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The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge

Introducing the 2010-2012 Membership Representatives

The staff of *The Cutting Edge* would like to congratulate the newly elected 2010-2012 member representatives. These individuals serve as the voices of the membership when it comes to decisions involving the direction of the organization. They attend the annual officers meeting, serve as members of the Grievance Committee and the Governing Body, as well as provide leadership for their respective membership groups. We encourage you to take advantage of their ability to share your thoughts, ideas, and concerns with the Governing Body. Also, remember that member representatives are volunteer positions that, while rewarding, are neither glamorous nor easy. We thank them for their commitment and generosity to the Society of American Fight Directors. We hope you will take the time to congratulate them as well.



Fight Master Representative
Richard Ryan



Fight Director Representative
Michael J. Johnson



Certified Teacher Representative
DC Wright



Friend/AC/AAC Representative
Mike Speck

Continued on page 3

COMIC OF THE ISSUE!

by: John Baca

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The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword...

Michael Mueller - Editor-in-Chief

2010 is shaping up to be one of the best years the SAFD has ever had. After a rough 2009, with the economic crunch, organizational restructuring, and technical difficulties beyond what I care to go into, we are poised for a tremendous rebound. Perhaps it is the time of year, when people look back on what has been accomplished in the previous year and begin to implement plans for the New Year, but I always find this time to be one of the most inspirational. I feel particularly strong about the SAFD's potential in the coming year.

Against all economic odds, new workshops are spreading into areas severely under represented by the SAFD. This issue has more advertisements for regional workshops than ever before. On top of the regional workshops, the NSCW is also increasing their workshop offerings to four different levels of training. Truly, this summer will bring some of the most talented people together to train at all levels. Having attended last year, I can attest to the quality education received at such a stellar event.

That's not all. With a successful electronic election of our newest membership representatives, the Governing Body (GB) is now set to push forward on many initiatives that will improve the value of our membership. In this issue, we have the minutes from the last GB meeting, so please review the topics currently being discussed. I know that they value membership driven initiatives, so if you see something that can be improved or an area where you can contribute please contact your regional representative to take your thoughts, ideas, and concerns to the next level.

I am also extremely excited about the increased efforts of establishing more consistent communication within the organization and improving our projected image to the rest of the world. As you may know, our three main sources of communication and information are this publication, *The Fight Master*, and our website. All three areas were challenged during 2009. Some challenges were successfully overcome while others presented new and/or additional problems requiring redirection, revision and/or restructuring. With all the upheaval and transition there have been many frustrations from all sides; but, as we head into 2010, there is definitely more cohesion, direction and focus on the pressing issues that stand in the way of clear and effective dissemination of information.

2009 was a year of idea implementation and growing pains for the SAFD, but this year is primed to reap the benefits of the previous year's turmoil. From new and enhanced workshops to the focus on communication and branding, the SAFD is ready to make great strides forward. Some years provide clear examples of growth, development and progress while others give the impression of regression. Rest assured, last year's difficulties only set the stage for a year of better understanding and deeper, long lasting growth. Our leaders are working tirelessly to ensure that this organization is the best it can be; but, for complete success they'll need your help, feedback, understanding, and patience. An organization like ours requires a group effort, so help make this year the best that it can be by voicing your opinions, volunteering where you can, and supporting a regional workshop. Our growth will only help advance opportunities for your passion.

Michael Mueller

Please send all submissions, comments and questions to:

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

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Regional Reports: Darrell Rushton

Regional Workshops: Dan Granke

Governing Body Advisor: John Tovar

The Cutting Edge Submission Deadlines

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2010	Dec. 1, 2009
March / April 2010	Feb. 1, 2010
May / June 2010	April 1, 2010
July / Aug. 2010	June 1, 2010
Sept. / Oct. 2010	Aug. 1, 2010
Nov. / Dec. 2010	Oct. 1, 2010

Regional Reports to Regional Reps.

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2010	Nov. 15, 2009
March / April 2010	Jan. 15, 2010
May / June 2010	Mar. 15, 2010
July / Aug. 2010	May 15, 2010
Sept. / Oct. 2010	July 15, 2010
Nov. / Dec. 2010	Sept. 15, 2010

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From the Governing Body

Geoffrey Kent - President:



Member representative elections results for the SAFD's first email ballot have been completed. We are happy to welcome Mike Speck as Actor/Combatant Representative and Michael Johnson and Fight Director Representative to the SAFD Governing Body. They join returning member representatives DC Wright (as Certified Teacher rep) and Richard Ryan (as Fight Master rep). A special thanks to exiting member reps Ted DeChatelet and Jamie Cheatham for their excellent work serving their membership for their busy term.

John Tovar - Vice President:



I hope this finds you healthy, happy, and ready to tackle the New Year. The GB has been working tirelessly on many things this past year. While we have certainly hit our fair share of "bumps in the road," it is our hope that the work we do over the course of 2010 will help the SAFD thrive in the future. Best wishes to you and yours for the New Year!

Willie Meybohm - Secretary:



Some words of advice on getting your certificates...

You've met the requirements for Actor Combatant and Advanced Actor Combatant status. With pride, you walk up to the adjudicator, hand her your certificate and say, "I'm an Actor Combatant now. Can I have my certificate, please?" And the adjudicator frowns a bit, and tells you that's not possible.

So, here's how you acquire your hard-fought for certificate:

Send an email to secretary@safd.org with the subject line: "AC Request" or "AAC Request." If possible, include scanned copies of your certificates, along with contact and address information so you can receive your certificate. Please allow up to 30 days from the date of your request to receive your certificate.

In the event you cannot scan your certificates, you may snail mail copies to:

W. MEYBOHM
505 ROSS AVE
KANNAPOLIS, NC 28083

Now, sit back and ice that shoulder.

Lee Soroko - Treasurer:



I have nothing to report for this issue, but I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday.

Richard Ryan - Fight Master Representative:



It has been my privilege to be Fight Master Representative for the past three years. My thanks to you for allowing me to continue for the next three years.

My sincere hope is that by the end of the next three years this GB will leave the SAFD in stable financial situation with a grant writing structure in place and with the organization thriving with fully modernized structures in place whilst maintaining it's sense of community. It is to that end I work. Happy Holidays!

Michael J. Johnson - Fight Director Representative:



As the New Year rapidly approaches and I prepare for my term as Fight Director Rep., I want to thank those who voted for me in the election. I will do my best to live up to your trust in me. I want to also thank my predecessor, Jamie Cheatham, for the good work he's done during the past three years. I hope I do half as well as you have.

DC Wright - Certified Teacher 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.

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'!

Mike Speck - Friend, Actor Combatant, Advanced Actor Combatant Representative:



I would first like to thank Ted deChatelet for his work, and to the entire GB for bringing me up to speed so quickly. Second, I want to thank the Friends, ACs, and AACs for your trust and your votes. Please let me know if you have suggestions for changes, questions, or if there's anything I can do to help you! My inbox is always open. I look forward to serving you all on the GB.

Governing Body Meeting Highlights from October 2009 by Secretary, Willie Meybohm:

This past October, the Governing Body met in Chicago. Over the course of two long days, reams of paper, whiteboard diagrams, and several tweets, we covered quite a bit of ground on how to improve and move the organization forward. Here are some of the highlights:

Firearms

The Governing Body unanimously approved changes to the Policies & Procedures (which you can download and read at our website, www.safd.org/forms) that include the guidelines for the Firearms Safety Course. Ask your Regional Representative or Member Representative for information on finding and attending a course.

Grants / Development

We are in talks with development directors and grant writers from all aspects of the sponsorship and grant world. In line with that, we are creating a detailed company profile for the Society of American Fight Directors that will help us tailor how our organization fits in the world of giving, as well as target specific resources and venues for support.

NSCW

We brainstormed with Mike Mahaffey, our new NSCW coordinator. In a nutshell, we're pumped, and you should be too. Mike is bringing a lot to the table, and this year's 30th anniversary workshop will be stellar. Find more information about who is slated to teach and what workshops are being offered at www.safd.org.

