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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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5-1991

## **The Cutting Edge, May/June 1991, Vol. 2 Issue 3**

The Society of American Fight Directors

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# THE CUTTING EDGE

Volume II, Issue 3

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

May/June, 1991



## Wanted: Swordfighters

Joel Mason needs three swordfighters to perform with him in an upcoming tour for the Boston Flamenco Ballet, Oct. 12– Dec. 20. Fight scenes will be performed from *The Three Musketeers* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Two weeks rehearsal in Miami and then eight weeks tour. Salary approximately \$300/week. If you speak French, be sure to note it on your resumé. Send your resumé ASAP to:

Joel Mason  
c/o Theatre West Virginia  
P.O. Box 1205  
Beckley, WV 25802

Questions? Call (304) 255-7735.

## Changes of Address

SAFD mailings are sent bulk mail which is neither forwarded nor returned to sender. We like to think 100% of the membership receives each issue of the *Cutting Edge* and the *Fight Master* with loud exclama-tions of delight. If you aren't, perhaps you moved and forgot to tell us? Come to think of it, you probably aren't reading this message either . . . But to those contemplating a move, let the SAFD know where you are!

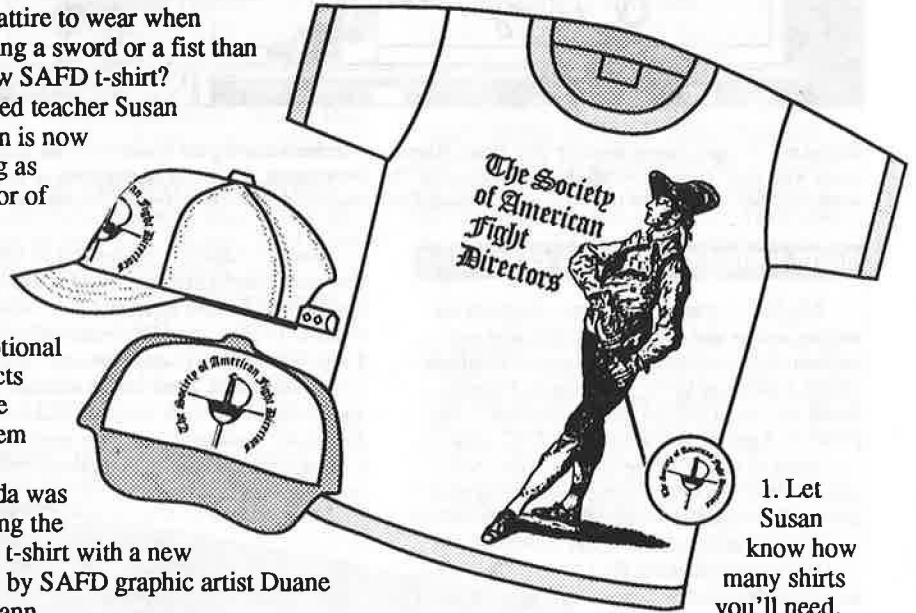


## U.S. Air NSCW Discount

Once again this year, U.S. Air is offering discounted air fare to Las Vegas—40% off full coach fare and 5% off their lowest airfare. To take advantage of the SAFD discount, call Air Express 1-800-347-4247 and ask for Edie Judd. You must refer to gold file #21640001.

## Tee-Time for the SAFD: Shirts, Hats, Buttons Available

Summer is here and what better attire to wear when swinging a sword or a fist than the new SAFD t-shirt? Certified teacher Susan Eviston is now serving as Director of



Promotional Products and the first item on her adgenda was updating the SAFD t-shirt with a new design by SAFD graphic artist Duane Orlemann.

Available in black or white, the shirt features an illustration of eighteenth century swordmaster de Angelo and is available in both short sleeves and as a tank. Sizes are small, medium, large, and x-large and the shirt is priced at \$9.00, \$8.00 for the tank.

Also available is a black baseball cap with the SAFD logo emblazoned in red and white for \$8.00 and buttons (black or white) imprinted with the logo in red for \$2.00.

Shirts, hats and buttons can be ordered directly from:

Susan Eviston  
1421 Sleepy Hollow Road #7  
Fort Wright, KY 41011  
606-431-8983 (between 9–5)

Or check with your closest regional rep.—a few of them have already ordered in bulk to make merchandise more available to our far-flung membership.

Those of you planning to attend the National Workshop in Las Vegas can look for a special NSCW t-shirt design.

