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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

Volume IV, Number 1 • January/February 1993



DIRECTORY UPDATES

Fight Master Erik Fredriksen has moved to:

1425 Textile Rd.
Ann Arbor MI 48108
(313) 944-0116

CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Check your certificates; if you certified or recertified in 1990, it is time for you to apply for recertification by sending to the vice president:

- A. A letter of intention.
- B. A \$50 non-refundable fee.
- C. An updated resume showing that the teacher has continued to work and hone his/her skills.
- D. Information on (and results of) any and all actor/combatant proficiency skills tests they have held during the three years, including adjudicator and date.

OR

A half-inch VHS video (unedited) from a stationary camera of the candidate teaching two students fight choreography from actor/combatant proficiency skills tests of their own (not to exceed seven minutes).

OR

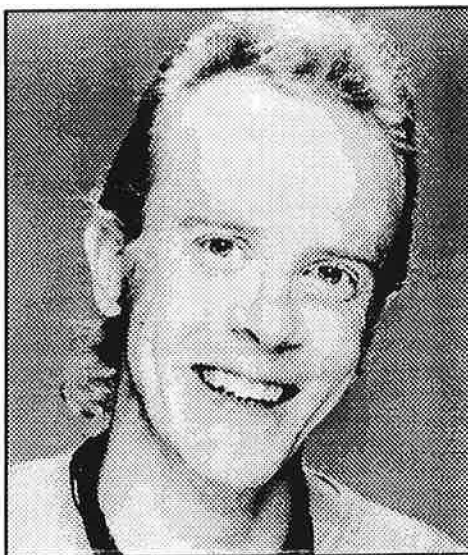
A written evaluation from a fight master who has seen said choreography live.

A certified teacher who does not renew every three years will have that certification revoked.

Send your recertification materials to:

Susan Eviston
1421 Sleepy Hollow Rd.
Fort Wright, KY 41011

Fracher and Eviston take office as SAFD president and vice president



Drew Fracher and Susan Eviston began a three-year term of office on January 1.

THE ELECTION OF SUSAN EVISTON as the SAFD vice president marks several firsts. Ms. Eviston is not only the first woman to be elected SAFD's vice president, she is also the first certified teacher to hold this office.

Susan first learned stage combat in a college classroom with Fight Master David Leong her teacher. Today she is a faculty member in the theatre department at Northern Kentucky University.

"I would like to thank everyone who supported me in this effort. I owe a great deal to the SAFD and its members.

My career has been greatly influenced due to the excellent training, job recommendations and overall professional support and encouragement I have received from countless people affiliated with the SAFD. In my tenure as vice president I hope to put in as much positive energy as I have received."

Fight Master Drew Fracher is a 15-year veteran of the SAFD, joining when he was a student of Joseph D. Martinez and the SAFD was just getting its start.

Nine NSCWs and two terms as vice president later, Drew brings a

wealth of SAFD experience to draw upon as he begins his term as president.



A Few Words from your President

This issue finds us rolling into a new year and with a new president and vice president. First of all, thanks to all members who voted; it's so very important to take part in the workings of the organization. Also, many, many thanks to J. Allen Suddeth for all the thankless hard work and moving and shaking during his tenure as president. I hop I can pick up where Allen left off and keep us rolling toward the 21st century.

Thanks again for your confidence. Please know that I am interested in hearing from any and all of you if you have any problems or suggestions regarding the organization. The lines are open — don't hesitate! I look forward to a great three years. Fight safely!

Profile
ACTOR/COMBATANT
JAMES R. ROBINSON

"I WAS AN UNDERGRAD STUDENT in the theatre department at Southern Methodist University when I saw the poster on the bulletin board," said Jim Robinson, recalling his introduction to the SAFD. "I'd taken the SMU stage combat course taught by Jim Hancock, who was about to go on sabbatical. He'd recommended me to teach the class in his absence. I figured I'd never have a better chance to get some more training and persuade SMU to pay for it."

Jim successfully made his pitch to the theatre department and, along with classmate Chuck Coyle, found himself headed for Macomb, Illinois and the very first National Stage Combat Workshop.

In common with other students who were there, including Fight Masters John Robert Beardsley, Drew Fracher, and Chris Villa (Jim's roommate at the NSCW), the weather looms large in Jim's memory.

