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The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge

Violence In Our Schools: A Call to Arms

By: Michael Mueller

As violence increases in and around our nation's schools, what repercussions will face the area of stage combat and the SAFD? This important issue was brought into focus once again due to the tragic events that occurred at Virginia Tech on Monday, April 16, 2007. With this tragedy came a response from one of our nation's most prestigious theatrical institutions that elicited both concern and outrage from many members of the SAFD.

The Yale Daily News reported, "In the wake of Monday's massacre at Virginia Tech in which a student killed 32 people, Dean of Student Affairs Betty Trachtenberg has limited the use of stage weapons in theatrical productions." The article went on to tell how students in one production were not made aware of the new regulations until the day of the production's opening, and that they "were subsequently forced to alter many of the scenes by swapping more realistic looking stage swords for wooden ones." As we are all aware, a change of this magnitude, so soon before a performance, can spell disaster for a production, not only in the integrity of the story but in the basic safety of the actors.

While this is not the first time that a production has been censored by a higher authority, it does serve as a reminder that the balance between administrative responsibility and censorship continues to be an issue within the educational theatre community. The fact that this decision occurred at a prestigious institution, like Yale University, only served to bring national exposure to this on-going issue.

The decisions made by our school districts, colleges and universities affect all of us regardless of whether it is our own education, the education of our children,

or simply community enrichment opportunities. As schools continue to face new challenges, new precedents are established to determine levels of safety and security. These decisions directly impact the educational environment and should be weighed heavily with forethought given toward possible negative repercussions. Naturally, we want our students to be safe in their learning environment, but when it comes to the use of weapons in a dramatic context this line becomes blurred. So how can we help support students who are caught in the middle? Quite a few SAFD members lent their support to the Yale drama students by sending letters expressing both their disapproval of Dean Trachtenberg's decision and suggestions on how the issue could have been resolved.

While the Dean, due to concerns of free speech, later rescinded this regulation, a follow up article by the Yale Daily News stated "a policy of announcing the use of stage weapons in advance will hold for all future campus productions." Most theatres will announce the use of firearms or strobe lights in a production, but this policy has left itself open to requiring all weapons to be announced. The next question will undoubtedly be: When does a weapon have to be announced, and what constitutes a weapon?

Weber's New Collegiate Dictionary defines a weapon as "an instrument of offensive or defensive combat: something to fight with, or a means of contending against another." CT Al Foote III commented on this issue in his letter to the Dean stating, "It is not the prop that makes the violence. One can choreograph a very light-hearted, swash-buckling sword fight, which takes all danger out of a very realistic looking weapon. Conversely, a sadistic and cruel

murder can be choreographed with a baseball bat or a telephone cord." Will there come a time when we will be forced to announce that a telephone cord will be used as a weapon prior to a production?

The final quote by Trachtenberg, in the follow up article by the Yale Daily News, suggested that her support of this new policy was not wholehearted. "I think people should start thinking about other people rather than trying to feel sorry for themselves and thinking that the administration is trying to thwart their creativity," Trachtenberg said. "They're not using their own intelligence. ... We have to think of the people who might be affected by seeing real-life weapons." Again, I felt that CT Al Foote III's response was very appropriate. He stated,

Unfortunately, what you (Trachtenberg) propose is not to think OF the people who might be affected, but rather to think FOR them and that has serious ramifications.

If I go to see Henry V, The Lieutenant of Inishmore or West Side Story I go with an expectation that there will be violence. Unless I've researched the production, the style with which that violence will be executed is an unknown (perhaps realistic, perhaps not), but I know there will be at least battles, torture and a duel, respectively. If one of those is personally so repugnant to me that I would be incapable of witnessing them simulated on stage, that is MY problem and MY choice not to attend.

If I have recently been subjected to a loss, like those who lost loved ones at Virginia Tech or in Iraq or on 9/11 (or indeed any of the countless tragedies that occur in this country which do not make national headlines), I would perhaps choose not to see a show with violence. But that must be MY choice. It



The pen is mightier
than the sword . . .

Michael Mueller, Editor-in-Chief

In accordance with our mission statement to "keep the membership informed", the primary focus of this column will be to clarify some facts about the organization's history. While we strive for perfection at *The Cutting Edge*, our contributors and editors are only human. Mistakes are made, but through these mistakes there comes a better understanding and solid foundation of truth from which we can continue to build. By accepting and acknowledging these mistakes we help to maintain the level of quality this publication aims to provide. Rather than create a separate section with corrections and additions, I felt that it would be fitting to use this space to acknowledge and elaborate on points requiring further detail from the previous issue.

The May/June issue contained an article derived from the SAFD website which reviewed the history of the SAFD. We received quite a few emails from our long standing members with comments, clarifications, corrections, as well as additional information concerning our organization's background. The majority of the debate around the article pertained to the term "honorary," however the list of founding members and the date when "Fight Director" officially became a classification were also called into question.

The term honorary appears to have been a confusing point for some time; however with the help of Brian Byrnes, SAFD Vice-President, I was able to obtain a segment of the most recent Governing Body meeting minutes which specifically dealt with this issue. In these minutes it states, with regard to Fight Masters, that "as Honorary position[s] - We would ask that 'honorary' be stricken from all SAFD materials [and] update materials as needed to reflect that the process is now documented and based on an application process." This has been noted on our part and will, no doubt, be adjusted on the website in the near future.

As for the list of founding members, it appears that we are not alone in our mistake. Google, IMDb, as well as the SAFD website all have Rod Colbin as one of the founding members. According to founding members FME David Boushey and FM Erik Fredricksen, Rod was not actually a founding member. He had a brief association with the SAFD and was actually an officer for a year or so, but moved on shortly after that. Erik said, "Rod was a wonderful man and widely respected," so it is easy to understand how the mistake could be made. But we are here to set the record straight.

Finally, the rank of Fight Director was not instituted until 1997, not 1993 as mentioned in the article. FM Michael Chin brought this to my attention and has his original application materials on file to back it up. In addition, Michael was also instrumental in establishing the partnership with Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids as well as starting the "Dagger Against Death" program.

I would like to thank all those members who took the time to respond to the May/June issue. We recognize that your time is very valuable, but without your feedback this publication would cease to be as credible a source as it is. Thank you from all the staff of *The Cutting Edge*.

Michael J. Mueller

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Mission Statement of The Cutting Edge:

The *Cutting Edge*, a bimonthly newsletter written exclusively by and for the membership of the Society of American Fight Directors (**SAFD**), provides its readers with resources to stay informed, 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

Cutting Edge Submission Deadlines:

Issue	Material Due Date
January/February 2007:	November 1, 2006
March/April 2007:	January 1, 2007
May/June 2007:	March 1, 2007
July/August 2007:	May 1, 2007
September/October 2007:	July 1, 2007
November/December 2007:	September 1, 2007

Regional Report Schedule and Deadlines:

- Jan./Feb., July/Aug. Editions include Int'l, SE, EC, NE**
(deadlines Oct. 15 and Apr. 15 respectively)
- Mar./Apr., Sept./Oct. Editions include PacWest, NW, SW**
(deadlines Dec. 15 and June 15 respectively)
- May/June, Nov./Dec. Editions include MA, RM, GL**
(deadlines Feb. 15 and Aug. 15 respectively)

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Send all submissions, comments and questions to
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... From the Governing Body

Mike Mahaffey, Secretary

Governing Body Meeting Minutes for June 2007

The first meeting of this year was held in Los Angeles, CA, from June 1 to June 3. What follows is a summary of what was discussed.*

*For more detailed information please visit the Members Only section of the SAFD website at <http://www.safd.org/members/index.asp>.

Professional Affiliation Committee Report

AGMA supports the SAFD in our efforts to secure FD contracts as part of Opera employment. Some details on our potential agreement with AGMA:

- We would be a part of the same bargaining unit as other staff hiring.
- What's to gain:
 1. Pension and medical coverage, salary minimums, working conditions, holiday pay and right of first refusal.
 2. We would be a part of the same bargaining unit as other staff hiring.
- Venue and FD Responsibilities:
 1. Venue by venue, each house and FD would set the rate year to year with gradual increases, minimum/maximum calls, and minimum hours with the negotiating help of the union. Rates would still be up to the individual FD and venue to set.
 2. Houses that commit to this would have to use AGMA FDs from then on out, but that's their decision, although given most opera budgets, we are dirt-cheap.
- To be done:
 1. We're our own worst enemy right now: Our lack of participation is the only thing holding us back.
 2. In 2008, Chuck will ask the then-GB if he could continue to spearhead this committee, and see it to its conclusion.