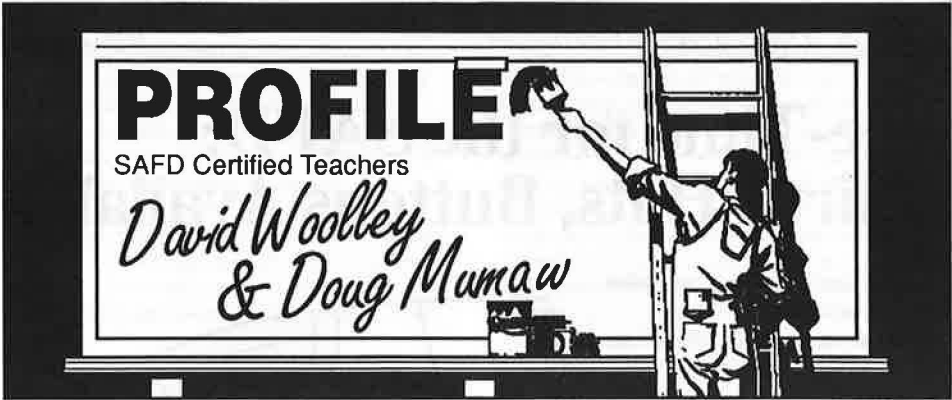
For certified teachers who may wish to order in bulk for their students, the procedure is as follows:

1. Let Susan know how many shirts you'll need.
2. Susan will ship the them to you.
3. After selling the shirts (or hats or pins) send the money to the Kentucky address in the form of a check or money order made out to the Society of American Fight Directors.
4. If not all merchandise is sold, just return items to Susan.
5. If possible, sending the money first would be very helpful to Susan.
6. If you phone in an order and get the answering machine, please leave the following information:

- Name
- Shipping address
- Phone number (as well as a time you can be reached)
- Your order (specifying size, style, color and number of items.
- Date by which you need your order

Amaze your friends! Be the first on your block to sport the latest trend in swashbuckling fashion with a dashing SAFD t-shirt, hat and pin.

★ ★ ★



Based in Chicago, David Woolley and Doug Mumaw have been touring the country for the past two years with their comic swordfighting act entitled The Swordsmen. It seemed appropriate to profile them together and get the inside story on Guido Crescendo and Dirk Perfect—The Swordsmen. —Ed.

**DAVID WOOLLEY a.k.a. GUIDO CRESCENDO**

My father was an economist for both the private sector and the government, and was captain of his college fencing team (Stanford, 1939). I grew up living overseas in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1962-64) and Vientiane, Laos (1968-71) and in and around the D.C. area. Most of my growing up was spent pool-side, competing in age group swimming and diving from age 6-16 and concentrating on springboard diving from 9-19. In the second grade I began tumbling class—a proper shoulder roll at age 8! While in junior high my dad introduced me to the gentlemanly sport of fencing. Then in 1977 the theatre bug bit hard; I left my studies as an economics major to perform at a local dinner theatre and in 1978 moved to Chicago to attend the Goodman School of Drama at DePaul University to become a great actor. While there I had a class in stage combat with Gene Schuldt: unarmed, single rapier, and q-staff. I had found a place where my skills as a diver, background in dance (ballet, jazz and tap) and love of theatre all came together. I graduated in 1981 with a BFA in acting! In my first show out of school, *Class Enemy*, I performed and choreographed the fights (using rudimentary knowledge from Gene). That resulted in being cast as Sonny in *Ladies in Waiting* (me and 14 women—got my equity card!). I was asked to stage the violence for David Mamet's *Edmond* for the world premiere in Chicago and New York premiere at the Provincetown Playhouse. Boom! An equity actor at 21 and a New York “fight director”... ooh... ahh...

Back in Chicago, professing to know what was going on fight-wise, I was wondering how in hell I could learn more... when lo! the SAFD came up with a national workshop. I was working on *Dungeonmaster* which opened the same week as the workshop. I staged fights for *DM*, went to NKU (Northern Kentucky University) for two weeks, back to Chicago for the opening and then flying back for certification!



