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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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## The Cutting Edge, November/December 2009, Vol. 20 Issue 6

The Society of American Fight Directors

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# The Cutting Edge

## ELECTION TIME!

The following are the instructions on how you can voice your opinion and help direct the future of the SAFD. Please read them carefully and submit your ballot before the deadline.

In order to vote, you MUST be a current dues-paying member of the SAFD, be current in the membership level that you are voting and, in order to verify that only one vote per member is counted, you must include your full name, phone number and email at the bottom of the ballot. Ballots that are submitted without this information will not be counted.

Ballots can be accessed through the News and Publications tab on the SAFD website (<http://safd.org/news-and-publications>) as well as through this issue and from an email that will be sent to you from the current Membership Reps.

Ballots may be submitted two different ways:

1. By email to: [voting@safd.org](mailto:voting@safd.org)

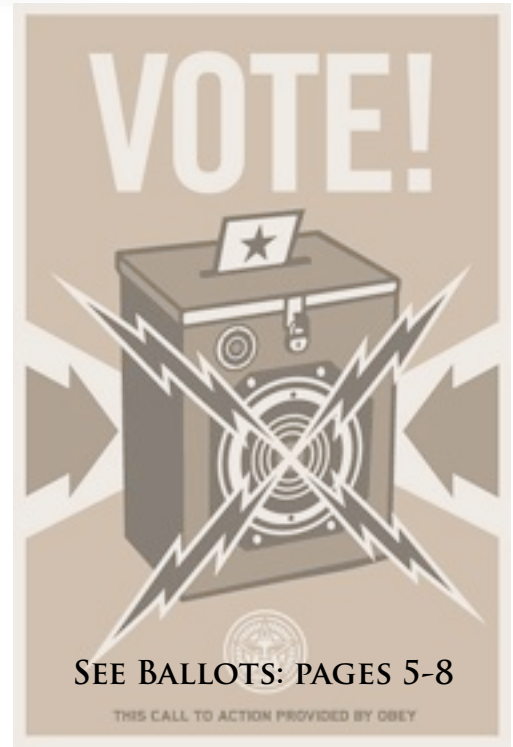
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2. By snail mail to: SAFD Elections  
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Boynton Beach, FL 33426

*NOTE: If you are mailing your vote, please print out the form, either from this issue, the website or from the email sent by the Membership Reps., and fill it out accordingly.*

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Tabulation of all votes will be completed by December 10, at which time the winners will be notified. Once the election winners have confirmed their acceptance, the other nominees will be notified of the election results. These results will be posted both on the website and in the January/February issue of *The Cutting Edge*. Newly elected representatives and officers will assume their offices on January 1, 2010 for a three year term.



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# The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword...

Michael Mueller - Editor-in-Chief

If 2009 could be summed up in one word, I think that my word would be "overwhelming". Over the past year I've been blessed to have had numerous opportunities to train, choreograph, and perform, but I'm constantly left feeling that the more I do the less I know. Perhaps you feel the same way. This sense has not only come from my activities but from the information and activities that have been reported in *The Cutting Edge* over the past year.

In this issue Michael Crider brings up the use of weapons outside of our recognized eight, which started me thinking about the number of times I've been asked to perform with, or choreograph stage violence outside the SAFD spectrum of training. Each time I found that SAFD principles translate into the various projects, but I've always feared the generalists' approach. In addition, we are often given such a short amount of time with students or actors that it is hard to do anything but ensure safety and provide a glimpse of the possibilities associated with the weapon(s) of choice. It's refreshing to hear that various styles and weapons are being addressed at regional workshops around the country, but if you are like me, time and money limit the amount of workshops that can be attended. Sure there are reference materials available, but the volume can be quite an intimidating factor. It's hard to comprehend ever really knowing one weapon completely, let alone eight or more.

Reading *The Cutting Edge* has also been humbling for me because of the amount of activities our membership accomplishes, often in just two months time. It's amazing to read about the different experiences and perspectives on training and implementation that occur around the country and how our members find the time to stay engaged in the art of staged violence. Focusing on specific areas, as Fulton Burns has done in his series of articles, provides fantastic examples of the theory in practice as well as help to remind the rest of us that the progression of sharing knowledge and creating art are open to interpretation and variation.

Even with such great examples, it's hard to not be frustrated by the lack of time to devote to further research and practical application, or overwhelmed by the amount of information to learn study and explore; but, with each issue of this publication, and the efforts made by all of you to contribute, I find my sense of despair lessen. As individuals we could never dream to master any of the eight weapons recognized by the SAFD, or the vast sea of other weapons throughout history and cultures; but as a society, our collective knowledge strengthens what can be accomplished by the individual. Having the ability to share information through *The Cutting Edge* and *The Fight Master* as well as contact other members for advice is an invaluable resource that eases my apprehension. Our society makes the impossible task of mastery that much more palpable, and you are to be thanked for that. May we always have more information and possibilities to explore than are humanly possible to achieve. Keep up the good work.

Michael Mueller

Please send all submissions, comments and questions to:

[cuttingedge@safd.org](mailto:cuttingedge@safd.org)

## The Cutting Edge Mission Statement

*The Cutting Edge*, a bimonthly electronic newsletter written exclusively by and for the membership of the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD), provides its readers with resources to stay involved and always on the cutting edge of stage combat.

Our publication aims to:

- ♦ Keep the membership informed about SAFD events, policies, opportunities, membership activities and useful industry information
- ♦ Provide the membership with a forum for open discourse
- ♦ Welcome new members and engage current members



Editor-in-Chief: Michael Mueller

### Associate Editors

Governing Body Liason: Eero Laine

Layout / Footlight: Katie Mueller

Regional Reports: Darrell Rushton

Regional Workshops: Dan Granke

Governing Body Advisor: John Tovar

## The Cutting Edge Submission Deadlines

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2009	Dec. 1, 2008
March / April 2009	Feb. 1, 2009
May / June 2009	April 1, 2009
July / Aug. 2009	June 1, 2009
Sept. / Oct. 2009	Aug. 1, 2009
Nov. / Dec. 2009	Oct. 1, 2009

### Regional Reports to Regional Reps.

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2009	Nov. 15, 2008
March / April 2009	Jan. 15, 2009
May / June 2009	Mar. 15, 2009
July / Aug. 2009	May 15, 2009
Sept. / Oct. 2009	July 15, 2009
Nov. / Dec. 2009	Sept. 15, 2009

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# From the Governing Body

## FROM WILLIE MEYBOHM - SECRETARY

To say theatres are struggling with finances right now is an understatement. Charitable giving is down, across the board. Any lower, and it might as well flatline. Even my favorite, free podcast is meekly sticking its hand out for dough.

Which is why we want to thank you, our members. Not just for continuing to be dues paying members, but for those of you who give of your time, your passion and your experience. You make this organization what it is, and we are very grateful. And, up until now, your dues and monies from adjudication kept this organization running.

In the coming years, we'd like to change that. As one of the longest-standing, successful, non-profit organizations in the United States, we have somehow managed to wade through the mire of three decades without a program of charitable giving. Even though it's the worst time in the world to start seeking grants, sponsorships and planned charitable donations, grant writing is the one hallmark of creative, non-profit organizations we are not embracing. And we should.

Right now, we are awaiting word on our application to receive a grant from Google, which will give us free advertising and AdSense (TM) exposure. We are also seeking out experienced grant writers to help us put together a development program. Bear in mind, our grant program is an infant now, and the climate couldn't be more unforgiving. But for all you've given to the organization, we think establishing a program of charitable giving is worth it. It can help fund more scholarships, more workshops, and higher salaries for teaching staff. Across the board, increased funds...is good.

We'll have more on this after our big All Hallows Eve meeting in Chicago, and hopefully even more once we roll into the new year. For now, with the economy crumbling around us, if you have a job, be thankful. If you've lost your job, or are struggling to make ends meet, our thoughts and hearts are with you. And pretty, pretty please, be sure to remember to pay your dues by December 31, 2009.

We're always open to your thoughts and feedback. You can email me at [secretary@safd.org](mailto:secretary@safd.org), or call me at 704.402.0692, or follow the SAFD on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/safdorg](http://www.twitter.com/safdorg).

## FROM LEE SOROKO - TREASURER:

As an organization, we continue to keep our fiscal house in order as exemplified by our consolidation to one National Workshop location. The economy has directly affected each of us; and as an organization; we too must change accordingly. In these tough times we must continue to reach out to past members to renew their membership. Why is this important for our rank and file? Here is a big one: SCHOLARSHIPS for continuing training/education in Stage Combat!

Last year at the National Stage Combat Workshop under the leadership of Angela Bonacasa as the Workshop Coordinator at the North Carolina School for the Arts, the SAFD sponsored over \$12,000 of scholarships for our membership that directly reduced the cost of attending this workshop. Dependant on years of membership, these scholarships ranged from 5% to 25% as well as two FULL TUITION scholarships. We want to do more, but need our membership base to renew in order to make that possible.

With the advent of the 2010 National Stage Combat Workshop under the leadership of the new Coordinator, Mike Mahaffey, we are hoping to continue building upon the success of this well run flagship event. I want it known by all that membership dollars fuel scholarships! As Treasurer, I want past members back on our rolls and the ones we have to stay on board.

## FROM TED DECHATELET - AAC/AC/FRIEND REPRESENTATIVE:

I would like to thank the membership and say once again what a privilege it has been to serve as your Membership Representative to the Governing Body. I greatly enjoyed and appreciated all of your feedback and want to assure you it does make a difference. Please continue to make your voice heard to your new Membership Rep., I know I will. Fight safe!



### FROM DC WRIGHT - CT REPRESENTATIVE:

I was pleased to be able to take over the CT Rep position to help out my dear friend Michelle, and humbled as I realized the amount of effort that she and so many other members of the Governing Body have put in over the years to help make and keep the SAFD in the strong position it is in today. Now that I have an inkling for what the job entails, and with your vote of support, I hope to be able to continue to serve the SAFD throughout the upcoming term, particularly the CT membership rank.

Of high priority to me is the sharing of information among the membership; from rank to rank as well as the GB. What would be even more fantastic is if everyone in the SAFD shared their thoughts, ideas, and frustrations with their membership reps., so we can more accurately represent the organization as a whole, rather than only the small portion that regularly provides feedback. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, so the saying goes. Make sure you are squeakin'!

### FROM JAMIE CHEATHAM - FD REPRESENTATIVE:

It has truly been a pleasure serving on the Governing Body for the last few years. What a treat to be one of the few people moving from one administration to the next, and to see such a smooth and, I think, successful transition. My reason for stepping down is personal. My boy is entering high school and I want to be there for him as often as possible in these last, potentially troubling years when we still have him at home, even though he has already begun to outgrow us. Thank you for the honor of serving you all.

### FROM RICHARD RYAN - FM REPRESENTATIVE:

The last three years has seen the SAFD continue in the process of revitalization and modernization.

As well as welcoming new members, the College of Fight Masters has significantly influenced reform, most notably in it's proposal to ensure that Advanced Actor Combatant status incorporate both breadth of study of stage combat as well as excellence in it's performance. As the organization's senior members, it is imperative that the CFM continues to strive to help the SAFD grow in the arena of training people to a professional level.

As FM Rep., I am honored to continue articulating the collective voice of the College of Fight Masters in terms of the evolution of this Society as well as to ensure we do not lose sight of our core business: preparing professional level practitioners; be they performers, teachers or fight directors.



