

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

4-2003

The Cutting Edge, March/April 2003, Vol. 13 Issue 2

The Society of American Fight Directors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/cutting>



Part of the [Acting Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), [Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Theatre History Commons](#)

The Cutting Edge

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY & SAFETY OF STAGE COMBAT



Fighter's Forum - A new addition to the Cutting Edge

Welcome to the first edition of our new Fighters' Forum! This is the place where we try to hash out some of the pressing questions that are on the minds of our members. All of the questions will be printed anonymously. We don't promise to have all of the answers, but we will try to get the questions out there for people to start discussing. If you have a question, please send it to cuttingedge@safd.org to be included in future issues. Here, now, are the first questions that have been brought to our attention.

What do I have to do to be recognized as an Advanced Actor Combatant?

Just as you must present documentation to the Secretary to become an Actor Combatant you must submit proof to be recognized as an Advanced Actor Combatant. Many people achieve the status of Actor Combatant by passing tests in unarmed, either rapier/dagger or single sword, and one additional weapon on the same day and are subsequently awarded their certificate as a result.

Consequently, many people do not realize that if they had taken those tests on different days they would have had to submit copies of their certificates of proficiency in each weapon and proof of paid dues to the Secretary to be

awarded the status of Actor Combatant. A similar process is required to become an Advanced Actor Combatant.

Let's begin by defining what it means to be an Advanced Actor Combatant. As stated in the SAFD Policies and Procedures and Advanced Actor Combatant is "Any Actor Combatant in good standing who has passed SPTs in six of the eight movement disciplines offered by the SAFD (providing the candidate has maintained said skills and that the proficiencies are current as per 2.01, III. G), has been a member in good standing for two consecutive years and three years have passed since the awarding of their first SPT certificate." For those of you playing along at home, 2.01, III. G states that "proficiency recognition expires three years from issuance."

So, in English, what does this mean? Simply, that you must first have been recognized as an Actor Combatant. Second, that you are CURRENT in six of the eight possible weapons- none of those six proficiencies can be expired. Third, you have to have paid your dues the last two years in a row, and that there has been three years since you PASSED your first SPT. And "first SPT" can mean a simple single weapon SPT passed or Actor/Combatant SPT passed,

which ever comes first.

Ok, so you know what Advanced Actor Combatant is, you believe you meet the qualifications, how do you become one? You send copies of your certificates of proficiency to the Secretary of the SAFD. You must send copies for six weapon styles that you are CURRENT in, you can send up to eight if you choose to do so. You should also provide proof of your membership status- copies of your handy-dandy member card works well. This bit is not mandatory, but since our Secretary has a lot on her plate, it will make her life a lot easier. Then, your materials will be reviewed and if it determined that you have met all qualifications, your Advanced Actor Combatant Certificate will be issued. This will remain current for three years, and you must repeat this process to renew it. Please keep in mind that your six weapons must also remain current for your status to be current.

So- that means that there are probably several of you that meet the qualifications and should submit your paperwork forthwith! That way you can display your shiny new certificate. More importantly, you can add that status to your working resume- you can't list it until you have been granted the title

continued from page 1

by the SAFD. So, send it all to: Ms. Angela Bonacasa, Secretary of the SAFD, 6321 N. Lakewood, Chicago, IL 60660.

My skills test results were not published in the Fight Master, what should I do?

This is something that happens from time to time, usually when teachers get busy at the end of session as they prepare for a new semester or job.

First, check with bank or financial institution to be certain that your check has not cleared. If it has, and it was to payable to the SAFD, then it may simply be that the records are in the process of being updated. The SAFD Policies and Procedures states that "data entry of tests and membership will not take place until after any and all

funds have cleared through the banking process." If your check was payable to the SAFD and has cleared the bank, simply email the Secretary at secretary@safd.org and ask for an update. It may be that it is in process and all is well.

Second, if your check was part of your class fee and was not payable to the SAFD but to the instructor or the institution where you study, begin by having a conversation with your instructor. The P&P states that all materials and payments "must be sent directly to the SAFD Treasurer within one week (seven days) after the test has been completed." Simply ask them if they have sent in the materials, and ask if it was sent to the Treasurer. If they tell you that it has been sent, simply follow up with an email to the Treasurer at

treasurer@safd.org asking for an update.

Third, if your instructor has failed to send in the necessary materials, you should encourage them to do so immediately and send an email to the Secretary alerting her that you could use some help. This is where you will be glad to know that measures are being put in place that will allow for paperwork to be tracked from your test so that the Secretary will know exactly whose test results to expect. So, even if your instructor has not yet sent in the materials, the Secretary is aware that they should be doing so and can follow up with them on your behalf. If your test took place well prior to this, please contact the Secretary immediately for assistance.