While in Kentucky I soaked up information like a leech and then returned to Chicago a recommended actor/combatant ready to kick butt around town. And, as I was the only one in town for a while, I did! Between 1983 and 1987 I staged violence for over 70 shows, taught at Roosevelt University and began at Columbia College. In 1987 I got a grant from Columbia to train at

*continued on page 4*

**DOUG MUMAW a.k.a. DIRK PERFECT**

When I was 13, a friend of mine shot a black and white silent movie called *The Time Machine*. I played a cavalier who dueled the hero. Barbecue skewers in hand, we “choreographed” the fight which climaxed with my untimely demise. That was the beginning... In 1981, I landed my first pro acting job and had the good fortune to encounter Drew Fracher at *The Legend of Daniel Boone*. I learned about unarmed fighting, knives, black powder weapons, tomahawks, and the SAFD. I was back the next summer. Drew announced that next year at *Boone* he would teach an SAFD certification test—his first. I got back aboard the good ship *Boone* for one more ride. That summer ('83) I was fight captain and tested in R & D, unarmed and quarterstaff. I passed, and literally passed into a life and career I cherish to this day. In 1985 I attended the NSCW and got the training that shaped me into the fighter I am today. I owe Mr. Leong my fight stance from hours of passing drills with a broadsword in my sweating grasp. I owe Mr. Boushey my fondness for dynamic facial hair. To J.R. Beardsley goes credit for my, my, my... I'm not certain what I owe Mr. Beardsley, but I know I learned things from him. Mr. Fredricksen introduced me to the smallsword—I was lost, but thankful nonetheless. In the fall of '85 I moved to Seattle where (thanks to Boushey) I ended up in the Seattle Children's Theatre production of *Robin Hood*. I was fight captain and David allowed me to do some choreography as well. I stayed with SCT that season, then returned to *Boone* as choreographer. In January, 1987 David Leong invited me to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire as fight captain and co-teacher of a certification class. Winter of '88 found me in Chicago. I'd never met Woolley, but I called from Omaha and said, “Hey I'm moving to Chicago!” He said, “Hey, I'm going to Brandeis for a semester; take my classes.” So I did. I also scored a bartender gig. Part of my duties were to open the place up every Saturday for a poetry gathering. One day the group's leader asked me what I did. I said I was a swordfighter. He said, “Do any poetry with it?” I said, “You bet!” He said, “Come to the Green Mill in two weeks and perform.” I called Woolley and told him we had a gig. We cranked out our first episode of *The Swordsmen*. I was Dirk Perfect, romantic poet and master of the gentlemanly arts. David was Guido Crescendo, romantic orator and

*continued on page 4*



# What's Happening?

**David Doersch** leads a double life these days, heading up two theatrical schools: Minnesota Academy of Stage Combat Skills & Fuller Young People's Theatre. In between, he teaches at both Gustavus Adolphus College and U. of Minnesota. Recent choreography include *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Robert Chapin** recently directed a living chess game at Dragonwood Faire in Los Angeles. He and brother Stuart are up for pirates in the upcoming film *Hook* and plan to go into production in August with an independent feature film entitled *Cutthroat*.

**Geoffrey Alm** is teaching advanced rapier & dagger, acting in a children's play *The Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*, and choreographing both *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Man of La Mancha*.

**J. Stanley Haehl** is currently the Artist-in-Residence at Washington University in St. Louis.

**Rod Casteel** is providing weapons for Steven Spielberg's *Hook* and *War and Peace* at the Seattle Opera.

**Larry Henderson** recently did the fight direction for a new play with a familiar-sounding title, *A McBeth* at the Odyssey Theatre.

**Erik Fredricksen** is doing some fancy commuting these days. His performance in *Shoe Man* at the Purple Rose Theatre scored such a hit that the play was extended, forcing Erik to fly back and forth to Colorado on days off to begin choreography for *Richard III*.

**Tony Carreiro** will put his fight training to good use playing the title role in "the Scottish play" at the Idaho Shakespeare festival this summer.

**Michael Kirkland** choreographed *The Warrior's Husband* at Millsaps College in Mississippi, *Les Liaisons* at Galveston College, and *Romeo and Juliet* at University of Houston.

**J. David Brimmer** has kept busy performing in *Henry IV* at the Public in New York—fights by **David Leong**.

**John Robert Beardsley** has been immersed in a rousing action piece set in the post-Gold Rush period. It is to be performed on board the *Balclutha*, a tall ship permanently moored at the Hyde Street Pier on Fisherman's Wharf at the National Maritime Museum. Watch this space for further details as they develop!

**Patrick Vala-Haynes'** fight direction is on three Portland stages: *Life is a Dream* at New Rose Theatre, *King Lear* at Portland State University, and *R & J* at Jefferson School for the Performing Arts. Patrick received a Gallery Jurors' Award for co-writing and directing *At the Point of a Sword, An Adventure in Mayhem* for Gallery Players of Oregon.

**Mark Olsen** has been granted tenure at Wright State University in Dayton. Now you don't have to work any more, right Mark?

**John Sellars** is working with the Hodcarrier Film Group, Inc. They are currently in production with a short subject written by and featuring John. The group is planning July production for their first full-length feature film.

