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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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The Cutting Edge

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY & SAFETY OF STAGE COMBAT



Report on Meeting with the SSD&C Executive Director, Counsel and Board Member

by Drew Fracher,
Fight Master

Several months ago I traveled to New York and met with the Barbara Hauptman, Executive Director and Ron Scheckman, Executive Counsel and John Dillon, Board Member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. This was a continuation of meetings held by several of our members and ongoing talks regarding fight directors being represented by the SSD&C.

So you might ask, why do this in the first place? Why union representation and why the SSD&C? For those of us in the organization who make our livings as Fight Directors, it has become increasingly clear that we desperately need some form of collective bargaining on our side. This would enable us to have more clout when it comes to negotiating contracts, it would guarantee minimum fees and probably most importantly, it would provide pension and health care for the many of us that are free lancers and have none otherwise. This would in effect legitimize Fight Directors in the eyes of producers and directors. Fight Directors are currently the only part of the professional production team (directors, actors, and all types of designers) who are not members of some professional union. We currently have not a leg to stand on when other members of the team have standardized fees, royalties, copyright protection and pension and health.

So, where are we at after these meetings? Well, it comes down to getting organized. Not just within the SAFD, but also within the ranks of any and all professional fight directors. I was told by the higher ups at SSD&C that the best place to start trying to organize would be with the production contract (the contract for a Broadway show) because there is already a clause in that

contract that allows for the hiring of a specialty dance choreographer (who might be brought in to stage a very specific sort of dance; say a highlighted tango or sword dance for instance). Using that as a precedent we would write a contract for a fight director and from there expand and move the same strategy into LORT and the other sorts of union contracts covered by SSD&C. Now the problem is, of course, that producers are going to hate this idea because it means that we suddenly have some clout and would be demanding pay commensurate with the amount of work we do. So, they will certainly challenge this as a violation of anti trust laws. The SSD&C counsel thinks that we can win this arbitration and open the doors for us to be unionized. However this arbitration will cost money and while SSD&C is willing to help foot the bill, we, the SAFD would need to be able to put our money where our mouth is and help financially. That is the first hurdle, not an insurmountable one, but certainly a hurdle.

The biggest hurdle is going to be organizing ALL of the fight directors out there that are working under the production contract. Many of them are not SAFD members and many of them, although very fine and talented professionals have never had anything to do with the SAFD for a variety of reasons. So, they will ALL have to agree not to work if we get to the point where we are organized enough to challenge this by going thru the steps that I have outlined above. Because if I say I won't work without a union contact and the producer says OK and goes to another fight director, then they will also have to agree NOT TO WORK and so on down the line. It is only thru this sort of solidarity that this organizing will work and provide the power that unions have, leaving the producer no other choices. This is the biggest hurdle and is where we now stand on the issue. Slowly but surely

contacting those individuals in NYC who are working on Broadway and trying to get them committed to NOT WORKING if that need arises.

There are perhaps some other directions that we might approach this from, such as getting all SSD&C directors to agree not to work without a union fight director. Or, perhaps contacting producers and their insurers and approaching it from a liability standpoint. Those doors are also open and worth investigating, but for now, the first step is trying to organize the Broadway choreographers. That's where we are for now and I will keep you all posted as we slowly move forward. I'm open to suggestions and anyone who is interested in helping get this organized. Feel free to contact me at any time at FMRep@safd.org.

Speaking of Unions, We'd Like to Hear From You!

We're presently forming an SAFD union roster. If you are a member of any of the performing unions please send that information to FD Representative Scot J. Mann at scot-mann@stagecombat.com, or 404-423-8504. At present we have a list of 30 names and we're certain with a membership as numerous as ours there are many more. One of the advantages we have as a group within unions like Equity is the ability to form a small voting block when it comes to important issues regarding safety and stage combat. Also, if you've worked with an equity stage manager that you know supports the continued advancement of stage combat safety and the use of experienced fight captains and choreographers please ask if they'd like to be included on our notification list, and send along their email address to Scot.

