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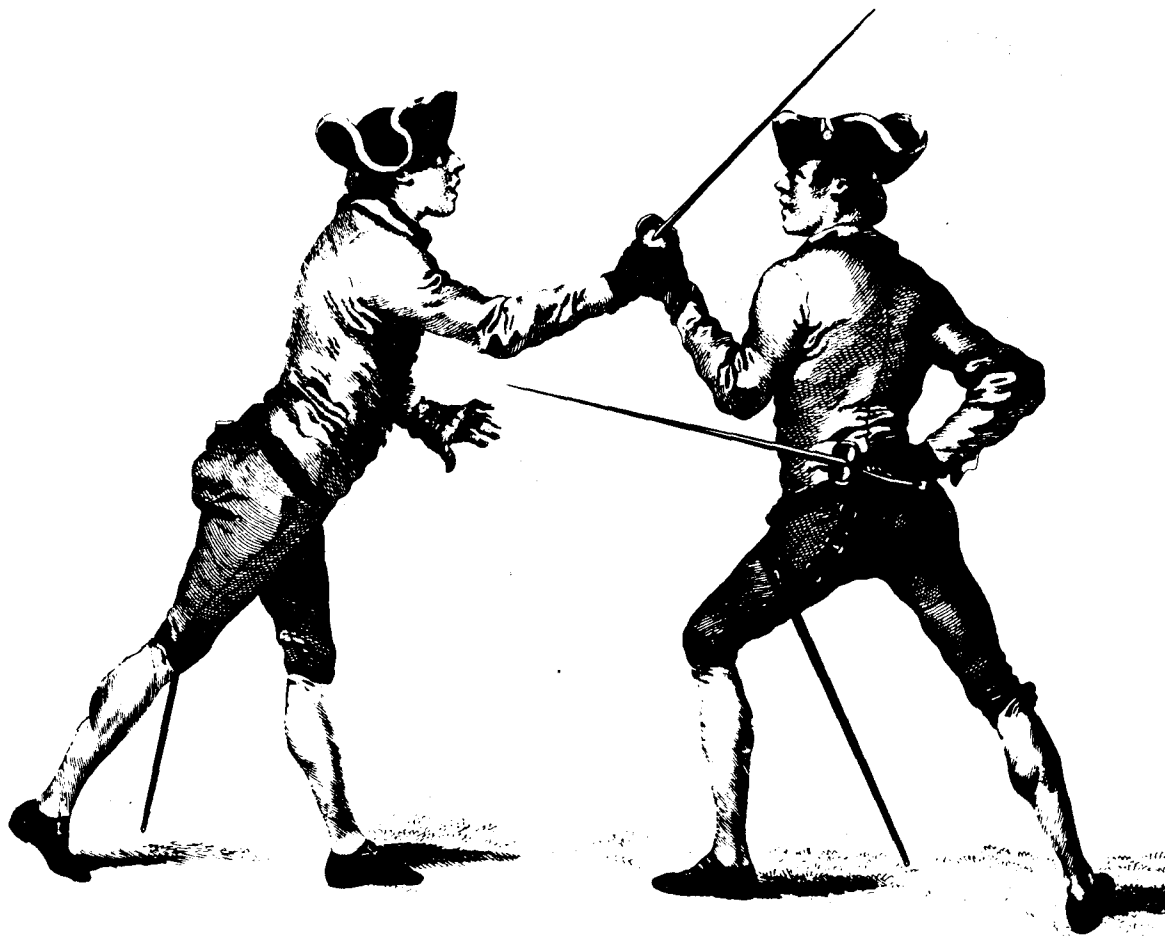
The Society of American Fight Directors

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THE FIGHT MASTER

The Magazine of the Society of American Fight Directors.

No. 10

JULY, 1980

Editor - Ann C. Long

Lay-out - David L. Boushey

Typed and Duplicated by Ann C. Long

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded by David Boushey and incorporated in Seattle, Washington, in May, 1977.

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A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

As President of the Society of American Fight Directors, I have had the good fortune to have sustained many fine relationships with my colleagues about the country. I have also gained numerous friends through my position as founder and President of the Society. I feel at this point in time that a shift of power and locale must take place with the Society to keep it a truly national organization representing all of its members. It is a fact that the majority of the membership reside in New York. Therefore, it only stands to reason that permanent residence of the Society should be centralized in that area. Thus, I wish to make it known that I am stepping down as President of the Society of American Fight Directors.

The new President of the Society as of August 15, 1980, is our colleague Erik Fredricksen, a devoted member of the Society. Many of you know him as Secretary-Treasurer of the Society. It has been approved by the Board of Directors that Erik take responsibility for the presidency. Erik has been one of the hardest working members of the Society and has strong feelings about where he feels the Society should be heading, and I concur with his philosophy 100%. Erik resides in New York City which is, as we all know, the hub of legitimate theatre in the United States. I feel very strongly that the shift to New York will make the Society a more viable organization and its reputation will continue to grow and prosper. It is a simple fact that Seattle, Washington, with all its fine theatre, is still not as strong an area to promote the Society to its fullest. I am pleased to see this shift from West to East.

Since I founded the Society in 1977, we have grown from a membership of 6 to 75. This in itself is quite a remarkable achievement. Not only have we grown in numbers but also in reputation. The Society is known in most areas of the country now and many directors and producers are aware of our standards of excellence. To date, not one blemish has been attributed to a member of the Society. The membership have presented themselves well when either choreographing or teaching stage combat. We must continue these standards if we are to remain a reputable organization with something to offer the theatre community.

I think everyone must agree that the magazine has grown by leaps and bounds. Much of the credit goes to our editor, Ann Long. She has been a workhorse in maintaining high standards for The Fight Master. I will continue to lay out the magazine and write various articles to help maintain its present quality. I must say, as

President of the Society, that this was and is my biggest grievance. Too many of the membership have sat idly by while a select few have continued to bolster the magazine. I still find it shocking that there are original members who have yet to contribute an article to the magazine. The magazine is as good as its membership. It is the very life-line of the Society whereby members can express their views and expertise with their colleagues. Through the magazine, we manage to stay informed as to what is happening in the area of fight directing and what is happening with our fellow colleagues. As a final request, I urge my colleagues and members of the Society not to pass the buck but to pick up the banner and make this Society the very best possible.

Two areas that make me very proud are the national fight workshop and the certification. We held our first national workshop in Macomb, Illinois, this summer, which was a very exciting first. Also, the certification tests which give recognition to those individuals who have become proficient combatants in armed and unarmed combat are a happy achievement. I hope that all of our instructor affiliates take advantage of this opportunity to promote their students and the Society through certification. The certificate is a good credential to have in one's resume.