SPT Certificates

President Coyl presented examples of certificates for review, and we will stick with the Angelos on the front, and the slightly "gothic" script for the SAFD. They should read as follows:

- AC front: The SAFD recognizes (name) as an Actor/Combatant who has passed a Skills Proficiency Test in (weapons). This is to acknowledge that, in the opinion of the SAFD, this person has demonstrated proficiency in the above stage combat disciplines. (make sure it has date and expiration fields)
- AC Back: When presenting one's qualifications on resumes, one must refer to the status currently held (and the year of the test) in the same line or in the same sentence that the reference to the SAFD occurs. Example: SAFD Recognized Actor/Combatant with proficiency in (weapon style), 2006. This certificate does not qualify this individual to teach or choreograph stage combat. For more information regarding stage combat training opportunities, please visit the SAFD website at www.safd.org.
- Single weapon SPT certificates shall be worded similarly.

"Basic Proficiency" vs. "AC" with separate certificates in each for each weapon

This discussion began in last year's joint CFM/GB meeting in Vegas and the original thought was that it would serve as a way to recognize someone who is really doing well with one weapon: shouldn't they be listed as an AC with that weapon vs. "basic proficiency?" After lengthy discussion, the options for the Actor/Combatant testing procedures were limited to the following:

- 3 levels of skill per weapon (basic proficiency, actor/combatant, and AC with EAE)
- An additional AC test with different criteria
- Continuing with three disciplines for AC status but requiring unarmed, a sword skill (R&D, Singlesword, smallsword, broadsword, or sword & shield) and one other.
- Continuing the current standard for ACs

All of your member reps need your input on this, so please contact them with your opinion.

Discussion of the Advanced Actor/Combatant rank, Take 2

The Governing Body is still of the mind that the AC rank should remain the same but that the Advanced AC ranking should be re-evaluated with an eye towards making improvements that make the rank more "qualitative" vs. "quantitative." In other words, the GB is interested in solid proposals and thoughts that pertain to excellence or superiority of technique or performance as opposed to an acquisition of a requisite number of SPT certificates. Should an additional test be required, and could this issue be resolved during this additional requirement? Does the current system work? AC rep Ted deChatelet is chairing the committee charged with collecting these ideas, so please contact him with your thoughts, concerns and/or ideas on this matter.



... From the Governing Body (continued)

Mike Mahaffey, Secretary

Regional Workshops, Workshop Sanctioning and other issues

Sanctioning is currently a very simple process. The same criterion is being used that was established in the beginning. With the larger number of sanctioning requests and the varied sizes, should the GB review and re-vamp the information? Are we competing with ourselves and over-saturating the market? The GB's perspective right now is that we are not, and the sanctioning process should remain the same. The SAFD's stake is limited with workshops (a mailing list) so there isn't justification for a cut of the profits or the need regulate them in any way.

What we can do is share information and work together to increase our profile in each region. A "postmortem report" from each workshop would be ideal for this. It would give the GB information stating numbers, names, clips from *The Cutting Edge*, etc. and assist them in determining how to serve the regional workshops more efficiently. It would also help to track a workshop's progress inside and outside the SAFD. FM Brian Byrnes, CT Mike Mahaffey are working on this issue, so if you have any thoughts, please contact them.

CT/FD renewals process

While the committee seems to be working and dealing with issues on time, there is little consistency as to what is submitted: Some renewals consist of a long letter detailing work experiences over the last three years, while others contain an entire CV, scans of reviews and SPT forms. For those CT/FDs with few credits, the board has asked for clarification in the past. Is there a need for minimum requirements? The GB would like it to remain more subjective, and evaluate each candidate on a case-by-case basis. Should the renewal board make recommendations and assist the membership with their individual career growth? Also, should there be a point when a form of "Certified Teacher tenure" has been reached? CTs and FDs, let your voice be heard on this through your member reps.

Proposal: Creation of a "Business Operations" Position

When we had approximately 250 members (only 8 years ago) the task of keeping up with our financial situation was considerably easier than it is today. Now that the organization continues to stand at nearly 1000 members worldwide, it has become close to a full-time occupation for the Treasurer position.

In 2004, we created the Administrative Assistant position, which handles the majority of data entry and database management for the SAFD. We would like to expand this position, in effect creating a "Business Operations" person to be in charge of much of the weekly operations the SAFD needs to serve its membership. This position could potentially cut down on processing delays; taking as much as three to four weeks out of the current six to eight week processing timeline. The position would be a paid position, at approximately \$15.00/hour for an estimated 4 hours a week. The duties would be as follows:

Weekly / Bi-Weekly Duties:

- Receive and sort all SAFD mail from the Las Vegas Address
- Membership data entry: Coordinate forms and check copies; enter all mailed dues payments and new memberships into the database (including online payments); enter address change forms; email payment confirmations to members (using Membership@safd.org, and the Secretary's approved text); handle the distribution of membership cards
- SPT Data entry: Coordinate forms and check copies; enter all SPT information, including student results and payment information
- Receipt and Return of Paperwork: Confirm with Secretary when any paperwork is received; process paperwork within in a timely manner; forward all processed paperwork to Secretary, including notes about anything out of the ordinary (requests for back copies of the Fight Master, SPT forms submitted without payment, requests for information, etc.)
- FM Postcards: Sent to secretary if no test has been received within 30 days for immediate follow-up
- Manage Accounts Receivable: Deposit Checks (Generate Deposit slips, Stamp checks, Copy membership and SPT checks for the files; Manage recording of online payments (Linkpoint / CSI-First Data; Reconcile CSI-First Data Statements with Nevada State Bank statements; Reconcile Nevada State Bank statements)
- Manage Accounts Payable (Electronic Pay Visa Bill, Confirm payment of automatic pay accounts; Reconcile Visa credit card bill)
- File Financial Records
- Update Secretary and Treasurer

Added Seasonal Responsibilities:

- Prepare and Distribute 1099's – to be completed no later than January 30 of each year
- Collect Documents for Tax Preparation – in time for May 15 filing

If you think this is a good idea or a bad one, let the Secretary or your representative know!



... From the Governing Body (continued)

Mike Mahaffey, Secretary

Executive Committee Nominations Please Forward All Nominations by August 1, 2007

Our current Executive Committee will conclude their terms in office on December 31, 2007. This means that nominations for potential candidates to fill these positions are needed no later than 12:00 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on August 1, 2007. Elections for these positions will be held this fall, with the newly elected Committee taking office January 1, 2008.

Those elected will serve on the Executive Committee, the Governing Body and its various committees, and will help to shape the growth of the SAFD over the next three years. Nominees will be notified of their nominations no later than August 7, 2007. All nominees must accept or decline their nomination by August 15, 2007 in order to be eligible for the fall elections.

Please note that any member in good standing may be nominated for Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer, but only a Fight Master or Fight Director may be nominated for President. Strong communication skills, knowledge of email etiquette/protocol and reasonable computer skills are necessary for ALL offices (as an international organization, most discussion occurs via email).

If you are interested in nominating an individual, please contact Dale Girard, the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, at dgirard@NCARTS.edu or (336) 403-6434.

Here are the duties of each office as per our By-Laws. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the current officers for further details of their positions, or the Secretary at secretary@safd.org.