"They were in the midst of a record-breaking heat wave there. We stayed in university housing where we were air-conditioned within an inch of our lives. Then we stepped out into stifling heat and humidity and fought all day in the world's hottest gym!"

"The physical confidence you gain, the sense of place, of action, of incorporating action with the spoken word — you carry that with you into every role you play."

Jim became a member of the SAFD at that 1980 workshop and still boasts his original certificate, one of the earliest issued, where he

was recommended by all three fight masters who taught at that first NSCW.

Jim spent a year in Milwaukee after college before making the move to New York. It's a year he remembers fondly.

"I performed non-stop during that year — everything from being a magician's assistant, to (extremely) low-grade horror films to, playing a guard at King Richard's Faire (now the Bristol Renaissance Festival).

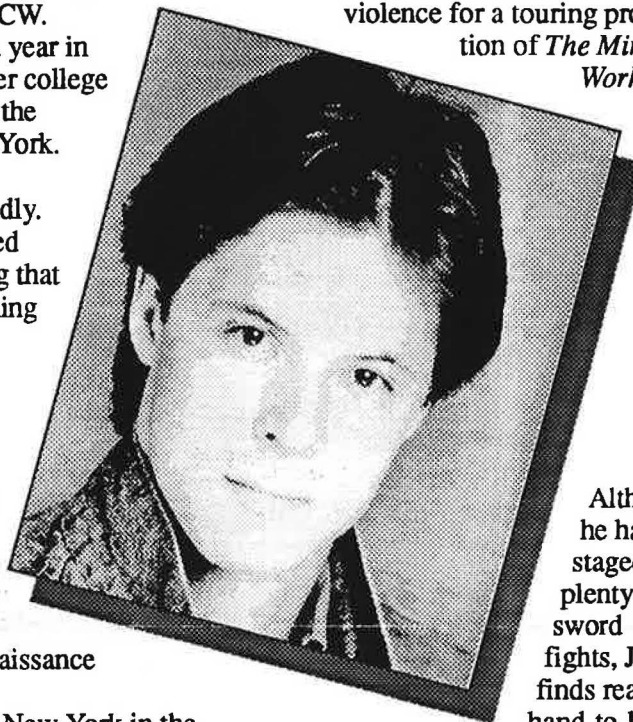
Arriving in New York in the early 80s, Jim found himself on familiar ground at the New York Renaissance Festival where he met SAFD members Steve Vaughan and Jim Manley, who in turn, steered him to Fight Master J. Allen Suddeth. "I took class with Allen at ACTS (Actors' Combat Training School) on and off through the years, between acting gigs. I also became a member of

[performance group] Fights R Us and did a number of shows with them." Now called the New York

Fight Ensemble, Jim is still active with the group.

Although primarily a working actor, Jim does a fair amount of

choreography along the way. In fact, Jim is currently directing the violence for a touring production of *The Miracle Worker*.



Although he has staged plenty of sword fights, Jim finds realistic hand-to-hand fights the most

challenging to stage. "The audience has a keener awareness of what looks phony or set up and what is convincing." Jim cites a production of *Oldtimer's Game* as his favorite fight scene. In it, he choreographed eight guys in a locker room brawl.

Stage combat goes beyond a skill listed on the bottom of a resume for Jim. Over the years, he has found the lessons learned in stage combat training invaluable as an actor. "The physical confidence you gain, the sense of place, of action, of incorporating action with the spoken word — you carry that with you into every role you play." The lessons learned in the world's hottest gym can pay off when you're a working actor in the cold cruel city.



Arms, weapons, and flying at UNLV workshop



A SAFETY workshop aimed at technical directors covers a fascinating array of subjects at

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, July 5-9, 1993.

- Hands on armory construction and maintenance with Rod Casteel's Colonial Armory.
- Firearms in stage productions with Stembridge Gun Rentals.
- Flying and rigging safety by Foy Inventerprises.
- Stage combat safety with Fight Master J.R. Beardsley.

The \$500 fee includes registration and housing. For more information, contact Joe Aldridge at 702-895-3096.



Help Needed at 1993 ATHE

Needed: actor/combatants or certified teacher who will be attending the 1993 ATHE conference in Philadelphia August 4-7, 1993.