## 2009 SAFD Member Representative Election Ballot for: AC/AAC/Friend Representative

In order to vote, you MUST be a current dues paying member of the SAFD, be current in the membership level that you are voting in and, in order to verify that only one vote per member is counted, you must include your Full Name, Phone Number and Email at the bottom of the ballot. Ballots that are submitted without this information will not be counted.

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**Rob Smith**

Hello- I'm Rob Smith, an Advanced Actor Combatant looking to become your Friend/AC/AAC membership representative. I acquired all eight weapon certifications in Las Vegas at the NSCW West from 2004-2007, working with an assortment of amazing instructors including FM's Mike Chin, Richard Raether, Richard Ryan, Chuck Coyl, Drew Fracher and many more. It was a great experience, and if you haven't done the NSCW I would highly recommend it because of the amount of time spent with some incredible instructors. My goals within the SAFD include attending at least three regional workshops a year (interning at some), teaching movement/combat at the university level and becoming a Certified Teacher by 2013. I recently moved to Cleveland, OH and hope to acquire more one-on-one time with instructors in the Northeast. I recently taught Voice, Shakespeare, and Stage Combat at Blue Lakes Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lakes, MI. I'm excited about the possibility for the future of the SAFD and my potential role of being your Friend/AC/AAC membership representative.

A Colorado native, Robert received his B.A. in Theatre Performance from The University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Robert recently received his M.F.A. in Theatre Performance from the University of Florida where he was seen in such productions as Rhinoceros (Dudard), The Man of Mode (Medley), Vincent in Brixton (Sam), and Complete Works of Shakespeare-Abridged (Jess). Robert is vigorous in his training and is an Advanced Actor Combatant within SAFD and also a member of the Equity Membership Candidacy Program. Robert has worked professionally at the Hippodrome State Theatre, Rough Magic Productions, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, and the Across Town Repertory Theatre. For more info visit [www.RobertMSmith.net](http://www.RobertMSmith.net).



**Mike Speck**

It is an honor to be nominated as a Friend/AC/AAC Representative Nominee, and to be trusted to carry on the excellent work of Ted deChatelet. I've been an SAFD member since 2004, and take great joy in what the organization has taught me. In this position, I would like to find ways to extend the reach of the SAFD into areas where we currently have less of a presence; making it easier to find SAFD training and testing opportunities, without sacrificing the quality of the teaching that got us involved in the first place. My goals include more regional workshops, more SPR opportunities, and more experiments in workshop formats and timing.

Mike Speck is an Actor Combatant based in Minnesota. Since 2007, he has been the Mid-America Regional Representative for the SAFD. In this position, he co-founded the Carnage in the Corn workshop, and co-coordinated an SPR Blitz with CT Ian Borden at University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He has interned at Central Illinois Stage Combat Workshop, Winter Wonderland, and the Virginia Beach BASH. This fall he is returning to school for master's degrees in Arts and Project Management through St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

### Cast Your Vote!

Rob Smith

Mike Speck

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**This MUST be filled out in order for your vote to count!**

## 2009 SAFD Member Representative Election Ballot for: Certified Teacher Representative

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**DC Wright**

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Of high priority to me is the sharing of information among the membership. From rank to rank, from the GB to everyone, and what would be even more fantastic is everyone in the SAFD sharing thoughts, ideas, and frustrations with your membership reps, so we can more accurately represent the organization as a whole, rather than only the small portion of population that regularly provides feedback. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, so the saying goes. Make sure you are squeakin'!

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### Cast Your Vote!

**DC Wright**

*DC Wright is running unopposed*

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**This MUST be filled out in order for your vote to count!**

## 2009 SAFD Member Representative Election Ballot for: Fight Director Representative

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**Michael Johnson**

The Governing Body has been working, tirelessly, on several projects important to SAFD Fight Directors:

- Talking with the SSD&C about possibly representing Fight Directors
- Bringing the Fight Directors Workshop back into the spotlight
- Having Fight Directors mentor those who have recently become one
- The creation of the Theatrical Firearms Certification program.

I believe all of these projects have helped the SAFD continue to march, boldly into the 21st century. I want to do what I can to help these projects, and others, become a viable and valuable part of the SAFD. I want the SAFD to be known in the theatrical world as the best of the best in both training stage combatants and fight directors. That's why I'm running to be your FD Rep.

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### Cast Your Vote!

**Michael Johnson**

*Michael Johnson is running unopposed*

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**This MUST be filled out in order for your vote to count!**



## 2009 SAFD Member Representative Election Ballot for: Fight Master Representative

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**Richard Ryan**

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### Cast Your Vote!

**Richard Ryan**

*Richard Ryan is running unopposed*

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**This MUST be filled out in order for your vote to count!**

# Dueling with SPT Questions

Members of the College of Fight Masters share their thoughts on Skill Proficiency Tests

By: Fulton Burns



As the rehearsal process grows closer and closer to the Skills Proficiency Test (SPT) common questions arise regarding what is needed in order to pass. Many of these questions involve the same basic idea – “What are the Fight Masters looking for so that I can pass the test?”, but the most important question that is asked is – “Do you think I will pass?”

The concern may come from an bad experience with an instructor, teacher, or professor or a poor testing experience. Even the Fight Masters like Maestro J. Allen Suddeth have acknowledged that “the test is sometimes perceived as overly subjective in nature, and dependant on the whim of the judge. Indeed, SPT detractors point to ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ judges, and CT lore has it that the test, and choreography can be skewed toward a particular Fight Master. Indeed, it has been said that because we ‘pass’ about 90% of students each year, that the quality of the test, and indeed the student’s skills, has diminished over time, and is no longer relevant. Nevertheless, certain criteria are common when judging fight scenes...”

When it comes to technical elements regarding the SPT it would be in one’s best interests to review the SAFD Policy and Procedures (P & P) located on the website prior to test day. Fight Master Representative Richard Ryan brought up a very important point regarding the information contained in this article, which bears repeating. “As the CFM (College of Fight Masters) are adjudicators of the SPTs it might be easy to construe any personal opinion or advice as organizational policy, particularly with the recent introduction of new SPT [adjudication guidelines].” By no means is this article intended to provide insight on SAFD policy, but rather to offer guidance and a means to alleviate stress.

## Check Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself!

The fight process can be lengthy, whether three weeks or an entire semester, but an actor/combatant cannot neglect the needs of performing a great scene. When interviewing the CFM members for this article there were common elements that arose time and time again that provide a great list to consider when preparing fight scenes. The following information will give an actor/combatant the ability to evaluate their work based on the experiences and opinions of those who sit in the adjudication seats; and help to alleviate stress through knowledge and preparation.

### *How is my scene and how does it serve my work?*

“Make sure the scene and characters you have chosen provide for growth, so that they are different at the end of the scene. If the scene does not, please rewrite and/or edit to assure that this happens.” - Maestro David Leong

### *What is the level of my character and script analysis?*

“If students have done their work -- really done their work -- during the course of training (class-to-class, week-to-week, and semester-to-semester) then their work on an SPT will be in very good shape. [Students] need to treat the fight scene itself as a small piece of the whole production -- meaning . . . knowing the play inside and out, knowing the why’s and wherefore’s of what is driving the characters and the scene, etc. In other words . . . do your work as an actor.” – Maestro Brian Byrnes

### *Where is my acting work including the vocal and physical needs of the piece?*

“Act the scene: find the variation, the tempo, the beat- intention- obstacle. Breathe and find vocal variation” – Maestro David Woolley

### *Have I made (or how can I make) good use of my rehearsal time with my partner?*

“I do look for specific partner connection, safe targets, and a commitment to a paired (vs. ‘solo’) acting scene the dialogue of which is essentially physical. But is it DIALOGUE, not two people talking ‘at’ each other with weapons, etc. Thus, all actors warm up according to their inclinations, but they always make connecting with each other prior to the scene part of that preparation.” – Maestro Erik Frederikson

### *Are you having fun?*

“Enjoy yourselves, if this isn’t fun find another career – Be bold.” – Maestro David Woolley

Whether you choose a scale that runs from 1-10 or A-F, then consider this rubric in your own work. The key is being objective in this part of the process. Wherever work is needed provide the extra attention it deserves; but also when there is success, then enjoy the success as well. The more this list is used the better the scene can and will improve, so use it and check back with it often.

## **Full House Tonight**

Unfortunately, even the use of the word “test” can cause many people to suffer from test anxieties. The beauty of our test is that it is a performance. In fact, this is a performance for which the actor/combatants are guaranteed a completely focused audience. That audience, of Fight Masters, wants a great show! Maestro Richard Raether encourages students to remember that “[the] actor’s job is to go out and do their scene (or fight scene) with courage and honesty and to tell the story to the best of their ability for their audience.” As actor/combatants “they must focus on, and work with, their scene partner. If their focus is on the adjudicator or critic, or obsessing about their technique they can not do their job effectively.” Yes this is simple advice, but as stress develops mountains can often be made out of mole hills, causing sight to be lost of the objective – Acting the Fight!

There is another side of simplification where one may feel that the acting is not as important as the fighting. Of course the fight skills matter and it is the basis of this style of acting. Still, it is the responsibility of the actor to combine these elements with the acting to the best of their abilities. Maestro David Woolley’s advice is, “Students: Do your best to entertain the audience with your fight scene. Technique is what the fight master is looking at, but he (or she) is an audience member as well as an adjudicator...tell the story.” Remember that the goal is not to obtain the title SAFD Fight Combatant but instead the level of Actor Combatant.

## **That Guy (Or Gal) Scares Me!!!**

If you make use of the previous idea that the adjudicator is your audience, then you have already taken a step in the right direction. Still many of us often see the adjudicator as one who may be looking to fail us. The truth is that many of the CFMs have been in the exact same spot in their careers facing an SPT. It is this past experience which makes them ideal for responding to our work. More importantly they are part of our growth process. Maestro Michael Chin shares that “when I adjudicate students I want them to know that I am in their corner. I want them to do well. I am there to support them. I am not there to trick them up, nor do I take any delight in failing students. Students shouldn’t try to impress me. They should trust the training that they received from their teacher. They should take care of their partner, fight safe, relax, commit to the scene and fight with conviction.” If you consider the Fight Masters as another great person in your training corner, then you will begin to view why the SAFD was started in the first place; to ensure safe and effective stage combat.

In fact, this idea of support should be considered throughout the entire testing process. This is why the second portion of the test exists. “The second part of the test can help [students] more than hurt them...I treat the second part of the test as a Master Class. I see what I think are weaknesses in the students’ first half and I try to address them in the second half. In addition, I try to give them something new and/or challenging. If the students focus on the techniques that I am teaching them, listen, learn and treat the second half as a class rather than a test, they will do well.” – Fight Master Chin

The entire process is intended to help one reach their stage combat and acting goals. Fight Masters are there to help students achieve this objective.

## **Did I get the Job?**

While training in stage combat is fun, it is also an important part that can help better our chances of being hired professionally as actors. It may come as a surprise that a person may get more than just a passing grade with an SPT. They may get a job! As the Fight Masters are working professionals, some are often looking for individuals that will help them on their professional paths. Maestro Drew Fracher reveals that “I’m always looking for a student that rises above the rest in terms of skill and acting chops and I often ask for resumes to put in my file for future casting possibility. View the process as your chance to show your talents and use that mindset to allow yourself to relax and do what you do best, perform.” So if extra incentive is desired, then look no further than the possibility of gainful employment. Not only can one become an Actor Combatant but perhaps a working Actor Combatant.