The President shall:

- Serve as Chair of the Board of Directors and the principle Executive Officer of the SAFD
- Supervise and execute control over the business and general affairs of the SAFD as authorized by the Board of Directors
- Keep the Board of Directors fully informed, and shall freely consult with them concerning the activities of the SAFD
- Preside over the selection of individuals appointed to the Advisory Body of the Board of Directors
- Preside at all meetings of the membership
- Call and preside at meetings of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee
- Create committees and appoint chairs of committees as he/she deems necessary
- Be a member ex-officio of all committees except the Nomination Committee
- Develop and maintain close contact with other organizations and foundations that might give support to or require assistance from this SAFD
- Travel, when necessary, representing the SAFD
- Perform such other duties as normally pertain to the president of an organization

The Vice-President shall:

- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Perform the duties of the President when designated to do so by the President or when the President is unable to fulfill such duties, and when so acting, shall have all of the powers of the President and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President
- Secure from committee chairs written reports prior to the Board of Directors meeting
- Solicit current operations manuals for all ongoing SAFD functions
- Maintain an accurate and updated record of each Certified Teacher and Fight Director
- Be responsible for coordinating the transfer of any fees collected to the Treasurer
- Perform other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Vice-President by the President or the Board of Directors

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... From the Governing Body (continued)

Mike Mahaffey, Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings before the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, the annual membership meeting and any special meetings as requested by the President
- Be responsible for updating changes to the Articles, Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures
- Be responsible for the dissemination of information either publicly or within the SAFD
- Be responsible for accepting new dues and membership data and coordinating transfer of monies to the Treasurer
- Keep records of the holdings and assets of the SAFD and all data pertinent to SAFD affairs
- Perform such duties not specifically herein enumerated as customarily pertain to the office of secretary
- Perform other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Secretary by the President or the Board of Directors

The Treasurer shall:

- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Have custody of all funds and securities of the SAFD which may come into the Treasurer's hands
- Be responsible for maintaining and filing all financial records required by law
- Keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the SAFD
- Deposit all monies and other valuable effects of the SAFD in the name and to the credit of the SAFD in such banks or depositories and the Board of Directors may designate
- At all times exhibit the books and render a statement of accounts to any Officer or Director of the SAFD
- Perform such duties not specifically herein enumerated as customarily pertain to the office of treasurer
- Perform other such duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Treasurer by the President or the Board of Directors

A Special Plea from the Secretary and Treasurer:

The offices of Secretary and Treasurer are vital contributors to the overall health and well being of the SAFD. They are also time intensive labors of love that require a significant commitment of energy that benefits the entire SAFD membership. Without strong candidates for Secretary and Treasurer, the future of the SAFD could be very bleak indeed!

We are very interested in finding replacements for these offices that are willing and able to take the responsibilities of the office seriously. Over the past ten years, the SAFD has greatly improved its customer service and has experienced over 300% growth in the membership. If you have strong computer skills and/or a good financial head about you, please show your true colors and volunteer to serve the SAFD for Secretary or Treasurer in 2008.

Transition training for new EC members

The GB has approved training monies for those selected to fill the Secretary and Treasurer positions, and will try to do the same with the incoming President and Vice-President. If possible, the timing should coincide with the Winter Wonderland Workshop to minimize costs.

Nominations Committee issues

Last year, a few candidates were not allowed to accept their nomination or run for office because they were unable to meet published deadlines or respond to notifications sent via email.

Communication last year was less than ideal; this year phone calls will be made well before the deadline to insure that the candidates are more informed.

Revising the Fight Director Application Form

The current form on the website is functional, but it is not consistent with the requirements as listed in the P&P. FM Brian Byrnes, CT Mike Mahaffey and FD Rep Jamie Cheatham are working together to revamp this form and to also include information vital to updating their SAFD website info (picture, resume, bio info, etc.). Please contact them if you have any thoughts or ideas on this topic.



... From the Governing Body (continued)

Mike Mahaffey, Secretary

SAFD Policies & Procedures Updated!

At the GB Meetings, the P&P was adjusted a bit to address some membership concerns. Some of these were decided in 2006, but were not amended until this year to allow the GB to work out details and the specific wording for each change. Due to space constraints, the P&P changes have NOT been printed below, only summarized. Please go the Members' Only section of the website for the exact verbiage.

CONCERN: On SPT day, the students were unable to do a part two due to time/space concerns. We would like to see more feedback from the adjudicator, both for the students and for the teachers on their teaching and choreography.	CHANGE: Part two is now "strongly recommended" and includes qualifiers for time constraints and large numbers of students. Also, we've added a mandatory part three (feedback from adjudicators to students) and a mandatory part four (feedback from adjudicators to teachers) to any and all SPTs. This is added in parts 2.01 II, B, C,D, and 2.01 III.
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CONCERN: Individual students could feasibly gather enough classroom time to qualify for an SPT, based solely on contact hours with SAFD CTs, FDs or FMs at regional workshops. While technically allowed, this lack of unified curriculum makes it difficult for the student to achieve proficiency and does not allow those teachers input or even consent on the student's progress. At the same time, we'd like to keep the option open should it be the only avenue available.	CHANGE: Contact hours from regional workshops may not be used for an SPT without the written consent of the Governing Body. These changes are outlined in sections 2.01.I.A.2 and 2.01.III.B.
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CONCERN: Certified Teacher and Fight Director Renewals should be conducted and achieved in a "peer review" manner rather than by the Governing Body.	CHANGE: We have created a "Status Renewal Review Board" consisting of the Vice-President, the Certified Teacher Rep., the Fight Director Rep., the Fight Master Rep., and the Secretary (who serves as a non-voting member) to handle renewals for Certified Teachers and Fight Directors. This can be found in sections 2.05.III, 2.06.III and 2.07.IV.
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CONCERN: Why should an SPT or the NSCW have all the fun? New members should be able to join the SAFD at any event, not just testing events.	CHANGE: SAFD membership is now available at the discounted rate (\$20 for the first year only) at all regional workshops. This change is in Section 6.10.
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<p style="text-align: center;">SAFD database access</p> <p>The membership lists have always been given to SAFD sanctioned workshops, but the issue was raised about being more protective of the list (and other's personal information). Should the GB handle the dissemination of materials instead of handing it to each coordinator? Logistically, this would require a LOT of time and energy that is right now being handled by the regional workshop itself, so it isn't really practical in those terms. But the GB should definitely be more protective in the future with the membership's private information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion of voting structure of Executive Committee and the Governing Body</p> <p>Last year a few motions were defeated by "non-pass"; that is, tie votes of 4-4 rather than defeat of 5-3 or more. We'd like to try to implement a tie-breaking procedure that works within Robert's Rules of Order. In the future we voted to adopt a tie breaker methodology as follows: In the event of a tie vote (4-4), an immediate re-vote is called for; if that result is also a tie, the past president shall step in as the tie-breaking vote.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NSCW Teacher/TA selection process</p> <p>The current process is working, but the GB would still like to see more representation by FDs/CTs who have not TA'd the NSCW for a long time (or at all). What are ways to give those CTs/FDs more opportunity?</p>
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A Call to Arms (continued)

is not up to anyone to make that choice on my behalf because then they are censoring my fellow Americans' rights to the freedom of expression.

The argument could be made that one might not expect violence in a particular production. To that I would respond, if I am emotionally fragile, perhaps I should do some research into a show I am considering attending, or only see shows I know to be "safe" until I feel able to deal with the possibility of being confronted with simulated violence. Again, that has to be MY decision (SAFD Forums, open forum, From the Yale Daily News).

How often do issues like the one at Yale University occur in our educational system and what efforts can be made to avoid safety issues while continuing to promote effective stage combat? I posed this question to all of our SAFD CTs to see what experiences they have come across regarding this dilemma.

CT Douglas Mumaw expressed his opinion that the TV networks have blurred the line between the news and CSI and that while children, at a very young age, do understand the difference between reality and fiction, they have come to expect that both are a big part of their lives. CT Ian Bordan also detailed a recent experience directing a touring production for Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, MI. The show was entitled *Bard to Go: All's Fair*. . . , and addressed issues of violence through Shakespeare.

It was frightening to visit many of these schools that have turned into virtual fortresses - and not just the inner-city schools, but also those in affluent suburbs. We were signed in and escorted around the building; there were video cameras in many of the schools, and an oppressive feeling of security. I felt justified in wanting to do the show I was doing because of what the high schools had become, but also felt hamstrung by the restrictions placed upon us by the schools we were visiting. In more than one, I made sure that the security officers were able to view the stage knives in order to see that they were not sharp, and to discuss what was going on with the stage combat scenes before any questions arose.

