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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge, January/February 1991, Vol. 2 Issue 1

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THE CUTTING EDGE

Volume II, Issue 1

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

January/February, 1991



Fight Test Wounds

A wound is a required move in the rapier/dagger section of the certification fight test. However, a word of warning is in order. Please do not make this wound a debilitating injury! Fight masters don't need to see actors expending their energies playing a sliced hamstring throughout the next two fights in their test scene.

T-Shirts

The official SAFD t-shirt concession is now under the jurisdiction of Susan Evistan. Watch the *Cutting Edge* for details on when and how you can order an official SAFD t-shirt of your very own.

Laundry

Following are some bloopers (incredible, but true) from the Fall issue of the *Fight Master*.

Directory Listings

Chuck Coyl should have been listed as a certified teacher.

Erik Fredricksen's phone number is *really* 313-484-0425.

The Seattle Regional rep. is:

Geoffrey Alm
316 N. 83rd
Seattle, WA 98106
206-784-3705

Put to the Test

The fight test listed as Washington and Lee University was actually comprised of U. of Virginia students being tested at Washington and Lee.

In the fight test results from A.C.T.S. in New York, both Ken Smith and Jim Robinson should have been listed (and congratulated) as recommending in all five weapons.

Broadsword and Shield Added to SAFD Certification Testing

SAFD President J. Allen Suddeth has announced that a new discipline has been added to the five currently available as certification fight test material.

"Broadsword and shield technique was the mainstay of the warrior arts in medieval and dark ages, and we're proud to add this new (old) weapons technique."

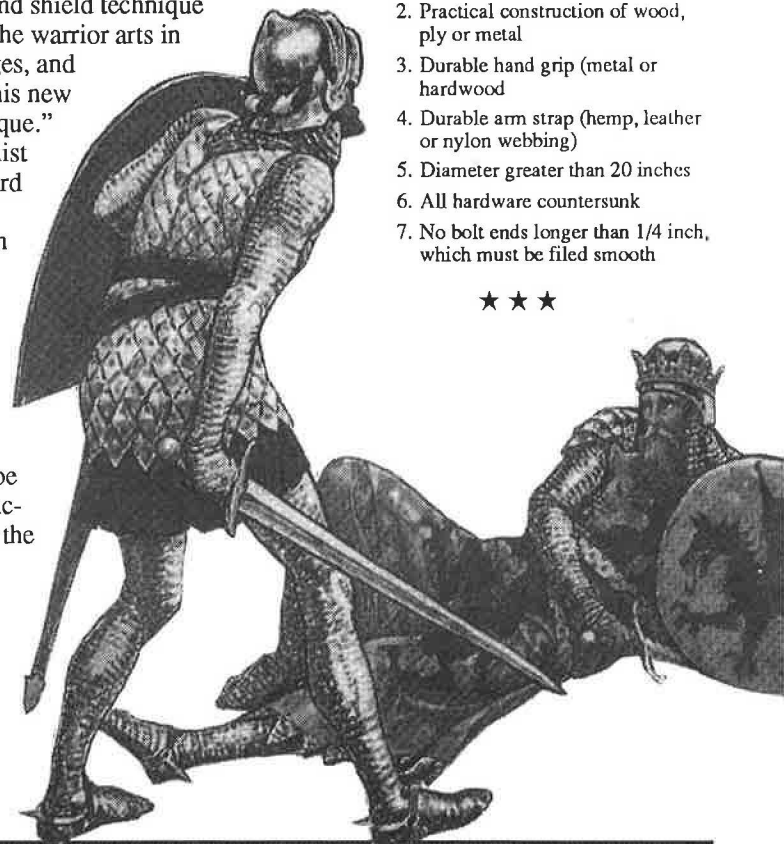
The following list of required broadsword and shield moves for an SAFD certification fight test are representative of basic minimum safe requirements that a well-staged broadsword/shield fight should contain.

Notice should be given to shield construction requirements. In the interests of safety, shields should meet some basic safety guidelines. The SAFD urges teachers and students who anticipate testing in

this form, to insure safe, practical shields are used.