Do you have a question for the Fighter's Forum? Do you have a problem that you want to bring to light? Do you have an idea that you feel would better the organization? The Fighter's Forum is all about improving communication, opening dialogue, and allowing all of its' members to have a voice without being worried about repercussions. Mind you, this is not a place to "bad mouth" others, but a place to bring up concerns that would, otherwise, not have a place to be mentioned. All names will be removed from submissions. If questions are pointing toward a particular individual, said questions will be re-written.

Send submissions to: cuttingedge@safd.org.

It's all fun until someone gets hurt - Theatrical Firearms Committee Report

by Julia Rupkalvis

More and more theatrical productions are including firearms in their dramatic offerings. Many times, the production has a relationship with a Fight Director, and calls for advice, training, and assistance in the use of these weapons. Traditionally, while the SAFD has provided exceptional training for our many weapons styles, firearms have not been a

part of the curriculum. Therefore, the Fight Director may not have the ability to accurately function safely within the production's parameters. To address this need, we've created a new committee on Theatrical Firearms Safety that is currently in the process of developing guidelines and curriculum for the use of these weapons in theatrical settings. With the input of experts in this field, we're exploring the best,

safest, and most efficient way of providing training to our members and to the public. As in all our training, this course will not provide training in practical weapons. If you are interested in learning more, or would be interested in serving on this committee, feel free to contact committee members Julia Rupkalvis at ExecDir@safd.org or Scot J. Mann at FDRep@safd.org

Regional Reports just keep coming!

New England Region

Connecticut, Maine,
Massachusetts,
New Hampshire,
Rhode Island,
Vermont



By Richard
Hedderman

CT's **Bob Walsh** and **Robert Westley** collaborated on a production of *Escape from Happiness* at Brandeis University with CT **Walsh** directing and CT **Westley** handling the fights. CT **Walsh** directed *Of Mice and Men* at Stoneham Theatre in March, and played a state trooper in a scene with Sean Penn in the new Clint Eastwood film *Mystic River*. The film, shot on location in Boston, opens in October. **Bob** continues with teaching work at Brandeis and Boston University and will return this spring as a Guest Instructor at American Repertory Theatre's Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.

Robert Westley continues studying and teaching Movement at Boston University. He recently staged the violence for *Skull of Connemara* at New Repertory Theatre and Pinter's *The Hot House* at Boston's Huntington Studio.

Advanced A/C **Matt Greene** reports in from Connecticut that he directed fights for *The Trip to Bountiful* at Hartford Stage Company, and *Ragtime* at Harrt School in Hartford. He also choreographed the action for a production of *Oklahoma!* in Providence, RI.

In January, Advanced A/C and New England Regional Rep **Richard Hedderman** directed fights for Edgar Allen Poe's *Politian* at Maine's Colby College, and *True West* at Portland Stage Company with film actor Don Harvey. He also choreographed the violence for *Antony and Cleopatra* with MIT's Theatre program, and *Taming of the Shrew* at North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly, MA.

FM **J. Allen Suddeth** reports that preparations are well under way for this year's Fight Directors Training Program at the Celebration Barn Theatre in So. Paris, ME. **Maestro Suddeth** will head the faculty and is joined this year by British Fight Director **Richard Ryan**,

SAFD Fight Director **Mark Olsen** and **A.C. Weary**, a New York-based DGA film and TV director. Program dates are slated for June 15th through 28th, and interested parties should contact Celebration Barn Theatre director Carole Brett at: 207/743-8452, or download a registration form from: www.safd.org.

East Central Region

Delaware,
Maryland
New Jersey,
New York,
Pennsylvania,
Washington D. C.



By Dan
O'Driscoll

In New Jersey: Friend **Laurie Jeffers** is performing in the Montclair Operetta Theatre's April production of *Children of Eden*.

The Actors Shakespeare Company in Hoboken presents *Romeo & Juliet* (March 7th thru March 16th) and *The Three Musketeers* (March 8th thru March 15th) starring the talents of AC **Andrew Blasenak** and Friend **Mike Hajek**.

In New York: AC **Andrew Smerick** has joined the cast of Pilot House Theater's production of *Night Ether* playing Feb. 27th thru Mar. 15th at Center Stage/NY.

Wagner College Theatre presents *Romeo and Juliet* directed by CT/FD **Ron Piretti** with AC **Carlo Rivieccio** as Romeo. The show opens on Feb. 26 and runs till March 8th.