Being proactive in addressing issues prior to their misinterpretation and escalation seems to be directly related to avoiding conflict with school administrations. CT/FD Robert Macdougall supported this theory when he wrote that taking control by setting ground rules for students was his first step. Having worked with at risk teens, incarcerated teens, and students that have had prior violence issues, either violence done to them or their having been "bullies," Macdougall has found that the real issue is getting the students on board with him as a person, having them trust him, the other teachers, and directors. Paying attention to any student that is perceived to be a potential problem, talking with them, keeping them involved and committed to the project are all ways to help give them a stake in the day-to-day activities.

CT/FD Geoffrey Kent, who has done workshops both at Columbine and other high schools where shootings have occurred, has gone a step further when it comes preparing to work in schools. He now overdresses for high schools by wearing slacks and a dress shirt instead of more causal working attire. When weapons are brought in, he asks teachers to escort him from the parking lot to the school's main office to sign in and has changed his weapon bags to purple, green, etc. in place of long black bags.

This pro-active nature can also be seen coming from schools as well. CT/FD Joe Travers' New York based company Swordplay was recently set to perform a sword fighting demo at a local high school, approximately one week after the Virginia Tech. shooting. On their way to the school they received a call that two students had died in a car accident the day before. Rather than cancel this event due to the accident, the school wanted to go ahead with the demo as planned. The call was simply to make Swordplay aware of the event so they could anticipate heightened emotions and/or sensitivity of the students. As a result, the performance was a fun release on a somber occasion. The students were excited and the teachers expressed their gratitude for moving forward with the day as planned.

If being proactive is a method of preventing compromising situations, like the one at Yale University or even a high school where a recent tragedy has occurred, how can the SAFD and its membership rise to the challenge of negotiating these delicate situations? Throughout all that I have read regarding this particular issue two things seem to continually stand out as ways of establishing a healthy environment to create and explore stage violence: communication and education. Whether communication is established from letters being sent to Dean Trachtenberg*, additional information being provided to concerned administrations, or instructors being informed of recent school events, the end result is a better understanding of the proper use of stage violence, its integral part of both theatre and humanity as well as an increased awareness of the environment students, instructors, and administrators all share. Through communication we educate each other from different perspectives with the hope of reaching mutual respect and support for all points of view. Humanity will always rise above horrific tragedies and the arts will continue to reflect our need for understanding, coping, and learning from such events. If we have learned anything from these events, I hope that an increased appreciation of the need for communication and education is part of this lesson.

**For more detailed information regarding the membership conversations that took place please visit the forum section of the SAFD members site (www.safd.org).*

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Rediscovering An Old Way to Train

By Darrell Rushton

Living in a remote corner of Maryland, about 150 miles equidistant from Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh and Baltimore, it has been difficult to find training opportunities. Other members of the SAFD have faced this issue before but with each solution being so individualized, I felt that it was important that my experience be shared for the benefit of those looking to train in remote areas. So how does someone get training when he or she loves living in the middle of nowhere? Workshops can be pricey or fall at times of the year that aren't possible. While there isn't one easy solution to this problem, there are a myriad of alternative methods available if you are willing to put forth the effort.

When I was at the Teaching Symposium last year, FM David Woolley suggested that all the interns, TAs and participants consider a different approach to training. The path he detailed was more "old school" in its method, but one that I found to be very effective for where I live. Maestro Woolley's advice was that if someone can't find a way to train in their area, it is their responsibility to seek out the people who can train and go to them. This made me think back to conversations I had with Paul Steger at the 2005 Rumble in the Rockies, particularly with regard to his training process.

Early in his career, he was advised to attend the National Workshops but found that despite his strong desire to learn more about stage combat, he just couldn't make it happen. Instead, Paul contacted FM Richard Raether and arranged to travel to him in order to train. Maestro Woolley's advice took Paul's experience one step further by suggesting that in addition to attending the National Workshops, we should seek out our own training, as well, and view it as a necessary supplement to the workshop training.

According to some of the long-standing CT's, this used to be the only way you could get training. Thankfully, there are more regional workshops to choose

from today, but it is still difficult to travel to the various workshops that are only offered once a year. In my quest to test in all the weapon styles and qualify for the 2007 Teacher Training Workshop (TTW), I found two unique opportunities to train. Both took a few months of planning and a bit of travel, but it was my way of getting the training I needed.

The first adventure that came about from my new way of thinking included AAC Russ Brown, who I had interned with at the 2006 Winter Wonderland Workshop. I was teaching at Ball State University at the time and Russ was located in Wisconsin. Russ and I discovered quickly that we both intended to apply for the 2007 TTW. Russ was also a student of CT/FD D.C. Wright, who I met at the National Stage Combat Actor Combatant Workshop in 2000. Through the course of our conversation we realized that it might be possible for us to travel to Western Illinois University, where D.C. teaches, and train to test in Smallsword over a long weekend.

After a series of emails, we were able to decide on a weekend. We drove down on a Friday night, in the middle of the winter, and worked for four hours with D.C. The next morning we got up early and were back at it from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Two weekends later, D.C. was slated to be a guest artist at Ball State University. Russ and I finished our thirty hours of training, helped as D.C.'s TAs for his workshop and filmed our Skills Proficiency Test, which was presented to FM Chuck Coyl for review. Following the test, we went to Johnny Carinos, ate ourselves into a pasta coma, and talked late into the night about the experience.

One of the topics we talked about was how unique this way of training was. The complete immersion we had for such an intense period of time was a huge benefit. As the only two students, we never had a question that went unanswered or a mistake that went unobserved. While we may have lost the camaraderie of the classroom environment, the condensed curriculum meant that we sped up our learning curve. D.C. also admitted that

having only two students increased his ability to feed us information. He didn't have to make sure that everyone in a large group understood his instruction. There was time for in depth discussion about how to fight with each weapon, the principles of teaching and how to balance theory with technique.

The next adventure in training outside the box came last November, when I made a deal with CT Michael Hood at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). I had the pleasure of knowing Michael from the 2001 Philly Cheesesteak, where we nearly killed each other in CT John Bellomo's "Running with Sharp Objects" class. The sharp objects were not the problem by the way; it was because we took John literally and ran non-stop for an hour before collapsing into a heap. We still tease each other about this. In order to get ready to apply to the 2007 TTW, I called Michael and offered to trade him my TA services for Sword and Shield lessons. There was only one snag, however, Michael hadn't done much Sword and Shield work and wasn't sure he was the right person to help me.

Fortunately, Michael wanted to do more Sword and Shield work. And, because he wanted to expand his own knowledge, he arranged with CT/FD Charles Conwell to give us some assistance in our training. Charles gave us permission to drive up, stay with him and his family, and bash and crash for an entire weekend. To this day, I am still not sure why his lovely wife Marcia allowed this, but it brings up another fringe benefit of training in this manner: the collegiality that comes as part of being involved with the SAFD.

Michael and I jumped into his Honda CRX, blasted up the highway to the outskirts of Philly, got lost, found a brew pub, eventually found our way to the Conwell house, and promptly went to bed. At 7:00 a.m. the next morning, Charles took us to a great little breakfast place where we ate and had a lively conversation about why we were pursuing Sword and Shield. We then drove back

Rediscovering An Old Way to Train (continued)

to Charles' barn for a non-stop day of training. On Sunday, we awoke early and repeated Saturday's schedule (another twelve hours of weapon work in two days).

To finish my hours for Sword and Shield, the month of January was spent driving up to IUP, or having Michael drive down to rehearse and practice. We submitted the videotape for review, and Michael and I are now proud holders of our SPT recognition certificates in Sword and Shield. True to my word, I have been up to assist Michael's class at least twice a month since. We actually just completed helping his students pass an SPT of their own, with FM Michael Chin adjudicating on May 6, 2007.

While our trade proved beneficial for both sides, I really got the lion's share of the deal. In addition to assisting, Michael also let me run two classes during the semester when he was out of town. This was a tremendous experience and really helped to enhance my perspective on teaching.