In closing, I hope the membership will give Erik the same support as many of you have given me. It has been an arduous task forming this Society, writing its by-laws, pursuing a stronger membership, and making it financially solvent, but in the end it has been worth all of the effort. I look forward to Erik's leadership and feel very positive about the Society's future. I should also add at this point that Rod Colbin will be taking on the responsibilities of the Vice-Presidency. As most of you know, Rod is the senior American fight choreographer in the Society. His reputation precedes him. With Rod as Vice-President, the Society gains an added strength due to his reputation throughout the country. I will continue to be an integral part of the Society by assuming the responsibility of Secretary-Treasurer for the Society. With myself still handling the magazine, Erik will be free to pursue the ever-increasing responsibilities of the President of the Society.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL BUSINESS RELATING TO THE SOCIETY SHOULD BE SENT TO
THE SOCIETY'S NEW PERMANENT ADDRESS: 1551 York Ave., No. 5-N
New York, New York 10028

IF A MEMBER WISHES TO SEND AN ARTICLE TO THE EDITOR OF THE FIGHT MASTER,
PLEASE SEND IT TO THE OLD ADDRESS: 4720 38th, Seattle, Washington 98105

To my colleagues and friends--Adieu. I hope I have served you well.

David L. Boushey

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Fellow Members:

It is with a great deal of pride and a strong sense of commitment that I accept the position of President of the Society of American Fight Directors. It is particularly exciting to do so at this point in the Society's development. How clearly I remember David's early talks and the calls from Seattle; and I have through a most direct involvement with the Society in those early days come to appreciate the immense amount of formative work David did. Through that work we are now gaining national recognition and I am excited to now occupy that post from which so much initiative began.

I would at this time like to briefly state the direction in which I feel our Society must move with increased concentration. Until approximately three years ago, most of my experience was with professionals in a totally professional setting. I am speaking primarily of the choreography that I performed for Broadway, Off and Off-Off, L.O.R.T. theatres and T.V. While this may be good for me (indeed, any of us) in the continuing battle of self promotion, I truly believe we have a larger duty to the Society and those whom we would best serve. I spoke briefly to this point at our second National Meeting on August 13 in San Diego, California.

While none of us can afford to give up what may be a major area of livelihood, we can begin to shift some of the emphasis to where I think our greatest duty lies. That duty lies in the colleges, universities, and actor-training programs throughout the United States. I have on occasion (and so have some others in other areas) taken myself out of more prestigious professional arenas with much higher visibility to go to areas where I believe that we, as a Society, could make an impact and perform a service. I have on occasion, and I am certain others of you may have too, been blatantly asked, "What can you (or the Society) do for me?" I won't make the obvious Kennedy-esque response, but you do get the point. Frankly, I and indeed others, have made a very adequate living before the Society began and could indeed without it. That should not be the issue and I urge you to look to the larger goal. We must promote standards of quality and safety in those areas that train the future performers of tomorrow. No, I do mean solely those prestigious League Schools, although they would be an obvious choice with which to start. But, as you know, working actors come from every part of the continent and have a remarkable variety of backgrounds and schooling.

I would like for the Society to make a strong commitment to

furthering the spread of safety and quality training in any school with a treatre department. This will take time, but that time to begin has already begun. Those of you who have been following the magazine have seen the strides we have been making in New York for instance. Although these classes have not been arranged under the auspices of an institution, they have been arranged around the very real needs of working actors. You have been made aware of the beginnings of certification at Carnegie-Mellon and Webster College. These are small, but strong and evident, beginnings that must grow.

Many of our membership teach in colleges and universities. However, few of our members has, to date, taken advantage of that opportunity to have their students certified or to even bother relating (via the magazine) the nature and thrust of their teaching in the area of Stage Combat. This has been true of Affiliate as well as Full members. I believe that there is a very real and implicit responsibility to being a Society member and I urge all of you to adopt that spirit of involvement and interest in growth or to at least question your motives for wanting to be associated with the Society.

Some of you may feel that this language is strong. If so, I have been at least partially successful, for that was my intention. We are at a very exciting but critical time for ourselves. We dare not rest upon the good things that have happened through the hard work and dedication of some. We all can and must do even more to advance the quality and influential sphere of the Society.

This is not meant as a lecture but a strong call to arms, a plea for an active and involved membership with an eye out, at least occasionally, to how we may do something for the Society. I feel that self advancement and visibility, if indeed that is your goal, can come about most quickly by dedicting yourself to the higher aspiration.

In this article, I know that David will make mention of our meeting in San Diego, so I'll let that go. However, I do want to say that we are considering a new guide in the classification of our Affiliate members. Part of this vailidation will involve a questionnaire, the construction of which will be partially directed by Joseph Martinez.

In closing, I want to remind all of you that we do represent the Society when we teach or choregraph. As we become better known and as our membership and endeavors increase, there are bound to be some individuals who will feel threatened--even when there is apparently no logic. This is, of course, true for any group of individuals which

seeks to have a quality (and thus, by definition, somewhat exclusive) impact on the direction of a significant number of people and ideas.

If faced with this sort of pettiness and fear, please try to react in a manner that is not in kind. Again, I can think of no better model of talented and gentlemanly behavior than our gifted mentor and colleague, Mr. Patrick Crean. As the saying goes, "He who makes no mistakes, makes nothing." If we err in the future, let it be in the direction of enthusiastic endeavor and cooperative spirit. I look forward to working and growing with you in just this spirit.

Sincerely,

Erik Fredricksen,
President

IF A MEMBER WISHES TO SEND INFORMATION TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE MAGAZINE, SEND IT TO THE PRESIDENT FIRST AND HE WILL FORWARD THE ARTICLE TO THE EDITOR. DUES WILL NOW BE PAID TO THE NEW PERMANENT ADDRESS. IF A PERSON WISHES TO JOIN THE SOCIETY, PLEASE CONTACT THE NEW ADDRESS IN NEW YORK.

OUR FIRST NATIONAL FIGHT WORKSHOP

Well, it was hot and humid! By and large a miserable environment to spend four weeks in, but the workshop itself was a super success. There were twenty-nine participants from all over the United States including Hawaii and Canada.

The students got the best we had to offer. They not only acquired the varied skills in broadsword, quarterstaff, rapier and dagger, court sword and unarmed combat but also work with explosives and black powder.

We wanted to give the participants a good working knowledge in not only swords but such things as quarterstaves, akido, tai chi (sword form) and rifles such as flintlocks and matchlocks. All of the participants were able to load and fire a matchlock weapon. This was an invaluable experience. As far as the black powder was concerned, we had two specialists come in and do the demonstration. They even fired a percussion pistol of Civil War vintage. A very impressive display!