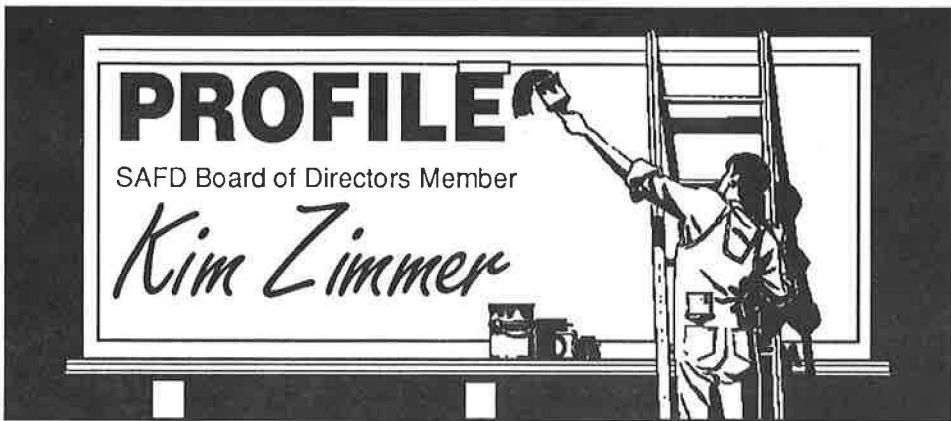
SHIELD REQUIREMENTS

1. Padding for hand and forearm
2. Practical construction of wood, ply or metal
3. Durable hand grip (metal or hardwood)
4. Durable arm strap (hemp, leather or nylon webbing)
5. Diameter greater than 20 inches
6. All hardware countersunk
7. No bolt ends longer than 1/4 inch, which must be filed smooth



BROADSWORD AND SHIELD COMPULSORY MOVES

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Two thrusts (one to mid-line, one to low line) | (per combatant) |
| 2. One horizontal cut across the head (duck) | (per fight) |
| 3. One horizontal cut across stomach (avoidance) | (per fight) |
| 4. One diagonal cut (avoidance) | (per fight) |
| 5. One bind | (per combatant) |
| 6. Cutting attacks in all lines | (per combatant) |
| 7. Sword parries in high, mid, and low lines | (per combatant) |
| 8. Shield parries in high, and mid lines | (per combatant) |
| 9. One moulinet | (per combatant) |
| 10. Running attack | (per fight) |
| 11. One beat parry with sword | (per combatant) |
| 12. One beat parry with shield | (per combatant) |
| 13. One attempted (non-contact) attack with shield | (per fight) |
| 14. One fall with the sword and shield | (per fight) |
| 15. One push away with shield (from contact with body or shield) | (per fight) |
| 16. One shield to shield corps a corps | (per fight) |
| 17. One shield parry of a thrusting attack to mid line | (per combatant) |



Kim Zimmer is a three time Emmy Award winner for her portrayal of Reva Shane on CBS's the Guiding Light. She recently left the show to pursue ventures in California, where she now resides with her husband, actor/director A.C. Weary, and their three children. A.C. currently teaches stage combat at the California Institute of the Arts. With A.C. asking the questions, Kim discussed her involvement with stage fighting and choreographers over the years.

Q: Kim, sources tell me you enjoy a good sword fight. Do you have the opportunity to practice the art yourself?

K: I used to, but not so much any more. I've been doing a soap for the last six years and there's very little cause to pick up a cutlass and hack away at somebody. Actually, the last time I used a sword was to duel with my husband in the back yard as a publicity stunt for Robin Leach's show.

Q: When was the last time you worked with a fight choreographer?

K: Jake Turner staged a barroom brawl on the show awhile ago.

Q: What was your involvement?

K: Oh, I had very little to do. For me, it was basically the "Eeek! A mouse!" school of fighting.

Q: Other than big brawls and stunts, do you see a need for choreographers in daytime drama?

K: Absolutely. It really helps to have someone watching out for the safety of the actors. You need protection from over-zealous directors, macho co-stars and a host of unsafe situations, that are usually overlooked due to the



demanding work schedule. I don't think directors are deliberately unsafe in staging physical confrontations, but a fight arranger can see the situation from both sides. He knows what

the script calls for and he also knows the strengths and limitations of the people he's working with. Its very uncomfortable when a director leaves it open to the collaboration of the actors, without a trained eye to bail you out. It's so much better having just one voice to listen to.