Member Retention

The big topic of the weekend, particularly the second day, was on member retention. We acknowledge that the largest part of our membership base is made up of Friends, Actor Combatants and Advanced Actor Combatants, some who have no desire to become Certified Teachers or Fight Directors. We want to recognize and celebrate our largest pool of members, and help that aspect of our organization grow.

This is where you come in. We want to know, for those of you who have been with the organization through thick and thin, why is membership in the Society of American Fight Directors important to you? What makes you want to continue with the organization as a Friend or Advanced Actor Combatant? What benefits or features could we offer to you, in recognition of your years of service? Send your thoughts to secretary@safd.org.

It's That Time Again . . .

Did you renew your membership? If not, there's still time! Just visit the SAFD website to safely and securely pay your dues via the Internet:

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

You can also fill out the membership application located on page 29 of this publication, make out your check to SAFD and mail to:

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

Membership renewals for 2010 were due by January 1, 2010!

Just Before Dawn

(Pre-Test Rituals and Preparation for Test Day)

By:
T. Fulton Burns



In Asian martial arts films there are usually beautiful moments that reveal the fighters in deep meditation before they are to meet on the field of battle. The process appears to center and calm the individual while preparing them for the final moments of their lives. The day of a skills proficiency test (SPT) can feel the same way.

The day of the test can be frustrating for the testers as well as those around them. Nerves can run high during this stressful time. I can still recall the excitement and nerves of my first test day at the 2000 National Stage Combat Workshop in Las Vegas like it was yesterday. It was from this first experience that I created habits and rituals to help me succeed in my objectives regarding stage combat training and testing.

During my years with the Society of American Fights Directors I have learned a great deal from the Fight Masters, Fight Directors, and Certified Teachers. As a professor of theatre I have come to realize that students learn as much from their fellow classmates as they do from their instructors, if not more. Here are some thoughts and ideas for approaching the 24 hours that lead up to a SPT from a few fellow Actor Combatants.

Good Night Sweet Prince (or Princess)

As a child, my parents always made sure that I went to bed early before my first day of school. The rationale was that a well-rested student is a good student. Similarly, coaches often make sure that their teams have curfews to ensure a strong performance on game day. Getting a great night of rest before a SPT is equally important for what we do.

Alaric Toy reiterates this sentiment while adding the importance of “a good dinner and get plenty of rest. [On] the day of the test make sure [to] have a good breakfast beforehand.” Rest and nutrition are keys to providing a relaxed and engaged body and mind on the day of the test. The amount of time needed for the best night of rest will vary based on the individual. I have found that eight hours can be too little on some occasions while too much on others. Do what fits the needs of the body and mind at the time.

Gotta Get To The Church On Time

Providing time before the test is every bit as important as the test itself. Zack Meyer makes sure that he “[wakes] up with more than enough time to get ready and get down to the place about an hour early.” A little extra time allows the actor/ combatant to acclimate to the performance environment. This will also allow them to double check weapons and prepare for the day. Make sure that plenty of time is available to breathe, both physically and mentally, prior to the test. The extra time will reduce feeling rushed; and, if any issues do arise, then there will be extra time to make corrections prior to the test.

Tying up Loose Ends

Jason Armit once suggested to a group of us on the day of a SPT that we consider double tying/knotting our shoes. This moment reminded me of the importance of good clothes and making sure that your equipment is in good shape. A person should check their weapons the day before they test and set aside the clothes they will be wearing for the test later that night.

Some people have lucky charms regarding attire like Charlie Cascino. “I have a pair of lucky boots. I have had them for ten years. They are my fighting boots. They are black leather and they lace all the way up to the knee. They have these amazing rubber soles that grip any surface. They are perfect for fighting.” Through her own process Charlie has found a very successful part of her SPT process in safe shoes. Take a look at what will be worn and consider the best possibilities for the test.

You're Getting Warmer

As a former dancer I can recall times when, in preparation for a performance, the entire company would gather for a complete dance class, which was our warm-up for the show. Our bodies are our tools. Barbara Seifert makes sure that she gets a good “actor warm-up”. That's always key for success. “If I don't warm-up, I usually fret and stress that I'm going to miss a line or a move. And then worrying about it makes me forget. So warm-ups are an essential pre-test ritual that I do.” It is also important to make sure that the actor warm-up includes a strong vocal portion to accompany the physical.

Remember that warming-up is an individual act that can take time to create. Dan Granke has found over time that he does his best if he works out really hard before a SPT. "I like to shadowbox...or do some other vigorous warm up." While slow and steady may work for some, it may be better for others to warm up fast and furious; so, suit the warm-up to the actor.

Another important fact to remember is that the test day it is not a good time to reinvent the wheel. Charlie Cascino feels that doing the same warm-up routine that has been done during the rehearsal period is very important. She advises not to do anything new or special for the performance day. "I have seen people strain muscles by doing an 'extra warm' warm-up for the performance, [so] I keep to my routine." This is great advice because injuries can occur at anytime. Suit the warm-up to the individual's needs and know that a routine warm-up makes good physical and vocal sense.

Hi! My name is...

A confident introduction can set the tone for a confident test. Part of the test day process requires that the actor/ combatants introduce themselves, their weapon, and the scene for the SPT. For Glen Wall, rehearsal and relaxation are key elements to confidence. "I...speak my intro out loud to make sure I don't flub it, and after that I just try to chill."

As part of the pre-test routine it is important to consider and rehearse the introduction. This can help establish the confidence needed to begin a solid SPT. Usually the instructor will have a student go through this part of the process before the Fight Adjudicator arrives, but I have seen some people choose not to take this seriously. From personal experience, I can attest that having this part well rehearsed can provide great peace of mind. Recently, when preparing for a video taped SPR, I found myself focusing only on the fighting and the acting. When it came time to introduce the fights I couldn't get through the process. Finally, I took a step back and thought about what I was saying. This breath allowed me to calm my nerves and prepare for the performance that was to follow. So, remember to consider the introduction as another important part of the dialogue to be rehearsed.

Still Going

A great way to prepare for the SPT is to walk through and run the choreography. In fact, this is a tried and true classic. Mike Speck bases his process on the immortal approach of Alfred Lunt: "Remember your choreography and don't run into things." "I run the choreography as often as my partner wants, and then I relax." For Mike, and many other people, taking the time to run their fights is the chosen way to prepare.

Matt McKay takes it a step further with some added detail about how he chooses to run a fight on the day of a SPT. "First I meet with my scene partner and walk thru the fight (with weapons preferably, but without works too). We go in super slow motion with exaggerated gesture and story, like taking forever to say, 'Oooooooooohhhhhh Nnnnoooooooo!' [We make] big facial gestures along with paying close attention to our targeting and body shifting. After that we run through it [at] half speed and then walk away from it for at least 5-10 minutes." The key element to take away from this is taking the time to connect with each other. The choreography, proper usage of the weapon, and targeting are all important, but focusing on partner connections will elevate a fight toward the recommended level while increasing the confidence of both partners.

A Little Time for Yourself

While our work will include our partner, and we must focus on that relationship for the sake of the performance, it is also appropriate to take a little time for the individual. This isn't selfish (unless you completely disregard your partner), but should be viewed as part of the pre-test ritual. Andrea Robertson views this as a simple, but effective way to relax. "Sometimes it's just in my head, thinking the moves. I find while I'm getting ready for bed is a great time to go over lines and moves mentally."

On the test day Claire Yearman finds her solitude as well. "I try to have a quiet moment to focus and relax before I go on stage; a little moment of zen if you will." This moment of gathering oneself before the test is required for some. The result will ensure that one's head will be in the right frame of mind leading to the performance.

Personal time can also be part of the warm-up process. Paul E. Hope makes sure to "take a moment to breathe before going in [and] use some Alexander Technique to align." With others it could be yoga that allows them to best prepare for a SPT. Regardless of the personal needs, take some time and internalize.

