

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

5-1995

The Cutting Edge, May/June 1995, Vol. 6 Issue 3

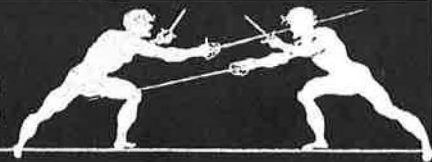
The Society of American Fight Directors

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



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

The Cutting Edge



Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

Volume VI, Number 3 ♦ May/June 1995



CHANGES OF ADDRESS

should be sent to:

Mark Olsen
Secretary SAFD
School of Theatre
University of Houston
Houston, TX 77204-5071
(713) 743-2915 (W)
(713) 265-0945 (H)

DUES REMINDER

Dues should be sent by
January of each year to
Mark Olsen
(see address above).
Dues are \$25 annually.
If you haven't already,
send 'em in!

THE FIGHT MASTER

The Spring issue is now
out. There will be an extra
Summer issue preceding
the Fall issue to make up
for the "missed" Fall issue.

SAFD HOTLINE

Now accepting
nominations for President
and Vice President.
(see article this page)

Ricki G. Ravitts
(800) 659-6579
9 AM—5 PM EST



Nomination Time is Here! Deadline Sunday August 20th.

IT IS ONCE AGAIN TIME for
nominations and election of officers for
the next three year term starting in
1996.

Only the office of President (a Fight
Master) and Vice President (any
member in good standing) are
nominated and elected. The Secretary
and Treasurer are appointed by the
President.

The current officers have decided to
conduct the nomination process via the
SAFD Hotline with members phoning
in their nominations rather than sending
out paper ballots.

Simply call 1- (800) 659-6579 and
give Ricki G. Ravitts your
nominations. Please include the

following in your nomination:

Your Name
Your Locale
Your Nomination(s) (*person & office*)
Your Phone Number

**The deadline for nominations is
Sunday August 20th, 1995.**

Once the nominations are in, those
nominated will be contacted and if they
agree to run, those candidates will
submit a short campaign statement
which will run in *The Cutting Edge*
along with a mail-in ballot. The ballots
will be sent to the Chairman of the
board of the SAFD, Jeff Koep, who
will tally them. Announcements will be
published in the next *The Cutting Edge*
and *The Fightmaster*. ♦♦♦

Letter from a Satisfied NSCW Participant

Last January I received a letter from
Julianne Wilson who participated in
last year's SAFD National Stage
Combat Workshop. I thought I'd pass
along excerpts from her letter as she
expresses a lot of why we all do this
thing that we do.

"When I returned from the summer
workshop in Las Vegas, I made some
personal decisions: I quit eating red
meat, I began Tai Chi, and, without any
weapon but my nerf-bat, subjected my
boyfriend to combat demonstrations-
whatever I could remember . . . to
maintain that feeling of physical and
mental well-being I found at the
workshop. I was addicted to a new-
found need to grow and live in every
aspect in my life.

"While there, I learned what most
of us newcomers learned; that stage

combat hurts like hell!...But rarely did
my thigh pain overpower that constant
feeling of child-like wonder at what we
were doing; every day was like the first
day of school.

"There is no way to explain to
anyone who wasn't there what it was
like . . . But for those who care to
listen, I will tell them the way I
changed and grew everyday . . . how I
never laughed so hard in my life as I
did daily with my new friends; and
how hot and fast the tears come when
you step outside your comfort zone so
often, but you know how essential it is
for growth and knowledge to step in.

"I want everyone I know to go next
year, even people like my Mom, who
still wants to know "what was it like?"

"Thanks to my choice for 'summer
work' I now know I can face

Profile
 Certified Teacher / Treasurer SAFD
Mark "Rat" Guinn
 by Dale Anthony Girard

BORN AND RAISED along the Tennessee river, Mark Guinn, has grown into an asset in Theatrical Design as well as the Fight Biz. I caught up with Mark during a break between his lighting design and stage combat classes as he was organizing piles of paperwork for the SAFD and prepping for 16 shows he had to get up in the next two weeks. Working more than a slightly hectic schedule, Mark joked about the time he was offered a job and was warned that there may be times he'd be expected to work sixty hours a week. "Are you kidding," he said, "I regularly work two-hundred and forty hours a week!" Needless to say, he was exaggerating, but I don't think by much.