## **Try Being More Direct**

Certified Teachers and Fight Directors face a tough role in gaining their status in the organization, but this status is well deserved. Once the required moves of a skills test are in place CTs have the ability to provide personal attention by adding “additional choreography, depending of the skill level of the students, to help the scene. Therefore, in addition to the group choreography, which all students must perform, a few extra moves in the style of the scene (comedy, Mamet, Shakespeare), a death perhaps, or an extra bit of staging helps the students inhabit the scene, and allows the CT to ‘fight direct’ a bit, too.” – Maestro J. Allen Suddeth. So teachers should also remember to play as well. A happy learning environment is a positive learning environment where we all grow.

## It's an Art Form and Not a Science

As stated earlier, the purpose of this article is to help in alleviating stress with the approach to the SPT. I cannot thank the CFM enough for their generous contributions to this piece. The final piece of compelling advice comes from Maestro Richard Raether and he shares that "I see a great many students obsessed with achieving perfection in their SPT. Although I believe the pursuit of excellence is an admirable goal - perfection is not. Perfection denies the very element that makes live theater so exciting - it is real, human, alive and in the moment, and not perfect."

The idea of linking the Actor with the Combatant remains constant throughout; from the homework, rehearsal process, the test itself, and beyond. Still, while it is a test, perhaps the best advice is to focus less on the idea of testing or striving for perfection and more on working for excellence and do what we do best – PLAY BEFORE A LIVE AUDIENCE!

One commonality during this part of the process is the opportunity to perform. While performing technique, remember that there is a guaranteed audience during this time. Their enjoyment is always the main focus and why we all do theatre. In approaching a skills test keep all of these ideas in mind and enjoy the time on stage, but most importantly – HAVE FUN!!!

Special thanks to the following for their contributions to this article:

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Richard Ryan  
J. Allen Suddeth  
David Woolley

Fulton Burns is an Advanced Actor Combatant and the Director of Acting & Performance at the University of South Alabama's Department of Dramatic Arts



The advertisement features a blue background with the SAFD logo at the top center, which includes the text "SAFD" in a large serif font and "THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS" below it. To the right is a circular emblem with a sword and the text "THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS". Below the logo, the text "MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE ON-LINE!" is displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font. On the left, a black t-shirt with a white graphic is shown in a white-bordered frame. In the center, a dashed white box contains a list of items: "T-shirts", "Hoodies", "Swordbags", "Sweatpants", "Ladies-wear", and "& more!". On the right, a pair of black sweatpants with a white graphic is shown in a white-bordered frame. At the bottom, a green banner contains the website address "www.companycasuals.com/SAFD" in white text.



# Of Heraldry and Pembroke

An Article by: Richard Gradkowski

The art of the armorer and the science of heraldry meld in the harness of Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke. This late sixteenth century Elizabethan armor proudly displays the history, relations and connections of the Herbert family up to the date of the armor's manufacture.

Henry Herbert was the eldest son of the devious William Herbert, a Tudor courtier and politician. The father was Squire to Henry VIII, had married Anne Parr (the sister of Henry's sixth wife, Catherine Parr), was Master of the Horse for Henry and, in 1547, co-executor of the King's will. He was astute enough to prosper under the reigns of Henry's successors, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, despite being involved with a scheme to subvert Mary's succession by the tragic Lady Jane Grey (he had arranged his teenaged son's marriage to Catherine Grey, Lady Jane's younger sister). In 1551 he was entitled Earl of Pembroke, of the second creation, by Edward VI (the original families of the first creation having lost the title for lack of male heirs).

Henry Herbert was born in 1538. In May of 1553 he was married briefly to the thirteen year old Catherine Grey (the marriage was quickly annulled when it developed that Mary, Henry VIII's daughter, would succeed as Queen). He was educated at Cambridge. Following Mary's coronation, he was named a Knight of the Bath, as well as a Gentleman of the Chamber to Mary's husband, King Phillip II of Spain. In 1557 he accompanied his father to the successful siege of St. Quentin in France. In 1562 he married Catherine Talbot, who died childless in 1575. In April 1574 he had been made a Knight of the Garter by Queen Elizabeth I and in 1577 he married his third wife, Mary Sidney, sister of the famous poet Sir Phillip Sidney, and a poet and author in her own right. They had three children, William, Phillip, and Anne. Herbert held a number of important political posts in his career:

Custos Rotulorum (County Record Keeper) of Glamorgan and Wiltshire; Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Wales, Somerset, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Monmouthshire; and President of Wales. He was also one of the Judges in the trials of the Duke of Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots.

The Herberts hosted a literary circle at Wilton House, the family's primary residence. Wilton Abbey in Salisbury, Wiltshire, had been granted in 1544 to the first Earl by Henry VIII. William Herbert razed it and built the current residence where the Herberts have lived ever since. On his father's death in March of 1570, Henry Herbert succeeded as the second Earl of Pembroke.

Henry Herbert was active in the cultural activities and society of the times with an entourage of poets, playwrights, and scholars. The second Earl was the patron of a theatrical troupe, "Pembroke's Men", which produced and acted in plays by Shakespeare, Kyd, Marlowe, Ben Johnson, and others. As most Elizabethan courtiers, Henry Herbert undoubtedly participated in the various pageants and jousts marking Accession Day and other occasions. The 1596 Christmas festivities at Wilton House included a pageant of King Arthur's knights. Henry was also an antiquarian and an avid student of heraldry, collecting various heraldic manuscripts. He died on January 9, 1601, and is buried in Salisbury Cathedral.

The science of heraldry seems to have developed in Europe in the twelfth century. Of course, prior to that time there had been many instances of emblems and totemic marks in use. The shields of Athenian hoplites might show the Owl of Athena, while those of Spartans bore the "Lambda" of Laconia.

Such emblems are found in many cultures; as the clan "Mon" of the Samurai or the Roman legions their "eagles", with ethnic groups adopting and identifying with creatures and symbols.



**The Pembroke Armor (MMA 32.150.5 A-M)**  
*This armor was manufactured in the Greenwich Armories circa 1590 and is of a "field harness" type, suitable for use in various military operations. The complete armor weighs just over 58 lbs. and would have had additional reinforcing pieces for use in tournaments. The design of the armor is illustrated in the "Jacob Almain Armourer's Album" (a folio sized catalog composed in the sixteenth century) on plates 25 by 26. The decoration of the armor consists of gilded strap work with the Heraldic Arms of component families embedded in various places. The helmet is of the "Burgeonet" style with a "falling buffe" to protect the face. The cheek plates of the helmet are the only elements which show the complete twenty-two arms together. The Jacob Album also shows a Chamfron (Horse's head defense) with arms illustrated in color. As mounted, the buffe obscures the arms on the cheek plate. This armor is unique in provenance in that it had been kept continually since the Earl's death in Wilton House, the Herbert family home, until it came on the market.*





**Henry Herbert c. 1590;** a portrait by an unknown artist in the National Gallery of Wales

But these iconic representations were primarily of a totemic or apotropaic nature. They did not present specific histories of a family genealogy and structure. As late as 1077, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, the shields of both the Norman and the Anglo-Saxons, while embellished with painted decoration, do not show any particularly personal markings. It may be that, with the advent of the Crusades and the adoption of “surcoats” to protect mail armor, as well as the general wearing of the Christian Cross among international armies, the idea of individual identification arose. The supposition that heraldry was functionally useful in identifying a completely armored (and obscured) friend or foe may have had some validity early on when the arms were relatively simple. However, it is doubtful that, in combat, when faced with a shield of sixty-four quarterings, one had time to peruse the lot and decide whether or not to fight the bearer. It is more probable that Heraldry became increasingly popular simply because it provided an opportunity for people to vaunt their egos and allege ancestral pedigrees. By the sixteenth century the science had reached a high degree of sophistication. The elements used on the shield were the two metals; Gold (Or) and Silver (Argent), the five Tinctures (colors) – Red (Gules), Black (Sable), Green (Vert), Blue (Azure), and Purple (Purpure) as well as seven varieties of Furs.

In 1484, Richard III incorporated his royal Heralds and assigned them a place of permanent residence which became known as The College of Arms. The College is still active, responsible for keeping records, setting the elaborate regulations of its discipline and is located in London on Queen Victoria Street. The College is supervised by a King Herald, the Duke of Norfolk, who is hereditary Earl Marshall, with regional Heralds assisted by Poursuivants. The description of the various methods of delineating the parts of the “ground” (shield) as well as the terms naming the objects depicted (Charges) seem like a separate language to the uninitiated. They are derived from Norman-French and, to the specialist, are highly specific and comprehensive.

Pembroke had apparently studied and researched the heraldry of all previous holders of the Earldom, beginning with the first creation by King Stephen in 1138. The first Earl of Pembroke was Gilbert Fitz Gilbert de Clare, also known by the sobriquet “Strongbow”. The title passed to the famous William Marshall by Richard I “Lionheart” and on to various families until the succession died out in 1491.

The decoding of all twenty-two arms depicted on the armor and the cheek plates of the Burgeonet, was done some years ago by Dr. Helmut Nickel, now Curator Emeritus of the Arms and Armor Department. The arms on the cheek plates are encircled with the Garter surmounted by the Crown and arranged in four rows, six in the top row, six in the second row, five in the third row and five in the bottom row.

#### **Top Row**

1. **Herbert:** *Per Pale Azure and Gules three Lions rampant Argent within a bordure compony Argent and Gules*
2. **Morgan:** *Sable a chevron between three spear heads Argent.*
3. **Gam:** *Argent three cocks Gules, combs and legs Or.*
4. **Ashley:** *Argent a Lion rampant Sable crowned Or.*
5. **Cradock:** *Azure crusilly three Boars' heads couped Argent.*
6. **Horton:** *Bendy engrailed Argent and Gules, a canton Or.*

Photograph compliments of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.



#### **Second Row**

7. **Cantilupe:** *Gules three Leopards heads Jessant-de-lys Or.*
8. **Parr:** *Argent two bars Azure within a b ordure engrailed Sable.*
9. **De Ros:** *Or three water bougets Sable.*
10. **Crophull:** *Argent a Saltaire Gules fretty Or.*
11. **Vardon:** *Or a fret Gules. ?*
12. **Colville:** *Or a fess Guls. ?*

#### **Third Row**

13. **Marshall: Earls of Pembroke:** *Per pale Or and Vert a Lion rampant Gules.*
14. **Fitz-Hugh:** *Azure three chevrons braced and a chief Or.*
15. **Staveley:** *Barry of eight Argent and Gules a fleur-de-lys Sable.*
16. **Fourneau:** *Gules a bend between six cross-crosslets OR.*
17. **Grey of Rotherfield:** *Barry of six Argent; and Azure, on a bend Gules three martlets of the first.*

#### **Bottom Row**

18. **Marmiion:** *Vair a fess Gules.*
19. **Garnegot:** *Barry of ten Or and Azure and Eagle displayed Gules.*
20. **St. Quintin:** *Or three chevrons Gules and a chief Vair.*
21. **Green:** *Azure three bucks trippant Or.*
22. **Mabelthorpe:** *Gules a chevron between three cross-crosslets and in chief a Lion passant Or.*

Numbers one through seven appertain to the Herbert family and were borne in this way by William Herbert, the father of the Second Earl. Numbers eight through twenty-two belonged to the Parr family and accrued to the Second Earl on the death of his maternal uncle, William Parr.