Q: But choreographers aren't flawless. Have you ever seen things go awry, even under experienced supervision?

K: No. But that doesn't mean I've never seen them make mistakes. I've seen them over-complicate situations, make choices inconsistent with the style of the show. You know: putting in flash moves instead of finding the reality of the scene or movement suited to the characters, but the only black eyes and split lips I saw, happened when a choreographer wasn't on set.

Q: Do you remember the first staged fight you ever saw?

K: Yeah, it was about 15 years ago. A rapier/dagger fight between Allen Suddeth and A.C. Weary at Hope Summer Theatre in Holland, Michigan. I remember that it was scary to watch at first, but the more they rehearsed, the more impressed I was at the skill and trust involved. So much so, I later married one of them.

Q: Cute. Didn't you end up in a fight show with them years later in New York?

K: Yes, *A Night At The Fights*. They had created an evening to showcase the talents of the major choreographers and fighters in New York at the time. This was 12 years ago and really an exciting time to be in the city. The cast list was a sort of *Who's Who* of the fight game. Along with Allen and A.C. were people like Erik Fredricksen, B.H. Barry, Terry Mann, Jake Turner, Bobby Walsh, Steven Earl Edwards, Peter Fernandez, Jim Monitor, and on and on.

Q: How did they have you involved?

K: Well, I was asked to do a broadsword fight with A.C. I was covered all in black except for my eyes and because of earlier sequences, everyone in the audience just assumed that I was Allen. So after I defeated this bear creature, I removed the mask and the audience freaked.

Q: Did you use any other weapons in the show besides the broadsword?

K: A rapier. All the women were slaves in the pirate finale and, following a big explosion, we defended ourselves in a free-for-all.

God, it's been so long . . . You know, I'd like to think that I could still do all that stuff just as well as I did three



children ago. Guess the only way I'll find that out is to drag my butt to Las Vegas this summer with the rest of you studs.

Q: Which of the two fights was the more dangerous for you?

K: Neither. I was in a roller derby dressing room fight which was, without a doubt, the most dangerous piece in the show. Fighting on skates is no picnic, believe me: people whipping around the stage, slamming into lockers. We staged it very carefully to allow for every possible slip-up but it still scares me to think about what we did.

Thank god everyone was dedicated to keeping things under control so nobody got hurt. Also Allen Suddeth designed some special pads, reinforced with aluminum, to protect our tailbones, which saved our asses more than once. No pun intended.

Q: What do you see as the necessary elements to make for a good fight?

K: Good choreography, obviously—the kind that enhances the scene, the dialogue, the characters involved—you know, rooted in something. Then of course, after that, there's the ability of the actors to make those moves look natural. I'm more impressed by the ease with which a fight is executed versus the heavy-handed approach which usually looks overplayed. Then all you need are a few surprise moves, to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. Then you hit them with the much deserved death or stirring finish. I don't think that's too much to ask, do you?

Q: You sound like a true fan of the swashbuckler. Do you have any personal hopes for the SAFD's future?

K: Oh, I imagine my hopes aren't any different than anyone else's. I'd like to see SAFD ranks continue to grow, so the network of trained actors, and teachers, and choreographers can have some kind of real impact on the industry at large. It's going to take this "spreading of the gospel" to compel producers, directors and actors to take advantage of this great resource that the society has to offer. Then perhaps, the level of excellence would be raised across the board.

I can tell you one thing, it would cut down on the amount of boring or ridiculous fights produced and certainly spare a lot of unnecessary broken noses.



What's Happening?

Payson Burt is teaching and choreographing *King Lear* at Temple University, and acting in the Dickens Festival at the Pen Ren Fair.

Drew Fracher directed the Dickens Festival at the Pen Ren Fair and is headed to Kansas City in February to stage fights for *Richard III* at the Missouri Rep, with **Martin English** serving as fight captain.

Jack Young has been promoted to assistant director of the drama program at Duke University and recently directed *Servant of two Masters* there. Jack also conducted a stage combat workshop at the North Carolina Theatre Conference with **George Bellah** and **Paul Lundrigan**.

Richard Lane, in addition to running his school, the Academy of the Sword, is touring *Captain Book and the Bookaneers*, and choreographing *Henry IV Part II*, *Beaux Strategem*, *Macbeth*, *Roshomon*, *Tosca*, and Wagner's *Ring*.

