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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Society of American Fight Directors

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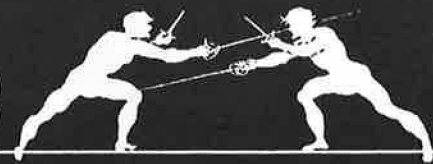


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The Cutting Edge

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

Volume IV, Number 2 ♦ May/June 1993



F Y I

DID I MISS SOMETHING?

No, we did. We regret to confirm that there was no March/April *Cutting Edge*. It has been a busy Spring.

SAFD ROSTER

The SAFD mailing roster is now available to members for a \$10 postage and handling fee. Contact:

Secretary/Treasurer
Richard Raether
1834 Camp Ave.
Rockford, IL 61108

DIRECTORY UPDATE

Vice President Susan Eviston has moved to;

7411 Moredale Rd.
Louisville, KY 40222
(502) 425-8115

NSCW Staff Changes

Due to a busy summer work schedule, J. Allen Suddeth has had to withdraw from teaching at the '93 NSCW. Further, Coordinator Dan Carter is busy packing for his move to Illinois (See *Late Breaking News*). Fight Master Richard Raether steps once more into the breach to teach broadsword and act as workshop coordinator. (Sympathy cards may be sent to Margaret.)

Certified Teachers

If you certified or recertified in 1990, it is time for you to recertify! Get your materials to Susan Eviston ASAP.



Ravitts & Alm elected Member Reps

IN AN EFFORT TO EXPAND THE VOICE of the membership, this year representatives of the actor/combatants and the teachers will be present at the annual officers' meetings that take place just prior to the NSCW. Congratulations go to Ricki Ravitts who was elected the Actor/Combatant Representative and Geoffrey Alm who was elected the Teacher Representative.

Member Reps are new positions in the SAFD hierarchy, created to give a stronger voice to the rank and file with regard to SAFD policies.

Member Reps are elected to three year terms and are responsible for

communicating the concerns of their constituents to the SAFD officers.

Your representative needs to hear from you. Let them know what you want and need. Ricki and Geoff can be reached at:

Ricki Ravitts
2350 Broadway #423
NY, NY 10024
(212) 874-7408

Geoffrey Alm
724 N 79TH
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 784-3705



New Regional Representatives

SAFD PRESIDENT DREW FRACHER has appointed new Regional Reps and assigned specific areas. This is part of a push to make the Regional Reps a more active part of the SAFD. Please contact your Regional Rep and let him or her know who you are.

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Steve Vaughan 716-591-3673
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David Doersch 612-823-8028
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Minneapolis, MN 55407
MN, SD, ND, North WI, North MI

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ACTOR/COMBATANT
RICKI G. RAVITTS
 CERTIFIED TEACHER &
GEOFFREY ALM

Profile



As a working actress in New York, the last thing Ricki G. Ravitts expected to be involved in was stage combat. She came to it as an audience member, coming to the Westbeth Theatre in the early 80s to watch performances by Fights R Us, a group headed up by J. Allen Suddeth.

Ricki came often to see the fights that featured, among many others, her home-town buddy Richard Raether. Finding herself intrigued, she eventually signed up for a beginning combat class at A.C.T.S. (Actor's Combat Training School). She's pretty much had a sword in hand every since.

Patrick Crean passed Ricki with recommendation in her first fight test in 1987. She's continued to study over the years and is in the choreography workshop at Celebration Barn this summer, studying with David Leong and J. Allen Suddeth.

She credits her stage combat skills with bringing her through certain roles with a whole skin: the wife in *Dial M for Murder*, who is attacked and kills her would-be murder with scissors. As Maggie in *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, Ricki

used everything she'd learned to avoid being slain onstage by a very "method" Brick who was doing his best to commit murder with his crutch. Ricki's also done a little stunt doubling on New York soaps; she particularly remembers being electrocuted on *One Life to Live*.

Ricki recently branched out into playwrighting. "I decided if I was going to do this, I might as well write a *great* role for me with lots of swordplay!" she laughs. Her play, *Behind the Mask*, had its third staged reading this Spring.

Ricki attended her first NSCW last summer as a journeywoman assigned to the Teacher Training Workshop and will be returning this summer as the newly-elected actor/combatant rep.



Geoffrey Alm is based in his home town of Seattle. Like many others, his introduction to stage combat was in school. Geoff attended drama school in London in 1977. "Part of the course was stage combat and I ended up working with John Waller for about six months. My fight test adjudicator was William

Hobbs. I was one of the few students who knew who he was. Nervous — oh, man!" [*British Fight Master William Hobbs is an acclaimed fight director. Ed.*] Geoff and his partner were the only ones to pass and he treasures his BSFD actor/combatant certificate signed by Hobbs.

In 1986, Geoff came to his first NSCW and got his SAFD actor/combatant certificate. In 1987, Geoff was one of the "Memphis Eight" — the first SAFD Certified Teachers.