# In the Footlight

With Ron Piretti

If you are interested in being featured or would like to nominate another member, please contact Layout Editor, Katie Mueller - [Perchance2dream6@aol.com](mailto:Perchance2dream6@aol.com)

**SAFD:** What has been your most challenging experience as a director, actor or choreographer?

**RP:** Every show I've acted in, directed or choreographed has had some challenge. Generally, I would say the biggest challenge is a director who doesn't want to give the time necessary for the fight to be performed effectively and safely. Many times a director is result oriented and wants the rehearsal to happen as quickly as possible. Film and TV, in my experience, are notorious for that. I had to stage a riot for a lower than low budget film. I don't believe that any of the cast had any experience in stage combat. They were friends of the crew or people who thought it would be cool to be in a film. The day started with about 50 people and because the director didn't get around to shooting the scene until the end of the day, we ended up with maybe 20 people to work with. I had to work fast and decide who was capable of doing what in a rather short time. Not impossible but rather nerve wracking. With some pretty good editing, it looks like a riot is happening.

Another challenge is an actor who is not physically aware of how their body works. Many times the actor is chosen because of his acting ability with no concern that they have to fight in the play. And fights usually happen at the climatic moment of the play. The challenge is to make the actor look as if they know what they are doing. It continually amazes me the number of actors who have no idea how to throw a punch.

My most rewarding challenge was teaching stage combat in a school for high functioning autistic students. The challenge was in preparing. I didn't know what to expect. When I started the class, I was incredibly surprised and delighted on how much they enjoy the class and how much satisfaction I received from it.

**SAFD:** How has your involvement with the SAFD benefited your career?

**RP:** First, the training over the years has been superb. To have trained with some of the best in this country and (because of the some of the workshops I've attended) the world, has expanded my work as a fight director, teacher and performer. It is very beneficial to watch other instructors' teaching methods. I always read *The Fight Master* from cover to cover. It is a continuing education source for me. In fact, I have in my library almost all of the magazines published from the early days until now.

I also believe that being involved a structured organization like the SAFD gives a sense of validity and security for the director/producer or educational institute when one is hired as an actor, fight director or teacher.

**SAFD:** Using what you have learned so far in your journey, what advice would you give to someone just becoming interested in the SAFD?

**RP:** As an actor, the chances of being involved in a staged fight are pretty good. Even if it is a push, a slap or a sword fight, there are safe and effective ways to learn how to execute the moves. Becoming involved with the SAFD and taking classes from Certified Teachers will start one on their journey. The SAFD classes serve to create a common language and technique. Of course, every instructor has their own technique and way of working which they have developed as they have taught.

I've heard actors say that they will learn the fight when they get hired. Too late! Being prepared is paramount in this business. The more skills one has an actor, the more chances to work. Learning the technique in rehearsal or on set wastes precious time and energy. That time can be spent getting comfortable with all the other variables that appear. Not to mention the stress of learning a new skill in front of everyone.

**SAFD:** How did you first get involved with the SAFD?

**RP:** When I first arrived in NYC, I attended a performance of a show called *A Night at the Fights*. Some of the people



Ron Piretti and Steven Earl Edwards



involved in the show were Alan Suddeth, AC Weary and Kim Zimmer. I had done sword work in *Troilus and Cressida* and in grad school and fell in love with it. I decided then and there that I wanted to work with this group of people. I found that Alan was giving classes and I signed up. We would meet a couple of times of week and when we got good enough, we would go into Central Park and perform for the line at the Public Theatre's Delacorte Theatre and then pass the hat. We would spend the proceeds at the nearest bar. The SAFD started up at around that time. There was something called a fight test that was required to become a member. I believe we tested in three or four weapons depending on one's choice. My recollection is Eric Fredrickson was our adjudicator. We wrote the scenes ourselves. I was involved in one that spoofed *Fantasy Island*. As a side note, Alan came to us one day to say he had a friend who wanted us



to perform at a theatre called Westbeth for their weekly production of a show called *Big Room Monday Night*. Fights R Us was born.

**SAFD:** Using what you've learned from your stage combat experience, is there anything that you would go back and do differently?

**RP:** Interesting question. I've been very lucky and for the most part I have lived the life I set out to live. So there really is not too much I would have done differently. Perhaps I could have been a bit more diligent in certain areas of my training. The steps one takes lead to where they are. Because of my training and involvement with the SAFD, I was prepared when the dice rolled in my favor and I got the opportunity to be the Fight Director on the Broadway productions of *West Side Story* and *In the Heights*. So I don't think I would have done anything differently.

**SAFD:** What is your favorite weapon and why?

**RP:** My favorite weapon (well weapons) is Rapier and Dagger. I love the brutal grace of it. Since both hands are used, I find there are a great variety of moves. When done well, the fight is very dangerous, incredibly graceful and balletic. Choreographing a R&D fight always fascinates me and it is so much fun to perform.

**SAFD:** What other movement forms have you studied?

**RP:** I have studied a variety of movement forms. When I first began, I studied quite a bit of dance which included modern, jazz and ballet. I always found that studying dance helped with my stage combat work. I've also studied some Ninjitsu. I always wanted to study more martial arts but other priorities arose.

**SAFD:** Who has helped you the most in your SAFD training?

**RP:** My most influential teacher has been Alan Suddeth. Even though I didn't take many classes from Drew Fracier, David Boushey or Eric Fredrickson many of the tips and techniques they taught me I still use. I still have all my notes from my teacher training in Las Vegas and I refer to them every time I stage a fight.



**SAFD:** Any future plans for further academic training?

**RP:** I don't have any further plans for academic training. I received my BA from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas and my MFA from the Goodman School of Drama (now DePaul University) in Chicago, Ill. I don't have the desire to pursue any further degrees. I currently teach acting at Marymount Manhattan College. Now is the time to pass on what I've learned. I still take classes in scene study and whatever I find interesting. I also keep going back to studying the Italian language.

**SAFD:** In your opinion, what is the best scene from a play or movie involving choreographed violence?

**RP:** A few scenes, especially from film come to mind. One of my favorites is from a film entitled *Robin and Marian* with Sean Connery and Robert Shaw. There is a great broad sword fight between an older Robin Hood and Sheriff of Nottingham. The final fight in *Rob Roy* is awesome. And the fight that takes place on ice in *The Three Musketeers* starring Oliver Reed, Michael York and Raquel Welsh.



BR: Steven Earl Edwards, Emily Conable, Alan Suddeth, Nancy Sigworth Swann, Jim Monitor  
MR: Sterling Swann, Steve Vaughn, Steve Anderson  
FR: Ron Piretti, Jim Manley, Chris Catt

**SAFD:** What is in your pockets right now?

**RP:** Wallet, comb, a keychain with an *In the Heights* logo and a pen knife. I travel light.

**SAFD:** If you could be any animal, what would you be and why?

**RP:** An eagle, because it soars.



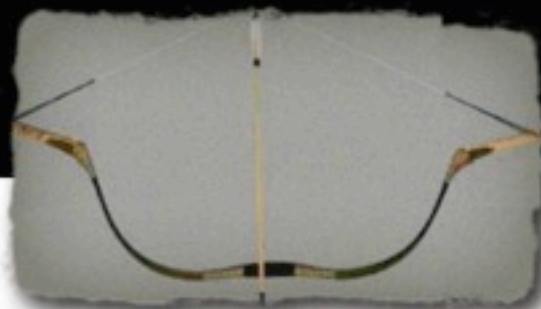
# Tools of the Trade

## English Longbow



Photo Courtesy of: i.ehow.com

"It is given credit for victories at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Capable of ten times the rate of fire of crossbows, longbows were typically shot in unaimed volleys, decimating an advancing enemy with sheer volume of arrows." *Weapon, A Visual History of Arms and Armor*



**ORIGIN:** England  
**DATE:** 13th to 16th Centuries

"During the 14th and 15th centuries, English archers were expected to shoot ten "aimed" shots per minute during battle. A skilled archer would be capable of around twenty shots. As the typical archer was provided with 60-72 arrows, this permitted three to six minutes of continuous fire."  
[www.militaryhistory.about.com/od/smallarms/p/englongbow.htm](http://www.militaryhistory.about.com/od/smallarms/p/englongbow.htm)

"It is a simple bow, cut from a length of yew, but the bowyer has skillfully taken advantage of the natural layering of the wood. The flat back of the bow is sapwood, which performs better under tension, while the rounded belly is heartwood, reacting best under compression."  
*Weapon, A Visual History of Arms and Armor*

# Edged Questions

By: Matthew Crider

Matthew Crider is the voice and movement teacher in the acting program at the University of Wisconsin: Stevens Point, and an alumnus of Brandeis University (MFA) and the University of Florida (BFA)



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About ten years ago, I was in a production of *Richard III*, and it was to be my first big experience with stage combat. Like many productions of classics, the director opted for a “period-less” show, with the cast in a huge variety of costumes and sets to serve the larger themes, rather than attempting absolute verisimilitude. As the big battle at the end began, the armies met...with quarterstaves. Ok, odd choice, though perhaps there’s some measure of truth in the bulk of soldiers using the cheap and highly damaging staff. Then Richard meets Richmond for the climactic duel, and the two noble fighters meet wielding...paired sai daggers. What the heck?

Whether this seemingly random choice was a decision based on design, choreography, direction, or simply a matter of armory availability, I’ll never know. It left an impression, though. It was bizarre, yes, and seemed a touch *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for my tastes, but it did create a definite separation between the soldiers and the nobles. In this production of heightened design choices, having peasants with really big sticks and royalty with elaborate and specialized Asian daggers made absolutely sure that our focus was on the duel, not on the twenty other people swinging away in the background.

Would the effect have been the same if everybody had swords? What about having broadswords for the common soldiers, and fancy rapiers and daggers for the royals? But if you do that, you’ve already somewhat cut away historical accuracy. What about a broad mix of weapons across the field? In that case, how can weapon choice be used to reflect character status? Going back to the production of *Richard III*, what of staying at least on the same continent, giving Richard and Richmond broadswords among the quarterstaff armies? It certainly shows the class difference, but I think again to just how striking the sai-wielding Richard was.

Unconventional weapons can easily draw a sneer, especially when you blatantly break from accurate weaponry, but, I’ve seen *Romeo and Juliet* with rapiers and machine guns and nobody batted an eye. So what about a katana-wielding Macbeth against a broadsword Macduff? It could work if Lady Macbeth is played as an exotic war trophy wife with more ambition than anybody bargained for. In this way a combat design idea influences the overall design of the play, separating the Macbeths from everybody else in a compelling way with one simple (though tricky) weapon choice.

Despite the myriad of problems in using unconventional stage weaponry (price, availability of combat-ready versions, performers with experience in said weapons, etc.), I think there’s strong potential in breaking from the norm; not for spectacle or expediency, but for genuine consideration in design. I’ve wondered for some time if the standard set of SAFD proficiencies can, to a degree, limit the imagination of combat design. The SAFD offers excellent training in a range of weapons readily available. With the significant extra effort involved in working outside of the standard eight weapons, how often are these unusual choices even considered?

