Us), a New York based stage combat ensemble.

In Chicago, David Engel acted as fight director for *The Homecoming* at Steppenwolf and did double duty in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Halsted Theatre Center, playing Tybalt and staging the fights. Currently, he is developing a fight show with the ensemble at the Organic Theatre Greenhouse Project.

Ann M. Tsuji is currently performing in *FOB* (written and directed by David Henry Hwang, best known for his Tony Award-winning play *M. Butterfly*) at the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre in New York. She notes that there is a Peking Operastyle fight in the second act. "Like dance and stage combat combined. Interesting."

Richard Raether is currently in Minneapolis choreographing *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V* for the Guthrie Theatre, which is staging all three histories in repertory. Please note, this leaves his wife, Margaret, to grind out this edition of *Cutting Edge* solo. Thanks, hon!

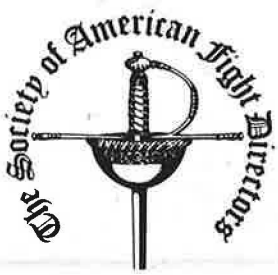
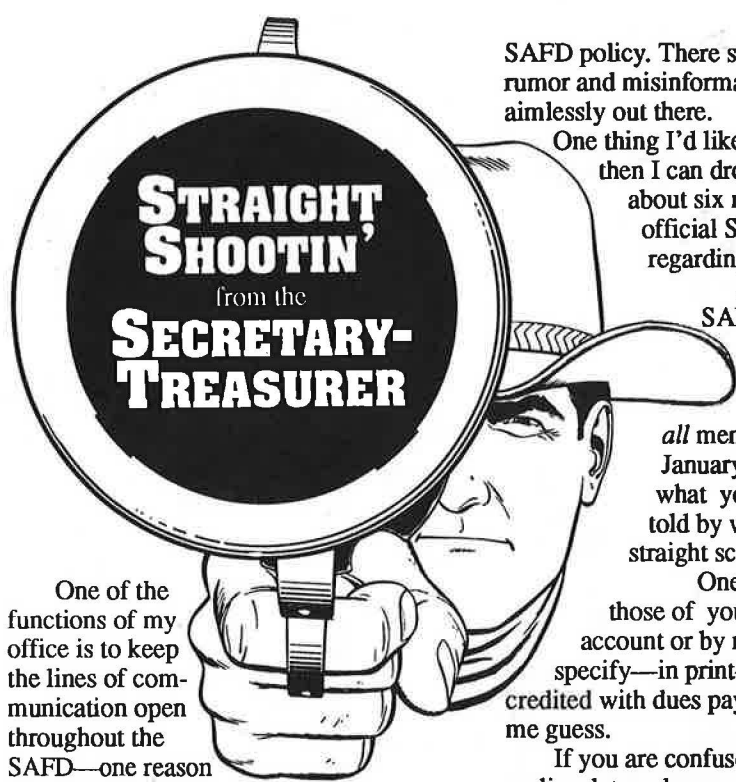


THE CUTTING EDGE

The Cutting Edge is concocted bimonthly by Richard and Margaret Raether and is a publication of the Society of American Fight Directors.

Submissions to *The Cutting Edge* should be sent to:

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One of the functions of my office is to keep the lines of communication open throughout the SAFD—one reason this newsletter was created. I'm supposed to make sure everyone is up to date and clear on

SAFD policy. There seems to be a lot of rumor and misinformation floating about aimlessly out there.

One thing I'd like to clear up (and then I can drop the subject for about six months) is the official SAFD policy regarding dues.

According to the SAFD bylaws, dues for *all* classifications of members are \$25. Dues for *all* members are due in January. Regardless, of what you thought, or were told by whom—this is the straight scoop.

One request from me: those of you paying by joint account or by money order, please specify—in print—the name to be credited with dues payment. Don't make me guess.

If you are confused about an SAFD policy, let me know and I will do my best to clear things up for you.

★★★



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