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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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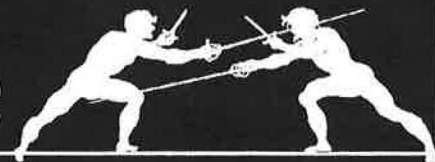
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The Cutting Edge



Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

Volume III, Number 3 ♦ May/June 1992



VEGAS VISITORS ARE WELCOME . . . BUT—

Being the friendly group that we are, the SAFD is delighted to greet friends and visitors at the NSCW. BUT, please tell us you are coming.

Due to a record enrollment, space at the NSCW is very tight. Admitting observers to classes is solely at the discretion of the teacher. But when work is done then begins the fun! Call Linda McCollum (702) 739-3662 or David Leong (212) 382-3535 to say you're planning to stop by.

DON'T MOVE WITHOUT TELLING US!

Boy are we tired of printing this. Not a month goes by without a member calling to say that their publications have gone astray. They didn't—you did.

For economic reasons (it's cheap!) both the *Cutting Edge* and the *Fight Master* are sent bulk rate; that means there is NO FORWARDING and NO RETURN! If the address isn't current, your vital SAFD mail goes in the trash. We never know that you didn't get it.

Here comes the stern warning: starting now, members who err in this respect will be lashed to a post and flogged—wait, we got carried away—will have to cough up the postage for a second mailing.

WE GROVEL IN SHAME

It's not David Brimmer, and it's not John David Brimmer. It is J. David Brimmer and it's been wrong in the past four *Fight Masters* and various editions of the *Cutting Edge* and it's driving him crazy. Sorry, J. David.

Nominations close for SAFD officers And the nominees are . . .

1992 IS AN ELECTION YEAR FOR THE SAFD (as members will doubtless get tired of hearing) and nominations for SAFD President and Vice President have been pouring (well, trickling steadily) in here at election central. Those who've been meaning to nominate someone, it is now officially too late. May 1 was the cut-off date for nominations, which are now closed.

The next step of democracy-in-action is, of course, elections. Elections will take place in September.

The SAFD is a nonprofit organization run by officers who voluntarily (*no money, just glory*) take time out from their careers and personal lives to spend literally hundreds of hours working for the SAFD. Heartfelt thanks to those volunteers, letting the SAFD reap the benefits of their energy and industry.

David Boushey declined a nomination as president (with thanks) due to personal and professional commitments. Drew Fracher declined his nomination as vice president in order to run for the office of president.

Richard Raether declined a nomination for vice president because he feels he can

best serve the SAFD in his current office of secretary/treasurer.



CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

Drew Fracher
J. Allen Suddeth

CANDIDATES FOR VICE PRESIDENT

John Robert Beardsley
Dan Carter
Michael G. Chin
Susan Eviston
Steve Vaughan



American College Theatre Festival winner awarded SAFD scholarship

THE SAFD, IN CONJUNCTION WITH the University of Nevada—Las Vegas, has awarded a full tuition and housing scholarship to the 1992 National Stage Combat Workshop in Las Vegas, Nevada, to Walter Wykes of Fort Worth, Texas.

This scholarship award was part of the SAFD's participation in the American College Theatre Festival competition held each year in Washington D.C.

SAFD President J. Allen Suddeth was on hand to award the scholarship. This is

the first time the SAFD has awarded such a scholarship, but the officers hope to make this an annual event.

Walter, a senior at Texas Wesleyan, is not unfamiliar with the SAFD, having been choreographed by SAFD member Nicholas Sandy during the course of a college production. But, says Walter, he's "definitely looking forward to the training in Las Vegas this summer."





“NOW, AS YOU FALL DOWN this flight of stairs, sort of bounce between the banister and the walls a couple of times then land over here by the sofa on your stomach. *And be careful—I don’t want anyone to get hurt!*”

This was the direction I got for my first entrance in the play which marked my theatrical debut. I didn’t know it at the time, but this experience was to become something of a hallmark in my career as a theatre movement specialist.

Because I am a high energy person I was often cast in roles requiring “feats of daring”, but I was left on my own to accomplish what the director wanted. It was not until at least ten years after that first fall down a flight of stairs that I met someone who really knew how to do it all.

I was a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor when Patrick Crean presented a stage fighting lecture/demonstration for theatre majors. I absorbed everything that I could and got all the written materials he suggested. My appetite was keen but there was no way to learn more apart from going to Canada to work and I was only part way through my course work.

At least ten years after that first fall down a flight of stairs . . . I met someone who really knew how to do it all.

My next opportunity came with a workshop sponsored by the Voice and Movement Programs of the American Theatre Association. B.H. Barry taught an intensive course on unarmed combat and I had my first opportunity for hands-

on instruction. It was great, but still only a beginning.

Shortly after this workshop, the Voice and Movement Programs separated and convention programming became much more specialized. It was during this time that David Boushey gave a presentation on Stage Fighting as part of the ATA convention program. He stressed the importance of this work in training programs and the centrality of safety in both teaching and performance. I was then at the University of Iowa as theatre movement specialist for their MFA program and I invited David to come teach some master classes.

Following David’s visit I became chair of the ATA Theatre Movement Program and encouraged program applications from specialists in stage fighting. This began an annual ATA program on some aspect of stage fighting at the ATA Convention, except for a period in the late ‘80’s when the summer fight workshop was in scheduling conflict that has since been resolved.

Since I took my first position as a movement specialist over twenty years ago, some aspect of stage fighting has always been a

part of the curriculum. I included only what I felt confident in teaching and used certified members of the society as



adjuncts when ever budgets allowed. Five years ago Martin English was my assistant in the one-

semester fight class. Now with further training and experience, Martin is currently teaching the two semester sequence in stage fighting to the actors in the Professional Training Program at UMKC and doing a wonderful job. The actor/ combatant certification that our actors have when they graduate is an important credential that I see as a priority in any credible actor training program.