I’m curious as to your thoughts on this matter. Have you ever broken wildly from a period style, or made an incongruous weapon selection? Was it out of design or necessity, and how did it turn out? Have you ever seen an exceptionally unusual weapon selection, and what did you think?

My hope is that this article will start a dialogue about questions regarding this topic from artists everywhere. So please, send your thoughts/stories to [edgedquestions@gmail.com](mailto:edgedquestions@gmail.com), and let’s see how the debate goes. I look forward to hearing from you!



# Philly Cheesesteak Workshop 2009

By: Melissa Ruchong

The tenth year anniversary of this particular regional workshop was quite refreshing for us "Workshop-aholics" or "workshop gypsies" as I recently heard it referred to. What a great time for the new and old alike! Ian Rose and his cohorts, Charles Conwell, John Bellomo, and J. Alex Cordaro, put together a well organized weekend. We also had the pleasure of learning from Fight Master J. Allen Suddeth, Certified Teacher Michelle Ladd, and Québécoise Fight Master Jean-François Gagnon. To the above, who led us through our violent (but safe) paces and inspired our imaginations and creativity, Kudos!

The first day began with registration and the greeting of old, and soon to become, friends. Mr. Rose pulled us all together for a focused warm up at 9:00 a.m., and then introduced the first round of classes. We separated ourselves without any problems, and off we went to our prospective spaces to fight hand-to-hand, block a tomahawk or find our inner dandy (Cane Fighting of the 1800's). After an hour and a half of loveliness, back together we came for the next round. And so it went.

With two classes in the morning and two in the afternoon, we were all happily distracted, but who could forget about the mid-day sustenance? Philly Cheesesteaks were provided for each participant and for people who don't get the real thing outside of Philly, what a treat!

The last class of Saturday's appetizing spread was an all participant re-creation of Custer's Last Stand. This is one of the special aspects of this workshop, which I believe will continue in the future since it has been well received in the past (last year was Roman Battle Tactics), and has become a favorite of many of the workshop attendees. With a plethora of weapons (guns, spears, knives, and even live fire), it was a sight to see.

After a full day it was time to come together, relax and socialize. We all had a wonderful time in our privately booked room at a local restaurant and finally, in the late night hours, headed to our respective hotels to sleep and prepare for another eclectic day.

The second day met us with an energizing warm up with Jean Francois Gagnon and then into our classes we danced. The morning hosted classes such as Advanced Smallsword, Single Rapier, Beginning Broadsword, and Skirts and Heels, just to name a few. Cheesesteaks were again devoured

and then the afternoon came with a last ditch effort to glean all we could. As a personal note, anyone who has not taken Ian Rose's Sword and Cloak class is missing out! At the end of the day the staff and students gathered once again for a quick Q&A and then it was time to say goodbye.

As we left the Gershman YMCA that was so generously provided to us for the occasion I was sad to realize the weekend was over; however, I was consoled by the fact that I will definitely be back next year. I hope to see you there!



AJ Gagliardi and Gretchen Breslawski



Kily Bagdis and Terri McIntyre



Jacqueline Holloway and Shoshanna Hill

Photos courtesy  
of Shelly Riggs

# Upcoming SPT's/SPR's

The SAFD membership is eager for opportunities to train, and *The Cutting Edge* is proud to keep you updated with the latest SPT/SPR events around the country. In addition to testing dates, we have also included information for classes being offered that will lead up to a SPT or provide an opportunity for a SPR. These classes can be through a college, university, private session or independent organization.

The structure of the information we request can be seen in the listings below. TBAs/TBDs are fine as long as there is contact information, however we do require an estimated date rather than listing a class as "on-going". This helps to prevent information from becoming stagnant or outdated. It doesn't matter how far ahead the dates may be. We will continue to print the information you send us in each issue until the date of your SPT/SPR has passed. As you find out more details, please update us so that we can maintain current information for the membership.

Helping the membership to find more training opportunities and assisting those providing these opportunities to spread the word is our primary goal with this section. Please email your events, suggestions and thoughts to [cuttingedge@safd.org](mailto:cuttingedge@safd.org).

When: Monday, December 7, 2009  
Where: Muhlenberg College, Allentown, P.  
CT: Michael G. Chin  
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer  
Contact Info: Michael G. Chin,  
[mikechin@thestagecombat.com](mailto:mikechin@thestagecombat.com)

When: December 12, 2009  
Where: Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.  
What: SPT/SPR - UA, SiS, and R&D  
CT/FD: Ian Rose  
Adjudicator: J. Allen Suddeth  
Contact Info: Ian Rose, [Rose-rosefights@comcast.net](mailto:Rose-rosefights@comcast.net)

When: December 14, 2009  
Where: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
What: SPT - QS, R&D, and UA  
CT: Erik Fredricksen  
Adjudicator: Chuck Coyl  
Contact: Erik Fredricksen, [hannis@umich.edu](mailto:hannis@umich.edu)

When: December 16 and 17, 2009  
Where: Columbia College, Chicago, Ill.  
What: SPT: BS, UA and S&S, KN, SS  
CTs: John Mcfarland and David Woolley respectively  
Adjudicator: TBA  
Contact: David Woolley, [dwoolley@colum.edu](mailto:dwoolley@colum.edu)

When: December 17, 2009  
Where: State University of New York-Fredonia, N.Y.  
What: SPT/SPR - UA  
CT: Ted Sharon  
Adjudicator: J. Allen Suddeth  
Contact Info: Ted Sharon, [tsharon@hotmail.com](mailto:tsharon@hotmail.com),  
716-410-3597

When: December 18, 2009  
Where: City College of New York, N.Y.  
What: SPT - UA  
CT: Denise Hurd  
Adjudicator: TBD  
Contact: Denise Hurd, [dahurd2000@aol.com](mailto:dahurd2000@aol.com)

When: November 15, 2009  
Where: Los Angeles Fight Academy, Los Angeles, Calif.  
What: SPT - S&S; SPR - UA  
CTs: Robert Hamilton, Mike Mahaffey, and Lacy Altwine  
Adjudicator: Chuck Coyl  
Contact: Robert Hamilton, [ftnv21@gmail.com](mailto:ftnv21@gmail.com)

When: March 26, 2010  
Where: Regent University, Virginia Beach, Va.  
What: SPT/SPR - UA, QS, and R&D, BS  
CT: Michael Kirkland  
Adjudicator: TBA  
Contact Info: Michael Kirkland, [michhil@regent.edu](mailto:michhil@regent.edu)

When: January to May 2010  
Where: Willamette University, Salem, Ore.  
What: SPTs - SS, S&S and UA; SPRs as needed  
Class Info: M/W 2-4  
CT: Jonathan Cole  
Adjudicator: TBD  
Contact: Jonathan Cole, [jon@revengearts.com](mailto:jon@revengearts.com);  
[www.revengearts.com](http://www.revengearts.com)





# Reflections on Three NSCA Summers

By: Mirla Criste



When I first contacted Angela Bonacasa in the spring of 2007 to find out the difference between the Introduction to Stage Combat (ISC) and the Actor Combatant (ACW) workshops, I explained that I was slated to teach a stage combat class to my M.F.A. actors in a couple of years. Though I had about 84 hours of combat in grad school nine years before, and done a respectable amount of fight choreography for productions since, I thought a refresher course would be excellent reinforcement.

I chose the ISC because I'd get a survey of eight, weapons in three weeks. Plus, I would not have to test in any of them, so it would be three pressure-free weeks playing with swords! What could beat that?

Well I got to the North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA) and the ACW kids seemed so cool and miles above those of us in the ISC. For just a brief moment I wished I'd chosen that workshop instead. But oh my stars and planets, thank the combat gods I chose the ISC, and let me tell you why:

In the ISC, I was instructed by CT candidates who were mostly bent on being careful and thorough about the absolute fundamentals, not only of technique, but of safety and respect for our partners and the weapons. In addition, they seemed to have a load of fun along with us.

I will never forget, among other things, Lee Soroko's goofiness, Martin Noyes' sweetness, Robert Hamilton's generosity, Rob Najarian's incredible patience, and Russ Brown's dogged belief that that HORRIFIC smallsword was "my weapon". They were methodical, respectful, hilarious, cool, and

astonishingly talented. More importantly, the instructors were also learning, and as a teacher myself, I was exposed to tools I myself could use to teach these disciplines to beginning combatants, when my time came to do so.

Because the instructors were great listeners, they created an environment in which we felt safe and able to make mistakes to learn. My ISC class was made up of six students of every possible generation under the sun. The youngest of us was young enough to be my...(ahem) young nephew. Without hesitation I can assert that we all felt that we had bonded tremendously during what was a fantastic learning experience. This was due, in large, part to the evenhandedness, patience and humor of our instructors, which turned the six of us into a family, and me into a combat junkie.

During following summer, July 2008, my ACW went far smoother because I'd begun the journey of reacquiring my weapons in the ISC's pressure-free environment. By the time my very exciting ACW rolled around, the fundamentals of the weapons work had settled into my muscles, and those muscles remembered how to cast a rapier like a fishing pole, place and pull a knife, execute a grande volte, knap audibly, keep the core low in the footwork, cue, react, and act. Certainly I was still in awe of the superheroes who were my Fight Masters, but I felt a little more confident that I could not only survive, but thrive, in the ACW and hold my own in my SPTs, all because of the experience of the prior summer.

This last July (2009) found me collecting enough hours to acquire three more weapons in the Advanced Actor Combatant Workshop (AACW), and though I had to leave early, the hours I collected that first ISC summer will easily make up for any hours I missed at the end of the AACW. So I doubt it will be long before I can call myself an AAC.

Let me just finish by saying that while I recommend the ISC to young students interested in the discipline, I highly recommend the ISC to older and non-traditional students, some of whom are teacher-types like me who are looking to begin or refresh weapons training, but who may not be ready for the intensity of the ACW. You'll be glad you did.

I suppose I'll always be a little thrilled each time I discover how much the weapons feel at home in my hands after any lull in my combat training, teaching or choreography. I have the national workshops to thank for that!

# Regional Reports

A Look At Our Membership Around the World

## East Central Region:

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



By: Ray Rodriguez  
e: [ECRegRep@safd.org](mailto:ECRegRep@safd.org)

**AC Gretchen Breslawski** has been delighting local audiences as Sister Amnesia in *Nunsense* at the Kean Theater in Gibsonia, Pa. Despite her best efforts, she has regretfully been unable to convince the director to introduce swordplay into the performances.

**AC J. Alex Cordaro** recently served as Fight Director for productions of *Hamlet*, with The Lantern Theater Company, the Philadelphia premiere of Mark O'Rowe's *Made in China*, with Inis Nua Theater Company, and an episode of Forensic Files entitled *Black Friday*. Keep an eye out for the nude knife fight! Alex also assisted CT/FD Ian Rose at Temple University in a Single Sword/Unarmed class for summer session. All eighteen students were on the Varsity Football Team! It was awesome! Finally, Alex and wife Suzanne organized and ran the Philadelphia Fringe

Festival Late Night Cabaret.

**CT Al Foote III** directed a staged reading of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. He also did the fight direction for *King Lear* with ShakespeareNYC, which performed this October at the Lion Theatre, Theatre Row. Next up, he is serving as Fight Director for a production of Kurt Weill's folk operetta *Down in the Valley* at NYU, going up in December.