From these two experiences I feel that perhaps the greater benefit I received was the opportunity to me to learn from two such distinguished and qualified teachers. The total immersion meant I had personalized time to ask questions about teaching, testing, choreography choices, weapon choices, as well as alternate ways of learning. In a traditional classroom environment, there is never time to stop and ask, "Why is this weapon taught that way?" or share and discuss different techniques learned from different sources. The learning didn't end in the classroom either. I was able to spend an entire weekend with two gentlemen who have been CTs since before there was a TTW and another long weekend with D.C. and his amazing family. Both weekends provided me with so much knowledge about the history of the SAFD and why we do things the way we do, information I might never have received without this

compressed, individualized timeframe.

The only negative was testing via videotape. Having to set up the shot, find a cameraperson, and avoid the hypercritical view of your own work is always difficult, but the real drawback has to do with the loss of camaraderie. Plus, it's so much more enjoyable to come off-stage knowing that you just did a fight live. Camaraderie is essential to the SPT/SPR process, and I'd much rather fight in front of friends with their positive energy and support instead of the cold and critical camera lens.

For some it may be difficult to make a trade like I did if you are just starting out in the organization. I have been lucky to meet and work with a lot of wonderful people with whom to network, but that happens with time. A good place to start is with the Regional Representatives. They are there to help you make these connections, so don't be shy about reaching out to them. I have never heard of anyone in the SAFD refuse to help someone get hooked into this craft. Even if you don't know another soul, you at least have all the contacts listed on the SAFD website.

My recommendation is that, if you can, trade assisting with a CT, even if they are two hours away (it's 90 miles for me each way to IUP). Try and get three friends to help you pay a CT to come to you and teach a weapon or a class. Beg if you have to, but it shouldn't take much, since we all love what we do. Finally, I strongly believe everyone should go to the National Workshop at least once and attend as many Regional Workshops as possible. I also know that after taking Maestro Woolley's advice that I didn't just learn two weapons and become a better fighter, but I became a better person from the experience. Take Maestro Woolley's advice and train outside the box.

... From the Governing Body (continued)

Summer 2008 NSCW

2007 was quite a year for the NSCWs, both good and bad. We'd like to discuss the NSCWs of 2007 with both coordinators before we make a decision regarding 2008. We'd like both of them to attend the August meetings in Chicago with all financial reports and postmortems complete so we may review and discuss 2007 in full. We should even look ahead to 2009, and see what options might suit us by then. Perhaps an NSCW at a time other than July?

2007 National Meeting Scheduled

The SAFD National Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 8, at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. This meeting will be open to ALL members, of all levels. The actual room used and location will be listed on the website once it is determined, along with more information. If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary at secretary@safd.org.

The next Governing Body meeting will be held in Chicago from August 17 to August 19: If you have any feedback to what you've seen here, or you've got an issue that wasn't discussed, please talk to your member representative or the Secretary. They would love to hear from you.



Knife Resources

By Michael Mueller

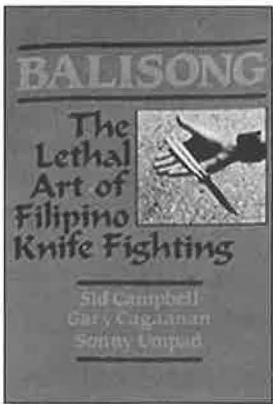
The Cutting Edge is proud to present the next section in our reference material series. This section is the fifth in a growing list of reference material we hope to provide you with in each issue.*

We are structuring the information so that it is categorized into the various disciplines the SAFD recognizes. Each discipline will be researched; and once we have gone through all the disciplines we will begin again, adding all the material we will have gathered between printings. These lists will consist of books that have been found to be extremely helpful, films that give examples of well choreographed/acted fights and serve as positive instruction, and any other material that instructors deem crucial to those who are interested in either increasing their skill level or merely their library of reference material.

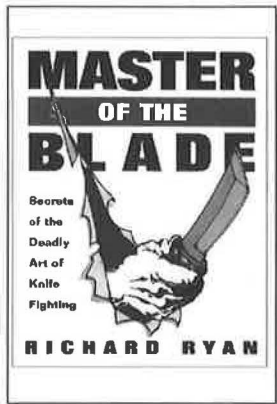
Please let us know your thoughts on these lists. What should be added? Why? What should not be on the list and why? Please email comments, suggestions and thoughts to Michael Mueller at cuttingedge@safd.org.

*Special thanks to CT Mark Guinn, CT/FD Michael J. Johnson, FD/CT Geoffrey Kent, FD/CT Nick Sandys and CT John Tovar for their input on this section.

Books



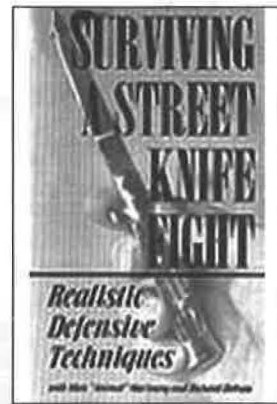
Balisong: The Lethal Art of Knife Fighting
by Sid Campbell



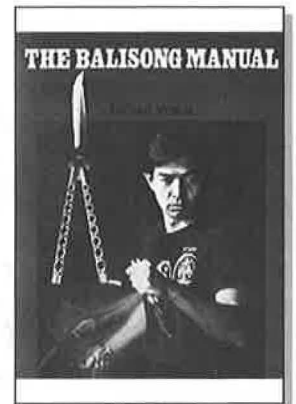
Master of the Blade
by Richard Ryan



Put 'Em Down, Take 'Em Out!
by Don Pentecost

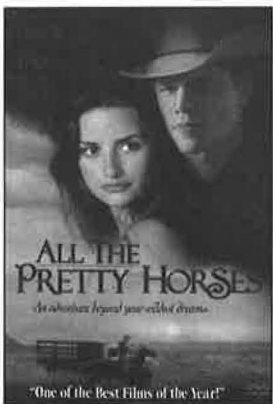


Surviving a Street Knife Fight
by Marc MacYoung



The Balisong Manual
by Jeff Imado

Film/TV



All The Pretty Horses



Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever



Exposure

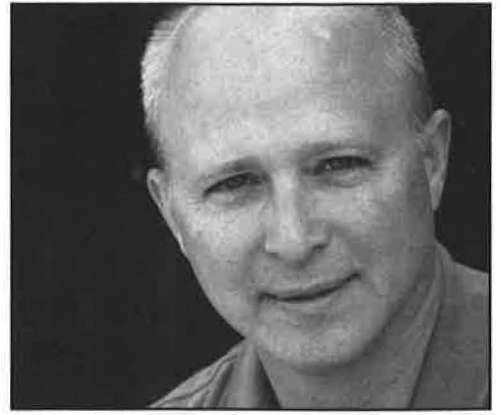


The Hunted



True Believer

Certified Teacher/Fight Director Payson Burt ...In the Footlight



If you're interested in being featured or nominating another member, please contact Editor-in-Chief Michael Mueller at cuttingedge@safd.org.

CE: How did you first hear about the Society of American Fight Directors?

PAYSON: In 1981, I was an acting student at Temple University. David Leong was hired to work on a show there and he held a little workshop/demonstration for us. Brad Waller was also a student there and the two of us, like little puppies, flitted around David until he used us in the demo. Brad got to break my arm (or did I break his?) with the old balsa wood taped to the arm trick.

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

PAYSON: At that demo at Temple, David had information about the 1981 National Workshop. I did not have the money to go that year, but the next year my graduation present from my parents was to send me to the National Workshop at Cal Arts in California. It was a small workshop, only 12 students, and I passed all three weapons.

CE: Why did you become a member?

PAYSON: During and after the 1982 workshop, I saw the art of staged combat as a very wide-open field. It was just starting to become recognized and defined in the theatrical world and I saw a niche where I could contribute. As an actor, I saw many ways to express myself; as young guy, a way to express things in an athletic way; and as an artist in a production, a way of contributing to the production by making the violence more believable while helping to keep it safe. So, I joined the SAFD right there at the workshop.

CE: What is your favorite weapon and why?

PAYSON: Rapier and Dagger. I love the power of a Broadsword and the finesse of the Smallsword, but R&D speaks to me the most. I credit my relationship with Brad Waller, and my early professional work in Renaissance Faires, as the reason. The research I did in the late 1980s and early

1990s gave me what I think is a specific signature on that particular weapon. Pushing the envelope on how we look at this weapon has always been a mission of mine.