Another note, for those observing or partnering, is to try and respect the time and space these individuals need. They will do the same in return; yet another example of excellent partnering on a basic level.

Check – Check – 1, 2 – 1, 2

Take a moment with the character before stepping out on-stage. It is important to recall that this scene will be part of the play. In most cases, much has occurred prior to this part of story and it is important to refresh these things in one's mind. This is a large part of Cara Rawlings pre-test ritual. "Just before the scene begins; I take a moment to focus on my given circumstances and my character's initial goal in the scene." Remember that the fight and/or characters do not begin on stage, but actually off stage. The old idea of walking the way a character would about five feet in the wings before entering the space applies to this scenario. Taking time for a mental reminder of the character will be the five psychological feet needed to place the character into the right time and place for the performance.

Conclusion

Determining your pre-test rituals is an ever evolving process. Look at the day of the test in comparison with preparation for a performance. For some people the above listed ideas are common-place while for others these ideas are new. Still, the best thing is to determine the process that works well for the individual. Try any of the above listed ideas to alleviate stress, improve preparation, partner connections, and a great stage combat performance.

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

Charlie Cascino, Dan Granke,
Paul E. Hope, Zack Meyer,
Cara Rawlings, Andrea Robertson,
Barbara Seifert, Mike Speck,
Alaric Toy, Glen Wall, and
Claire Yearman

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 of the logo 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 merchandise: "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.

In The Footlight

With Jonathan Cole

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



SAFD: What has been your most challenging experience with staged violence as an actor, director, choreographer, etc.?

JC: As a choreographer, I was once called in to help a friend who had been injured during opening

night of *Like Totally Weird* by Mastrosimone, being done at a small professional house. It was an intense experience: what I knew going in was that my friend had multiple cuts and bruises from being dragged, thrown through a backstage railing and punched in the face with the barrel of a loaded blank-firing pistol. What I found upon arriving was an Artistic Director who desperately wanted help, a Director who wanted nothing to do with some "fight guy," (she had set all the violence herself) and actors who were confused and threatened by the whole situation. What was particularly amazing was the gunplay and what I found in their props. One of the guns they were using was a de-commissioned Uzi that had been purchased by someone with a Class 3 FFL, then home-modified to fire blanks (the barrel was blocked via hex bolt). They were firing both guns in a 75 seat thrust, and the Uzi had to use full load blanks just to cycle! In any case, the show eventually closed, since the director ultimately refused to change any of the violence, and the actor then walked. This whole thing was early in my career, and left a lasting impression on me regarding safety and ego.

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

JC: It's brought me into contact with some of the most talented people working in the field, and has given me access to an incredible network of experts. I've also made some of my closest friends while working in the SAFD, and have benefited tremendously from the mentorship of many of the people with whom I've worked. As someone who works in academia, I can also say that having an internationally recognized organization to back up and legitimize my work in stage violence has been a tremendous help, and was definitely a factor in my recent (successful – thanks guys!) run to tenure.

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

JC: Be humble and respectful, but ask for help when you need it!! As someone who trained largely in a vacuum (the Pacific NW, which, along with parts of the Midwest is still *sorely* lacking in training opportunities for folks interested in stage combat), I can't stress enough the importance of proactively going out and finding qualified instructors. I worked outside the SAFD for the first seven years of my career as a fight choreographer: I've been with the organization since 2000, and I can honestly say my learning (both quantity and certainly quality) have increased exponentially since I started working with the SAFD. The last thing is *never stop training*: it's a maxim I try to follow, and something that I think is the most important part of this craft, and life. It's also something I see constantly in the SAFD: I was just at the Winter Wonderland, and saw a whole lot of teachers learning from each other, regardless of status in the organization. It's inspiring.

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

JC: As a Ph.D. student, I wrote a grant to go the the NSCW in 2000 after having finally worked with someone with SAFD training (A/C Danielle Ozymandias). The quality of her training and the way she described the NSCW and the SAFD made me finally start putting together the resources to go. From there, I was pretty much hooked.

SAFD: What's your favorite weapon and why?

JC: Martially? Knife, unquestionably. Knife bakes my noodle - the subtleties of tactical folder carry, deployment and use are dizzying, and these are things that I wrestle with and train daily. Knife has become the center of my game as a martial artist, and I'm truly humbled by my lack of knowledge and skill in that area. BUT, it sure is fun to work on! I've just begun working on Tomahawk and Knife training, and it's blown my mind even further! A knife is the most useful, brutal, flexible and elegant weapon around, in my humble opinion. For stage combat, my favorite of all the weapons is broadsword: I love its intricacies. It is such a contradiction, and it seems every time I teach it or train with it, I discover something new about energy, centering and just plain old down and dirty fightin'.

SAFD: What is your favorite film involving violence?

JC: *True Romance*: it's so cliché, but sooooo visceral. The present-ness of the violence and how close it lurks to the surface in even the supporting characters is ridiculously stimulating.

SAFD: What other movement forms have you studied?

JC: A little Feldenkrais, Laban and Alexander, and a whole lot of Martial Arts - most significantly Danzan Ryu Jujitsu, Shingu Aikido, Kodokan Judo, and modern combatives training (largely based on Filipino martial arts: Simplified and Modern Arnis, etc.)

SAFD: Any future plans for further academic training?

JC: I'm really hoping to start doing Alexander more seriously. I'd eventually love to be an accomplished practitioner/teacher of Alexander. People like CT Lee Soroko (a very accomplished Alexander teacher who was in my class at the 2007 TTW) have a grasp of movement that is astonishing - I desperately want to get to that point in my own training. Martially, I have continued my cross training in Modern Arnis and Kosho Ryu Kenpo, and continue to suck at both. But I'm learning!

SAFD: Who has helped you the most as far as your SAFD training?

JC: AAC Deb Fialkow, FD Geoffrey Kent and FM David Brimmer. Deb and Geoff both mentored me early in my career with the SAFD, inspired me (they're both *incredible* technicians and teachers) and were insanely giving of their time, resources and advice. David Brimmer I first met at the TTW in 2007: he's completely changed the way I approach several of the weapons, and has had a *huge* influence on my work as a teacher and choreographer. All three of these people reach out without expectation of return, and are incredibly generous. I hope to be as good a mentor as they have been to me.

SAFD: What is in your pockets right now?

JC: Right now? Teeny bic lighter, Leatherman Skeetool CX (weak side), Benchmade 710D2 (strong side), though the knife EDC varies almost daily. What can I say? I'm obsessed with sharp things. That's pretty much me in a nutshell. hehe.



Tools of the Trade

M
A
Q
U
A
H
U
I
T
L



DATE OF ORIGIN:
1500

ORIGIN:
AZTEC EMPIRE

LENGTH:
29 1/2 INCHES

"The principal close-quarters weapon was a wooden club with obsidian blades. Known as a *masquahuitl*, it was wielded like a sword, delivering a razor-sharp cut that could sever a horse's head." - *Weapon, A Visual History of Arms and Armor.*

"The Maquahuitl was a thin wooden paddle with obsidian blades glued into it creating a ferocious cutting edge. There were many kinds. Most common were single handed versions, which were used with a rattan shield called a Chimalli. Other kinds of Maquahuitl just had blades down one side, not both. There was also the mighty two handed Maquahuitl which resembled a pole arm. Blades on Maquahuitl could be many shapes: triangular, straight and rounded were common. A Maquahuitl could have just 2 or 3 long blades making up one edge or more than 20 tiny blades. Maquahuitl could be made of plane wood, or elaborately decorated, with carved patterns, feathers, paint and precious jewels." -

www.mexicolore.co.uk

Carnage in the Corn

A Fight to the Death Kind of Time...

All Photos Courtesy of:
Craig Lawrence and Sara
Hodges



...stage death that is! There is nothing like making new friends while practicing how to safely slay them, kill them, assassinate them, bump them off, cut them down, or however you'd like to do it, over and over again in very

imaginative ways. Carnage in the Corn 2009, held at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa was a smooth success even for first time attendees (like me), which made up almost half of the group.