The Lady Cavaliers held a stage combat workshop in NYC on Feb. 22nd to raise funds for 2003 productions (<http://www.ladycavaliers.com>)...

CT **Edward 'Ted' Sharon** recently moved from Boston to Fredonia where he teaches voice, movement and stage combat for the SUNY system. He taught at the Winter Workshop in Las Vegas and is directing High Noon (stunt show) in China. Ted is currently working on *Daniel* with Sight and Sound Theatres in PA.

Besides teaching basic workshops in

New York City during February and March, Swordplay and CT **Joseph Travers** offers classes leading to SPTs in knife, broadsword, and unarmed techniques.

Fights4 in NYC offers classes in March/April that lead to Skills Proficiency Tests in broadsword, rapier & dagger, single sword, and quarter-staff. All classes taught by CT/FD **Michael Chin** and CT/FD **J. David Brimmer**.

In Pennsylvania: AC **Stanton Davis** is busy teaching at Temple University and directing a production of *RandJ* in Philadelphia...

In Washington D.C./Maryland: CT/FD **Michael J. Johnson** is performing in the East Coast premiere of *Sidney Bechet Killed A Man*. Previews begin February 26th. The show opens March 1st and closes April 6th. Michael is also choreographing the fights for *Romeo and Juliet* at the University of Maryland. That show opens March 7th and closes March 15th. CT **Lewis Shaw** is providing the weapons for the production. Speaking of CT **Lewis Shaw**, he's been teaching a SPT classes in R&D, UA and BS.

South East Region

Alabama, Florida,
Georgia, Kentucky,
Mississippi,
North Carolina,
South Carolina, Tennessee,
Virginia, West Virginia



By John
Cashman

Greetings from the South Eastern Region!

The SETC (South Eastern Theatre Conference) just concluded and the SAFD was represented by **Tiza Garland** (CT), **Aaron Anderson** (CT), **Tim Pinnow** (FD), and **Drew Fracher** (FM). It was reported as a great success from presenters and attendees alike. Congrats to **Tiza** who has been asked to be the liaison between the SETC Movement Committee and the SAFD.

Bruce Lecure (FD) is directing fights at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, and at the Papermill Playhouse

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

in New Jersey —on a production of a new musical *Romeo & Bernadette*. He also directed *Park Your Car in Harvard Yard* at the Caldwell Theatre Company in Boca Raton, FL.

Tim Bell worked as the lead Swashbuckler at Universal Studios Florida last summer and did Precision Driving on the *Fast and the Furious II*.

Andrew Sutherland, at the University of Southern Mississippi, delivered two papers and conducted one workshop at The International Conference on Arts and Humanities held in Honolulu HI— Defining Action on Vertical and Horizontal Continuums (Fight Choreographer as Playwright), Reducing Youth Desensitization to Television Violence Through (Stage Combat) Outreach, and Staging Realistic Domestic Violence. He choreographed *A Flea in her Ear*, and is starting *Romeo and Juliet* both at USM.

In Fall semester he'll be relocating to Turlock CA where he will join the faculty at California State University Stanislaus— designing new curricula for Voice, Movement, and Stage Combat.

Matthew von Redlich is working on *Alice in Wonderland* (the Tweedledee and Tweedledum fight) for Tuscaloosa County High School and *Romeo and Juliet* (knives and clubs) for Hillcrest High School. This summer he will be working with Theatre Tuscaloosa on *Peter Pan* and conducting workshops through the Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre, Tuscaloosa Academy and Shelton State Community College on introductions to Stage Combat for children and teen actors.

Jenny Male will spend her third summer as dance choreographer for the outdoor drama *Tecumseh!* and first summer as its fight captain. She started a class

with fellow grad student **Ray Anderson** called Combat Dance during her last semester at VCU (Fall '01).

Spencer Humm (CT) is touring Europe with his two man, comedy, sword fighting show *Hack and Slash*. They are entertaining the troops at military bases all over UK, Iceland, Norway, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Having a great time and the soldiers are in good spirits.

Phil Yeager is teaching and choreographing throughout Florida. As is **John Cashman** (CT) who continues with bi-monthly weekend workshops in Orlando, FL and is planning SPT classes for two private Renaissance Faire/Combat groups.

Remember to keep your Regional Reps posted when you move into or out of a region. Keeping tabs on the constantly changing membership roster is tricky.

Ahhh, the Perks of Community Service!

We are currently looking for a few Regional Representatives.
Does the following describe you?