With the various other weapons, Joe Martinez taught unarmed combat and quarterstaff, Erik Fredricksen taught courtsword and akido and I taught rapier and dagger, broadsword, and tai chi (sword form). The classes were quite intense and the average working day was 6-1/2 hours. The weapons dealt with were introduced on a very elemental level at the outset and proceeded to a more complex level by the end of the workshop. Also, various historical anecdotes were introduced to give the participants a better working knowledge of the weapons they were handling.

We were very pleased to have four women in the group. They were given the same demands as the others, and the came through marvelously. The ages ranged from 19 to 53. The average age was approximately 24. Over all, they were a very physical group with the usual exceptions. We were able to take them at a pace exceeding our normal classes. This was to be expected because these individuals were there to learn the craft and that's exactly what they got.

I must say that I was quite impressed with the workshop and I wished how nice it would have been if I could have had a workshop like this one when I was training in Great Britain. It's not that I didn't get the training but it took me 2-1/2 years! I am not implying that these students are all fight choreographers, but they certainly do have a good working knowledge of the various weapons in the theatre. What many of them need now if they wish to choreograph is experience. It would be a mistake to assume they are ready to start taking the responsibility of fight sequences on a large scale after one month, but what a head start these participants got!

There were some difficulties. We feel the main one being the varied levels of competency. Some people were very good and a few others were lacking. Next time, we will opt to divide the class into two groups depending upon one's level of expertise. In this way, we will be able to work at an even higher level with the more experienced group. There was no doubt that some students slowed the classes down, but by and large the students were kept on their toes. In other words, we didn't work at the lowest level but somewhere in between.

There was a fight night near the end of the workshop to an invited audience to give the participants a chance to show off their prowess. They did admirably with all the weapons being introduced at some point.

Finally, on the last day of the workshop, 24 participants applied for certification by taking a test of proficiency. Of the 24, 21 passed with three individuals attaining recommended. The following list contains those combatants who passed the test and were awarded a certificate sanctioned by the Society of American Fight Directors:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Kay Aoyama | 12. Peggy Goss |
| 2. Mark Beard-Witherup | 13. Alan S. Harris |
| 3. Gray Boeck | 14. Hollis Houston |
| 4. Mark Cole | 15. Darnell Lauth |
| 5. Charles Coyl | 16. Michael Myers |
| 6. Lyn Dutson | 17. James Robinson (Recommended) |
| 7. Drew Fracher (Recommended) | 18. Daniel Rose |
| 8. Tim Ellis (Recommended) | 19. James Simpson |
| 9. David Eves | 20. Michael Sokoloff |
| 10. Allan Fulmer | 21. Mark Taylor |
| 11. Brian Gagne | |

Perhaps one of the best things that happened (or didn't happen) was the fact that not one injury occurred of any significance during the workshop. Aside for some sore muscles and a few aches, the combatants survived the ordeal and now have something to tell their grandchildren.

Besides a number of administrative factors that can and will be re-adjusted in future workshops, one of the most important elements to come out of the first national workshop was a specific list of moves that must be incorporated into a test for certification through the Society of American Fight Directors. They are as follows:

Court Sword

Point Work:

- Deception of parry
- A coupé
- A double

Three Prises de Fer:

- A croisée
- An envelopement
- A bind

- One Beat Attack
- One Corps-a-corps
- One Sequence in line
- One Circular sequence
- One Mollinello
- One Punto reverso
- One Cut across head (duck)
- One Cut across stomach (jump back)
- One Diagonal cut (avoidance)

Rapier & Dagger (All of the above plus)

- One Dougle corps-a-corps ✓
- One Cross parry with dagger ✓
- One Double parry with both weapons
- Two Attacks with dagger (thrust & cut)
- Two Dagger parries solo
- One 360° turn within fight
- Ability to parry with both equally well
- One disarm

Broadsword

- Two Thrusts (different lines)
- One Corps-a-corps
- One Cut across head (duck)
- One Cut across stomach (jump back)
- One Pommel or attempted pommel
- A Bind
- A Displacement
- Attacks in all lines
- One Mollinello
- One 360° turn within fight

Hand to Hand (required)

- One fall (feint included) One Forward roll
- One Rabbit punch One Elbow
- One Kick One Strangle
- Two Punches
- One Flip
- One Knee
- One Slap

The Society now requires that the above mentioned moves must be in every fight sequence for certification to the Society. We found that it was best to set the fight sequence and have everyone do the same fight. It is asking a lot of a student to put together his own fight. It is enough just to technically do the fight much less to choreograph it. The Society suggests that an instructor put the basic fight together using the aforementioned moves and then leaving a section within the fight where the combatans can put some of their own moves together. But it is strongly suggested that the fight be pre-determined using said moves.

Hand to hand and two weapons should be the basis for the fight. An example would be: Hand to hand (required), rapier and dagger (required), and an option of broadsword or even quarterstaff (moves not included but can be set by the instructor).

Also, the fight should be acted! A scene can be taken directly from literature (Romeo & Juliet Have some great fights), or it can be improvised (with dialogue). It also makes it easier to judge the fights when the same fight is being performed by everyone. The combatants were pleased to have the fight set for them so that particular burden was relieved. In closing, the Society suggests that the teacher(s) show the fight to the combatants and perhaps review it after a couple of days, but the instructor should not continue to give assistance thus allowing for a fair treatment of all participants. REMEMBER, CERTIFICATION MUST BE ADJUDICATED BY A FULL MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

The first national fight workshop for the Society of American Fight Directors was a tremendous success. The Society intends to conduct another similar workshop next summer. Some of you who weren't able to take the workshop this summer might consider it for next year. I might add that four members of the Society took the workshop and ten participants joined the Society after the termination of the four-week course. All in all, a very successful first fight workshop for the Society of American Fight Directors.

D. L. Boushey

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

Members of the Society convened after the A.T.A. convention in San Diego August 13. Erik Fredricksen, new President to the Society of American Fight Directors opened the meeting with a brief statement of philosophy.

Erik praised the outgoing President, David Boushey, and committed himself to carry on the high standards as set forth under the guidance of Mr. Boushey. He felt the Society could use more exposure in the public eye and promised to actively pursue that goal throughout his tenure as President.

A second area which was stressed very strongly by Erik was the upgrading of the membership to the Society. Erik feels there should be stronger guidelines set forth by the Society when admitting individuals into the Society. In particular, he feels the Society must expect high standards from entering affiliates. The full membership have always had to go through stringent scrutiny to gain that status within the Society, but affiliate members have had only to send the Society two recommendations and a resume of their experience. As the Society has found, resumes can be padded and in some cases have been. The Society can only go by what they hear or read at this point in time, but Erik would like to change all that.