In 1979 Mark left Tennessee for higher learning at the Center college of Kentucky. there he earned a BA in Dramatic Art and the nickname "Tennessee River Rat." through time the title diminished into "River Rat" and

"I've always been a wild-ass, and here was an opportunity to be a wild-ass and get paid for it!"

eventually "Rat." It was during his years as an undergrad student that Rat was introduced to the world of stage combat. In 1981 he worked as Master Carpenter for the epic outdoor drama *Blue Jacket* and saw Fight Master David Leong's work on *Tecumseh!* The mass battles, guns, cannons and pyrotechnics grabbed his attention. "I've always been a wild-ass," he says, "and here was an opportunity to be a wild-ass and get paid for

it." This spark caught fire and when there was an audition posted for *Cyrano* at school, Rat jumped at the opportunity. A local fencing master was brought in for the fights, and the audition was a fencing bout with foils. when it was Rat's turn, he was told, "just try to hit me," and so he did. Sword in hand, Rat went after the poor fellow and got the best of him. Lacking the finer points of fencing, he was not cast.

1984 saw Rat's graduation and his return to the outdoor dramas. This time he was a participant at Daniel Boone, and had the opportunity to work with fight Master David Leong and Drew Fracher. There he received his initial training in stage combat, and his recommended

Actor/Combatant certification with the SAFD. Although lighting and design work were his mainstay, Rat continued his training in stage combat by attending the Fifth National Workshop in Cedar city, Utah (1985). In 1987 he returned to Tennessee for Graduate studies in design and technical production at Memphis State University. While following his pursuit of design, Rat linked up with Maestro Leong and began working as his teaching assistant. He also worked as teaching assistant for various other Fight Masters at the '87 and '88

National Workshops. In 1988 his training and efforts paid off as he earned his Teacher Certification with the SAFD. The

following year Rat taught the



combat classes at Memphis State and earned his MFA in Design. With this background, Rat stepped into the professional world and hasn't

slowed down since.

Despite his heavy schedule, Rat is a family man. In 1990 he, his wife Katie and son Jake moved to Ruston, Louisiana for more "quality family time." (The past year has seen a new addition to Rat's family, Darby, a lovely baby girl.) In Ruston he bought a home and settled into the position of Assistant Professor of Design and Production Coordinator at the School of Performing Arts, Louisiana Tech University. Rat's background and diversity in training has allowed him to help develop the design and movement programs at LTU, gaining recognition for his efforts and his students accomplishments.

Rat's professional manner and personable demeanor have earned him respect and admiration from students (continued on page 3)



Mark Guinn

(CONTINUED)

and colleagues alike. His effort to make a difference has earned him numerous awards and honors for both his designs and choreography and aside from his position at LSU, he is currently the SAFD Treasurer and the Assistant Coordinator to the National Workshop.

Still a "Wild-Ass" at heart, Rat sets an admirable example of professional commitment while still maintaining the joy of the art. Whether designing or choreographing, Rat loves his work and treasures what Robert Wilson calls "the creation of the mysterious."



Jousting and Combat School

forming in the
St. Louis Area

Ron Peterson and his partner are looking to start a combat school in the St. Louis Area. His expertise is in jousting, but he will be looking for instructors and assistants in other areas of stage combat and of course students for the school.

His plan is for a four month training period. Students will have the option to purchase their horse (quarterhorse) and armor. He also hopes to include a job placement service for his graduates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL

RON PETERSON
(501) 253-6713

Dale Anthony Girard recently spent two weeks in England at the first "International Stage combat Workshop." There he and fellow CT Colleen Kelly tested for Advanced status with the SAFD, SBFD and FDC and received the award for "Best Scene" at the workshop. Back in the States, his students at the National Theatre Conservatory just completed their Skills Tests, with all 15 passing and 3 receiving recommendations. He is presently working his fourth season as company Fight Director for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, setting fights for their productions of *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *As You Like It* and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. In June he will be teaching "Fire Stunts" for the United Stuntmen's Association's Stunt Workshop with Maestro Boushey and in July it's off to Las Vegas to assist Maestro Fredricksen in the SAFD Teacher Training Workshop.