**Friend Daryll Heysham** finished a five-week run playing mobster Samy Carducci in the world premiere of *Harry's Friendly Service* at the Pittsburgh Public Theater. Up next is the role of Phil in *That Championship Season* at The Rep (at Pittsburgh Playhouse) directed by Robert Miller. On the stage combat front, he'll be teaching a basic unarmed class, for sophomores and up, at the Conservatory of Performing Arts at Point Park University.

**CT Michael Hood** taught a skills class last spring in UA, BS, and R&D at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. FM Mike Chin adjudicated the SPT in early May. Hood also directed and arranged fights for Unseam'd Shakespeare's *Macbeth 3*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy

featuring only three actors: two women and one man, with the man playing Lady Macbeth (among others). The fight between Macbeth and Macduff, which opened and closed the play, featured a tulwar, a falchion, and a .45 automatic! The play ran in Pittsburgh's strip district this past June.

**AC Paola Jazmin** (aka Pedro J. Gonzalez) finished work choreographing two shows, *Hamlet* at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, N.Y. and *Romeo and Juliet* for Confetti Stage Theater in Albany, N.Y. Video of a fight call for *Romeo and Juliet* can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaoHbtbfNtg>. He also attended a fighting for film work shop in New York City on June 7 as well as the Summer Sling in August.

**AC Casey Kaleba** is busy staging fights in DC: *Camelot* for Olney Theatre, *Lulu* for Washington Shakespeare, and the world premier of a new adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for Round House Theatre. In May he taught single sword for the Rapier Wit Intensive in Toronto, with all of his students passing the Fight Directors Canada basic level test. In late October he heads to Gothenburg, Sweden to teach a weekend workshop for the Nordic Stagefight Society, and in November he returns to Drake University on staff for the Carnage in the Corn Workshop.

**AC Jared Kirby** started the year teaching several classes, including a master class on Italian Rapier all week, at the Paddy Crean Workshop in Banff, Canada. He then taught a Spanish Rapier workshop in Milwaukee, Wis. before heading to Fla. and Calif. for various sword events. Jared did a reading of *Othello* as Iago for the Instant Shakespeare Company in May



Michael Hood's *Macbeth 3* photo: Jennifer Tober is on the left, Lisa Ann Goldsmith is on the right.



and finished up coordinating and teaching at ISMAC in Detroit, Mich. This summer he was the Fight Director for a *Hamlet* in Riverside Park with Hudson Warehouse and was in rehearsal for *Taming of the Shrew* after that. In August, Jared taught at the Art of Combat Fight Directing Workshop in New York City. This intensive workshop offered over 60 hours of training and culminated in a performance on August 14 and 15.

**AAC Lisa Kopitsky** spent the summer assisting Rick Sordelet on The Public Theater's *Twelfth Night* in Shakespear in the Park with Anne Hathaway, Audra McDonald, and Raul Esparza. She interned at the Summer Sling and had a blast working again with the Fights4 folks. She also continued her work with the Subjective Theatre Company on their play *Ardor Doody*, staging a fight between a rodeo clown and a mime. She also worked as Stunt Coordinator on Subjective's first film venture, *Handsome Zombies*, to be released to the web on Nov 2. Upcoming, Lisa will be working with Alexander Sovronsky on two new one-acts for The Flea Theater by Sheila Callaghan and Adam Rap.

**AAC Tonya Lynn** pulled double-duty this summer in Poor Yorick's Players' *Romeo and Juliet*, practicing her commanding authority in the role of the Prince as well as serving as Fight Director (assisted by AAC Adam Rutledge). As a representative of Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks, she also reprised her little-but-fierce Hermia at a Midsummer Night's Stream benefit for Pittsburgh's Nine Mile Run Watershed Association—the rain-soaked patrons quite enjoyed the muddy cat-fighting in the great outdoors! Tonya continued, in a less-violent Shakespearean vein, this September as the Latin-spouting Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost* with Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks.

**Friend Tom Mirth** performed in *12 Angry Men* at the Kean Theatre, and plans to rejoin them in May 2010 for a revival of *Hooray for Hollywood* (a movie-inspired collection of skits in

which he plays nine characters!) after a short but well-received run earlier this year. Tom also taught three stage combat classes at Paragon Studios, this year to students aged eight through sixteen.

**AAC Catherine Moore** directed a production of *Floyd Collins* at Carnegie Mellon University. She also served as Fight Director for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* at the City Theatre in Pittsburgh, and will be performing in a new adaptation of *Jane Eyre* at the Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre in December.

**AC Laurie Miller Petersen** fight directed and did the dance choreography for *Rikki-Tikki Tavi* at the Manhattan Children's Theatre. Her best compliment came from her two and a half year old son Jude loved "Mommy's show" and continues to talk about it... especially the snakes. She stunt coordinated and played a zombie the SVA film *Zombie Apocalypse* in mid-September. Stunts included a stairfall (which she performed), fights, and breakaway bottles/glassware. Her boys, Jude and Gideon, enjoyed being on set for part of the day.



Jodie Pfau and Jessica Kuhne in *Rikki-Tikki Tavi* with fight direction by Laurie Miller Petersen.  
Photo by Annie Arthur

**CT Ray Rodriguez** is currently fight directing *Henry V* in Warren, NJ. He recently finished a run of *Dracula* playing Dr. John Seward (he is still sporting the mutton chops!). He is currently teaching at Adelphi University and teaching both BS and S&S through Combat Inc. ([www.combatinc.com](http://www.combatinc.com)). The film *The Crimson Mask*, which he did fight direction and stunt coordinated, is still touring the film festival circuit and winning awards. The film is due to be released on DVD in late 2009. Also in the film are AAC Galway McCullough and CT Michael Yahn. You can also watch Ray being shot in the Pereza music video *Violenta Amor*.

**AAC Adam Rutledge** enjoyed a summer of outdoor Shakespeare! He played Tybalt with Poor Yorick's Players' production of *Romeo and Juliet* in early August; and for that same production, he choreographed several fights under AAC Tonya Lynn's fight direction. Helping to bring the cast up to fighting trim was quite an adventure! Following close on the heels of *Romeo and Juliet*, Adam played King Ferdinand in a production of *Love's Labour's Lost* with Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks.

**Mark James Schryver** finished his second successful season fight directing the New York Renaissance Faire.

**CT Ted Sharon**, along with six other actors from the United States, performed this summer in FESTA Theatre's production of *Macbeth* at the Bargello Museum in Florence, Italy ([www.themacbethproject.org](http://www.themacbethproject.org)). Ted played Macduff and directed the fights. "I felt ready to play the role; Macduff's situation has resonance with me at this point in my life." Ted also studied traditional Italian side sword and broadsword for five weeks with the Confraternita dell Spada in Florence. "So much history and technique was brought to light. I look forward to continuing my association with those great fighters." AC Kyle Curry played Young Seward and SAFD trained actor Dan Lenzian played Malcolm; they combined to play the Murderers as well. "It was so great to have Kyle and Dan there. Their SAFD training allowed their



fighters to reach a level of excellence that was consistent from night to night." Plans are already in the works for next summer's FESTA production of...., well, at least we can be sure it will have fights!

**CT/FD Joe Travers** has been keeping busy teaching stage combat at AMDA New York, and running Swordplay, where's he's been offering SPT classes in UA and S&S, as well as workshops in Medieval Poleaxe and Irish Shillelagh. He recently



Matthew R. Wilson as Rochefort for *The Fifth Musketeer*.

Photo by Nancy Garwood.

staged fights for *Dreyfus in Rehearsal* at the Becket Theatre in N.Y. ([www.swordplaystagecombat.com](http://www.swordplaystagecombat.com))

**AAC Matthew R. Wilson** recently served as both Fight Director and actor in *The Fifth Musketeer*, written and directed by Paco José Madden (Capital Fringe Festival) and *The Rough Guide to the Underworld* (Capitol Hill Arts Workshop). He also choreographed combat for productions of *Cymbeline*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Perseus and the Gorgon* for local theatre training programs. This August he returned to Reggio-Emilia, Italy, for his sixth summer as an Instructor at Antonio Fava's International Workshop in Commedia dell'Arte, and he was honored to perform his *The Great One-Man Commedia Epic* as part of the festivities celebrating the school's twenty-fifth anniversary! [www.matthewrwilson.com](http://www.matthewrwilson.com)

Steve Lee (Draught) foolishly believes that he has gotten the upper hand on Kelley Slagle (Treville) in Paco José Madden's *The Fifth Musketeer*. Fight Direction by Matthew R. Wilson. Photo by Nancy Garwood.




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## Great Lakes Region:

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin



By: Jim Stark  
e: [GLRegRep@safd.org](mailto:GLRegRep@safd.org)

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**AAC Stephen James Anderson** spent the summer playing Laertes in *Hamlet* at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass., and choreographed two different productions of *The Pillowman*, one at DePaul University in Chicago, directed by Jennifer BeVard, and one directed by Kimberly Senior at Red Twist Theatre in Chicago.

**Friend Mary Shen Barnidge** writes that "The Joseph Jefferson awards committee were paid a visit at one of their meetings by a panel comprised of FD David Woolley, Stephanie Repin and Geoff Coates to raise their awareness of stage combat and how to tell the good from the bad."

**AC Sarah Beckerman** is currently choreographing for *Cabaret* in the University Theatre and *Fuddy Meers* in the Studio Theatre at Valparaiso University in Indiana.

**FM Chuck Coyl** recently staged the fights for the national tour of *August: Osage County* and for *Tosca* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Also, he recently began teaching a three weapon SPT class at the Actor's Gym in Evanston.

**AAC Christopher Elst** worked as "The Bodyguard" and a stuntman in a yet untitled independent film in Madison, Wis. this October. He will also be lending his talents in the Milwaukee premieres of *The New Century* with RSVP Theater, as Shane, and *La Cage au Folles* with Off-the-Wall Theatre, as a Cagelle. Christopher also continues to serve as webmaster for the Winter Wonderland Workshop and hopes to have his first Teaching Assistant position with the SAFD in 2010.

**Friend Kateri Kline-Johnson** just returned from a lovely extended stay in Italy, where she met some wonderful stunt artists at the Venice Film Festival, and attended interesting discussions on Violence In Films. She also spent time in Tuscany with Mounted Fighting, and finished in Rome with classes on Roman & short sword. She's currently in rehearsals for Ken Ludwig's new script *Treasure Island*.

**AAC Nate Mitchell** hit the ground running after returning home from the SAFD NSCW this summer. After finishing choreography for *Escanaba* at the Purple Rose in Chelsea, Mich. Nate choreographed the zombie killing carnage in *Evil Dead: The Musical* at The Ringwald theatre in Metro Detroit. Next up on the agenda is a knife fight for a Purple Rose Theatre function and then at the end of the month it's off to Western Michigan University where Nate will teach a 2-day Unarmed workshop. All the great things that Nate picked up from the NSCW are being put to good use. Thanks SAFD! Outside of stage combat, Nate just played his first acting part this past month in a SAG film called *Fittful*, to be released early in 2010.

**AAC Adam Noble** recently completed fight choreography for *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* at Beef & Boards in Indianapolis. This fall, he is creating the stage violence for *Romeo et Juliette* (opera, IU Jacobs School of Music), as well as *Blood Brothers*, *As You Like It*, and *Parentheses of Blood* (IU Department of Theatre & Drama). Adam is also currently in production as action coordinator on a student-based webisode series. The series, loosely based on Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, is entitled *Student Seven*, and features a martial arts battle in every episode.