Training began shortly after dawn on Saturday, when all the soon to be stage warriors gathered for registration, class sign up, and a warm welcome. Before everyone scattered off to their first class, a group warm up was led by Marianne Kubik. She started us out by saying, "Fighters and Lovers of the World Good Morning!" and encouraged everyone to "work from their power house." Then, with limber bodies and eager minds, we set of to our first class of the morning. *Unarmed* (Jason Tipsword), *Smallsword* (Amie Root), *Talking Trash* (MJ Johnson) and *Shoalin Staff* with the Emperor himself, Mike Chin were some of the choices. Promptly at 11:00 a.m. the second set of classes began including *Knife* (Craig Lawrence), *Found Objects* (DC Wright), *Bloodbath!* as only Casey Kaleba can do it, *Street-Fighting Single Sword* a la Brian LeTraunik, and (winner of the funniest class name) *Swishy-Poke with a Smallsword* taught by Ian Borden. After a break for rest and nourishment, the training began again with Alex Miller's *Single Sword*, *Lookee What I Found!* (MJ Johnson), *3-2-1 Contact* (Brian LeTraunik), and DC Wright's first installment of Jackie Chan combat: *Sticks of Chan* to name a few. Round four of classes concluded the day with *Death and Wounds* hosted by the newest member of the Carnage faculty Harris Smith, *Instant Choreography* (Mike Chin), *Rapier & X* (Ian Bordan), and *Tyler Durden Isn't Home* (Tonya Lynn), focusing on the aspects of acting and reacting to actions in the fight. After a smashing day of classes, those who were brave enough commenced for an epic battle of *Schlomo the Berserker and the God's of Smiting Justice* (thank you DC Wright), followed by an opportunity to watch Proficiency Renewals in Knife, Quarterstaff, Unarmed and Smallsword! All those renewing

passed with flying colors: recommended passes, that is. And...we celebrated...with BBQ!

After an amazing Saturday, the second day began much the same: class sign up, and another lovely warm up with Marianne. With more classes ahead of us and yesterday's classes behind us, everyone was in good spirits. The class line up was just as exciting, if not even more so, than the first day. *Unarmed* (Alex Miller), *Rapier Dagger: Stage Combat Jazz* (Brian LeTraunik), *We Can Add a Point?: Quarterstaff as Spear* (Ian Borden), and *Duel Vs. Ambush* (MJ Johnson). Round two included *Smallsword vs. Rapier* (Mike Chin), *Groin Shots are Funny!* (DC Wright), *Quarterstaff* (Tonya Lynn), and *The Pinch and the Ouch*, otherwise known as the Meisner method of stage combat (Brian LeTraunik). After a break for lunch round three offered So *That's Why We Do that Move* (MJ Johnson), *Fashions of Chan* (DC Wright), *Characters In Conflict* (Harris Smith), *Rapier & Dagger* (Casey Kaleba), and folks running amock in the hallways during *Police Tactics* (Jason Tipsword). The final Carnage class line up was a grand finish including: *I'm Not a Rock-em Sock-em Robot* (Amie Root), *Falls* (Mike Chin),



Sara Hodges & Craig Lawrence in gun-fu

action hero Craig Lawrence's sizzling *Gun Fu* (always listen to your guns, see how they're doing and to get their advice), *Comic Fighting* (Harris Smith), and *Choke on This!* (Ian Borden). With sore bodies and enlightened minds we all gathered together for the grand farewell, which included group pictures and the highly anticipated raffle drawing for scholarships to up-coming stage combat workshops. So, if you attend a stage combat workshop soon be sure to ask your new friends if they attended Carnage in the Corn 2009!

A few words from the head intern: Word has gotten out and Carnage just keeps growing and growing. We doubled our enrollment over last year (which wasn't shabby), added more staff and classes to accommodate the population increase, and had a large influx of intermediate and advanced fighters in addition to the beginners. We were also privileged to be the first to hear about one of the newest regional workshops: the *Lincoln Assassination* to be held at the University of Nebraska/ Lincoln in April.



Marianne Kubik & Tonya Lynn



Claire Yearman & Jay Burckhardt



Casey Kaleba & Kitty Walsh

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.

When: March 11, 2010
Where: Newman Center for the Arts, University of Denver, Denver, Colo.
What: SPT - SiS
CT: Geoffrey Kent
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact Info: Geoffrey Kent - geoffrey@thefightguy.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

When: March 27, 2010
Where: Newman Center for the Arts, University of Denver, Denver, Colo.
What: SPT - UA
Class Info: January 23 to March 27, Saturdays 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cost: \$225 (+\$35 optional SAFD skills proficiency test fee)
CT: Geoffrey Kent
Adjudicator: TBA
Register: 303-446-4892

When: May, 2010
Where: Frostburg State University, Frostburg, Md.
What: SPT/SPRs - UA, BS, and KN
CT: Darrell Rushton
Adjudicator: k. Jenny Jones
Contact: dsrushton@frostburg.edu

When: May, 2010
Where: University of Miami, Miami, Fla.
What: SPT - TBA
CT: Bruce Lecure
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: Bruce Lecure, blecure@aol.com

When: May, 2010
Where: Willamette University, Salem, Ore.
What: SPTs - SS, S&S, SiS and UA; SPRs as needed
Class Info: January to May, M-Th mornings
CT: Jonathan Cole
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: Jonathan Cole,
jon@revengearts.com; www.revengearts.com



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

AAC J. Alex Cordaro reports that The Philadelphia Cheese Steak Stage Combat Workshop turned ten this year! The Philly Four want to thank everyone who came out to make this one of the best yet; FM J. Allen Suddeth, FM Jean-Francois Gagnon of Fight Directors Canada, CT Michelle Ladd, FM J. David Brimmer, CT James Brown, and all of the fantastic students without whom the workshop would not exist! Here's to another Ten!

Great Lakes Region:

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin



By: Jim Stark
e: GLRegRep@safd.org

Friend Mary Shen Barnidge writes: "Moulinet's gonna be ten years old next February! Can you believe it?" *Moulinet* is the newsletter of stage combat in the greater Chicago area.

CT Bruce Cromer played Henry II in *The Lion in Winter* at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company in September; then directed Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at Wright State University (with his son Charlie assisting on the fight direction). He returned for his fifth year as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* at the Cincinnati Playhouse in December. All this while he continues to adapt *Moby Dick* for the Dayton mask-and-puppet company, the Zoot Theatre.

AAC Christopher Elst choreographed a canoe paddle and hockey stick fight for the Edgewood College's Upper Peninsula production of *A Comedy of Errors*. He also worked as a voice actor for Raven Software and performed as Hanna from Hamburg in the Milwaukee premiere of *La Cage Aux Folles* at Off-the-Wall Theatre. He continues to act as webmaster for the Winter Wonderland Workshop in Chicago.

This fall, **AAC Richard Hedderman** taught his usual eight-week single rapier program at Milwaukee's First Stage Children's Theatre Conservatory, and led two workshops on staging violence for the Wisconsin Theatre Education Alliance annual conference.

Friend Dennis Henneman choreographed the violence in Opera Western Reserve's production of Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*, which was performed before a sold-out audience on November 6, 2009 in Youngstown, Ohio. Under the direction of David Vosburgh, with Musical Direction by Susan Davenny Wyner, the opera featured mezzo-soprano Jennifer Barsamia as Carmen, tenor Clayton Hilley as Don José, and baritone

Scott Skiba as Escamillo. The updated production, set in the 1930's, was sung in French with spoken dialogue in English with English supertitles. The violence featured both knife and unarmed combat. Henneman teaches stage combat for the Department of Theater and Dance at Youngstown State University.

CT/FD Robin McFarquhar recently choreographed *Richard III* at Chicago Shakespeare, with Wallace Acton in the title role.