Fighting for a Great Cause

Food Fight 2003 is continuing to grow every day! This project, organized nationally by the SAFD, is designed to raise the awareness of hunger via the local theater community in major metropolitan areas this October. We currently have 8 cities on board and we hope to have that number increase now that we are heading into the summer months. If you live in Montgomery, AL, Denver, CO, Atlanta, GA, Chicago, IL, Lexington or Louisville, KY, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, or Greensboro, NC there is already work underway that you can easily become a part of today. Simply visit the new Food Fight website at <http://foodfight.stagecombat.com>, click on your city and get the contact information for your local coordinator. Each of these cities is now working to determine the local food bank/organization that they will directly benefit from their efforts. Donations to local food banks have been down in the

past few years and this is our effort to raise awareness to the problem while raising funds and food that will benefit the local communities where we work as artists in the theater everyday.

Latest congrats got to Terry Kroenug of Denver who has confirmed a November 14 performance with the Longmont Theater Company! Terry is also a playwright and has offered: "If any groups need unusual material, I will offer any of my 12 woman-centered one-act fight plays royalty free for this event. I know fights for women are in short supply. Some of these are very serious, some are silly. They cover every SAFD-recognized weapon, as well as found weapons. One comedy even takes place in a fight class." So, if you have been hesitant to put together a performance due to lack of a script or performance ideas, contact Terry via the Food Fight website for ideas and

inspiration.

We have also heard from individuals that do not live in an active fight community but were wondering how to participate. If you are one of these people, we'd love to hear from you! If you live in a rural area or away from other members and want tips on how to organize a food drive visit our website or contact the Food Fight coordinator, William Michael Gray, at foodfight@safd.org. If nothing else, you can collect cans and other non-perishable foods and donate them to your local food bank and report your results to us. We will include them in our year-end national tallies. After all, every little bit helps and we appreciate any and all participation. You can also reach the Food Fight website via the SAFD home page. Simply go to www.safd.org and click on the link to Food Fight. So, check us out and join us for a good time and a great cause.

I Hear a Raffle Calling Your Name!

Our annual benefit raffle for Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS is right around the corner! Traditionally, the Annual Raffle happens the final week of the National Stage Combat Workshop, usually at the final awards presentation. This year the workshop will be ending on July 25, 2003- so, make a note to purchase your tickets in mid-July! Our next newsletter will not reach you until after the raffle has ended, so please keep your eyes on the website for details and reminders. In the past there have been such remarkable prizes as weapons, coloring books, instructional videos, workshop fees, and many, many more wonderful items. So, mark your calendars to purchase those tickets, you just might win something extraordinary and you will help to make an extraordinary difference- either way, you'll be a winner! Are you undertaking a charitable effort of the scale of a Food Fight or Marathon? If so, please let us know at cuttingedge@safd.org!

Membership Representative Elections!

The terms of the current membership representatives will end on December 31, 2003. Nominations will be accepted through August 1 for the November election. Actor Combatant/Friend, Certified Teacher, Fight Director, and Fight Master Representatives will all be up for election. The next term will be the first three year term for the elected reps; all previous representative terms have been for two years only. All those elected will serve from January 1, 2004, through December 31, 2006.

To nominate a member, please contact the Nomination Committee Chair, Neil Massey, no later than August 1. Please include your name and membership level, the name of the nominee, and the position for which the person is being nominated. Mr. Massey can be reached via phone at (708) 485-2089, or via email at swordcutler@earthlink.net.

The member representatives are your voice on the Governing Body; please be active in their nominations and elections!

Congratulations to the 3rd Annual Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Winner!

Our thanks to all of the applicants — it was a difficult decision and we appreciate all of your efforts.

This year the lucky recipient is Andrea Dammerman of Colorado. Andrea will be attending the Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshop this July in Las Vegas! That's right, Sin City, Baby! She'll spend three glorious weeks of study at UNLV with fight Masters Chuck Coyl, Drew Fracher, and Richard Raether. The scholarship covers her tuition and housing in the spectacular dorms. And it's not too late for you to join her: Come sling steel and hug slot machines. Rub elbows with Michael Chin, Paul Steger, David Brimmer, Mark Guinn, Donald Preston, and Tiza Garland. This is your opportunity to attend the Granddaddy of them all,

The National Stage Combat Workshop!