**AAC Sarah Pitard** just settled into her new flat in Northwest London, UK, where she is receiving her MA in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media from The Central School of Speech and Drama.

**CT/FD Nick Sandys** has just finished choreographing *Honest* for Steppenwolf's "First Look" summer series, *All My Sons* for Timeline Theatre, *Faust* for Lyric Opera of Chicago, the world premier of *The Castle of Otranto* for First Folio Theatre (in Oak Brook, Ill.), and *1001* for The Theatre School at DePaul University, where he continues to teach. Upcoming projects include fights for *Holes* (The Theatre School), *Ernani* (Lyric Opera), and *High Holidays* by Alan Gross (The Goodman), with a trail of great assistants and interns (Stephen Anderson, Jessica Allen, Erica Ikeda, James Ballard) toiling in his wake.

**AAC Steven Schwall** attended the Central Illinois Regional SCW, where he passed both Smallsword and Sword & Shield SPTs (Recommended pass in S&S), and then spent the summer as the Technical Theatre Head at Camp Laurel in Maine. This fall he's back to Graduate studies at Eastern Michigan University.

**AAC Jason Speicher** was hard at work this summer, as the fight captain and Debris for Actor's Theatre of Columbus's production of Ken Ludwig's *The Three Musketeers*. Then he played the role of Tuppy Glossup in Bread and

Circus' world premier of *Right Ho, Jeeves!*, of "Wooster and Jeeves" fame. In the coming months he will be preparing to direct *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

**CT John Tovar** has been busy choreographing violence for *Moonlight and Magnolias* (Buffalo Theatre Ensemble), *Summer People* (The Gift Theatre Co.), *Romeo and Juliet* (Janus Theatre Co.), and *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Moraine Valley Community College). He has also been teaching Unarmed SPT classes for Elgin Community College and College of DuPage. John and the WWW crew are gearing up for the next Winter Wonderland Workshop, which will be held on January 15-17, 2010 at Elgin Community College. For info, go to [www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com](http://www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com)

**FM David Woolley** is completing his twentieth season with Douglas Mumaw in *Dirk and Guido: the Swordsmen!* at the Bristol and Ohio Renaissance Faires. He has a new job title, "Senior Lecturer" at Columbia College Chicago (SPTs are TBA Dec 16- 18). Fall staging: *Year Zero*, *Victory Gardens*; *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, Teatro Vista at Victory Gardens (both World premieres); *Of Mice and Men* and *He Wo Gets Slapped*, Columbia College; and *Death of A Salesman*, Raven Theater.

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## International:



By: Bret Yount  
e: [IntlRegRep@safd.org](mailto:IntlRegRep@safd.org)

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This region did not submit a report for this issue.

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## Mid-America Region:

Iowa Kansas, Minnesota,  
Missouri, Nebraska, North  
Dakota, South Dakota



By: Mike Speck  
e: [MARegRep@safd.org](mailto:MARegRep@safd.org)

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**AC Jennifer Allton** will train the cast and choreograph the violence for *Henry V* at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Performances are November 20, 21, and 22. The cast will be all women, set in a hyper-violent war-based society, with costuming, set, lighting, and sound design influenced by post-apocalyptic film and graphic novels. The weapons will be a number of found objects, including tennis rackets!

**Friend Matt Franta** stunt-coordinated the short film *Whiskey* in Minneapolis. He also tested and received his first degree black belts in Tae Kwon Do and Hapkido. Matt has moved to Los Angeles to begin the MFA program in Television, Film and Theatre at California State University, Los Angeles.

**Friend Peter Moore** just directed *Becky's New Car* for Park Square and will also be staging the fights for a high school production of *Scarlet Pimpernel* and a college production of *Macbeth*. Then, he is directing a new original play for the Mayo Clinic about its founding, before returning to Virginia Stage in Norfolk for his fifth season as Scrooge in their *Christmas Carol*.

**AC Mike Speck** returned to Macomb, Ill. for Bard in the Barn, using the

First Folio Cue Script/"unrehearsed" technique. He played the French King in *All's Well that Ends Well*. He is continuing work on the Carnage in the Corn workshop for this year as well.

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## New England Region:

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



By: Rob Najarian  
e: [NERegRep@safd.org](mailto:NERegRep@safd.org)

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**Friend Mark Bedell** fight directed three out of the four winners of the Maine High School One-Act Play festival last spring. A fourth one-act, also fight directed by Mark, did not win but did receive a special Staged Combat Citation. The Maine Academy of Staged Combat now only operates during the summer months as Mark took a job with the theatre department of the University of Missouri, St. Louis and has therefore relocated. Within the next few months he plans to open the Missouri Academy of Staged Combat that will operate during the school year. Mark also taught two 5-day Action Film-making Courses, each of which culminated in an action short. The second is still in post but the first one garnered a contract for a PAID sequel! For more news and info please see: [www.Fight-Director.org](http://www.Fight-Director.org)

**CT Angela Bonacasa**, before finishing her time as NSCW Coordinator this summer,

choreographed *Hamlet* for the Theatre at Monmouth. After the intensive three weeks that is the NSCW, she took a break by teaching Unarmed and Swashbuckling for the Stage for the Schoodic Arts Summer Festival. She also wrapped up her Maine directorial debut with her amazing cast of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, at the Masker's Theatre in Belfast, Maine. She traveled to Chicago in October to teach Broadsword and Broadsword and Shield master classes for the Babes with Blades, as well as an Unarmed master class for the Women's Theatre Alliance.

November will find her at a workshop with her good friends down the Baltimore area, featuring lots of swishing and swashing. She continues to be a full time aspirant program student in Isaac Royal Farm's dressage program, where she continues to train in preparation for her first dressage tests in July of 2010.

**Friend Chris Cardoni** acted in *Shaw3*, three one-act plays by G.B. Shaw, at the Vokes Players in Wayland, Mass. He is working on fights for *Romeo and Juliet* at Curry College, which opens in December, and has been enjoying his recently purchased custom rapier from Lewis Shaw.

**AC Meron Langsner** is composing the fights for the national educational tour of *Classics!* by Chamber Theatre Productions. He recently fight directed *Concord Marrow* with Exquisite Corps in Boston, which included working with the playwright during the development process. A selection from his play, *B'Shalom* is included in the just released Applause Theatre Books *Duo!: Best Scenes for Two for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Meron has also recently had poetry published in *Bear Creek Haiku*. He continues to pursue his PhD. at Tufts University.

**CT Robert Najarian** can be seen right now in *Sleep No More* at the American Repertory Theatre, running through January 3, 2010. He is also the Violence Designer for *Taming of the Shrew* with Actor's Shakespeare

Project, running at the Garage in Harvard Square in October and November. Finally, Robert is Co-Fight Director (along with his good friend and collaborator Ted Hewlett) for *Carmen* with the Boston Lyric Opera, which can be seen in November at the Citi Performing Arts Center in Boston's Theatre District.

**Friend Jeremy Smith** is currently involved in a production of Moliere's *The Miser* at Western Illinois University. He is also working on more proficiency tests. What's on the way? Rapier and Dagger!

**Friend J.T. Turner** served as Fight Captain for the Lyric Stage Company's production of *Kiss Me Kate*. He also got to "Brush Up His Shakespeare" as a Gangster in the show. At another fun gig, he taught lightsaber fighting to fathers and sons at a church function, while moms and daughters were having tea.

**Friend Paul Ugalde** was back on the boards in a non-combat role, playing Dr. Boyle in *Prelude to a Kiss* for Vermont Stage Company. He directed a workshop production of *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, instructing the pair of actors in creating the illusion of domestic violence. The woman playing Roberta got so excited about learning more technique that she attended the Summer Sling in NYC in August. Paul is currently working on turning a bunch of high school actors into swashbucklers for *The Pirates of Penzance*.

**CT Robert Walsh** just closed the East Coast premiere of Israel Horovitz's *Sins of the Mother* in which he acted and also staged the fights at Gloucester Stage Company. He also directed *Speed-the-Plow* for New Repertory Theatre that runs Oct. 18 through Nov. 7. Currently, he is staging the fights for *Twelfth Night* at Boston College.



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## Northwest Region:

Washington, Alaska, Oregon



By: Heidi Wolf

e: [NWRegRep@safd.org](mailto:NWRegRep@safd.org)

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**CT Jonathan Cole** is staying busy: he's taught SPTs in all eight weapons constantly since the 2007 TTW, and is now taking a semester off! He'll resume in spring of 2010, and will teach Unarmed, Single Sword, Sword & Shield and Smallsword SPTs at Willamette University. In the meantime he's choreographing *Twelfth Night* for Oregon State University, *Mauritius* for Salem Repertory Theatre, and assorted workshops and projects for Willamette University. He completed directing a particularly aggressive *Woyzeck* for Willamette University in May, and just closed an all-female *Antigone* in a warehouse/found space, also for Willamette University.

**AAC Kevin Inouye's** accomplishments within stage combat this month (two renewals; fight choreography for *No Exit*) are dwarfed by other events: he and former AC Chandra Inouye have cast twin boys as their sons, and welcomed Gregory Fox Inouye and Cedric McLean Inouye to the ensemble on September 2, 2009.

Since April of this year **AC John Williams Lynch** has choreographed productions of *Macbeth*, *The Three Musketeers* (one production with two separate casts), *Romeo and Juliet* and *Oklahoma!*. He is also slated to choreograph another production of *Macbeth*. In addition John co-founded and became the co-Artistic Director of Performers Forge.

**AC Julia H. Welch** has recently entered the Seattle theatre scene, working with companies such as Our American Theatre Co, Theatre Off Jackson and Ubiquitous They. She is currently working with Annex Theatre as well as Ghost Light Theatricals and her work can be seen in their upcoming productions of *The Believers* and *The Oedipal Duplex*, respectively.

**AAC Heidi Wolf** is teaching six classes a week for FM Geof Alm while he's in *Peter Pan* at Seattle Children's Theatre, and taking dance and Suzuki classes in her spare time.

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## Pacific West Region:

California, Nevada, Arizona,  
Hawaii



By: Robert Hamilton

e: [PWRegRep@safd.org](mailto:PWRegRep@safd.org)

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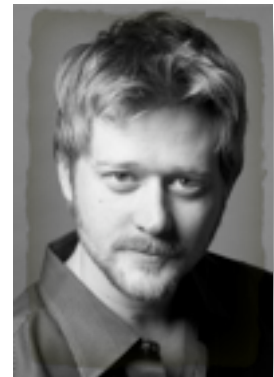
**CT Robert Hamilton** just completed fight direction work on *Balm & Gilead*, *Wet Side Story* and the short film *Stuck*. Robert is the Chair of the Stage Combat Department at AMDA Los Angeles, and is the Secretary and an Instructor with the Los Angeles Fight Academy where he recently completed co-teaching a Quarterstaff SPT class with fellow CTs Mike Mahaffey and Lacy Altwine (100% pass). Robert has also been developing the extended studies of the Stage Combat Department at the LA campus, which has recently received accreditation for Bachelors degree programs, which will include a concentration in Stage Combat. Robert is currently co-teaching a Sword & Shield SPT with fellow CTs Mike Mahaffey and Lacy Altwine. It's like the Three Musketeers gone wild!