You having a working email address.

Your dues are currently paid.

You've been a member since 1999.

You live in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North or South Dakota, Missouri, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, or Wyoming.

You'd love to have your dues waived while representing your area, making new contacts in your artistic community, and getting to know local fighters better.

If so, then please visit our website at www.safd.org and download the Regional Representative Application today!

John Bellomo Triathlon Update

Since the Winter Wonderland Workshop, many of you have been asking for updates on John Bellomo's quest towards his second Triathlon. He is happy to report that his training is well on its way for the St. Anthony's Olympic distance triathlon: .9 mile swim, 25 mile bike, and 6.2 mile run taking place in St. Petersburg Florida on April 27th, 2003. This Triathlon is with Team in Training, a division of The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. If you would like to support his fundraising effort, you can do so by making a tax deductible donation to The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Checks can be mailed to:

John V. Bellomo, 1217 Porter Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148

Over 75% of money raised goes directly to research or patient services. Good Luck, Johnny!

FOODFIGHT: Local Theaters Fight Hunger!

By Wm. Michael Gray

Continuing its tradition of charity work, like its involvement with Broadway Cares - Equity Fights AIDS, the SAFD is proud to announce the 2nd annual FOODFIGHT: Local Theaters Fight Hunger project. FOODFIGHT is a project, organized nationally by the SAFD, to raise the awareness of hunger via the local theater community in major metropolitan areas this October. Through direct contributions and performances, money and food will be raised for donation to local-area food banks and/or shelters..

FOODFIGHT has several possible avenues of support planned by the SAFD. First, theaters would be approached by local SAFD city coordinators and asked to participate as part of a food drive for a local food bank. Alternatively, the theaters would be encouraged to donate all or a percentage of ticket proceeds or food concessions to the same local food bank. Finally, one or more local stage combat groups are encouraged to plan and promote a benefit showcase featuring stage combat scenes and vignettes ranging from the comedic to the dramatic.

FOODFIGHT History

In 2002, the 1st annual FOODFIGHT occurred in Atlanta, GA, and was coordinated by FD/CT Scot J. Mann and the Atlanta Stage Combat Studio in partnership with The Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Carolyn Cook, and Christy Costello. Food and money were collected at five theaters during the month of October. Donations at Actor's Express, Center for Puppetry Arts, Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Push Push, and Theater Emory resulting in an approximate total of an astounding 2000 pounds of food and \$1500 benefiting the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

The ASCS along with the Georgia Shakespeare Festival raised 600 pounds of food and \$330 at a stage combat showcase with seventy-five people in attendance. The program from the 2002 Atlanta FOODFIGHT is available online at <http://www.stagecombat.com/foodfight.html>. Additionally, the They Fight Stage Combat School, coordinated by Don Preston, raised 143 lbs of food in a pure community service effort donated to Senior Food Shelter

of North East Minneapolis.

FOODFIGHT 2003

For 2003, we would like to attempt the goal of raising 5000 pounds of food per participating city. At the time of this writing, Atlanta, Chicago, and Minneapolis have confirmed their participation in support of this event. Various ideas are being pursued as incentives for each SAFD city to compete. Multiple groups are encouraged to put on showcases or performance events in single cities; however, there will only be a single contact/coordinator per city responsible for keeping track of local events and participation. But, the more people that can assist each city in its planning, the better the overall results.

If you are interested in assisting or learning more details about the coordination for your city, please contact FOODFIGHT Committee Chair Michael Gray at foodfight@safd.org or by cell phone at (773) 793-6566. As the year progresses, further information will be available in future Cutting Edge issues and at the SAFD website: <http://www.safd.org>.

Gallery Talks are taking place in NYC

**Are you Planning to be in or around the NYC Metropolitan Area?
If so, you may want to check out one of these discussions
on Arms & Armor at the Metropolitan Museum or Art with Richard Gradkowski!**

Sunday March 23, 3:00 pm. Knights & Tournaments
Saturday April 26, 7:00 pm. European Armor
Sunday May 25, 3:00 pm. Knights and Tournaments
Saturday June 21, 7:00 pm. European Armor
Friday July 4, 7:00 pm. Islamic Arms & Armor
Saturday July 26, 3:00 pm. European Armor
Saturday August 30, 7:00 pm. Japanese Arms & Armor

Gallery talks are free with admission to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Richard Gradkowski is a Fencing Master and has a Black-belt in Kendo (Japanese fencing).
For any details you may telephone (212) 532-2557.

Workshops, Workshops...