July 7 through July 25, 2003

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

ACW Tuition: \$1,365

IACW Tuition: \$1,465

Non-Refundable Deposit: \$275

Discounts:

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

IACW discounted price for 3 year SAFF 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

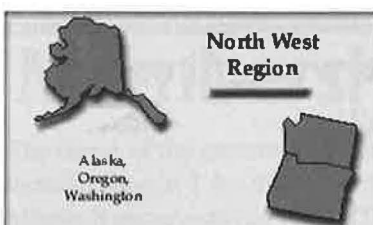
or NSCW Coordinator Michael Chin at NSCWCoordinator@safd.org

Another Regional Report and A New Regional Representative



by Payson Burt

As Chairman of the Regional Representative Committee, I spearheaded the committee and regional restructuring last year which resulted in a stronger, more consistent committee. With a small membership (45), it was no surprise to me that the initial call for members to apply to be a RR was unheeded. Now, a year later, I am ready to hand the reins off to a qualified member. This region needs a Regional Representative that lives and works in the area and can become actively involved — if you are interested, download an application form from the web site and send it in! In the downloaded document, you will find some of the perks and expectations of a RR. One that is not on the document (it was just voted in) is that all RRs will have their SAFD dues waived for the years they serve. In the mean time, continue to contact me with questions and information about what you are doing! In news from the Twin Cities, [They Fight] stage combat school just completed a set of SPT's resulting in all of the students passing two to three weapons and eight new members to the SAFD. Welcome to you all!



By Deb Fialkow

The Northwest Region has been quite active, and I'm sure I don't know the half of it — so please, fill me in — in particular, any news from Alaska would be most welcome! Thanks to Chris, Payson and Al for helping with the NWRR transition.

GOINGS ON:

- **Chris DuVal** became the proud papa of Megan DuVal this April, congratulations to the whole DuVal clan! Chris starts the long run as Lysander in *Midsummer's* mid June, and continues in the even longer run of *Present Laughter* as Roland Maule at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.
- **Geof Alm** choreographed *The Shakespeare Stealer* for Seattle Children's Theatre, *MacBeth* for Tacoma Actor's Guild; performed in Seattle Opera's *Fidelio* and continues to teach at the UW's PATP (Deb Fialkow assisting), and Freehold Conservatory and ETI program (Brynna Jourden and Heidi Wolf assisting). He'll fly out to D.C. to re-space his choreography for RSC's *All the Great Books (abridged)* at the Kennedy Center. He will fight direct for Shakespeare Santa Cruz' 2003 season in July (*Hamlet*, *Comedy of Errors* and *Private Lives*).
- **Bob Borwick** is performing in Village Theatre's production of *Damn Yankees* (5/7/03-7/27/03); he recently choreographed Lakewood Player's *R & J*, and is the fight director for *The Laramie Project* at Seattle Central Community College and *In Flagrante Gothicto* at The Empty Space, as well as fight consultant for *God's Man in Texas* at Taproot Theatre Company. He is also doing movement reference and consultation for the University of Washington's Computer Animation Department.
- **Kristina Sutherland** and **Desiree Prewitt** received a foundation grant for touring their two woman show "R" in 2004 (machamonkey.org)
- **Jim Gall** will be performing in Empty Space's *In Flagrante Gothicto* (6/19/03-

7/20/03 emptyspace.org).

- A Theatre Under the Influence's production of *Cardenio (a.k.a. Thomas Middleton's the Second Handmaids Tale)*: **David Nochimson** is the production manager, **Evan Whitfield** is performing and fight captain, **Ginger Culver** is performing, Deb Fialkow choreographed.
- **Carol Roscoe** teaches at the Seattle Children's Theatre, produced a reading of William Mastrosimone's *The Afghan Women* (a fundraiser for the International Orphan Care Project), and is performing in a reading of Michael Feingold's new translation of *Don Carlos* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre (she also married the lovely Andrew McMasters in March, best wishes).
- **Ilene Fins** directed *MacBeth* for Seattle Country Day School, teaches movement and stage combat at Seattle Children's Theatre, and choreographed *R&J* with **Gorden Carpenter** for Inglewood High School. She is directing *The Oresteia* for SCT this summer and is working on a new opera, *Dream of Zeus*, with composer Garrett Fisher, to be produced in January 2004 at Consolidated Works.
- **Matt Orme** teaches combat at Seattle University (SU) and Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), recently co-directed and choreographed *Hamlet* for PLU, Choreographed *Dark* for SU, Guys and Dolls for Roosevelt High School and is currently choreographing *R&J* for Skagit Valley Shakespeare Festival. He held specialty workshops for the Washington State Thespian Conference and Kamiak High School as well as a Valentine's Day Couples Combat for Roosevelt H.S. theatre parents as a fundraiser.
- **Kevin Inouye** choreographed and performed in *Lost Souls* at Cornish College
- **John Lynch** performed in the Island Player's production of the *Misanthrope*.
- **Sarah Cabatit** is performing in ArtsWest's production of *Shakespeare's R&J*, Deb Fialkow is the fight/movement consultant.