The SAFD has and is continuing to provide an important service to actor training throughout this country. I remember a woman from a very small college asking David Boushey after his first ATA workshop how people in out-of-the way places could get this important work for their students.

—Continued on page four

Boushey named to Hall of Fame

CONGRATULATIONS GO TO SAFD founder David Boushey who, on June 12, will be inducted into the Stuntman Hall of Fame.

The ceremony will be held at the Hall of Fame in Moab Utah, in Monument Valley, location for so many great John Ford westerns.

"A big part of this honor is due to the SAFD," said David, who also wants to thank friend, partner and fellow inductee Bob Miles for his help.

David Boushey's many film credits include stunt direction on *Blue Velvet*, *Drugstore Cowboy*, and the recent hit, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*.



Celebration Barn Workshop

DUE TO CANCELLATIONS, there are still some slots open for the choreography workshop at the Celebration Barn Theatre in Maine.

Taught by SAFD fight masters J. Allen Suddeth and David Leong, the workshop takes place June 28 through July 9.

SAFD certified teacher Steve Vaughan will teach a stage combat performance workshop working in conjunction with the choreographers.

For further information, call (207) 743-8452



What famous screen swashbuckler successfully disguised himself as a tree to spy on the Germans during World War I?

What noted Shakespearean actor was a real-life descendant of King Henry IV?

What Hollywood actor, famed for his portrayal of a detective, employed an aristocratic butler who moonlighted as a jewel thief?

The answer to all of the above is Basil Rathbone, whose 100th birthday is June 13, 1992.

Watch for a celebratory article in the Fall *Fight Master* (It's a plug!).



Michael G. Chin wants to set the record straight: "I am not the biggest guy in Pan Asian Rep (See Jan./Feb. *Cutting Edge*), merely one of the biggest. I don't want people thinking Pan Asian Rep is comprised of midgets!" He will be performing with Pan Asian Rep in Singapore this summer.

In Minneapolis, **David Doersch** recently choreographed two *Macbeths* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and also did stuntwork in the motion picture *Baboon Heart*.

Erin Kenny was the fight director for *Treasure Island* and *Who's Going Home*, also in Minneapolis.

David Woolly recently staged fights for *Phantom*, *Macbeth*, and *Puss in Boots*. **Doug Mumaw** was a guest artist at James Madison University, playing the title role in *Tamberlaine* and staging the fights. Together, David and Doug are hitting the Renfest circuit with their comedy act, *The Swordsmen*.

J. David Brimmer acted (and was fight captain) in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* at the Public Theatre in New York—fight choreography by **David Leong**. But his major work in progress is his new baby girl, Caitlin Lee, born March 10, 1992. Congratulations to J. David and Amy Ward Brimmer.

Ron Piretti is teaching unarmed combat at the Manhattan Class Company. Ron returns to Rhode Island this summer to Shake a Leg, where he will teach stage combat workshops to paraplegic and quadriplegic participants.

Geof Alm staged *Twelfth Night* and *Lisbon Triviota* at the Seattle Rep. and *Fedelio* at the Seattle Opera.

David Leong is keeping up his usual breakneck pace. On Broadway: *Conversations With My Father* starring Judd Hirsch, *Hamlet* with Stephen Lang, off-B'way: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* with Val Kilmer at the Public. In regional theatres, David recently staged fights for *Cymbeline*, *Pericles* and *Police Boys*.

Christopher Villa, having changed coasts, has resurfaced in the West with fight direction for productions of *Macbeth*, *Treasure Island*, *Mirandolina* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Liz Zazzi, **J. David Brimmer** and the rest of the the New York Fight Ensemble performed at several "No Shame" evenings at the Public, billed as a "weekly assault on good taste." NYFE offerings included *Steven Segal Sketch #3 (The Importance of Being Lethal)* and *Twisted Sisters (With Apologies to Anton Chekov)*.

Steve Levine and **Mike Mahaffey** teamed up with **Bill Eissler** to stage violence for *Romeo and Juliet* at University of South Carolina, and also for *Friday Night Fights* at the Trustus Theatre.

Tina Hansen reports that she has been hired at two of the state theatre schools in Denmark. She will be a guest instructor at one, and has a regular gig at the other, starting in September. It looks as if she will also be doing promotional work for the weapons museum in Copenhagen, the largest such museum in the world!

Richard Raether is on the road, staging *King Lear* and *Richard II* at Alabama Shakespeare and *Henry V* at Colorado Shakespeare before heading to Las Vegas.

Profile: Movement Specialist Jennifer Martin

Continued from page two—

His answer has been unfolding for the last fifteen years through the work of all the fight masters in the SAFD. I have met and worked with many SAFD-trained artists over the past fifteen years. While styles and areas of expertise may vary, all their work has been marked by the highest standards of quality and professionalism.

While styles and areas of expertise may vary, all [SAFD-trained artists'] work has been marked by the highest standards of quality and professionalism.

The SAFD is a model organization and I look forward to the time when good fight training is an integral part of

every movement training curriculum in the country. Maybe that is a goal for the next fifteen years!

In addition to the training aspects I value the choreographic training given by the SAFD. Again, I have had the pleasure of working with several SAFD fight choreographers on Missouri Repertory Theatre productions and found the same level of quality.

I have enjoyed my collaborations with fight masters on productions, especially where special attention was given to the historical style of movement. I look forward to working with more SAFD members at Missouri Repertory Theatre in the future.



The Cutting Edge

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