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

PAYSON: Train. Work, work, work. Train, train, train. I think Bruce Cromer said it best in the January issue: "Be an actor first and foremost." Don't think your Fight skills alone will get you jobs. In terms of stage combat, train to be as specific as you can. A vague action, like a vague acting choice, will get you nowhere. Lastly, be actional. The best lesson stage combat had for me as an actor, besides making up words that don't exist, is how to put my thoughts immediately into action in a way that the audience can see.

CE: What is your favorite restaurant in your city and why?

PAYSON: Vittello's in North Hollywood. It's great Italian food, has an "Opera Room" in the back where locals (mostly Hollywood musicians and actors) sing songs all night long, and every once in a while you get to see Robert Blake (or order the Robert Blake special which is actually VERY good)!

CE: What is in your pockets right now?

PAYSON: Absolutely nothing. I keep all my change and keys and things in my jacket or fanny pack (yes I still wear one)! I keep my pants pockets empty. I never know when I might have to do a pratfall!

CE: If you were a fruit/vegetable/inanimate object, what would you be and why?

PAYSON: A hat on the head of Gene Kelly; doesn't matter which production. I think the view and ride would be fabulous!

Don't think your Fight skills alone will get you jobs. In terms of stage combat, train to be as specific as you can. A vague action, like a vague acting choice, will get you nowhere.

Regional Reports

New England Region

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



**By Richard
Hedderman**
NERegRep@safd.org

AC Kim Carrell taught "Stage Combat for Burlesque" at the Boston Burlesque Expo as well as staged fights for *The Grapes of Wrath* at Stoneham Theatre, MA and for the Freedom Trail Foundation's school touring program. Kim also traveled to Montana to teach a series of stage combat workshops.

AC L. Stacy Eddy reports that The Stage Combat Studio in Somerville, MA held its spring SPT in April with great success. The Studio is looking forward to adding a second test to its schedule and expanding the class/workshop offerings.

AC Ted Hewlett fenced with AC L. Stacy Eddy as corporate competitors for "Hit the Mark", a campaign for Smith and Nephew's corporate function. They performed a saber duel in the fashion of competitive fencers with a few twists that told the story for the client.

AC Meron Langsner did the fight direction for the New England premiere of *See What I See* at the Lyric Stage Company, several productions at Tufts University, an abridged version of *Tonya & Nancy: The Opera*, which toured Boston and NYC, and Susan Lori Parks' *Tundra*. He was also the director of the latter two projects. His scholarly work on staged violence was published in *Text & Presentation 2006* (McFarland), *The Fight Master*, and was presented at national scholarly conferences. This past semester he taught stage combat at Tufts University.

AAC Phil Leipf has taken stage combat to the land of the little people. Not Lilliput, but middle school. In a recent version of *Pirates of Penzance*, Phil

created a rollicking sword fight with his young cast. He's just thankful that most of them were girls.

CT Adam McLean joined The Stage Combat Studio in the fall and was CT for the Studio's R&D SPT. He also taught at the 2007 Winter Wonderland Workshop.

AC Robert Najarian played the title role in *Einstein's Dreams* with the Cambridge Catalyst Collaborative at MIT and Harvard University. He is currently appearing as Capt. Philip Lombard and doing fight choreography, for Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* at the Stoneham Theatre. He had a great start to the year attending the Paddy Crean Workshop in Banff, Alberta and working as a teaching assistant at the Winter Wonderland Workshop in Chicago. Robert continues his duties as combat and movement instructor at Boston University, and also teaches at the Stage Combat Studio.

AC Paul Ugalde was back at Vermont Stage Company working the George & Martha violence for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* He'll be staging *King Lear* for them next season. This summer he gets to say, "You can't handle the truth!" when he plays Lt. Col. Nathan Jessup in *A Few Good Men*.

CT Robert Walsh keeps busy with several teaching, fight directing, and directing gigs at such venues as Brandeis University, Boston University, American Repertory Theatre and The Stage Combat Studio. Robert recently played the title role in *Titus Andronicus* for The Actors Shakespeare Project in Boston.

East Central Region

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



**By Dan
O'Driscoll**
ERegRep@safd.org

AC Carrie Brewer recently worked on

the fights for an upcoming episode of *Haunting Evidence* for Court TV. Carrie also choreographed *All's Well that Ends Well* for Boomerang Theatre Co and *12th Night of the Living Dead* for Impetuous Theatre Group.

With *Spring Awakening* on Broadway, the ever-busy **FM J. David Brimmer** did a stint as Fight Director for *Blackbird* starring Jeff Daniels at The Manhattan Theatre Club.

CT Al Foote III fight directed three shows in May: *King John* and *Richard II* in rep for Shakespeare NYC on Theatre Row and *Q1: Bad Hamlet* for the Pretentious Theatre Festival at the Brick Theatre in Brooklyn. Al is also excited to be working with Anne Bogart and the SITI Company at their summer program at Skidmore College.

AAC Jared Hoffert staged the violence in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the Metro New York Vocal Arts Ensemble, which starred his lovely wife, Julia, as Cherubino

CT Michael Hood and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) Combat for the Stage class did its SPT under the auspices of FM Michael Chin on Sunday this past spring. Everyone passed and four EAE's were given out.

AAC Paul E. Hope recently performed in *Trial and Error* at the American Theatre of Actors in NYC. It is a play that explores the violence that can happen when boy meets girl. Paul also completed his SPT in *Broadsword*, bringing his total to 8, with Combat, Inc. and continues to teach movement workshops combining stage combat technique with elements of Lecoq, Grotowski, and Laban at the Little Village Playhouse and Broadway Theatre Lab.

CT Robb Hunter and **AAC Craig Lawrence** will both be performing in Baltimore Shakespeare Festival's *Macbeth* in July. Craig will be Young Seward and Robb will be MacDuff and choreographing the fights.

CT Denise Hurd recently choreographed the fights for a production of *Marat/Sade* at The Classical Theatre of

Regional Reports (continued)

Harlem. She also co-choreographed the fights and appeared in a production of *King John* with the Actors Shakespeare Company of New Jersey. In addition, Denise did the fight choreography for a production of *Othello* for the Epic Theatre Company on Theatre Row and a production of *Tamborines for Glory* at the Harlem Repertory Theatre.

CT/FD Michael J. Johnson Played *Othello* at Western Illinois University, where CT D.C. Wright teaches, and taught master classes for D.C.'s students. He has moved back to Washington D.C. and was Fight Director for *Carmen* for the In Series in D.C. and for *Drama Under the Influence* (a collection of plays by women playwrights from the 1920's) at American Century Theater. Michael entered his 11th year as the stage combat teacher for the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland, College Park with recent projects including *Don Giovanni*, *An Evening of Opera Scenes* and consulting for the *Armide* and *Transformations*.

AC Laurie K Miller (Petersen) wrote that last spring she did her final two stunts before taking a break from *As the World Turns* and coordinated and drove for Court TV's *Haunting Evidence*. She took a break because of her pregnancy, but last summer she managed to coordinate the stunts and fights for a film called *The Exiles*, which is currently being shopped for more funding. She did the fight direction for the Lady Cavaliers production of *Brave Margaret* and also did a lot of teaching throughout the NY area. On October 3, 2006 she did her finest work, and most difficult stunt ever, entitled *Jude Kreider Petersen*. He is the light of her life and an absolute bundle of joy. More recently, she got back in the saddle and was the Fight Director for a production of *Romeo & Juliet* in CT, and continues to be kept quite busy with the joys of motherhood.

AC Ax Norman staged the violence for a modern retelling of *Thomas Arden of Feversham*. Another fun project was a web video for Intel.

CT Dan O'Driscoll directed A

Midsummer Night's Dream for his 18th season at the New York Renaissance Faire. Besides his teaching duties at Montclair State University and Nassau Community College, Dan also directed the violence for *King Lear* at SUNY-New Paltz where he will teach stage combat in the fall.

CT Mark Olsen did the fights for Hartford Stage's productions of *Fences* and a co-production of *Summer and Smoke*, which also performed at Paper Mill Playhouse. He did lots of productions at Penn State including the musical *Urinetown*, and is looking forward to doing some fight direction at the Roundabout Theatre in NYC.