AAC Adam Noble recently completed fight choreography for the opera *Romeo et Juliette* at the Jacobs School of Music, as well as *BOOM* for the Cardinal Stage Company. At Indiana University, Adam is in rehearsals for *Parentheses of Blood* and *Marat/Sade*. Adam is also in production, as Action Coordinator, on a martial arts webisode series. The series, loosely based on Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, is entitled *Student Seven*, and features a bokken "honor duel" in every episode.

CT/FD Nick Sandys has just finished directing the fights for the following shows in Chicagoland: *Faust* and *Ernani* at The Lyric Opera of Chicago; *All My Sons* at Timeline; *The Castle of Otranto* at First Folio Theatre; *The Flowers* at About Face Theatre; *High Holidays* at The Goodman Theatre; and *1001* and *Holes* for Chicago Playworks/The Theatre School at DePaul University, where he has also been teaching BFA and MFA combat. He is about to finish fights for the co-production/remount of Lookingglass Theatre's *Around The World In 80 Days* at Centerstage, Baltimore, before hoofing it for the holidays in the ensemble of the Marriott Theatre's *My Fair Lady*. After that he'll be taking a respite from all that violence.

CT Jim Stark turns producer this month, presenting *A Child's*

Christmas in Wales for the Riverrun Theatre Company, where he is Artistic Director. His next project will be choreographing violence for the medieval dramas *Noah and the Flood* and *The Disobedient Child* at Hanover College.

CT and SAFD VP John Tovar has kept busy in recent months, choreographing the violence for the world premiere of *Summer People* at The Gift Theatre, an all female version of *Romeo and Juliet* (Janus Theatre), and *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Moraine Valley Community College). He has two Unarmed SPTs coming up at Elgin Community College and College of DuPage. John and the WWW Team are gearing up for the 2010 Winter Wonderland Workshop. The staff has been selected and registration is now on line. For early registration, go to: <http://www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com/registration/>

FM David Woolley got rave reviews for his work on *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* at Victory Gardens, including WWE-style wrestling.

International:



By: **Bret Yount**
e: IntlRegRep@safd.org

The past year saw **FM Richard Ryan** completing work as Fight Coordinator on *Sherlock Holmes*, directed by Guy Ritchie and starring Robert Downey Jr. as Holmes and Jude Law as Dr Watson. He collaborated on the fights with Eric Oram, who many may remember from his days as an AC and intern at the NSCW in Las Vegas in the early 90s. The film was released on December 25, 2009. Following this

he was Stunt Coordinator on *Rolling Thunder*, which filmed in North Carolina. He was also Fight Coordinator in *Gulliver's Travels*, starring Jack Black. After working on the *Gulliver's Travels*, he went to Budapest, Hungary to work as Swordmaster on *Eagle of the Ninth*, a film directed by Kevin MacDonald and starring Tatum Channing and Jamie Bell. After finishing work on this, Ryan was the Stunt Coordinator on *Ironclad*, a film set to the backdrop of the siege of Rochester Castle in 1215 AD and which had tons of fights, horses, fire and high falls.....all in the ever present Welsh rain! Filming was in and around the new Dragon studios just outside of Cardiff. *Gulliver's Travels*, *Eagle* and *Ironclad* are all due for release in 2010, along with *Solomon Kane*, a film based on the character created by Robert E. Howard (*Conan*, *Kull the Conqueror* and *Red Sonja*). *Kane* is a 16th century Puritan who wanders the world with no apparent goal other than to vanquish evil in all its forms. Other highlights include: *The Dark Knight*, on which Ryan was the Fight Arranger, won a SAG award for 'Best Stunt Ensemble' as well as a Taurus World Stunt Award for 'Best Fight'. The Taurus was the third time in five years that fights/action, which Ryan has coordinated, received a nomination.

In addition to his teaching, **CT Bret Yount** has been very busy with fight direction. Projects he has worked on include: *This Isn't Romance* and *Shraddha* (Soho Theatre), *The Caretaker* starring Jonathan Pryce (Liverpool Everyman and West End transfer), *Category B*, *Seize the Day* and *Detaining Justice* (part of the Not Black and White season at Tricycle Theatre), *Babylone* (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry and West End transfer), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Young Vic), *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* (Hampstead Theatre and The Curve, Leicester), *House of Special Purpose* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Aladdin* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East), *Dick Whittington* (Liverpool Everyman), *The Harder They Come* (Barbican/Toronto/Miami) and *Bugles in The Great Game* (Tricycle Theatre and possible off-Broadway transfer).

Mid-America Region:

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



By: **Mike Speck**
e: MARegRep@safd.org

AC Jennifer Allton was brought in as a Guest Artist and Fight Director at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. During her residency at Simpson, she trained her fighters in basic Unarmed and Quarterstaff. She choreographed all the violence for *Henry V*, using found-object bashing weapons for the battles. The crazy-cool weapons included wood crutches with metal ends, a chain-and-showerhead welded to a 5-foot bolt counterweighted with a c-clamp, a wheelchair wheel, and a block-and-tackle, plus staffs of various sizes and shapes. Jennifer also offered a workshop in hand-to-hand combat, visited department classes and was a presenter as part of Theatre Simpson's ongoing Vocational Journey Conversations program.

AAC Danette Baker has taught five Unarmed stage combat workshop classes: three for a local theatre's "high school days" and two at a community college. She is doing the fight choreography for a local high school production of *Oklahoma!*, and will participate in an unarmed stage combat workshop for the Kansas Thespian Conference in January. After this she will choreograph a spring production of *Picnic* at Wichita Center for the Arts. She also served as the head intern at *Carnage In The Corn*.

AC Karla Kash worked at the *Carnage in the Corn II* and recently finished directing and

choreographing *Cabaret* for Drake University.

AAC Mike Speck is recovering from *Carnage* in the Corn II, which has more than doubled in size from last year! Eleven staff members renewed successfully in four different weapon styles and three new SAFD members joined. Speck is preparing basic workshops for the Minnesota Thespian Festival and for St. Mary's University of Minnesota, interning at the 2010 WWW, and teaching *Unrehearsed Shakespeare* at the Eureka workshop in May 2010.

New England Region:

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



By: Rob Najarian
e: NERegRep@safd.org

AC Meron Langsner was the Fight Director for *Dead Man's Cell Phone* with the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, *Lady* with Zeitgeist Stage, *Concord Marrow* with Exquisite Corps (for which he also worked on the fights dramaturgically with the playwright), and the national educational tour of *Classics!* with Chamber Theater Productions. He directed *No Exit* at Tufts University, and recently signed a contract to have his play, *The Godot Variations*, licensed and anthologized by Smith & Kraus. Continuing his publication, he has had three poems published by Bear Creek Haiku. This semester he taught a theatre appreciation course for the Osher Life Long Learning Institute at Tufts University,

where he continues to pursue his PhD in Drama, and where he received a citation for contributions to undergraduate development. He also works as a self-defense instructor for IMPACT Boston, a non profit violence prevention organization.

CT Adam Mclean has been busy in the last several months. The brunt of his time was consumed directing *Giants Have Us in Their Books* and scenes/monologues from *Cloud Tectonics* by Jose Rivera at Newton North High School. In addition, thanks to his fight friends CT Robert Najarian and AAC Ted Hewlett, he has been very busy been doing fights for Shakespeare Now's *Macbeth*, Boston Playwrights Theatre on *Little Black Dress*, the Nora Theatre's *The Caretaker*, and Harvard University Hyperion Theatre's *Richard II*. Adam just started work on Harvard's *Bat Boy* and is looking forward to directing Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for MetroWest Opera in the spring. The rest of his time is occupied by composing copious amounts of original music: <http://adamclean.bandcamp.com> and playing with his 18 lbs. Boston Terrier, Moxie.