Congratulations to **Geoffrey Alm** on his marriage to Kathy Smith (Kathy, you've heard of football widows—welcome to the Widows of the Blade.)

David Leong maintains his usual hectic schedule which is just too long to list in full. Highlights include choreographing Stacy Keach in *Richard III* at the Folger, *Henry IV parts 1&2* at NY Shakespeare Festival, opening soon. Next he's off to A.C.T. in San Francisco to do *Hamlet* from Feb. 1-21, then back to the Folger for *King Lear* March 13-April 30.

Bob Walsh represented the SAFD at the NETC and is teaching at Brandeis University and Curry College. Recently, he choreographed *Cyrano* for the American Stage Festival and *Roshomon* at Wooster Foothills Theatre and directed *Table Manners* at Merrimack Rep.

David Doersch has left En Garde Unlimited to pursue his own career and is teaching stage combat at University of Minnesota and Gustavus Adolphus College.

Steven Earl Edwards is back in school getting his PHD in Theater Management and working as Promotion Director for Texas Tech University.

Michael Kamptman is choreographing Globe Works, a tour show for the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival.

David Woolley is back from the Texas Ren Fair, teaching at Columbia College of Chicago and choreographing *Romeo and Juliet* for the Steppenwolf high school series.

Douglas Mumaw is spending his winter teaching stage combat at Ohio University.

David Engel staged the violence and performed in *The Custom of the Country* at the Buffalo Theatre.

T. J. Glenn choreographed a European tour of *Macbeth*, was stunt coordinator for the film *Voodoo Woman*, and is teaching stage combat at Montclair State College.

Peter Moore recently staged the fights for Des McAnuff's *Twelfth Night* at La Jolla Playhouse.

Richard Raether hits the road for a stint at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to choreograph *Julius Caesar*, then on to Youngstown State University to choreograph *Macbeth*.



A Message from the Treasurer: Hand Over Your Money!

Dues are due! Again! Everybody! This means you!
Send your 1991 dues (\$25.00) to Richard Raether
and you won't miss a single exciting issue of the
Cutting Edge or the *Fight Master*.

There are a couple of exceptions to the
\$25 bucks—"This Means You" policy.

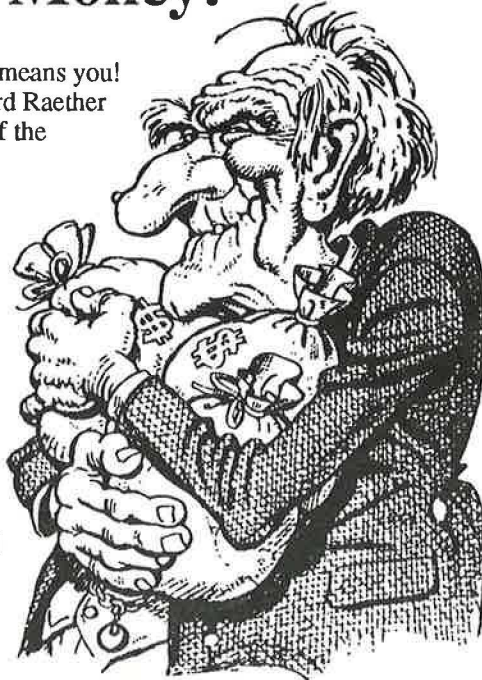
If you were a paid-up member in 1990
who subsequently attended the national
workshop, you are entitled to one year's
free membership—you are all set for '91.

If you became a member for the first
time at the 1990 national workshop, your
free year extends from July '90 to July '91.
BUT, you still owe the SAFD \$12.50 *now*.
This is to keep the Treasurer from going
crazy as dues trickle in all year long.

Everybody else, ante up. Checks should
be made payable to SAFD.

Questions? Call 1-800-659-6579.

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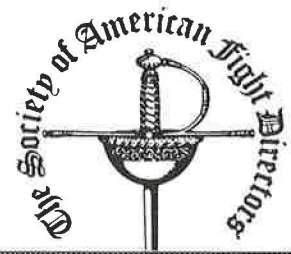


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Richard Raether
1834 Camp Avenue
Rockford, IL 61103



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Rockford, Illinois 61103

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