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The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge, September/October 1990, Vol. 1 Issue 5

The Society of American Fight Directors

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THE CUTTING EDGE

Volume 1, Issue 5

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

September/October, 1990

F. Y. I.

Colonial Armory

Rod Casteel says check out his new Schloger blade. It's much improved and cheaper than the Musketeer blade. However, it may not fit a hilt meant for a Musketeer.

Rod has also acquired diamond shaped "Town Sword" blades with steel scabbards.

Colonial Armory

106 Lynnbrook
Eugene, OR 97404
(503) 688-0607

Arms and Armor

The Whitte Museum in San Antonio has commissioned Arms and Armor to create replicas of Spanish armor and weapons for the Living History portion of their exhibit on the Conquistadores.

Arms and Armor

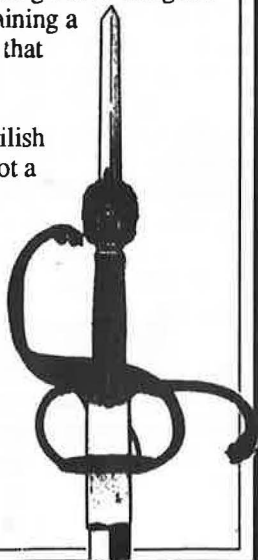
1101 Stinson Blvd. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 331-6473

Did You Know . . . ?

In Richard Lester's film of *The Three Musketeers*, the Duke of Buckingham gives D'artagnan a rapier containing a hidden blade that springs from the pommel.

This devilish device was not a Hollywood invention, but a real sword with a chiselled steel hilt made by Oyhmar Wetter in 1594.

★ ★ ★



SAFD Blows into Windy City for 1990 ATHE Conference

The SAFD was well represented at this year's ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) conference with President J. Allen Suddeth, Fight Masters Erik Fredericksen and Richard Raether, and Chairman of the Board Jeff Koep in attendance. The conference was held August 8-11 at the Palmer House in Chicago. The theme of this year's conference was *Issues of the 90s* and the SAFD was there to make sure stage combat is one of those issues.

Mr. Suddeth sat on a panel of movement specialists, along with Ed Bouchard of the North American Society of teachers of the Alexander Technique, Lloyd Williamson of Rutgers University and the Actors Movement studio, fellow SAFD member Colleen Kelly of SETC, and Karen Bradley of the Laban Bartenieff Institute.

Mr. Fredericksen and Mr. Suddeth conducted a workshop on the safe use of swords and firearms on stage. Suddeth, Fredericksen, and Raether presented a

panel chaired by Mr. Koep on the SAFD—who we are and what we do.

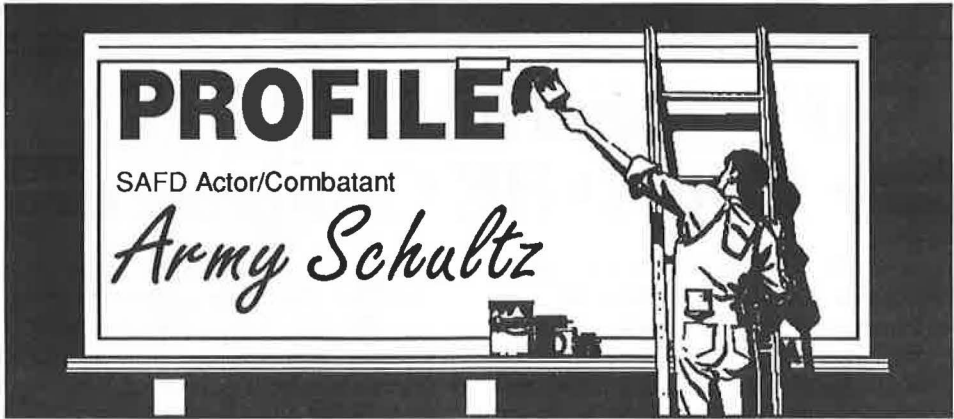
All these things appeared in the program but, as with most conventions, there was a lot of politicking between panels. The SAFD is anxious to gain more recognition, so the organization has applied to be an ATHE focus group. Focus groups have a say in the yearly meeting, provide programming for the yearly conference, and can apply for funding from ATHE.