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- **FD Bob MacDougall** is the fight director for Island Player's production of *R&J*, and continues to be an all around International Man of Mystery.
 - Maestro **David Boushey** has been busy adjudicating in and out of the region – Cornish College (Bob MacDougall) and University of Washington PATP (Geof Alm) in May (in khakis BTW), Freehold Conservatory in June (also Geof Alm), and North Carolina (Dale Girard and Angela Bonacasa) and Denver (Geof Kent) somewhere in between.
 - **Deb Fialkow** is the female understudy for *The Shakespeare Stealer* at Seattle Children's Theatre (and has gone on for all roles – it is good to be the Queen); and will be teaching stage combat for Tacoma Actor's Guild's STAR camp this summer, as well as training in London the month of July with Youngblood/BADC.
 - **William Hulings** is currently performing in Willamette Repertory Theatre's production of RSC's *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*.
- WORKSHOPS:** The third annual

Ironclad Productions **Memorial Day Melee** in Portland – AA/C **John Armour** (creator and producer of the workshop), FM **Chuck Coyl**, FD **Geof Alm**, CT **Angela Bonacasa** were in attendance to teach, run renewals and torture AA/C's **John Tovar**, **Sandy Van Bremen** and Deb Fialkow. Making the trip from Seattle were Michael Crowley, Evan Whitfield, Heidi Wolf, Kevin and Chandra Inouye, and Brynna Jourden. From the area helping run things was Jaime Kirk, Jonathan Cole up from Salem, Bill Hulings up from Eugene, Steve Nabors down from Eastern Washington. A sampling of some classes: knife vs. unarmed, found objects, basics of broadsword, q-stick, single sword & swashbuckling, aikido; progressive small sword (classes continued over three days), reactions, falls and rolls.

RENEWALS: Jim Gall, Gorden Carpenter and Deb Fialkow successfully renewed in UA and R&D in April (CT Angela Bonacasa and AA/C John Tovar made the journey from Chitown). Bill Hulings, Jonathan Cole,

Evan Whitfield, Michael Crowley successfully renewed in UA, BS and R&D, John Armour in UA & R&D (no time for BS, he was running the workshop!) at the Memorial Day Melee in Portland (CT Angela Bonacasa, FD Geof Alm instructing, FM Chuck Coyl Adjudicating, AA/Cs John Tovar and Deb Fialkow willing victims).

IN THE WORKS: SEA-TOWN OTPs (One Trick Ponies). Weekend intensives with guest artist instructors as well as skills renewals. Keep checking the Northwest Region Newsletter for more information.

TRANSFERS: Lacy Altwine, Mike Mahaffey, Kate Roxburgh and Jen Taylor have made the move to L.A. Best of luck in La-La-Land to all.

Congratulations to Deb Fialkow on being named the new Northwest Regional Representative. Look for her introduction letter in the next edition of *The Cutting Edge*.

Help Wanted!

We at the Cutting Edge are always looking for interesting information to share with all of you. To that end, we would like to begin adding workshop updates to future issues. If you have recently attended a workshop or will in the near future and would like to share your experiences with us, please contact us and let us know! We can be reached at cuttingedge@safd.org. We would be happy to provide you with assistance in writing an article that will help everyone to see what each workshop has to offer, the classes they can take and the people they can meet- all of which will help them to find the right workshop to meet their skill level and the challenges they would like to tackle.

Additionally, we are looking for someone with experience working with photo archiving, scanners, Photoshop, etc. We would like to build a picture archive involving combat photography. This would include images, photos, diagrams and the like, so we need someone who has experience in transferring photos to digital forms, organizing them in a searchable manner, and generally making them easy to access and use. We would also love to be able to restore some older photos for the database if possible. If this is something that you believe you could assist with, even if it is only with a portion of the project, please contact us ASAP and let us know! We'd love to hear from you creative types that can help us get this project underway! When e-mailing us please include what programs/hardware you have used and would like to use to give us the best idea of the path this project can take. Please drop us a line at cuttingedge@safd.org and share your thoughts and vision. We look forward to hearing from you!

Friends, Members, Combatants- Lend Us Your Brains!!!