Charles Conwell was awarded tenure by the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He will direct the violence in Mark Lamos's *Romeo and Juliet* at Hartford Stage in Sept. (Ed.: Congratulations Chuck!)

Joyce Peifer, a member of the Noble Blades in Reston, Virginia and President of Vpstart Crow Productions, Inc. directed *Romeo and Juliet* (running May 13 - June 17) for the 2nd annual Summer Shakespeare In The Park in Triangle, Virginia. **Ben Howard**, a former student of **Brad Waller**, staged the fights. Joyce and Ben are both stage combatants and company members of the Maryland Renaissance Festival. Also a former student of Brad's, Joyce was certified this past year. Call 202-223-CROW for more information.

Tony Wright passed his certification tests at the ISCW in Britain, then returned to Atlanta, Georgia the next day to resume rehearsals for *The Three Musketeers* at the Georgia Renaissance Festival for which he is fight director, playwright, and playing Aramis. After *Musketeers* opened Tony went into rehearsal for *Time Masters*, also written by Tony, an original sci-fi rock-n-roll play with eleven fight scenes opening in July at the Atlanta Shakespeare Tavern, where Tony is the Associate Director.

Ralph H. Anderson taught a SAFD Proficiency Skills Class in April and May. Ten students passed the SAFD Proficiency Skills Test adjudicated by Fight Master **J. Allen Suddeth** on May 20th. Along with fellow New York Fight Ensemble colleagues **Michael G. Chin** and **J. David Brimmer**, Ralph will be teaching intermediate and advanced classes this summer. Call the NYFE Hotline for more details. (212) 946-1361

Drew Fracher was recently in Virginia directing **Joseph Martinez** as the lead in *MacBeth*.

Michael Kirkland completed his Ph.D. this year and is hoping to publish his dissertation *A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Stage Combat Resource Materials*. Michael did the fight choreography for Houston Grand Opera's world premiere of *Harvey Milk* which has since gone on to the NYC Opera and the San Francisco Opera. He also choreographed fights for Houston Grand Opera's *Porgy and Bess* which will tour the USA, Japan and Paris. In May Michael choreographed the rapier fights for

Late Breaking News

(Continued from page 3)

Good Night Desdemona, Good Morning Juliette for Capitol City Playhouse in Austin, TX. Michael has further been busy staging the *Hamlet* fights for Houston Community College's Classics Tour. And finally, a big change for Michael—He is leaving Galveston College to join the theatre faculty at Kutztown University in Kutztown, PA in the fall of 1995. AT KU he will be teaching acting, directing and splitting stage combat class duties with **Dr. John Callahan**, a venerated contributor to *The Fight Master* during its early days.



Submissions Needed

For *The Cutting Edge*

YES!

I'd love to hear from you.

Let me know what information and articles you would like to see in *The Cutting Edge*. Even better, write and article and send it in!

Send me information on what you've been doing in the theatre world.

Got some nice artwork appropriate for the newsletter? Send it in! Even better, scan it onto a Macintosh floppy and send it along to me.

Please type or print your submissions. (*Mac floppies gratefully accepted*).

Keep the submissions short and pertinent to the newsletter mission: to serve the SAFD membership. Thanks!

The Cutting Edge

is edited bimonthly by
Ralph H. Anderson.

The Cutting Edge
is a publication of the
Society of American Fight
Directors

Submissions should be sent to:

Ralph H. Anderson
465 West 49th Street #1-B
New York, NY 10019

T H E C U T T I N G E D G E



465 West 49th Street #1-B
New York, NY 10019

Non-Profit
US Postage
PAID
Rockford, IL
Permit No. 434