Proposals are already in the works for panels at next year's ATHE conference in Seattle. Jeff Koep was busy drumming up support for the SAFD library and working out details for a scholarship to the National Stage Combat Workshop—details to be forthcoming.

It was a very productive four days, and many thanks go to SAFD members Dan Carter and Colleen Kelly for all of their help and assistance in Chicago.

★ ★ ★





Profiles is a regular feature in The Cutting Edge saluting SAFD members across the country.

"I guess it was Errol Flynn, really. I was crazy about his movies when I was a kid. Captain Blood was the first one I saw—I must have been about ten. I would even turn the channel from sports if a Flynn movie was showing."

Armand (Army) Schultz talks about how his interest in swordplay got its start. It is an interest that

has severed him well as a working actor. In plays from *Coriolanus* to *Paradise Lost*, at theatres from Baltimore's Center Stage to the Public, Army has found his stage combat skills a plus.

Army is currently putting his sword arm to good use as Richmond opposite Denzel Washington's villainous *Richard III* for the New York Shakespeare Festival.

"When I auditioned the director chatted about the Patrick Creen award—he'd worked with Paddy." The idea of

having a Richmond who was a first rate fighter, as well as a first rate actor, was appealing to the director as this was to be Denzel's first time with a sword. Army landed the role and, incidentally, can't say enough in Denzel's praise, both as an actor and as a fight partner, first time or no.

How did an erstwhile Errol Flynn fan start studying the sword in earnest? "It so happened that the first play I ever acted in involved swords. It was *Romeo and Juliet* at State University of New York-Niagara."

Army was cast in the role of Gregory and, along with the rest of the cast, reported to the college fencing instructor for fencing class.

Then he landed the title role in *Cyrano de Bergerac* during graduate school at Catholic University, so once again Army got a chance to swing a sword on stage.

"But the first time the idea of real training occurred to me was when I was working as an actor-in-residence at

Cornell University in 1986-87. David Boushey was brought in to teach some combat workshops. He encouraged me to think about the NSCW and told me to get in touch with David Leong when I got back to New York."

Army followed up on this and David Leong invited him to come watch the next fight test at A.C.T.S. (Actors' Combat Training School—Allen Suddeth's students). Seeing the actors perform their fight test scenes made up Army's mind and he signed on for the '87 NSCW.

Although I had fighting experience, my first realstage combat training came in Memphis at the NSCW.

"It was a business decision for me—I wanted a saleable skill that would aid me when I was up for classical roles. I was very focused in Memphis; I crammed every night."

The concentration Army poured into his training paid off. He was the winner the 1987 Patrick Creen award for best combatant at the workshop.

Returning to New York, Army continued studying with Allen Suddeth at A.C.T.S., something he still does when (his acting career permits.

Working at theatres in a variety of roles, Army often finds himself asked to stage fights as well as perform them, but it's a practice he's consciously tried to steer clear of. "Right now, my whole focus is on acting. I hate to splinter that focus. There are too many good fight choreographers out there who do this for a living. I always try to recommend one of them."

The fight choreographer for the current *Richard III* production was SAFD member Martin Pistone, who promptly made Army the fight captain.

"Basically, we've got one major battle scene and a couple of great murders I've got to keep an eye on," laughs Army. The biggest safety factor in performing at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park has been the weather. Rain has made keeping one's footing a major concern.

For Army Schultz, a working actor's life is occasionally a slippery business—but sometimes, when you've got your armour on and your sword in hand, it can make you feel just like Errol Flynn.

★ ★ ★





News from the Society of British Fight Directors

Henry Marshall, President of the Society of British Fight Directors is swapping newsletters with the SAFD and reports on the British Society's ongoing battle with Actors Equity.

Under British regulations, members of the BSFD are barred from working in film or TV. Only members of the stunt register may perform or choreograph fights in those mediums.

This seemingly nonsensical ruling was to insure that knowledgeable people only were involved in staging and performing fights. The BSFD has retorted in frustration that fighting is what they are all about and their particular area of expertise.

Of late, the scales seem to be tipping in favor of the BSFD—they are waiting to see if British Equity follows through on promises made. It's enough to make one appreciate the relatively free and open situation in America.