Erik intends to institute a questionnaire which must be filled out by the candidate. This questionnaire would ask very specific questions about the area of fight choreography. This would give the Society a better idea as to the knowledge an affiliate candidate has in the area of combat. Also, it would give the Society a better insight into what a candidate wants from the Society and what he wants to contribute to the Society. The affiliate member as defined in the by-laws is a person who either teaches stage combat on a college/university level or choreographs on a part-time basis. Generally, the affiliate status is the step just below full membership and many members work through the various levels of the Society eventually anticipating full membership. Therefore, it is important that the Society maintain high standards for those individuals applying for affiliateship.

After the questionnaire was discussed, Erik asked the attending membership about specific possibilities that could be introduced into the screening process of affiliate candidates. Chris Villa suggested that all affiliates be interviewed by a member of the full membership to the Society. It was noted that although this was a good idea and could be implemented in some cases, there was still the problem of topography. This is a large country and full members cannot be in all sectors of the country, and the Society certainly is not inclined to send a full member to Texas to talk to a prospective affiliate candidate. The interview could be effective when it was convenient for the individuals involved, but otherwise would be difficult to implement.

Lyn Dutson, new member to the Society, suggested that new members to the affiliate status be put on a probationary status until such time as a full member could view their work. This was received in a positive manner by the members attending, especially by the President. The possibility of "provisional affiliate" could be introduced to the Society.

Joseph Martinez, full member to the Society, suggested that affiliates be required to take at least one national fight workshop to insure their prowess as teachers or choreographers on a limited level. Here again, the problem being that some people would be hard pressed to attend a national workshop somewhere in the U.S. Outgoing President David Boushey stressed that these individuals would have to expect to do something to gain proper status. If they are serious applicants to the Society, they may find themselves having to go to an interview or going to a national workshop. He reminded the membership that traveling some distance in the U.S. was far superior to having to go abroad as many of the present full members have done in the past.

Joe also suggested that the affiliate participants who went to a national workshop could perhaps be placed in a separate class where they would receive special instruction, thus preparing them for their teaching and choreographing duties at their prospective schools or theatres.

The final point brought to the attending membership was introduced by Chris Villa who suggested that prospective affiliates could perhaps send a video tape of their work to the Society. This tape would not only show their work as performed by various individuals but would have to include segments showing the candidate working with students and actors and thereby giving the Society some idea of how they approach stage combat and what their philosophies are and how they implement their philosophy. The video idea was received well by the attending membership and along with the other proposals would be considered by the whole membership to the Society.

There was not a majority present to pass any proposals introduced, and therefore no official business was conducted by the officers to the Society. It was primarily an open forum to discuss the upgrading of the Society. In closing, it was stressed very strongly by the President of the Society that members continue to support the Society's magazine The Fight Master. He was very firm in his language that too many people are allowing a select few to do the bulk of the work in regard to the magazine. Erik stated his intent to continue the national fight workshops as formalized this summer, and to encourage the continuation of the certification process throughout the entire country.

The meeting was closed by the President and a tentative meeting was scheduled to take place again next year after the national A.T.A. convention in Dallas, Texas.



I recently contacted a foundry in San Francisco and after a month of negotiations have arranged for a number of the Armourys' weapons to be recast in a durable manganese which, along with a few design changes, will eventually make almost all of the Armourys' weapons reliable for "intense" stage combat purposes.

The manganese is a highly polished gold in color and is only slightly heavier than the metal now being used in Armoury items.

These changes will begin immediately and will take place over a period of the next 3-5 years in which time we hope to alter most all of the Armoury. I will be submitting articles concerning each new weapon as it is recast and will gladly receive any comments from colleagues in reference to changes being made.

Any of you who have worked with these weapons in the past will appreciate these efforts on the part of the Armoury to bring a finer product to combatants and directors in the future.

The first weapon being recast is the Art. 6 cup-hilt rapier which will be available at the beginning of September. We chose to recast the cup-hilt first due to it's extreme popularity among rapier wielders. Changes are as follows:

Cup- larger (about the size of a std. epee guard) with oblong oval holes extending from the bottom to the top of guard, slightly heavier than old style.

Quillons- have been extended $\frac{1}{2}$ " on both sides to compensate for larger cup.

Pas d' Anes- have been added below quillons to protect overlapped forefinger and also to add more support to guard.

Grip, quillons & cup- all cast with square opening as opposed to old style round opening to minimize grinding on the tang of blade reducing heat factor which results in weakening the temper of the tang.



The new cup-hilt design is reminiscent of the old Art. 34 which was cast in steel and was a beautiful weapon but unfortunately is no longer available. In essence we are bringing this weapon back only cast in a manganese and gold in color.

This new Art. 6 is not only durable but is also more aesthetically pleasing to the viewer. All in all I think anyone using this rapier in the future will be highly pleased with it's appearance and performance.

When ordering the new art. 6 be sure to specify that you want the new manganese items as we will still be sending out the old items until our backstock is depleted.

Some of the next weapons to be recast will be the Art. 21 Florentine rapier, the Art. 5 Renaissance rapier and the Art. 51 Conquistador sword. We chose these items to be next in line due to the fact that they are no longer available from their European manufacturers.

I will again inform you through the Fight Master as to their alterations and availability as soon as work has been started on the plates necessary for their casting. In the meantime please don't hesitate to spread the word that the Armoury is hard at work and will be offering a wider and wider selection of durable fighting arms in the years to come.

Jerome Smith
AFS Armoury

BECAUSE IT'S THERE

John M. Callahan
Associate Prof. of Speech
and Theatre
Kutztown State College

Stage violence, as I define it, is any bodily contact action which could result in injury to the performer. One of the questions I am frequently asked by well-meaning people is "Why?" "Why do you perpetuate violence when there is already too much violence in the world?" My answer is similar to the mountain climber, "Because it's there."

Whether one agrees with the showing of violence onstage or not, violence is present in dramaturgy and must be dealt with by the actors and the director. Unlike the movies or television, there are no stuntmen in the theatre because the practical problem of substituting the stuntman for the actor during an actual performance would be all but insurmountable. Can you imagine a substitute Hamlet, or a stand-in Cyrano? Stage actors have no retakes and must get their stunt down the first time, every time, and do it perfectly eight times a week. Finally, stage actors get no extra pay for stunting because it is considered a part of their professional responsibilities as actors ("if you can't do the fight, don't audition for Richard III"). For these reasons it is important that an actor learn something about a craft that he will undoubtedly need at some time in his career, and a craft that might save him from some bad bruises, broken bones or worse.