CT Robert Najarian had a very fulfilling autumn with three productions, for which he provided fight direction: *Taming of the Shrew* with Actors' Shakespeare Project, *Carmen* with Boston Lyric Opera (co-fight direction with AAC Ted Hewlett,) and a new play, *The Hill*, with Boston University. Also, Robert can still be seen in the well-received production *Sleep No More* with the American Repertory Theatre through January 3, 2010. From all of us in the Northeast to all of our colleagues and friends across the country and in the corners of the world, we hope you had happy holidays!

Friend Paul Ugalde has been busy as a fight doctor this fall. Paul was called in to a couple of productions where fights had been loosely staged but needed some attention toward safety and specific needs. He provided basic training in swordplay for a high school production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, and is now brushing up a

routine for *I Hate Hamlet* at Middlebury College.

Northwest Region: Washington, Alaska, Oregon



By: Heidi Wolf
e: NWRegRep@safd.org

AAC Casey Brown completed recertifications in Unarmed and Quarterstaff, appeared in Seattle Opera's production of Wagner's *The Ring* alongside FM Geoffrey Alm, and continues to teach acting and physical theatre at Studio-East in Kirkland, Wash. Casey has also been very active with Performer's Forge as a choreographer, writer and performer. In the fall, he made a return as an actor, playing Oliver and a few other parts in Harlequin Productions' production of *As You Like It*. He also was Fight Captain and assistant to FD Bob MacDougall for this production. Casey is looking ahead with renewed focus on his theatre and teaching work in 2010.

AAC Kevin Inouye has had a more stylized than typical fall, teaching stage combat for a ballet conservatory and providing choreography and consultation for a dance interpretation of the WTO riots. He also coordinated fights and played a mercenary in the web pitch *Agent 5*. Weapons rentals continue to be offered through www.fightdesigner.com.



Pacific West Region:

California, Nevada, Arizona,
Hawaii



By: Robert Hamilton
e: PWRegRep@safd.org

This region did not submit a report
for this issue.

Rocky Mountain Region:

Idaho, Montana, Colorado,
Utah, Wyoming



By: Benaiah Anderson
e: RMRegRep@safd.org

AC Benaiah Anderson has had a very "pirate" semester, choreographing three pirate-themed shows, *A Changing of the Wind*, *Captain Bree and Her Lady Pirates*, and *Pirates of Penzance*, all for high school theatre departments. He also choreographed the violence for Town Hall Arts Center's production of *Oliver*, and will begin rehearsals as Dwight in *Dead Man's Cell Phone* in January.

FD/CT and SAFD President

Geoffrey Kent is currently in rehearsal for *The SantaLand Diaries* and then will appear in, and fight direct, *Eventide* and *Othello* for DCTC this spring. He also has two SPTs in the works, *Single Sword* for the University of Denver and *Unarmed* for the Denver Center Theatre Academy; both start in January 2010. March 27-28 marks the return of the Rumble in the Rockies Regional Workshop (more to come). Fight Direction for the National Theatre Conservatory's *Hamlet*, teaching at a regional workshop in Wyoming for Memorial day and a three week trip to Rome rounds out his spring. This summer, Geoffrey will return to the Colorado Shakespeare Festival to fight direct and act in their fifty-third season: *King Lear*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Our Town*, *Measure for Measure* & *The Fantasticks*. For more information go to: www.thefightguy.com

AAC Terry Kroenung's fight-filled fantasy novel *Brimstone and Lily*, featuring a smart-aleck talking sword, was a finalist at the Colorado Gold Writers' Conference in Denver. His student fight group, Niwot Swashbucklers, performed every SAFD weapon style in a demonstration to accompany the DVD release of *Reclaiming the Blade*, and the group now has its own YouTube channel. Terry will direct *Much Ado About Nothing* in February with a whip-wielding female Don John (sigh no more, ladies!).

AAC Michael Mueller traveled to Ohio in November to test in QS with some fantastic people. This test marked his completion of the eight weapons recognized by the SAFD, and he expresses his extreme gratitude for all the help, support, and fun provided over the long weekend. In addition his continued training, he completed fight direction of The Alley Repertory Theater's production of *Sex a.k.a. Wieners and Boobs* and is gearing up to fight direct *Othello* for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's outreach tour, *Twelfth Night* at Kuna High School, and *Romeo and Juliet* for the College of Idaho. He is also teaching for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's spring drama school.

South East Region:

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



By: John Cashman
e: SERegRep@safd.org

CT Bob Borwick is adjusting to life in Tennessee. He recently served as Fight Director for the Tennessee Wesleyan College production of *The Fantasticks*. Bob also recently published his book, *Crazy Janet*, available on Amazon.com.

CT/FD Jeff A.R. Jones spent the fall teaching Unarmed to students at Duke University and private classes. Chris Beaulieu came by for a couple of weeks to do a mentorship in teaching and some fine knowledge flowed both ways. This winter, he will be doing *Macbeth* at Durham School of the Arts and *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* at ManBites Dog. He is also consulting on the violence in a new script currently being written.

CT/FD Colleen Kelly, CT John Paul Scheidler and **AAC Marianne Kubik** hosted a successful "SAFD South East Regional Meeting" on November 15, offered for the first time at the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Va. Over 30 participants met in the world's only re-creation of Shakespeare's indoor theater to examine the topic: "Renaissance Staging Practices on the Original Blackfriars Stage." The morning session, which included a look at period-specific staging challenges and a live performance of a dagger fight with participation by all attendees, was followed by a group luncheon and afternoon master classes. FM Emeritus J.D. Martinez,

from Washington and Lee University, shared his work in Renaissance fighting practices and staging fights at the reconstructed Globe Theatre. CT Brad Waller came down from D.C. with several students to work with participants on the "Old Ways" of wrestling and dagger fighting, referencing the Pressa attack and counter system. FD Kelly and her actors from the American Shakespeare Center also demonstrated Kelly's *Romeo and Juliet* fight choreography. An informal dinner and further discussion was enjoyed by those remaining in Staunton after the day's events. A special thanks goes to Mary Baldwin College and the American Shakespeare Center for sponsoring this inaugural event at the Blackfriars.

AAC Marianne Kubik also assisted JP Scheidler teach SPTs in Unarmed and Rapier & Dagger to the graduate students at University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. They tested on December 15, 2009, with FM Dale Girard adjudicating.

CT/FD Bruce Lecure fight directed *Hamlet* in the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre at the University of Miami.

CT/FD Scot J. Mann had a busy fall choreographing *A Life in the Theatre*, starring Andre' de Shields, for the Alliance Theatre, and the critically acclaimed *Julius Caesar* for Georgia Shakespeare in Atlanta. Scot instructed the Theatrical Firearms Safety Course at Frostburg University and Gainesville State University with AC Kelly Martin assisting. In addition, Scot continued to work with the Theatrical Firearms Committee and the Governing Body on further refinement of the Theatrical Firearms Safety Certificate and Instructor programs. In September, Scot and AC Kelly Martin taught an Unarmed workshop for the Opera Program at Mercer University. Also at Mercer, where he serves as Theatre Director, he directed *An Enemy of the People*, directed and choreographed violence for *The Lucky Spot*, and taught Playwriting and Introduction to Acting. In October, Scot and Kelly also performed their whip routine, *Whip Dance el Loco*, for the Mercer Arts/

Susan G. Komen for the Cure in support of breast cancer research.

South West Region:

New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma,
Arkansas, Louisiana



By: Ann Candler Harlan
e: SWRegRep@safd.org

FM Brian Byrnes is on sabbatical this year, and **CT Leraldo Anzaldúa** is teaching stage combat and movement in his absence at the University of Houston.

AC Ann Candler Harlan recently taught a workshop in basic staged combat for Friend Cheryl Kaplan's acting class at San Jacinto College.

CT Bill Lengfelder writes from London, where he is appearing as a Sage in *Rite of Spring* for the Fabulous Beast production at the English National Opera, on the Coliseum Stage (where Charlie Chaplin played!) He also did the fights for *Othello* at the Dallas Opera in October.