(For more on breaking into film and television work, see David Boushey's article on page four. Ed.)

★★★

Changes in the Works for the *Fight Master*

SAFD members watching their mailboxes for the Fall issue of the *Fight Master* can relax for a while, reports Editor Margaret Raether. There are some changes in the works and they are taking a little time. "We're shooting for a November mailing," she avows bravely.

One of the biggest changes is that the *Fight Master* will be published twice yearly instead of three times. "With *The Cutting Edge* covering current news, it was felt we could pull back on the *Fight Master's* publication schedule and concentrate on making those two annual issues showstoppers," says SAFD president Allen Suddeth.

Submission dates for 1991 are March 1 and September 15. Issues will be mailed in April and mid-October.

★★★

What's Happening?

J.Allen Suddeth faces a busy Fall. He's teaching at Julliard School of the Arts, Lee Strasburg Institute, and A.C.T.S. In addition, he will be choreographing *Romeo and Juliet* for Micheal Langham at Julliard.

Richard Raether is teaching stage combat at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Professional Training Program.

Drew Fracher is directing *Taming of the Shrew* at Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati and will be staging fights for *Burn This* and *Lute* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

David Wooley and **Doug Mumaw** alias "*The Swordsmen*" are finishing up eight weeks of performances at the Bristol Renaissance Faire. Then they are off to Maine to work with Vaudeville King Benny Reehl. Following that, the Swordsmen head to the Lone Star Stae for another stint in the Renaissance.

Fresh from a stint as Fight Coordinator for the hit series *Twin Peaks*, **David Boushey** continues his busy career as a Fight Director. Currently, his choreography can be seen on film in *Dog Fight*, *Nowhere Man*, and *Scout's Honor*. On TV, his work is in *Northern Exposures* and *I'll Take Romance*. On stage, David is represented by *Playboy of the Western World* for the Seattle Rep. and *Dracula* at the Pioneer Theatre.

In New York, **Todd Loweth** will be teaching unarmed combat at Playwright's Horizons Theatre School again this year.

Mark (Rat) Guin is home from Madonna's *Blonde Ambition* tour. He has cigars at the ready as he awaits the imminent birth of his child. While in Europe, Rat had the opportunity to meet with Oscar Kolombatovich, former Olympic fencing champion and for many years the resident fencing master of the Metropolitan Opera. Kolombatovich is a renowned armorer and Rat came away with weapons, three of which he now has for sale: two

Colichemardes and an Aquirre rapier.

Bob Macdougall and **Dale Gerard** performed stunts for David Boushey in the feature film *Scout's Honor*.

David Leong is in Washington, D.C. these days, choreographing fights for *Richard III* at the Folger Theatre. Stacy Keach stars as the doomed king.

Society of British Fight Directors Fight Master **William Hobbs** is staging the fights for the forthcoming film of *Hamlet*, starring Mel Gibson.



WRAP TIME

by
David Boushey



Film and television work is the wave of the future. If we don't "catch" that wave we will find ourselves relegated strictly to theatre and outdoor drama. I encourage you to pursue film work; not only are the jobs there, the money is there.

Approach the film commission in your area. Find out which productions are coming to your area. Get a contact number—hopefully the production manager. If you need the phone number and contact person for your film

commission, call me. I will be happy to give you the necessary information. Runaway production costs are a fact of life. If producers can eliminate costs for housing, transportation, and per diems, they will gladly lend an ear to local stunt people. My stunt organization, United Stuntmens' Association, has done very well in the northwest states.

Don't bite off more than you can chew, but start pursuing film work as well as stage work.

For more information contact:
David Boushey
United Stuntmens' Association
322 N.W. 175th
Seattle, WA 98177
(206) 542-1649

David Boushey is a Fight Master, a founder of the SAFD and President of the United Stuntmens' Association.

Editors note: If you are new to stuntwork, be especially cautious. Don't pretend to know more than you do. Watch for Mr. Boushey's upcoming column dealing with how and when to say "No" to a director.

THE CUTTING EDGE

The Cutting Edge is concocted bimonthly by Margaret and Richard Raether (with sporadic help from Brian Anderson) and is a publication of the Society of American Fight Directors.

Submissions to the *Cutting Edge* should be sent to:

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