Violence has been in the theatre from the very beginning. The Greeks normally performed violence offstage, but they felt no compunction about displaying the bloody, mutilated bodies afterwards on a device called the eccyclema. Some believe that the Greeks favored offstage violence because of the strong religious nature of tragedy, but more pragmatic theatre people, including myself, believe that the Greeks did violence offstage because given the masks, large head-dresses, high-heeled boots, and the heavy, long padded costumes of the tragedians, and the fact that only two or three actors played all the individual roles, it was too difficult to show violence convincingly onstage. Violence requires mobility, and the Greek tragedian probably had little of it. Nonetheless, the Greek theatre ran red with the offstage blood of Agamemnon, Cassandra, Clytemnestra, the children of Jason and Medea, and the eyes of Oedipus, to mention only a few.

The Romans imitated the Greek theatre, but gladiatorial contests, animal fights, water battles and the like were staged in theatres when there were no amphitheatres available.

The Middle Ages loved violence onstage and because of the religious nature of medieval mystery, miracle, and morality plays, one of the favorite scenes of violence would be the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus or the tortures of Christian martyrs, with the tortures onstage frequently taking longer than they would have in real life. In one play, The Acts of the Apostles (1536), the stage directions tell us that St. Paul is decapitated, the head falls to the stage and bounces three times, and at each spot a well flows; one with milk, one with blood, and the third with water. These plays could be dangerous in their quest for realism: At Metz in 1437, the actor playing Judas was almost hanged and at Seurre in 1496, Satan's costume caught on fire from Hell Fire.

The Elizabethan theatre, particularly Shakespeare, is awash in violence, and Shakespeare might demonstrate why violence is present in drama, because, as Hamlet says, the purpose of the theatre "was and is, to hold as 'twere, the mirror up to nature." If drama is an imitation of human action as Aristotle says in The Poetics, then what is more fitting than violence in any telling of the human story? Man is a violent animal and any honest depiction of man must include this element of his nature. And in addition, violence is a crowd pleaser because it is definitely not boring, and audiences hate being bored. A rousing fight, the resolution of conflicts building throughout the play, the final battle of good vs. evil, the hero vs. the villain, all please an audience enormously and Shakespeare, being a professional playwright with stock in The Globe, gave his audiences what they wanted. The fact that the fights in Shakespeare are justified from the plot (and not just thrown in for audience titillation) means that one can enjoy the fights without guilt.

Violence then is in the theatre, and it is justified when done for the right reasons (i.e., to further the plot, to demonstrate characterization, to point up a theme). But I have been writing only of "serious violence." Comedy, and particularly farce, frequently makes use of slapstick, but because this violence is funny, it is usually not considered violent, yet an actor can be as badly hurt doing a fall on a banana peel for comedy as he can by doing a backwards fall from a stab wound for tragedy.

The question I am usually asked after I explain why I teach stage violence is "How did you get started?" For my start in violence I must thank St. Louis University for in my very first play at the university, Caesar and Cleopatra (1961), I struck an actor in the

head, very hard, with a wood baton. The blow was accidental, but it almost knocked the actor unconscious during a performance shortly before he had to deliver a speech. A year later in King Lear, the actor playing Edgar stepped on my elbow with his full weight when he killed me with a quarterstaff. I knew then that stage violence was something I should become interested in out of a love of self-control and self-survival. I began to study violence in the movies, and tried to figure out ways that certain movie stunts could be recreated on the proscenium stage of the old law school on Lindell. I found that many stunts could be adequately performed, but I also learned that no matter how much preparation one has, accidents still happen. I had a foil tip pushed into my eye in Romeo and Juliet (1964) and narrowly escaped a serious injury. In that same production, during the Tybalt-Mercutio fight scene, the blade of my dagger flew out of the handle upstage, struck the cyclorama, and carromed offstage-- all this in full view of the audience. I was supposed to parry Mercutio's sword with my dagger as well as kill him with it. I had no weapon and the actor playing opposite me, Michael Prichard, was far-sighted, wore glasses and had no contacts so he did not see me lose my weapon. I grabbed Mike's wrists, wrestled around a little bit whispering feverishly into his ear "drop your dagger," while he replied "What the hell is going on here?" and then I calmly proceeded to kill him with a vicious thrust into his stomach with my rigid, extended index finger.

The fact that accidents such as the above do happen is yet another good reason to teach stage violence, to try to minimize the risk of such accidents by more careful planning. A course in stage violence might have saved the life of the teenager in Illinois who was stabbed to death while filming a movie about drug pushing for a high school project in 1976. The director might have learned that movies no longer use a piece of wood underneath the shirt to stop a blade, but use a fake knife with a retractable blade, or camera angles and editing, or several other relatively simplistic but very safe methods. A course in stage violence might have saved the life of the actor playing Bill Sikes in a community theatre production of Oliver in California in 1978 who was shot to death by a home-loaded blank which contained a tiny trace of lead from the original bullet. The man who made the blank might have learned that gun fire in the movies is a carefully worked out procedure, usually involving an explosives expert with at least a Class 3 powderman's license and over 1,000 hours of on-the-job training and apprenticeship in special effects. A course in stage violence might have saved the life of the 14 year old Houston boy who hung himself in 1977 trying

to do a "hanging man" trick for a church Halloween carnival when he put the noose around his neck instead of under his arms. In the movies this trick involves a fake noose while the real hanging rope is attached to a parachute-like harness underneath the clothing which distributes the body weight and any snap from the drop through the arms and the legs.

Accidents such as the above may happen even with the best of knowledge--after all, Laurence Olivier proudly carries many scars from his Shakespearean fights, Jackie Gleason broke a wrist once riding through a brick wall on TV, Robert Conrad fractured his skull on The Wild, Wild West, and many stuntmen have been killed or maimed in the movies--but knowledge is still the best preventative. Careful preparation and rehearsal of a fight scene is what makes it relatively safe, but it takes knowledge to know what to prepare and how to rehearse. A course in stage violence can help to supply that knowledge.