FD Jack Young is directing *Hamlet* for Promethean Theatre Company in NYC in December, then off on the recruiting trail to find the next acting ensemble to start working toward their MFAs at the University of Houston in Fall 2010.

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 what is on file. The website will have the capability to list and track this information very soon, but until all the issues are worked out, emailing the Secretary is the best option.

Don't
Procrastinate!

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wants to thank everyone who came and shared the fun at our 10 Year Anniversary!



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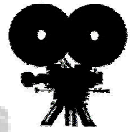


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The Society of American Fight Directors and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts present

The 30th Annual National Stage Combat Workshop

July 5 – July 23, 2010

Introduction to Stage Combat

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

Basic Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency

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

Advanced Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency

For students seeking additional weapons, advanced techniques and an emphasis on performance. Previous SPT experience is required.

Teacher Certification Workshop

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

Scholarships and SAFD Member Discounts available!

Up to 25% off tuition!

For up to date workshop information or to fill out an application please check the SAFD website at

www.safd.org/training/nscw

Come celebrate 30 years of NSCW Stage Combat this summer!

photo by mccormackphotography.com

FROM THE NSCW COORDINATOR:

Greetings! I hope that the holiday season has left you healthy, wealthy and ready to tackle 2010 with passion, energy and artistry!

As NSCW coordinator, I'm stepping into some very big shoes. I need to thank my predecessor and colleague Angela Bonacasa for leaving me a workshop that is perfect in just about every way. Her passion, tireless commitment and desire for excellence helped to create the UNCSA workshops, from their inception in 2004 to the present. I'm both absolutely thrilled and positively terrified to be taking on this post for 2010. And what a 2010 it's going to be!

This year's workshop will be our 30th NSCW. For 30 years, the SAFD and its members have gotten together in July for three weeks of 'peace, love and swordplay'. This year, we will be aspiring to create the largest SAFD National Stage Combat Workshop ever, as we hold four training courses at once:

The Introduction to Stage Combat (ISC), for absolute beginners and high school students;
The Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency (ACSP), our tried and true three-weapon Actor Combatant Workshop;
The Advanced Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency (AACSP), for those who've passed three or more SPTs;
and
The Teacher Certification Workshop (TCW), our training and certification workshop for prospective stage combat educators.

Why ANOTHER acronym, you may ask. Well, since the workshops are now being offered for high school and college credit at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, we thought it might be a good idea to match what it says in their summer course book.

The workshops are still the same: The ISC and ACSP will continue with their tried and true formats-the ISC will cover 10.5 hours of all eight SAFD disciplines, supplemented with master classes and movies, and the ACSP will focus on training and SPTs in Unarmed, Rapier and Dagger, and Broadsword.

The Advanced Workshop will follow much the same format as in years' past, with renewals in current weapons and additional weapons added based on student need. We will also be offering Theatrical Firearm training, a huge success in our 2009 workshop, along with continuing to stress stage combat in performance. And, you need not be an Advanced Actor/Combatant to apply in 2010: three SPTs are enough to apply.

Lastly, there's our TCW, where our very best actor/combatants are working hard to achieve their Certified Teacher status. Always a challenge but well worth it, many of my best NSCW memories come from my Teacher Training Workshop in 2001, and I expect this year's workshop to be nothing short of amazing and awe-inspiring.

All in all, 2010 promises to be a great workshop, with members of ALL ranks coming together to do what they love to do and enjoy the camaraderie. I sincerely hope you'll find the time to come and join us in July!

Just a quick note: all SAFD members are eligible for tuition discounts for the ISC, ACSP and AACSP, based on years of membership. Discounts start at 5% for one year of membership, and go up by 5% per year, to a maximum of 25%. If you have been a member for 2 years, for example, your discount would be 10%, and so on. SAFD members can also find the application requirements for other scholarships sponsored by the SAFD in this edition of *The Cutting Edge*. For further information about all of the SAFD workshops, including application requirements, please check out the SAFD website at www.safd.org/training/nscw.

As new NSCW coordinator, I promise to stay committed to giving the NSCW students the best training and staffing that the SAFD can offer. I swear to give my faculty and staff the resources to be the best teachers that they can be. Finally, I will do everything in my power to make the NSCW at UNCSA an amazing, inspiring and rewarding experience for all.

If you have any questions at all, please drop me a line at nscwcoordinator@safd.org.

With gratitude and respect,

Mike K. Mahaffey
NSCW Coordinator

Call For NSCW Scholarship Applications!

This year, the SAFD will offer at least one, if not several, scholarships to attend the National Stage Combat Workshops. How many the Governing Body can award this year, due to mitigating factors such as the economic downturn and lowered attendance at the NSCW, will depend on many financial factors. Rest assured, we want you to attend the NSCW. And, if possible, we want you to go on us.

A candidate for these scholarships must be nominated by a member of the SAFD Governing Body, Fight Master, Fight Director or Certified Teacher. In addition, a candidate for these scholarships must:

Be a member of the SAFD in good standing for a minimum of one (1) year

Demonstrate an aptitude toward, and a strong desire to learn the skills and performance styles of the stage combative arts

Demonstrate a need (not necessarily financial) for said scholarship

Be pursuant of or have received an undergraduate degree in performance studies (or other such equivalent training)

The online applications are currently being set up and tested. Once they become available an email blast will be sent to the membership with more specific details. Candidates interested in applying will be directed to our website at www.safd.org, since all applications are now being done electronically. This website is foreign to many of us, so if you hit a snag, have a question, comment or problem, hit my email at secretary@safd.org or my cell at (704) 402-0692.

Application requirements are as follows:

Nomination letter from the petitioner

Letter of Intent

Resume (CV if available)

Copies of any and all SAFD certificates

Proof of membership (minimum of one year)

Letter of recommendation from one other party

The scholarship deadline this year will be **March 31, 2010**. All application materials not submitted by this date cannot be accepted. All recipients will be notified by **April 15, 2010**.

Now, for more information on potential scholarships for 2010:

The Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. Memorial Scholarship (full tuition scholarship) is presented annually to a SAFD Friend, Actor Combatant or Advanced Actor/Combatant in good standing who, in the opinion of the Governing Body, has shown themselves worthy of assistance in continuing their training. This scholarship is given in memory and honor of swashbuckling film star and SAFD Honorary Member, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

The Patrick "Paddy" Crean Memorial Scholarship (partial tuition scholarship) is given to honor the memory of a great teacher, friend and inspiration to the SAFD and the art of stage combat.

Ian McKay (partial tuition scholarship) is given in memory of one of the founding members of the British Society of Fight Directors, and friend and mentor to SAFD founder David Boushey.

We look forward to receiving your applications and wish you all the best in the New Year.

Your Secretary,

Willie Meybohm

Call For Teaching Assistants & Interns!

This year the NSCW will be celebrating its 30th anniversary, and we are looking for a special group of Teaching Assistants and Interns to be part of the fun (and hard work!) that will turn our **biggest** workshop to date into the **best** workshop to date. And we need your help!

Workshop Information:

Workshops: Introduction to Stage Combat, Basic Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency, Advanced Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency, Teacher Certification Workshop

Location: University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Dates: July 5 to July 23. All faculty and staff members are required to be on site from July 3 through the evening of July 23.

Positions Available: Five Teaching Assistants and Eight Interns

Contact: NSCW Coordinator Mike K Mahaffey @ nscwcoordinator@safd.org

Teaching Assistants:

Teaching Assistants will be chosen from the ranks of current SAFD Certified Teachers and Fight Directors. CTs and FDs who have not attended the NSCW in some time are encouraged to apply.

Compensation:

Teaching Assistants will receive salary compensation, per diem, housing and travel reimbursement. The exact figures will be determined by enrollment.

Job Description:

If selected, you will be asked to assist in the TCW, the BACSP or the AACSP, **and** teach one or more of the following: master classes or a series of classes in a non testing weapon for the BACSP, AACSP or ISC and/or renewals in the AACSP. You will also be asked to fill in whenever needed.