**AAC Andrea Robertson** has been very busy so far this school year. She just opened *Oliver Twist: the Musical*, an adaptation of Dickens's classic tale that she directed with a 38-member cast (all but three were kids aged 5-20). She'll be directing *Miracle on 34th Street* again this Christmas and *Love Letters* in February. She's also been busy fight directing through her company Fight Call, LLC. She staged fights for an original musical- *Captain Preston and the Pirate Scourge*, as well as productions of *Camelot*, *Night of the Living Dead*, and *Tobacco Road*. She's teaching several acting classes and two stage combat classes through the Maricopa Community College system in Phoenix.

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## Rocky Mountain Region:

Idaho, Montana, Colorado,  
Utah, Wyoming



By: Benaiah Anderson

e: [RMRegRep@safd.org](mailto:RMRegRep@safd.org)

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**AC Benaiah Anderson** is choreographing violence for *Pirates of Penzance* for a high school, and *Oliver* for Town Hall Arts Center, and will begin work on *Les Miserables* this month... it is a semester for musicals. He is also choreographing fights for a new work entitled *A Changing of the Wind* written by Billy Bair which follows the exploits of the Irish pirate queen. Later this semester he will choreograph *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Tara Performing Arts High School.

**CT/FD Geoffrey Kent** is currently completing a run of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* for the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Then it is back to the Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC) to stage violence for *Absurd Person Singular* and *Well*. He dons the candy cane tights for *Santaland Diaries* this December and then appears in and fight directs *Eventide* and *Othello* for DCTC for the spring.

**AAC Michael Mueller** has been working consistently since returning from the NSCW. He served as Fight Director for *As You Like It* for Boise State University and is slated to fight direct productions of *Sex a.k.a. Wieners and Boobs* for The Alley Repertory Theatre, *Twelfth Night* at Kuna High School, and *Romeo and Juliet* for the College of Idaho. In addition, he is traveling to Ohio in Nov. to continue his training in QS.

**AAC Erin Ramsey** choreographed *West Side Story* for the Mizel Arts and Cultural Center, *Captain Bree and her Lady Pirates* for both Colorado Academy of the Arts and Northglenn Youth Theatre, and *Macbeth* for Kids Theatre West. She also choreographed *The Miracle Worker* for Westminster High School.

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## South East Region:

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



By: John Cashman  
e: [SERegRep@safd.org](mailto:SERegRep@safd.org)

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**Friend Brad Oxnam** is an actor in Nashville, a teaching artist with Nashville Shakespeare Festival, and an adjunct instructor at Middle Tennessee State University. Brad is now the Education Coordinator for the People's Branch Theatre and the Workshop Coordinator for the Street Theatre Company. He also is a new member of ATME, and gave a successful workshop, "Exploring Gender with the Mask" at SETC 2009 (also given for Nashville School of the Arts & MTSU). In addition, he has choreographed unarmed stage violence for NSA's production of *A Woman Called Truth*. As an actor, Brad just completed work on People's Branch Theatre's *Molly Sweeney* and *Three Gods Walk into a Bar...* In other news, as of May 17, 2009, he is now engaged to fellow SAFD member Heather Snider.

**AAC Fulton Burns** is currently serving as the Fight Director for *The Beaux' Stratagem* at Theatre 98 in Fairhope, Ala. Fulton was also recently elected to the Governing Board with the Mobile Theatre Guild.

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## South West Region:

New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana



By: Ann Candler Harlan  
e: [SWRegRep@safd.org](mailto:SWRegRep@safd.org)

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**AC Ann Candler Harlan** assisted and taught a class at the Texas Intensive Stage Combat Workshop in September, with FM Brian Byrnes coordinating and teaching. Additional instructors were FD Timothy Pinnow, FM Mark Guinn and AAC Jake Guinn, CT Leraldo

Anzaldua and CT Matt Ellis. Matt Ellis was drawn and quartered, apparently several times, but lived to tell the tale. Ann is now staging period dances and fights for a High School production of *Romeo & Juliet*. She recently appeared in a segment on Saigon Broadcast Television Network, an internationally-broadcast Vietnamese news station, doing Tai Chi with the Zenobics Tai Chi Society.

**CT Bill Lengfelder** staged the fights for *Othello* for the Dallas Opera, which opened in October. He is currently in London playing a Sage in the Fabulous Beast's production of *Rite of Spring* at the National Opera.

**Friend Erick Wolfe** taught at the Red Dirt Ruckus stage combat workshop in June, with CT Matthew Ellis, and Friend Lloyd Caldwell also as instructors, hosted at OCU School of Theatre.

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*Update Your Contact Information!*

Having current contact information, to ensure that you are kept updated on the latest SAFD news and events, is a top priority of the SAFD. Please email the Secretary, Willie Meybohm, with any new contact information or to verify the what we have on file. The website will have the capability to list and track this information very soon, but until the it is launched, emailing the Secretary is the best option.

## Don't Procrastinate!



# FIGHTING SOLVES EVERYTHING!

*The Fifteenth Annual*

## WINTER WONDERLAND WORKSHOP

January 15-17, 2010



[www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com](http://www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com)



## National Stage Combat Workshop 2010!

HELD AT - THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

### Introduction to Stage Combat

Perfect for high school drama teachers and students, educators, collegiate actors, and those interested in a strong foundation of Stage Combat.

### Actor Combatant Workshop

Perfect for college students and professional actors who wish to study and test in Unarmed, Rapier & Dagger and Broadsword.

### Teacher Certification Workshop

Our intense testing program required for certification as a teacher by the SAFD. Experience in choreography and teaching are essential.

### DATES:

July 5 - 24, 2010

Discounts available for all SAFD members - For more information visit: [www.safd.org](http://www.safd.org)

Historical Photo #2:

Michael Donahue, Geoffrey Kent, FMJ. Allen Suddeth



1994

NSCW - Las Vegas

Historical Photo #3:

J. Allen Suddeth teaching Sword and  
Shield



2000

NSCW - Las Vegas

## Call For Historical Information!

The Cutting Edge is seeking additional historical information on the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD). We are looking to update the website and establish a more concrete system of record keeping to preserve the legacy that was started by our founders (SAFD). We are looking for the following:

1. Photos from past SAFD events with captions
  - a. Please send photos as .jpg, .tif, or .eps files
  - b. We accept black & white as well as color photos - but color is preferred
  - c. 300 dpi is preferred, but contact us if you are having problems
  - d. Please include name of photographer, subjects' names and membership levels.
2. Lists of attendees for any and all SAFD sanctioned events
3. Detailed examples of how the SAFD has assisted you as an artist, an educator, and/or choreographer

Please send submissions and any questions to our email, [cuttingedge@safd.org](mailto:cuttingedge@safd.org). This is a tremendous opportunity to share your favorite memories and inspire new generations of members. We hope that you will find the time to take advantage of this opportunity.

# It's That Time Again . . .

Did you renew your membership? If not, there's still time! Just fill out the form on the next page, make out your check to SAFD and mail to:

**Society of American Fight Directors**  
1350 E. Flamingo Road, #25, Las Vegas, NV 89119

You can also safely and securely pay your dues via the Internet by visiting:

<http://www.safd.org/membership-renewals>

Don't Forget! Memberships make great gifts as well!

**Membership renewals are due by January 1, 2010!**

# 2010 SAFD Membership Application/Annual Dues Form

Please complete the entire form. In order for the SAFD to maintain accurate records, it is important that all of your information in our database be current. You can mail your payment with this form, or you may pay online with a credit card at [www.safd.org](http://www.safd.org).

Reasons to join the SAFD:

- Subscription to **The Fight Master**, a journal published twice yearly
- Subscription to **The Cutting Edge**, our bimonthly online newsletter
- Access to back issues of both publications and online discussions in the members only section at [www.safd.org](http://www.safd.org)
- Discounts to national and regional stage combat workshops
- The right to vote for members of the Executive Committee and Governing Body
- A free T-Shirt (Available to new and renewing members)
- And much, much more...

**Status (Check one):**  New Member  Current Renewing Member  Lapsed Renewing Member  Gift\*

\*If giving a membership as a gift, please print your name here \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the information for the gift receiver below.

**Amount Enclosed (\$45.00/year USA, \$55.00/year Outside USA) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00**

**Payment Method (please check one):**  Paid online via Credit Card (please include copy of online receipt)  Paid via enclosed Check Check # \_\_\_\_\_

## General Information

**Membership Level (please check one):**

Organization  Friend  Actor/Combatant  Advanced Actor/Combatant  Certified Teacher  Fight Director

**Name (First, MI, Last):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Union Affiliations (SAG, AEA, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials should be mailed to (please check one):**

Home  Work

**T-Shirt Size (please check one):**

S  M  L  XL  XXL

**Please check the following:**

- I would like to receive information regarding SAFD sanctioned workshops:  YES  NO
- I would like to receive information regarding non-sanctioned workshops:  YES  NO
- I would like to receive information regarding SAFD classes in my area:  YES  NO
- I would like to receive information regarding SAFD merchandise:  YES  NO

## Current Skills Proficiency Test Results (Please list most recent SPT for each weapon)

WEAPON	Month/Year	Instructor	Adjudicator
Broadsword			
Knife			
Quarterstaff			
Rapier & Dagger			
Single Sword			
Smallsword			
Sword & Shield			
Unarmed			

**Photocopy & Mail with payment or receipt to: SAFD, 1350 East Flamingo Road #25, Las Vegas, NV. 89119**



## Word of the Issue:

ZA

**Webster's Dictionary:** n. (Min.) An old solfeggio name for B flat. It was long considered false, but is the true note of the chord of the flat seventh.

**Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008:** in feudal Japan, any of the mercantile or craft guilds that flourished about 1100-1590. In exchange for certain fees, the za enjoyed official recognition and exemptions from tolls, transit duties, and market taxes. Many za were begun and maintained under the patronage of nobles or of the zasu (head priests) of Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples. More than 80 guilds situated in the Nara region specialized in the manufacture or conveyance of paper, sake, salt, vegetable oil, and malt. Other guilds were organized by dancers, musicians, carpenters, and blacksmiths. The za gradually declined with the declining authority of their patrons and the expansion of the market economy. Market taxes and za were officially and nationally abolished by the feudal lords Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi about 1590.

**Dictionary.com:** pronunciation of the 11th and 17th letter of the Arabic alphabet.

**SAFD:** A term coined by the "Dean of Fight Choreographers," Patrick (paddy) Crean, for the irresistible charismatic allure and charm of the gallant swashbuckler.



## WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN THE SAFD?

### Save

If you join on the day of your spt (skills proficiency test), you join at a 33% discount. Pay only \$30 instead of \$45 for your first year of membership.

### Network

Become a member of a close-knit organization within a close-knit industry. We think we're a pretty friendly bunch and we're always happy to meet more new members.

### Discounts

Attend future SAFD workshops at a discounted rate. National and regional workshops offer big savings once you're an SAFD member.

### Access

Get listed on the new and improved SAFD website that gives you access to member info across the nation. If you move or are working out of town, you'll be able to contact local SAFD members more easily.

### Opportunities

The new and improved SAFD website will also allow directors, fight directors, casting directors and other employers an easy way to find you and other qualified fighters in your neck of the woods.