In Seattle, Geoff teaches private students and also works a lot with the Seattle Children's Theatre, teaching in their Young Actor Training Program. "It's surprising, but in lots of ways, the kids are easier to teach than some professionals I've choreographed. They have no set ideas and they really want to learn."

Geoff enjoys both teaching and choreographing, although he says he sometimes misses performing the fights himself. He works out frequently with a friend, and his concerns about keeping his own technique sharp have also led him to Amazing Grace Farm to study privately with Drew Fracher. Another avenue for keeping up his skills is the NSCW. "It really recharges the batteries. You can never have too much of the basics."

Geoff choreographs professionally throughout the Northwest, including staging the fights for the premiere production of *The Kentucky Cycle*. Geoff also frequently hits the road with SAFD member Gordon Carpenter, in a lecture/demo show about stage combat entitled *The Daredevils of Defense*.



Regional Reps/Cont.

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Mark Guinn 318-257-2930
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PO Box 23078
Seattle, WA 98102
WA, OR, ID, MT

Michael Hood 907-562-4047
1942 North Salem
Anchorage, AK 99508
AK



Mark "Rat" Guinn directed a *Macbeth* for the 90s with a Banquo murder a la Rodney King at Louisiana Tech and is currently staging the fights for *Blue Jacket*.

Congratulations to **Dan Carter** who is the new theatre department chairman at Illinois State University.

Steven Gray is busily working on his PhD dissertation on the Chicago theater boom of the '70s and '80s.

Drew Fracher has survived his latest project at the Ensemble Theatre in Cincinnati. Wearing three (count 'em, three) hats, Drew directed, choreographed and co-authored a new version of *Zorro*.

Tina Robinson-Hansen recently choreographed *Macbeth* at London Toast Theatre in Denmark, and is performing *The Adventure of the Singing Sword and Other Legends* at the Arsenal Museum in Copenhagen.

Brian Byrnes and **James Finney** are working together on a production of *The Kentucky Cycle* in Iowa City.

Mark Olsen has said adios to Dayton, Ohio and moved to Sugarland, TX to join the faculty at the University of Houston.

Jean-Francois Gagnon was fight director for *The Three Musketeers* at the Trident Theatre in Quebec and is teaching stage combat at the National Theatre School, where he choreographed *The Mad Forest*.

Susan Eviston has gone back to school to obtain her degree in sports medicine

Richard Lane assisted **David Leong** on Berkley Rep's production of *The Mad Forest*. Richard then went on to do the fights for their production of *Volpone*. Richard's company, The Academy of the Sword, was recently awarded a grant for its production of *Death By Shakespeare*.

Lawrence Woodhouse staged the fights for Chicago's Center Theater production of *Katzelmacher*.

Richard Raether just directed *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the New American Theater. He also staged fights for Shakespeare Rep's *King Lear* in Chicago and Alabama Shakespeare Festival's *Henry IV*.

Erica Bilder did triple duty as an actor, co-director, and fight director for the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Co. all-female production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

David Doersch spent two weeks in Cairo, Egypt this spring teaching university students there the fine points of stage combat.

Rick Sordelet traded in his sword for a word processor (temporarily) and came up with two plays which were produced in the Big Apple by the Column Theatre & Studio.

Michael Kirkland became a proud papa on February 2 and yet has somehow found time to stage the fights for *I Hate Hamlet* in Jackson MS, and *Romeo and Juliet* for the Galveston Ballet.

Michael Kamptman did the fights for North Carolina Shakespeare Festival's *Globeworks* and directed *Oklahoma!* in High Point, NC.

Policy on Actor/Combatant Retesting

AS THE NEW RETESTING WORKSHOP becomes more popular, there are many questions that arise. I will attempt to cover the ground on the most common of these.

The retesting workshop must be a minimum of six hours over two days and may be taught by any certified teacher or fight master.

When an actor/combatant is retesting via this workshop, only rapier & dagger and unarmed techniques are covered and therefore only those weapons are listed on the actor/combatant's certificate. Also since this is just an examination of technical ability, no recommended rating is available. This does *not* mean that the actor/combatant is not still proficient in other weapons or that he or she is

not worthy of recommendation.

In order to make the retesting workshop quick and easy, *something* had to be omitted. The retesting workshop was designed to demonstrate that stage combat skills have been maintained — nothing more.

One's initial actor/combatant test should be listed on resumes, including the date, all weapons, and recommendation (if there is one), then simply add the retesting date.

Actor/combatants who wish to be tested in additional weapons or wish to go for recommendation, must pass a complete actor/combatant proficiency skills test again.

Secretary-Treasurer
Richard Raether

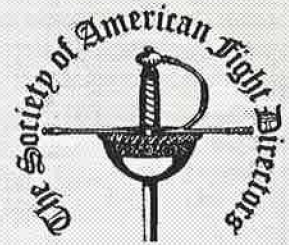


The Cutting Edge

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