Selection Procedures:

The NSCW Staffing Committee will select Teaching Assistants, with input from the coordinator. Whenever possible, staff will be selected based on an equal division of new and senior CTs. To ensure an equitable rotation, preference will be given to those applicants who have either never served as an NSCW Teaching Assistant, or have not served as a NSCW Teaching Assistant in some time.

Application Requirements:

To apply for a Teaching Assistant Position, please submit your CV or Stage Combat Resumes, including teaching and choreography experience, as well as a letter of intent that outlines:

Previous NSCW experience

Any previous Regional Workshop experience

Your contact information

If you have a car that you would be willing to use for SAFD business/transportation (will receive compensation for fuel).

*Please note that this will have no impact on your selection, but is for informational purposes only.

Interns:

Interns will be chosen from the ranks of current SAFD Actor Combatants and Advanced Actor Combatants. Those who have not served as an intern previously are encouraged to apply.

Compensation:

Interns will receive housing and a small stipend.

Job Description:

Interns are the backbone and workhorses of the NSCW. If selected, you will have a variety of responsibilities, which may include, but are not limited to: preparation of spaces, data entry, transportation, workshop morale, assisting in the ISC, serving as the third staff member in the BACSP / AACSP classroom, runner, weapon maintenance, and much more.

Selection Procedures

Priority for the available Intern positions will be given to SAFD members holding Advanced Actor/Combatant status. In the event that there are not enough applicants who meet this qualification, then choices will be based upon the highest degree of skill proficiency. The number of years that have passed since an applicant has served on an NSCW staff will also be taken into account.

Application Requirements:

To apply for an Intern position, please submit the following materials:

A Letter of Intent outlining the following:

Previous NSCW experience

If you have computer/word processing skills*

If you have a car you would be willing to use for SAFD business/transportation (will receive compensation for fuel)*Please note that this will have no impact on your selection, but is for informational purposes only.

Your contact information

Proof of paid up dues

Proof of valid Advanced Actor/Combatant Status (if applicable)

Picture and acting resume

Stage combat resume

Letter of recommendation from one of the following: Fight Master, Fight Director, Certified Teacher.

How To Apply:

The online applications are currently being set up and tested. Once they become available an email blast will be sent to the membership with more specific details. Candidates interested in applying will be directed to our website at www.safd.org, since all applications are now being done electronically. This website is foreign to many of us, so if you hit a snag, have a question, comment or problem please email SAFD President Geoffrey Kent and/or NSCW Coordinator Mike K Mahaffey at: president@safd.org and NSCWcoordinator@safd.org

Deadlines:

The deadline for all applications is March 31, 2010. Applicants will be notified of staffing decisions no later than April 15, 2010, and those chosen must accept or decline the offer no later than April 30, 2010.

CALL FOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE CUTTING EDGE!

The Cutting Edge is seeking a new Associate Editor to serve beginning in March 2010. As a bi-monthly publication, *The Cutting Edge* publishes articles, information, and reports for its growing membership and is committed to assisting contributing members through the publication process. We strive to strengthen communication for the SAFD membership and to provide an outlet for the wealth of information they have to share.

Responsibilities for this position may include the following:

- Contacting regional workshop coordinators to obtain advertisements for upcoming workshops, organize who will write the report for the workshop, and assist the writer in completing a detailed report on or before the deadline for the next issue.
- Generating new material, columns, and/or contributing to the existing sections listed with each issue
- Initiating interview articles with the membership such as the *Footlight* and *Spotlight* series
- Collecting information on upcoming SPTs and SPRs across the country

Qualified applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Consistent access to the Internet and email
- An ability to work with MS Word, MS Excel, Adobe Acrobat and some kind of picture preview application
- Have a working knowledge of both Mac and PC applications and software differences
- The ability to produce articles and information in a timely fashion

If you are interested in finding a creative way to become more involved with this great organization please consider applying. This is an opportunity for new members to network and become more familiar with all that the SAFD has to offer. It also provides new ways for long-standing members to give back and affords some the motivation to publish work of their own.

This position is limited to SAFD members and is currently a volunteer opportunity. The search process will begin **February 1, 2010** and all candidates must have sent their information by this date.

To apply, send an updated CV, a cover letter noting qualifications and what you hope to do for *The Cutting Edge*, as well as contact information for three references to Michael Mueller, Editor-in-Chief, at cuttingedge@safd.org or mjmueller3@aol.com. Thank you for considering this great opportunity.

Call For Applications - SAFD Regional Representatives Mid-America, Pacific West & Southwest

Call for Applications

SAFD Regional Representatives – Mid-America, Pacific West and Southwest

The Society of American Fight Directors Regional Representative Coordinator is seeking applicants interested in serving as a Regional Representative for the Mid-America, Pacific West and Southwest Regions:

1. Mid-America: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
2. Pacific West: California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada
3. Southwest: Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico

Each Regional Representative is a volunteer position responsible for working with the Regional Representative Coordinator, in cooperation with the SAFD Governing Body, to administer the following duties:

- Maintain a working knowledge of the current policies of the SAFD
- Make initial contact with each regional member
- Be available for answering questions concerning the art form and the SAFD
- Keep local membership updated with the growth and development of the SAFD, including nominations and elections, proposed policy changes, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Submit a member report to both the Regional Rep. Coordinator and the Regional Rep. Editor of *The Cutting Edge* for publication six (6) times per year
- Hold at least one (1) regional informational meeting per year where all regional members are invited
- Attend one (1) yearly committee meeting at the Fight Director Workshop and Conference or have a surrogate present a written annual report
- Ability/Willingness to communicate openly, frequently and in a timely fashion with Regional Rep. Coordinator and members of Governing Body

In return for services, the SAFD will:

- Waive dues for each representative while they hold office
- Print each Regional Representative's name and contact information in *The Fight Master* and on the official SAFD web page
- Deliver a second copy of all SAFD publications to the Regional Representative. This includes, but is not limited to, *The Fight Master*, *The Cutting Edge*, SAFD workshop posters, and brochures
- Deliver an updated list of all SAFD members in an assigned region at least once per year
- Permit any Regional Representative, regardless of rank, to attend the workshops held at the Fight Director Workshop and Conference
- Provide an annual operating budget of \$1.00 for each member in good standing situated within his or her region. No regional budget is to exceed \$100.00

Qualified applicants should meet the following requirements:

- A member in good standing for at least three years with the SAFD
- Reside in the region of applied representative
- Detail oriented with excellent communication skills
- Reliable access to the internet

This position will be effective as of February 1, 2010 and last for a minimum of three years. At the conclusion of the three-year term the option to renew for another term will be provided.

Please submit a letter of intent, updated CV, and contact information for three references via email or post by **January 20, 2010** to the following addresses:

regional-rep-coordinator@safd.org

or

SAFD Regional Rep Coordinator
H. Russ Brown
207 Senter Avenue
Whitehouse, TX 75791

Applicants will be contacted and interviewed individually thereafter. We hope you'll join us and help serve the SAFD!

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.

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
- ☞ Discounts to national and regional stage combat workshops
- ☞ The right to vote for members of the Executive Committee and Governing Body
- ☞ A free gift (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 (check one): Paid online via Credit Card (please include copy of online receipt) Paid via enclosed Check Check # _____ Other _____

General Information

Membership Level (please check one):

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

Name (First, MI, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

Work Address: _____

Materials should be mailed to (please check one):

Home Work

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Union Affiliations (SAG, AEA, etc.): _____

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			
Unnamed			

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

Word of the Issue:

Abstraction

SAFD: The process of reducing a fight sequence, style or form down to its most basic or essential characteristics.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary: Etymology of abstract: Medieval Latin *abstractus*, from Latin, past participle of *abstrahere* to drag away, from *abs-*, *ab-* + *trahere* to pull, draw
a. to consider apart from application to or association with a particular instance

FIND THE SAFD ONLINE!

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/safdorg>

Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/SAFDFirearms>

Facebook: "Society of American Fight Directors"



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.