The Annual Meeting is just around the corner and we want to hear from you! Please contact your member representative by June 30th so that they can bring your concerns to the attention of the Governing Body. Let them know what you think is working well, what you'd like to see work better, what you think is missing that you'd love to see implemented, and anything else you feel is important. Remember, even if you feel your brain is "Abby Normal" it is by combining all of our thoughts that we create the amazing Creature that is the SAFD! So, share your crazy thoughts with your member rep today.

Friend/Actor Combatant/Advanced Actor Combatant Representative:

Al Foote III
ACRep@safd.org

Certified Teacher Representative:

Geoffrey Kent
CTRep@safd.org

Fight Director Representative:

Scot Mann
FDRep@safd.org

Fight Master Representative:

Drew Fracher
FMRep@safd.org

Dress Like the Star You Know You Are!

Orders are currently being taken for the super swank SAFD jackets! These beauties come in sizes S-XXXL, they cost \$200.00 and are so cool that they are hot!

For ordering information please contact
SAFD Merchandise Committee Chair Brian LeTraunik
at (773) 805-0926 or via email at tybalt1@msn.com



What's that you say? You won't be attending a workshop soon but you are desperate to get a new pair of SAFD sweatpants? Don't worry, we understand your pain. After all, they were all the rage on the runways this year in New York and we wouldn't want you to feel left out. We currently have t-shirts, polos, spaghetti strap tank-tops, shorts and sweatpants in stock. You can contact Brian for all of your SAFD merchandise needs, he will let you know the price, the cost to ship it to you, the sizes available, and of course, how stunning you will look in all of our fine SAFD wear.

Coming Workshops

Combatuere

The 5th National Stage Combat Event
Presented by the Society of Australian Fight Directors, Inc
Perth 11th - 19th July, 2003

Instructors include:

Lawrence Carmichael - Andrew Fraser - Nigel Poulton - Jason King - Scott Witt
Special guest Tony Wolf (Fighting Styles Designer, Lord of the Rings)

Full workshop (over 50 hours of instruction!) - \$550.00

Master class - \$50.00

Taster class - \$25.00

All practice weapons provided

Discounts for MEAA, SAustFDi members, Find-a-Friend

For further information please contact -

Andrew Fraser - 0417 980 366 Scott Witt - 0414 349 530 switt@qldtheatreco.com.au

The Seventh Annual Summer Sling

Thursday August 21 through Sunday August 23, 2003

NYU, in the heart of Greenwich Village

Up to eight hours of instruction daily, from beginning to advanced

All weapons provided

Sponsored by Fights 4

Fees:

\$250 for all four days

\$85 per day for individual days

10% discount for all college students with a valid ID

10% discount for attendance of SAFD Regional Workshops in the past year

15% discount for SAFD members in good standing

(only one discount applies per person)

For More Information call

800-659-6579

or contact workshop coordinator Michael Chin at NSCWboss@aol.com
or workshop registrar Robert Tuftee at 718-788-4957, rtuftee@ix.netcom.com
www.Fights4.com

The British National Stage Combat Workshop Celebrating its TENTH Anniversary

August 4th-15th, 2003

Two-week intensive beginners' course,
an Intermediate/Advanced course, running concurrently.

The beginners' syllabus includes Rapier & Dagger and Unarmed Combat, with the emphasis on safety and dramatic presentation, and the Intermediate/Advanced course will cover weapons from the BASSC syllabus, which includes:

Single Sword ("Swashbuckling" style); Broadsword; Smallsword.

Participants will be given the opportunity to take the BASSC Fight Performance Test (FPT) at the end of the two weeks if they wish. The test will be adjudicated by an independent examiner.

The Islington Arts and Media School
Turtle Road, London N4 3LS

Workshop fee £300 (approx. \$485 US Dollars)

£270 concessions - Students, Equity Members, Members of stage combat organizations All test fees included.

Please email info@bassc.org for more information or to register

Coming up in the next issue...

- Details on the upcoming elections
- The Fighter's Forum returns to answer more of your questions
- Info on the Philadelphia Workshop set for September
- And Much, Much More!

If you have anything you would like to include in
the next issue, please send it to:

cuttingedge@safd.org

by June 30, 2003

The Cutting Edge

is a publication of the SAFD
and
the sharp side of a blade, DUH!?!

Please send all submissions to:

Symmonie Steger
and
John Tovar

cuttingedge@safd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