12th Annual Stage Combat Workshop at Louisiana Tech University

April 18th & 19th, 2003
North Central Louisiana
Master Teachers from the:
Society of American Fight Directors
British Society of Stage and Screen Combat
Congress of American Knife Fighters
and other special guests

Registration for the two day workshop: \$100.00 before March 28th
Late registration: \$125.00

To register send a \$25.00 nonrefundable deposit made payable to:

Tech Theatre Players

Include with the deposit:
name, address, phone number, and email.

Mail to:

School of Performing Arts

Attn: Tech Theatre Players/Stage Combat Workshop

P.O. Box 8608 T.S.

Ruston, LA 71272

Classes from last years workshop: Double Stick, Music and Fights, Shaolin Staff, Advanced Throws, Broadsword Fundamentals, Rapier and Dagger advanced work, SAFD Knife Fight, Rapier and Buckler, Katana Advanced blade work, Advanced Smallsword, Laban Analysis applied to Kung Fu Forms, Whips for Dummies, Gun Workshop, Basic classes in rapier and dagger - broadsword - quarterstaff - unarmed techniques, Swashbuckling Hollywood Style, Tomahawk and Knife. Two days, Five classes a day, ninety minute classes

For more information visit: <http://performingarts.latech.edu/theatre/scwwweb/scw.html>

Swords-N-Surf Hawaii

June 9 through 28

Presented by Hawaii Institute of Physical Performance,
University of Hawaii at Manoa Outreach College & Dept. of Theatre & Dance
Honolulu, Hawaii and Dueling Arts International

Offering Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Theatrical Combat
Featuring Instructors from the Society of American Fight Directors and Dueling Arts
International

Tuition per 3 credit class: \$402.00

For information on course content visit www.duelingarts.com

For information on registration, housing, and meal plans visit www.outreach.hawaii.edu

For information on Dueling Arts Lake Tahoe workshops, please visit their above website

...and more Workshops!

CELEBRATION BARN WORKSHOPS 2003

June 15 through June 28 inclusive.

Fight directors workshop: \$1,500.00

Directors: \$1,500.00

Actors Ensemble \$1,100.00

Tuition includes housing, lunch, and dinner- always with a vegetarian option. There is a 10% discount if we receive your application early, before April 1, 2003, or if you are an SAFD member (only one discount applies).

For further information, please visit our website at www.safd.org/fdw.asp.

2003 National Stage Combat Workshops

July 7 through July 25

Offering both an Actor Combatant Workshop
and an Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshop

Come study with Fight Masters

Chuck Coyl

Drew Fracher

Richard Raether

ACW Tuition: \$1,365

IACW Tuition: \$1,465

Non-Refundable Deposit: \$275

Discounts:

ACW discounted price for 3 year SAFD members \$1,230

IACW discounted price for 3 year SAFD members \$1,320

ACW discount for AEA, SAG or AFTRA members: \$1,295

IACW discount for AEA, SAG or AFTRA members: \$1,395

(Photocopy of valid union card required)

Housing is \$440 for double occupancy dormitory housing for 20 days.

For details and registration applications visit: www.safd.org

If you have questions please contact:

On site coordinator: Linda McCollum at McCollum@ccmail.nevada.edu
or NSCW Coordinator Michael Chin at NSCWCoordinator@safd.org

The Cutting Edge needs your input

Do you like what you see? Are you finding the articles and announcements informative and enjoyable to peruse? Do you feel that we, the editors of The Cutting Edge, have no idea what we are doing and should be flogged until we cry like babies? Whatever the case may be, we would like your input. We try to bring you information that helps get this organization on the same page. We like to inform you as to what other members are doing. We bring up information that, we feel, you would like to know. If there is something else you would like to see written, a change of format, or something that should be removed from future publications, please contact us at: cuttingedge@safd.org. The only way this organization can grow is with your insight. Don't be afraid to speak up. Don't feel as though your opinion doesn't matter. If it didn't matter, we wouldn't ask for input. We hope you have enjoyed what you have read thus far. We are striving to make this newsletter, and this organization, better and better every day. The only way this can happen is with the ideas and thoughts of its' members coming to the foreground.

Thank you for your time.

Keep safe.

The Cutting Edge

is a publication of the SAFD and can be made into a hat, or a broach, or a little pterodactyl.

Please send all submissions to:
Symmonie Steger
and
John Tovar

cuttingedge@safd.org

PPSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BARTLETT, IL
PERMIT NO. 51

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Society of American Fight Directors
6321 N. Lakeview
Chicago, IL 60660
www.SAFD.org