**Jamie Cheatham** has been doing an off-Broadway *R & J* (choreographed by David Leong) and teaching at both AMDA in the city & SUNY-Binghamton.



Watch for **Liz Zazzi** as "Mom" in a Days Inn commercial and as a sleepy executive-type in a Vivarin commercial. C'mon Liz, tell them to cast you as a swashbuckler in your next ad.

**Robert Walsh** continues teaching stage combat at Brandeis and recently staged fights for *Rashomon* at Worcester Foothills Theatre Co. and *Cymbeline* at M.I.T. Shakespeare ensemble. He's also directing *Table Manners* at Merrimack Repertory and teaching unarmed combat!

**Nicholas Sandys** and **Joe Price** conducted workshops for the Southwest Theatre Conference. Nick recently choreographed *As You Like It* at Dallas Theater Center & *Twelfth Night* at Stage West in Fort Worth—in which Nick also acted, along with SAFD member (and Nick's wife) **Patrice Egleston**. This summer, he will stage fights for *Henry IV, parts 1 & 2* and *Merry Wives* at Fort Worth Shakespeare in the Park.

**Steve Vaughan** continues teaching at Niagara University, U. of Rochester, Nazareth College, & SUNY-Brockport. He continues building swords in his spare time. Recent choreography includes *Caucasian Chalk Circle* for the Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo. This spring found Steve and wife **Emily Conable** in Virginia performing in a show for Apple Computers. Imagine what Steve could do if he just wasn't so lazy . . .

**Rick Sordelet** is producing *Jewel and the Medicine Man* at the George St. Playhouse. Recent choreography includes *Road to Nirvana* for Circle Repertory Theatre in New York.

**David Drobot** is now Artistic Director of Thunder Bay Theatre.

**Dr. Robin McFarquahr** was the first U.S. fight choreographer to have his Kabuki fights tour throughout Japan in Illinois Kabuki Theatre's production of *Achilles: A Kabuki Play*, directed by internationally renowned Kabuki artist Shozo Sato. Robin will re-choreograph the show for upcoming performances in Hungary, Greece and Philadelphia.

**DAVID WOOLLEY** *continued from page 2*  
 the teachers' workshop in Memphis. It was grand to work with Joseph and David Leong again. Also, I met J.R. Beardsley, Allan Suddeth, Richard Raether, Mark "Rat" Guinn, Dan Carter, Susan Eviston, and all the rest of the madmen and women of the SAFD.

After certifying as a teacher it was back to Chicago, where I had my first certification class and worked like a madman—23 shows that year. I received a special (one time only) Joseph Jefferson Award for the body of work in 1988.

It was November '88 when I first met Doug Mumaw. Following a 20-minute meeting, a quick crossing of blades, and an exchange of terminology, I said, "I'll see you in two months!" and left him to cover my classes while I went off to teach a semester at Brandeis. Within a month of my return we were fighting as Dirk and Guido on the Green Mill Stage, doing bad Elizabethan poetry and rock-and-roll swordplay.

These days I am teaching four levels of stage combat at Columbia, performing with Mumaw on the Faire circuit and choreographing in the city. It's a lot of commuting, but "Have sword, will travel." Safety and Za!

★ ★ ★



1834 Camp Avenue  
 Rockford, Illinois 61103

**DOUG MUMAW** *continued from page 2*  
 master of the gentlemanly arts (so he thinks). We did it—they loved us—and we loved us. It was one of the biggest rushes of our career. We performed *The Swordsmen* around town and for a month at the PA Renn Faire in '89, pausing while I got my teacher's certification.

After our gig in the Pennsylvania woods, we were so pleased with ourselves we decided to market the act and see what was out there. We auditioned for comedy clubs and played cabarets where our swords touched the ceiling.

In 1990, Benny Reehl, a vaudevillian, asked us to play the New England Vaudeville Festival. We drove to Maine and spent four days sweating like pigs in Benny's studio. His input was invaluable. We had a good time at the Festival, 'though we were scared silly. Our act had been turned upside down, shaken hard, and four days later we played for crowds of 3000 people. We learned to trust Benny!

We did the Bristol Renn. Faire for eight weeks, then back to Maine for Benny's two-week workshop to get our show very hot for our last gig of the year, the Texas Renn. Faire. The first day there were 26,000 people in the park! We were awarded Best New Show and we'll be back this year. People have told me how lucky I am—who am I to disagree?

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**THE CUTTING EDGE**

*The Cutting Edge* is concocted bimonthly by Margaret and Richard Raether (with sporadic help from Brian Anderson) and is a publication of the Society of American Fight Directors.

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

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