A question that I am frequently asked is "Have you ever been scared?" I can truthfully answer only twice--before the event (several times after something had gone wrong). One of my two most frightening memories was in a 1965 production of Romeo and Juliet in summer stock for Webster College in Webster Groves, MO. I was hired as a "jobber" and one of my scenes was a quarterstaff fight with Wayne Loui, then on the Webster faculty (and now in the theatre department at St. Louis University). In the rehearsals for this fight, I broke Wayne's index finger with my quarterstaff. He said it was his fault, that his finger was in the wrong place, etc., but the fight had to be changed. Wayne changed it to a quarterstaff vs. a dagger with him holding the dagger!! Since he was using a real dagger against the man who had broken his finger, I admit I was scared. But Wayne is a professional and he never stabbed me, not even once. The other frightening memory is when I gave a demonstration/workshop on stage violence in Chicago in August, 1977, with Albert Katz for the national convention of the American Theatre Association. I had never met Dr. Katz and it was the ATA in December, 1976, who suggested that we do a workshop together. In March of 1977 I reviewed Dr. Katz's book Stage Violence for the Educational Theatre Journal and had some negative comments about it. Demonstrating the use of broadswords, quarterstaves, and various daggers, with a man whose book you criticized is scary. But Dr. Katz was a genial, jovial man, and one of my fond memories will always be of Katz, myself and David Boushey having a drink in the Palmer House bar with Katz and Boushey demonstrating with ordinary silverware knives their differing techniques for properly stabbing an opponent. I am not sure what the other patrons thought of the three of us, but I did notice that several people left and that no one sat anywhere near us.

After I graduated from St. Louis University I did my Master's work at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale where I taught my first college-level course in violence and did my MA on "Stage Violence." At Kent State University where I got my doctorate, I tried to do my dissertation on the Grand-Guignol Theatre of Paris, an institution known as the "House of Horror." However, this project had to be dropped after an unsuccessful trip to Paris failed to yield the necessary information as to how the Grand-Guignol accomplished their stage violence trickery. (In French the word for special effects is secrets, and they certainly kept their tricks "secret.") One of the ironies of my life is that I was teaching stage violence to high school students at the time of the shootings at Kent State. If anyone thinks that what I teach is wrong, or glamorizes violence, they should have been at KSU on May 4, 1970. Reality is far more violent than anything a playwright can think up, or I can direct.

I believe in the catharsis theory of violence, that by showing violence on the stage, bloody, gory, brutalizing, it purges the audience of the need to commit violence. This catharsis theory of drama was first promulgated by Aristotle writing of tragedy, but it is a theory which Sam Peckinpah and Joseph Wambaugh, among others, claim to believe in. In all honesty, I do not know if the theory is completely proven because the studies of the effects of violence on audiences (usually grade school children watching television) are far from complete, but it is a theory which I must believe to be true or I could not continue to teach stage violence because I would then indeed be perpetuating violence itself.

As a man of conscience I do worry about this matter. When I saw The Wild Bunch in 1969, the Sam Peckinpah western which first featured major stars exploding on screen in slow motion when hit by bullets, I remember how sickened I was by the naturalistic depiction of the violence. Yet what made me sick caused some members of the audience to "ooh and ahh" and giggle whenever a "squib" would be exploded under an actor's shirt. One has to be very careful of glamorizing violence, of making it an end in itself ("well, let's see how much blood we can get out of a stomach wound 'squib' today"). The sort of violence which is obscene to me is the television western school of brawls without bruises, ham-heavy fists delivering bone-crunching blows to the face without broken noses or missing teeth, and gunshot wounds without blood or very little blood. I personally believe this sort of violence leads to childlike imitation because a person who is susceptible to suggestion might well believe he can hit someone without really hurting him.

But violence must fit the style and mood of the entertainment, as well as artistic good taste. Scenes of violence in the Japanese

Kabuki, called Tachimawari, are carefully choreographed so that the combatants never make actual contact. In the movie West Side Story fight scenes which were part of the choreography featured dancers performing kicks and body blows with no actual contact, but fights that were part of the dramatic action, not choreography, were realistically portrayed. Since the movies and television are photographic media, more often than not naturalistic in style, I feel violence here should be very realistic. As Joseph Wambaugh kept asking NBC about Police Story, if you are going to show the violence in the life of a cop, show it as it is--ugly, bloody, gory, nauseating. On the stage, because of the different aesthetics of live theatre over a photographic medium, violence should be as tasteful as possible and as realistic as required, but it must not be so realistic as to make the audience ever fear for the actor's safety. The rule to remember on stage is that anything can happen to the character, but the audience must always believe that nothing has happened to the actor. The movies and television handle this rule very well because audiences know about stuntmen, special effects, editing and camera angles, but on stage the audience knows the actor is doing his own stunts, live and without any camera lens telling them what to view and when to watch it.

The aesthetics of violence on the stage are different from movies, but one thing remains constant in all performing arts: violence must always be properly motivated and must fit the characters being portrayed in order to be considered justified. For example, I recently choreographed several fight scenes for a production of Oklahoma! at Kutztown State College. When Jud and Curly had their final battle (without music), a knife in the hands of Jud vs. an empty-handed Curly, I worked out a fight routine which included Curly kicking Jud in the crotch. I figured that Curly was a cowboy and that cowboys would fight with their feet and boots against a knife, but after seeing the routine performed I changed the move because a kick in the crotch gets too much empathy from all members of the audience, especially males (audiences always groan at crotch kicks and puns), and also because Curly, the All-American hero in a musical would never think of kicking someone in the frontal nether region (I hate the word "privates"). Having Curly do a crotch kick was out of character for him, it was too brutal, it almost made him a villain--so I changed it. It should, however, be noted that even though in real life Curly might well have kicked or kneed Jud, audiences don't always want what is real, they want what is appropriate.

Finally, for those who worry about the effect of all this violence upon audiences, let me mention four lessons to be learned from the Grand-Guignol of Paris, a theatre of terror, shrieks, and horripilation: (1) the thing which killed this theatre was reality because Parisians were not frightened by a playwright's horrors or

a director's special effects after World War II and the German Occupation; (2) sex and violence alone will not keep a theatre going; (3) the principal clientele of the theatre after WWII were American tourists; and (4), in the entire sixty-five year history of the Grand-Guignol, there was not one documented case of any person committing a real-life crime based upon anything he saw at the theatre. These lessons are important to me because they indicate that reality will always be more violent than anything a theatre can stage; that audiences have innate good taste; that Americans may talk against sex and violence but a goodly number of them like to see it; and that violence doesn't seem to adversely affect people with a normal psychological balance.

Because of all these elements I can continue to teach stage violence in all good conscience knowing that my work is important to playwrights or other artists wanting to make a statement about their society, and that my work is necessary for the actors and directors who must perform the violence in a safe, suitable manner.

(Now if there is anyone who does not agree with me about the importance and validity of classes in stage violence, let him meet me behind DesPeres Hall any midnight. If he is blindfolded with his back to me and is being held down by two Jesuits (St. Louis University is a Jesuit school), I might show up and give him a demonstration of my work.)



COMBAT IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

(Excerpt from the Master's Thesis
of Michael Hood - Affiliate mem-
ber to the Society and professor
at the University of Alaska,
Anchorage.)