AC Mike Pauley just finished playing Tybalt in a touring production of *Romeo and Juliet* with the Theatre at Monmouth. Mike served as a co-fight choreographer with Sally Wood, and was the company's fight captain on the road. He will return to Monmouth as the fight choreographer for the summer company as well.

CT/FD Ron Piretti was fight consultant on the Off-Broadway play *In the Heights*. He also did the fight direction on *Hamlet* for Take Wing and Soar Productions. Ron directed and choreographed the fights for *The Adventures of Alwilda the Pirate, Queen of the High Seas*, a TYA show at the Music Hall in Snug Harbor, Staten Island, NY. Ron also wrote "In January, Ann Reinking asked me to teach a stage combat workshop in Scottsdale, AZ at a school for autistic children (amazing experience). In May I will be part of a documentary about the school and I will be teaching another workshop for them."

AAC Darrell Rushton has fled the Midwest and returned to Frostburg State University, where he is teaching Acting and Stage Combat. This year he was FD for *Urinetown*, *Out to Lunch*, *Earth and Sky* and an all African American production of *Of Mice and Men*, directed by his wife Mairzy Yost. He also acted as bull riding coach and FD for Windwood Theatricals' tour of *Urban Cowboy*. His big news is his acceptance into the 2007

TTW class, and serving as Director for the first ever Savage Mountain Summer Stage Combat workshop in June. Anyone who knows anything about running a workshop is welcome to call and help. He will be joined there by CT Robb Hunter for a weapons night and AAC Cara Rawlings as Resident Guest Artist. For more information visit <http://www.frostburg.edu/savagemtn/>. He has also had the good fortune to assist CT Michael Hood's SPT class this past spring, attend the Winter Wonderland Workshop, pass SPRs in Single Sword and Broadsword, and complete his 8 proficiencies by testing in Sword and Shield with FD/CT Charles Conwell and CT Michael Hood; FM Chuck Coyl adjudicating.

CT Ted Sharon held SPTs at SUNY-Fredonia in Rapier and Dagger in May and in Unarmed last December. Besides working as an Instructor at the Vegas Winter Workshop and the Chicago Winter Wonderland, Ted was also busy with *The Yakov Smirnoff Show* in Branson and the Miracle Theatre in Tennessee.

CT/FD Joe Travers set the fights for the premier of Adam Rapp's *Essential Self-Defense* at Playwrights Horizons. In addition to his ongoing work teaching stage combat at AMDA and running Swordplay - New York's longest continuous running stage combat school, Joe will be spending this summer staging fights in Florida and Massachusetts.

South East Region

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



**By John
Cashman**
SERegRep@safd.org

CT Tim Bell has been stunt driving full time for Disney/MGM Studio's *Lights, Motors, Action!* but has found time to

Regional Reports (continued)

work outside Disney as well. Most recently he appeared as a SAG Stunt Driver on a Honda "Reflections" commercial filmed in Miami, a Toyota Tacoma "Lifestyles" commercial shot in Central Florida, and the feature film *The Key Man* shot in Winston-Salem, NC. The Stunt Coordinator for this feature was FM Dale Girard. Tim donned a stylish wig and 70's era clothing to drive a monstrous Buick Electra 225, doubling for Jack Davenport in the film. Tim is never far from a sword though, as just this spring he performed as a Stunt Pirate in *Disney World's Pirates and Princess's Parade* in Disney's Magic Kingdom. He and three fellow performers met the challenge of performing a 30-minute, non-stop, four-person fight aboard a moving pirate ship-float twice a night for thirteen nights from late January to early March. The performance included rope swings from the mast, ratline crossings, four-person sword battles in a 10' x 12' center deck, and a Case of Rapier fight. The choreography was repeated every two and a half minutes, with performers rotating through all four tracks every ten minutes. Whew!!

Friend Cathy Brookshire appeared as Mrs. Yang in the Theatre South Carolina production of *The Good Person of Setzuan* directed by Beatrice Rancea (National Theatre, Constanta, Romania) this past fall. During the winter she served as fight choreographer for both the Theatre South Carolina's production of *The Pillowman* and for the University of South Carolina's *Twelfth Night*. Cathy extends her thanks to CT Robb Hunter for his firearms advice. She also taught an unarmed workshop for the MFA & Undergraduate Opera students at USC where she serves as adjunct instructor of acting in the Theatre and Dance Department.

CT and Regional Representative John Cashman directed the fights for the Maltz Jupiter Theatre's production of *Death Trap* this past January in Jupiter, FL "My heartiest congratulations to k. Jenny Jones for her election to Fight Master. I've been trying to think of some clever new title to honor our first woman

to earn that rank, but everything I think of I'm sure will land me a fat lip. I shall leave it with 'Cheers' and 'Well deserved!'"

AC Joey Costello just finished his 15th season with the Florida Renaissance festival. He is teaching a workshop at the Raymond F. Kravis center in West Palm Beach as well as doing a 2-day workshop on Unarmed and Single Sword for the Student Arts Enrichment Program.

AC Ilene Fins will be heading back west this summer, as usual, to teach stage combat and physical comedy for Seattle Children's Theatre. She also took a Suzuki workshop in May/June, and continues teaching at Harrison School for the Arts in Lakeland.

CT Tiza Garland continues as an Assistant Professor in the BA, BFA, and MFA programs at the University of Florida teaching Movement, Period Styles, Stage Combat and Stage Dialects. She has been attending classes in New York at the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies and will be completing certification as a Certified Movement Analyst in the next few months. On February 17, Tiza completed her first ½ marathon (13.1 miles). Recently she did the fight direction for *Rashomon* at the University of South Florida in Tampa, where she and the cast members collaborated with the director on an anachronistic style that allowed for an exciting world for the fight between the Samurai and the Bandit. It was a great opportunity to explore what makes theatre and remind both artists and audiences that the theatre has an exciting life of its own, with conventions that can be exploited in order to tell compelling stories. After her Stage Combat class at UF completed its SPT in May, adjudicated by FM Brian Byrnes, she visited family in Michigan, took a few trips to New York for her Laban class, then traveled to Romania where she taught movement and combat classes at the International Theatre Festival in Sibiu as the city is named the Cultural Capital of Europe.

Friend Stephen D. Hyers was guest artist and fight choreographer at Wake

Forest University for their production of *Romeo & Juliet*.

Friend Allen Johnson was recently filmed for the upcoming documentary feature entitled *Reclaiming the Blade*. Allen discusses both his involvement in the historical martial arts community as well as his involvement in stage combat and his ideas on how the two should be related. More information on the film can be seen at www.reclaimingtheblade.com. Allen also continues to remain an active member of The Association for Renaissance Martial Arts and The Cateran Society.

CT/FD Jeff A.R. Jones has been busy since the New Year. He did a modern *King Lear* at Peace College, pitting switchblades against police maglites and crowbars. He helped a local high school with *Oklahoma!*, and was involved with a new play, *Shadow of Himself*, staging wrestling, fights between animals, as well as movement and combat for a 3-actor monster. With all this activity, his private classes have been put on temporary hold, but should return in the near future. This summer he heads to New Jersey Opera Theatre to work on *Pirates of Penzance* and *Romeo & Juliette*. In the fall he will be an adjunct faculty member with Duke University, teaching combat and acting as well as helping develop a movement based production of *Pericles*.

CT/FD Bruce Lecure had an SPT scheduled for May 5, 2007 at the University of Miami with FM k. Jenny Jones adjudicating.

AC Jim McClellan's recent activity includes the fights for *The Tempest* at Dr. Phillips High School, and *Oklahoma!* at Theatre Winter Haven. He also worked with T'ai Chi master William C.C. Chen.

AC Stefan Sittig provided the fight direction for *That Championship Season* at The American Century Theater in Arlington, Virginia. His work on this show included staging four scenes of violence, including two stage slaps, a tousele with a rifle and a fall down two flights of stairs.

Regional Reports (continued)

He is currently working on the fight direction, as well as choreography, for *Little Shop of Horrors* at McLean Community Players. Later in the season, he will be staging fights and creating choreography for *South Pacific* at Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre in Woodbridge, Virginia. For more information on Stefan please visit www.stefansittig.com.