Fight Masters Fredricksen, Fracher, and Martinez are conducting a workshop on the value of advanced actor/combatant training when producing classics and need help with the practical portion of the workshop. Contact:

Drew Fracher
Abiding Grace Farm
780 Bushtown Rd
Harrodsburg, KY 40330



SAFD wedding bells! **Dexter Fidler** first met **Roseanne Hauer** at the '89 NSCW where she was a journey-woman and he was assisting David Boushey. They're getting married in March. Meanwhile, Dexter is choreographing *Romeo & Juliet* in Idaho and teaching foil at Halberstadt Fencers' Club. Rose passed the California bar exam last Nov. and is a legal eagle.

Steven Levine choreographed *Simon Speaks* and *I Hate Hamlet* for Trustus Theatre before starting the term at the Dell Arte School of Physical Theatre.

The Jefferson award for fight choreography in Chicago was won by **Joe Dempsey** for his work on *Victims* at the Organic Theatre Greenhouse. Joe is currently an understudy for Second City's National Touring Company.

David Woolley and **Doug Mumaw** finished up 32 weeks of touring as *Dirk and Guido: The Swordsmen!* (Bold and Stupid Men at your service) in November. David's in Chicago, staging fights for *Love of a Nightengale* and Doug is staging a *Romeo and Juliet* tour in Virginia.

Leanne E. Beauregard is acting and fighting at P.C.P.A. where she is on staff as Outreach Coordinator.

Greg Michaels stunt doubled sword play for *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* and also appeared in CBS' *Dangerous Curves*. Onstage, Greg performed his 10,000th (!) broadsword fight in Universal Studio's live *Conan the Barbarian*.

Steve Vaughan is working his way through six different *Romeo and Juliets* currently on his schedule in addition to classes and a directing stint at Eastman School of Music.

Michael Donahue is co-director at Theatre on the Square in Memphis and teaches stage combat there.

Chris Darland sends a greetings to pals from the Memphis 1987 NSCW.

Willis Middleton has relocated to Vermont. She's choreographed *As You Like It* there and taught workshops.

Drew Fracher just staged fights for Theatre Virginia's *As You Like It* and is currently directing *Tartuffe* and teaching a combat class at the Burt Reynolds Institute for Theatre Training.

Steven Earl Edwards finished his Ph.D. (that's *Doctor Steve* to you) and is now head of the Advanced Acting and Playwriting programs at LaGrange College just outside Atlanta.

Compadres can reach Steven at:
1108 Park Place
LaGrange, GA 30240-1737
708-812-9481

Ax Norman was fight captain for *Cross and Sword* in Florida and followed up by choreographing and starring in *The Secret of San Miguel* in Georgetown, SC.

Ron Stevens wants to get together with other SAFD members in Arizona. Contact Ron at:

4758 E. Delta
Mesa, AZ 85206
602-924-8070

Richard Raether is currently staging fights for *R & J* at Purdue University and *King Lear* at Shakespeare Rep. Next up is *Henry IV* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. **Margaret Raether** is holding down the fort and pounding away on the *Fight Master*.

David Leong's latest and greatest production: a New Year's Day baby boy — Jesse Moy Leong. Congrats to David and Janet. A sleepy David sent a list of recent shows: *Woyzeck*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Hamlet*, *Mad Forest*, and on Broadway, *Solitary Confinement*. Next up: *Escape From Happiness* and *Marisol*.

BALLOT



ACTOR/COMBATANT REP.

- David Engle
- Erin Kenny
- Ricki G. Ravitts

CERTIFIED TEACHER REP.

- Geoffrey Alm
- Dan Carter
- David "Pops" Doersch
- Dale Girard
- David Woolley
- Jack Young

Due to the *many* nominations for membership representatives only those members who recieved more muptiple nominations appear on the ballot.

Remember only actor/combatants may vote for Actor/Combatant Rep. and only certified teachers may vote for Teacher Rep.

Send ballots to:

Jeff Koep
Chairman
Dept. of Theatre Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 South Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, Nevada 891 54-5044

All ballots must be *received* by March 15, 1993.

The Cutting Edge

is concocted bimonthly by Margaret and Richard Roether with sporadic help from Brian Anderson.

The Cutting Edge is a publication of the Society of American Fight Directors

Submssions should be sent to:

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1834 Camp Avenue
Rockford, IL 61103



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