HENRY VI, PART III

Henry VI, Part III, is as rife with combat as its two pre-
cedents. In Act I, i further information is given concerning the
battle of St. Albans which ended Part II. Edward, Earl of March,
claims to have wounded or slain the Duke of Buckingham. "I cleft
his beaver with a downright blow." A blow of force enough to split
a helmet would certainly suggest an edged weapon of great strength,
perhaps an axe or two-handed sword. Pikes are mentioned as an arm
for common soldiers in the same scene.

In Act I, iii, young Rutland is stabbed by Clifford with a
rapier. Again we see Shakespeare injecting the renaissance weapon
into a late medieval historical setting.

Mention is made of an interesting and little known weapon in
Act I, iv. York describes his son Richard, later Richard III, as
having led the Yorkists in battle "with purple falchion, painted to
the hilt in blood of those that had encounter'd him." Reference is
also made to a buckler later in the scene. Act I, iv, also contains
the murder of York at the hands of Clifford and Margaret, both of whom
stab him.

Act II, iii, opens with excursions. Warwick, Edward, and
Richard indicate in dialogue that their cause is losing, and that
all three have been involved in the fighting.

Act II, iv, also opens with excursions, after which Richard
and Clifford meet in single combat. The ensuing dialogue suggests
that each of them may carry weapons in both hands:

Richard.

Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone:
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

Clifford.

Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone:
This is the hand that stabbed thy father York;

And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death.

One possible choice of weapons for this combat would be sword and dagger, though, as we have seen, their simultaneous use is out of period.

Act II, v. contains the familiar call for excursions, in which the tide of battle goes against the Lancastrians.

A paradox develops in Act II, vi, when we are told that Rutland was killed by Clifford with a "murdering knife." In Act I, iii, it will be remembered, the weapon was a rapier. It is possible that Shakespeare has forgotten the earlier reference, but if he substitutes the shorter word merely for the sake of meter, then poetic license may make all references to specific weapon types suspect. One source indicates that "knife" was often used by the authors of Shakespeare's day to mean either sword or dagger, though "it meant rather the latter."

In Act IV, iii, Warwick's guard surprises the king's watch and takes Edward captive. The watchmen are armed with halberds.

Act V, ii, opens with an excursion pitting the forces of York against Warwick, who has gone over to the side of the red rose. No specifics within the excursion are given, but immediately Edward enters with the mortally wounded Warwick. If the director intends to people his excursions with central or familiar characters, Warwick's inclusion in the excursion seems logical. It is also possible that Edward appear as Warwick's opponent in that exchange. His opening line, "So lie there: die thou, and die our fear;" suggests that Edward may have just wounded Warwick.

Act V, iv, ends with excursions which depict a defeat for Queen Margaret and the Lancastrian forces. Major characters on both sides are on stage at the moment the excursions begin and, as such, can hardly be left out of them.

A particularly brutal murder occurs in Act V, v, when Edward, Richard, and Clarence stab Edward, Prince of Wales. Queen Margaret indicates that at least one of the weapons used is a sword. "Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here; Here sheathe thy sword, I'll pardon thee my death."

In Act V, vi, Henry VI is stabbed by Richard. The weapon may be a dagger or a sword, or both. Henry urges Richard to get on with it. "Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words! My breast can better brook thy dagger's point than can my ears that tragic

history." After the murder, however, Richard indicates that he has used a sword. "See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death." Shakespeare's earlier use of two terms for the same weapon makes the weapon used here suspect unless Richard is equipped with both sword and dagger.



'POINTS' OF INTEREST

Stemming from the national fight workshop, ten of those participants joined the Society. Four other individuals also joined the Society. We welcome these new members to the Society and hope that they will take an active part in making this Society an integral part of the theatre/cinema scene.

1. Kay Aoyama (Friend) 22B Gormley Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4V 1Y8
2. Mark Beard-Witherup (Actor/
Combatant) 1905 N. Dayton
Chicago IL 60614
3. Gary Boeck (Actor/
Combatant) RR2
Ida Grove IA 51445
4. Charles Coyl (Actor/
Combatant) 1306 Oxford Lane
Glenview IL 60025
5. Lyn Dutson (Actor/
Combatant) 123 E. Fairmont Dr.
Tempe AZ 85282
6. David Eves (Actor/
Combatant) University of South Florida
Theatre Department TAR230
Tampa FL 33620
7. Peggy Goss (Actor/
Combatant) 515 Kenilworth Ave.
Kenilworth IL 60043
8. Tabitha Eagle (Student) New England College
Henniker, NH 03242
9. Michael Sokoloff (Affiliate) 821 E. 10th St.
Bloomington IN 47401
10. Mark Taylor (Actor/
Combatant) 4289 Shirley Lane
Salt Lake City UT 84117
11. Tony Soper (Student) 1304 N.E. 42nd, No. 204
Seattle WA 98105
12. William Reith (Affiliate) P.O. Box 18927
Cleveland Hts OH 44118
13. Patrick Vala-Hayes (Affiliate) 624 Third St.
McMinnville OR 97128
14. Emily Conable (Actor/
Combatant) 350 W. 47th St., No. 5B
New York NY 10036

For those of you who wrote and wondered if I was going mad! No, I am still struggling with some fleeting glimpse of sanity. The reason you saw the Castello ad on the cover of the magazine is quite simple. We have our covers made up in bulk to cut costs. The simple fact is that the Castello ad will be on this cover and never to be seen again. We were not about to let them burn us twice! We paid for the layout of their ad but we will be damned if we will remake new covers and thus nail us for another fee due to Castello's shady dealings. We will simply use up the covers bearing their ad and that will be the end of it. By the way, this will be the last issue where you will see their ad. Remember, YES! we are still boycotting Castello Fencing Equipment and will continue to dos until the bill is paid. Ignore the ad, do anything you want with it. Hang it in your bathroom and throw things at it. We don't care. Just don't patronize them.

David Boushey
Secretary-Treasurer

The Society is pleased to announce that ALLEN SUDDETH has been elevated to that of FULL MEMBER to the Society of American Fight Directors. He received a majority vote by the full members of the Society and was passed by the Board of Directors to the Society. As many of you know, Allen has been instrumental in moving our certification program along at an accelerated rate. He teaches full time in New York at his studio and also choreographs professionally in the New York area. He has been a hard worker for the Society and we hope that now that this distinction has been awarded him, he will continue to promote the Society as he has in the past. Congratulations Allen!

I met with Milt Robinson, an affiliate to the Society now residing in Cedar City, Utah. He is quite an amazing chap. He not only holds a black belt in Karate but was State Champion in Illinois and North Carolina. If any of you need a specialist as an advisor or choreographer, Milt certainly can fill the bill. His knowledge of martial arts is awesome but he is very much into the many other aspects of stage fighting as well. I was most pleased to make his acquaintance. It is very good for the Society to have such specialists on its roster.