AAC Lee Soroko's big news is that his application to the 2007 TTW was accepted! He expects a large amount of learning and crying in his immediate future, but is truly honored and excited to move on to this next level of training and involvement with the organization. This past January, he had a great time working as a Teaching Assistant at the Winter Wonderland Workshop, where he taught a knife class with FM Chuck Coyl as my assistant. He recently completed the fight direction for a production of *Pterodactyls*, a production FM Mike Chin did the original work for Off-Broadway, and worked as the FD and Movement Coach for Sharon Ott's production of *Bette and Boo*. Lee also directed a production of *Story Theatre* for the Savannah College of Art and Design.

AC Arthur Rowan: Following his work as fight choreographer for The Rude Mechanicals' production of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in Washington, D.C., he attended the week-long Paddy Crean workshop in Banff, Canada, where he received training in Case Rapier, Peking Opera Staff, Whip, Katana, and more. He is currently working as an actor and fighter for the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire.

AC Matthew R. Wilson will return to Italy to teach for another summer at Antonio Fava's International Workshop in Commedia dell'Arte and is still performing his one-man Commedia dell'Arte show around the world. In the fall he will begin the MFA program at the Shakespeare Theatre Co.'s Academy of Classical Acting in Washington, D.C., but for the time being he is finishing a Master of Divinity degree and working as a hospital chaplain while also teaching and choreographing in Tennessee

and Virginia. Matt's work as co-creator and choreographer of Milligan College's original movement piece *The Gospel according to Jazz* received praise at both the state and regional levels of this year's Kennedy Center/ACTF. He was also happy to reunite with mentors and friends while serving as a Teaching Assistant at Cincinnati's March Madness and as an Intern at the Virginia Beach Bash. Matthew misses NYC but is still enjoying the fruits of his lucrative acting career there: he grossed \$2.50 in AFTRA royalties last year. For more information about Matthew please visit www.matthewwilson.com.

Friend Kurt-Alexander Zeller staged, designed, and produced a double bill of seventeenth-century operas at Clayton State University in Morrow, GA in February, where he is Director of Opera and Vocal Studies. He paired Claudio Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. AC Marcus Durham set the fight choreography for two upper-class voice majors who had completed a six-week combat workshop with him in a previous semester. Marcus noted that it was an unusual assignment: "I've done lots of fights that have contributed to the story of an opera, but never a fight that actually was the opera!" The work was also unusual because there is a Narrator who provides the audience with blow-by-blow commentary, which created the additional challenge of simultaneously matching what the audience hears with what it sees.

which is the sequel to the film *Batman Begins*. Recent theatre work includes: *The Three Musketeers* for Bristol Old Vic, *Don't Look Now* at the Sheffield Crucible & Lyric Hammersmith, *Twelfth Night* at the Theatre Royal, Northampton and *Angels in America* for Headlong Theatre Company. He was also Fight Consultant for the new X-Box game *Fable 2*.

AC Pippa Winslow just finished a run in the title role of *Kiss Me Kate*. She enjoyed the fights as well as an opportunity for some whip cracking, thanks to CT/FD Scott Mann, in the song "I Hate Men". Other performances included Emma in *Jekyll & Hyde*, Vera in *Stepping Out*, and numerous concerts. Pippa has also been busy teaching musical theatre and choreographing, including a very special children's pop/rock version of *The Tempest* in which she included some swordplay for her son playing Antonio. Perhaps he will be following in mom's footsteps?

CT Bret Yount has been very busy recently, both as an actor and fight director. His acting work can be seen in the new Channel 4 series *Angelo's* as well as in the short film *Hush*. Recent fight direction includes *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Our Country's Good* at the Liverpool Playhouse, *The May Queen* at Liverpool Everyman, *The Harder They Come* at Theatre Royal, Stratford East and *Leaves of Glass* at the Soho Theatre.

International Region

All locations outside
the United States



By Bret
Yount

IntlRegRep@safd.org

FM Richard Ryan is currently working as Fight Arranger on *The Dark Knight*,



Upcoming Workshops

ATTENTION WORKSHOP COORDINATORS:

Please look these specifications over to make sure that you are sending us exactly what we need so we do not have to contact you and ask for corrections.

What you put in the ad is up to you, however, the following criteria must be met:

- The workshop must be **sanctioned by the SAFD**
- The ad must be **7.75" wide by 4.5" high**
- The ad must be in **black and white**
- The ad must be submitted in either **.tif, .jpg, .eps, or .pdf** format
- When sending us a file, you **must include the fonts** you use

If your ad does not meet the following criteria, your ad will NOT be placed in the publication. We will accept ads up to six months before the date of your workshop, and we are more than happy to answer questions as well as help you through the process. If you have further questions, contact us at:

cuttingedge@safd.org

The 4th Annual FIGHT DIRECTORS FORUM and the TEXAS INTENSIVE STAGE COMBAT WORKSHOP 2007

A Regional event Sanctioned by the Society of American Fight Directors

The Fight Directors Forum

7:00-9:00pm Friday, August 31st, 2007

Start the weekend off with a unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of this important aspect of performance.

"A special seminar in fundamental principles of stage fighting from a fight director's point of view". This event is open to the public and free to workshop participants.

The Texas Intensive

9:00am-6:30pm Saturday and Sunday

September 1st & 2nd, 2007

Applying performance principles of stage combat in a variety of classes for the beginner and the advanced level actor/fighter.

Skills Proficiency Renewals (SPR) offered on Monday, Sept. 3rd, based on interest. Additional fees apply.



S.A.F.D. Instructors:
Leraldo Anzaldua (CT)
Brian Byrnes (CT/FD/FM)
Mark Guinn (CT)
k. Jenny Jones (CT/FD/FM)
Jack Young (CT/FD)
additional staff TBA



Location: University of Houston, School of Theater & Dance; Cullen at Elgin Drive, Houston, Texas

Fees: Texas Intensive \$175.00 (for both days) PRICE INCLUDES A T-SHIRT, BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND SNACKS BOTH DAYS!!

10% discounts available (for a reduced fee of \$157.50) for - S.A.F.D. members - or - groups of six or more! Only one discount per participant accepted.

Send a copy of current S.A.F.D. membership card - or - send your group's registration forms together to qualify for a discount.

Send registration fees with your complete contact information to: Judy Frow's Show Business 5041 Nina Lee Lane, Houston, TX 77092
of Fax to register by credit card 713-683-0467

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Rapier and Cloak

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Scrappy Knappy

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Professional Wrestling

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Your tuition includes continental breakfast, cheesesteak lunch and 8 classes. Recerts are available on Oct. 5th

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The Thirteenth Annual

WINTER WONDERLAND WORKSHOP

January 11-13, 2008

Presented at Elgin Community College • 1700 Spartan Drive • Elgin, Illinois

www.winterwonderlandworkshop.com

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 either send in 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 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
- And much, much more...

Status (Circle one):	New Member	Current Renewing Member	Lapsed Renewing Member	Gift*
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*If giving a membership as a gift, please print your name here _____

Please fill in the information for the gift receiver below.

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General Information

Name (First, MI, Last)	Membership Level (circle one): Organization, Friend, Actor/Combatant, Advanced Actor/Combatant, Certified Teacher, Fight Director
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I am interested in getting involved (circle any that apply):

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

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Knife			
Quarterstaff			
Rapier & Dagger			
Single Sword			
Smallsword			
Sword & Shield			
Unarmed			

Photocopy & Mail with payment to:

SAFD, 1350 East Flamingo Road #25, Las Vegas, NV. 89119

Call for SAFD Historical Information

The Cutting Edge is seeking additional historical information on the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD). In honor of the SAFD's 30th anniversary, we are looking to update the website and establish a more concrete system of record keeping to preserve the legacy that was started by our founders.

We are looking for the following:

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

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

Definition

Feint

Main Entry: **feint**
Pronunciation: feynt
Function: *noun*

1 : a movement made in order to deceive an adversary; an attack aimed at one place or point merely as a distraction from the real place or point of attack

SAFD Definition: An attacking action made without intending to hit and designed to either probe the opponent's defensive reaction or to draw a reaction or a parry.

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**Submissions for the
November/December
issue are due
September 1st!**



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