D. L. Boushey

Rod Colbin, new Vice-President to the Society has been doing very well for himself. He recently completed a film with Bo Derek

and Shirley McLain. The title of the film is Change of Seasons. You may have seen him on the series Roper where he plays Hubert. Something that Rod is very proud of is his winning of the 1979 Christian Oscar sponsored by the Cinegraphic Arts Council for Best Actor in Jon Huss. Rod is not only a very fine fight choreographer, he is also a very fine actor. The Society is most pleased that Rod has accepted the position of Vice-President to the Society.

Remember the lawsuit against the Folger Theatre in Washington, D.C.? Well guess what! The suit was apparently all but dismissed. The injured party did have some compensation and their medical bills were paid but the \$35,000 they wanted didn't materialize. If you will remember, I stated that they wouldn't have a leg to stand on. They could not prove negligence. How could they? As I stated before, it was a nice way for some lawyer to try to make a fast buck. I am very pleased with the outcome as all of us should be because if they would have been awarded a substantial sum, we would have all suffered the consequences. I will give specifics in the next issue of The Fight Master as to just how much the theatre had to pay out in damages.

D. L. Boushey

The new President to the Society, Erik Fredricksen, wants to emphasize the importance of certification. This is how we enhance the reputation of the Society and the theatre departments that sponsor such tests. As stated previously, this fight credential is a very nice thing to have in one's resume. Don't deny your students this opportunity. Certify them! Contact the Society about an adjudicator at the new Society Address.

William Hobbs has his new edition of The Technique of Stage Fighting on the market. I don't know at this point if it is on sale in the U.S. I do know that the book is available in Great Britain. The reviews concerning its quality have been mixed but you can rest assured that it will be reviewed hopefully in the next issue of The Fight Master.

The Society of American Fight Directors wishes to make it perfectly clear that we as an organization did not promote the disbanding of certification by the British Society in this country. We are most pleased with the decision, but this decision was addressed in Great Britain and we had no input into the final determination.

If any of the membership have ideas as to how the Society might be better promoted, please let us know. There is a certain amount of funding allocated for this area and your ideas would be welcomed.

Erik Fredrikson, Pres. S.A.F.D.

SOCIETY NEWS

DAVID L. BOUSHEY recently choreographed Hamlet for the California Shakespeare Festival, Romeo & Juliet for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival and Macbeth for the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He recently co-conducted the national fight workshop in Macomb, Illinois. He is presently re-doing the swordplay for the U of W opera production of Don Giovanni. He will soon be heading to the Louisville Actors Theatre to do Cyrano and to S.M.U. to do Romeo & Juliet. He has now assumed the office of Secretary-Treasurer for the S.A.F.D.

JOHN CALLAHAN (Affiliate) recently conducted a stage violence workshop for three weeks at Kutztown State College as part of a high school workshop in appreciation of the arts.

EMILY CONABLE (Actor/Combatant) is still working with Allen Suddeth's group performing fights at the Delacort Theatre in Central Park. They also did an exhibition at a summer camp in Connecticut with 400 screaming meemies!

PADDY CREAN (Honorary) will be introducing his book "More Champagne Darling" this October. He is still doing the fight work for Stratford Ontario.

STACY EDDY (Affiliate) is heading to Carnegie-Mellon for graduate work towards an M.F.A.

ERIK FREDRICKSEN co-conducted the national fight workshop held in Macomb, Illinois. He presently is working at Carnegie-Mellon teaching a fight workshop. He will soon be doing the fight and playing the title role in Hamlet at the Kelsey Theatre. At the same time he will be doing the fights for a swashbuckling version of Comedy of Errors at the Syracuse Stage.

PETER GIFFEN (Affiliate) will be choreographing a huge human chess match at the Medieval Fair in Sarasota, Florida, sponsored by Ringling Bros.

JOHN HAUSERMAN (Affiliate) recently taught a workshop for Towson State University for their summer program. McDonogh High School hired him to choreograph a fight to introduce an excerpt from Romeo & Juliet to be presented at the Maryland Thespian conference. He has also been asked to teach a workshop in stage combat at the International Thespian Society's Convention hosted by Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

BYRON JENNINS accepted an acting position with the A.C.T. Theatre in San Francisco. He will be leaving P.C.P.A. to pursue his new

position.

JOSEPH MARTINEZ co-conducted the national fight workshop in Macomb, Illinois and will return to Western Illinois University to assume a new position in the theatre department. He has a new book coming out this May on unarmed combat. He is also starting a shop for weapons called CHEVALIER FORGE.

RAMON MARTINEZ (Affiliate) has been accepted into "The American Fencing Academy" where he will not only study modern fencing but ancient weaponry as well. He will attend for two years and receive certification as a "Maitre D'Armes."

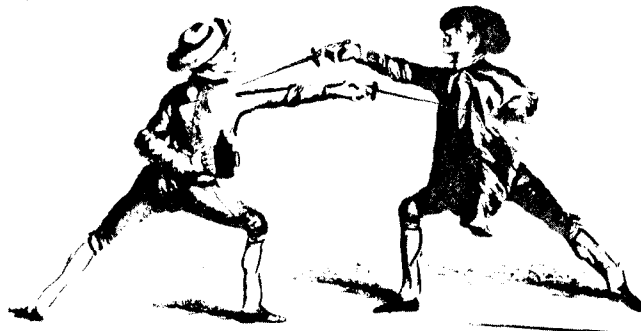
PETER MOORE (Affiliate) has moved to New York. He is teaching combat at Trinity Theatre and recently finished a showcase for the New City.

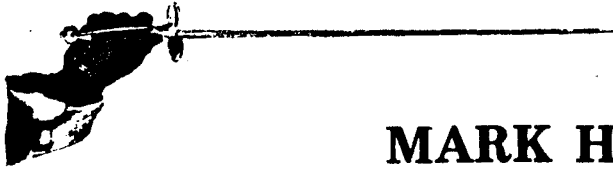
SCOTT NICKLIN (Student) recently choreographed the fights for the Preston Players production of The Rainmaker.

JEROME SMITH (Affiliate) choreographed a 19th century duel in Cornbury, the Queen's Governor, at the Folsom Theatre in San Francisco. He attended the national fight workshop in Macomb, Illinois. He is not in Boston and will be representing the Armoury there.

CHRIS VILLA (Affiliate) also attended the national workshop in Macomb. He will soon be attending Humbolt State University and teaching combat there. He will also be choreographing Romeo & Juliet at Domingos Hills Community College in Los Angeles.

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