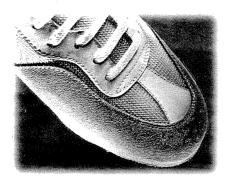
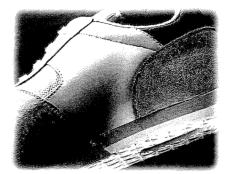


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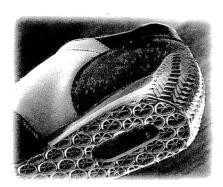
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# American Elso Winter '98/Volume 48, Number 1

Finding a Lost Foil Champion by Andrew Shaw
The USFA's Official Historian employs serendipitous sleuthing to fill in the gaps.

 $12^{{\tiny \mbox{Five Lesson Program for Sabre}} {\tiny \mbox{A Hungarian legend offers a simple lesson plan for coaching sabre mastery}} \label{the lesson Program for Sabre}$ 

The Current Reel Story by Ted Li
Used, new, crafted from spare parts — an overview of what's out there.

Results from the 1998 Junior Olympic Championships
The Convention Center in Oakland, California, was the site of this year's President's Day weekend event.

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# The USFA Advances Opportunity

Fencers share a heartfelt belief in the virtues of our sport; the USFA exists to promote those virtues through policies and programs designed to achieve our goals.

#### BY DONALD W. ALPERSTEIN, USFA PRESIDENT

Last time in these pages I commented on the different skills needed for organizational and competitive effectiveness. I observed that not only do those tasks demand different ways of thinking, but that sometimes what works for one is an obstacle to success in the other. In both, the key to accomplishment is recognizing and applying the attitudes best suited to attaining the goal at hand, whether scoring a touch or implementing a program.

This is not to say that organizational work and competition have nothing in common, for they do. In both, success depends on identifying possibilities, weighing the pros and cons, and capitalizing on good opportunities thus perceived. Others are better qualified than I to discuss technical strip analysis, but let me take a few moments to comment on how the USFA as an association recognizes and addresses its opportunities.

The groups that implement policies and programs for the USFA at the national level — the Congress and the Board of Directors — work in concert to identify and respond to the desires and needs of the membership. Sometimes the process is slower than we might like, but it works pretty well. Let me demonstrate by looking at three issues of concern to very different segments of the membership.

#### A First Step for Professional Fencing

The past year witnessed lively discussion about fencing for prize money and the anticipated affect of professional competition on our sport. Few developments have stimulated more debate and greater disagreement. One group of fencers — most of whom have considerable experience and accomplishment in the sport, but who are no longer interested in representing the USA internationally — see great possibilities in this new competitive forum. Others wonder whether cash awards will diminish the integrity or reputation of fencing, will divert attention and resources from an activity they believe should be motivated primarily by passion, and could result in the inadvertent disqualification of fencers from scholastic, collegiate, international or championship competition.

The Board of Directors took on the difficult task of formulating a policy that would most benefit the entire membership, the sport and the USFA. The Board articulated the Association's official position, and planned for further discussion in the future. Published in the most recent USFA National Newsletter, the statement clarifies the definition of "professional" and reiterates the rules which govern the participation of professionals in USFA events and the participation of USFA members in professional competition. The USFA pres-

ently has no formal relationship with any organization that conducts professional fencing tournaments, and neither approves nor censures any such entity or competition. We will place the question whether to change the rules that prohibit professionals from participating in National Championship competitions and qualifiers on the agendas of the July meetings of the Congress and Board of Directors. At the same time, we are considering whether to propose that the FIE remove amateurism requirements from its international rules.

#### Financial Assistance for Clubs

While the advent of professional fencing primarily interests established fencers, the USFA is also addressing the needs of newcomers. At its Annual Meeting last September, the Board created one such program, a "President's Developmental Fund," to explore ways to assist clubs and other qualified organizations which foster new fencers and aid existing participants of limited means.

Response to the program has been wonderfully enthusiastic, with more than a dozen organizations submitting excellent proposals. A review committee is evaluating the submissions, and after considering its recommendations the Board of Directors will decide at the July meeting how to award the grants.

This year's pilot program has only modest resources, but so encouraging has been the response that the administration is looking for ways to increase substantially the level of support available for distribution next year. The need and opportunity are obviously there, and the USFA can marshall its resources to bring fencing to more and more people while making it possible for existing fencers to remain involved. By seeing such possibilities and working together, the USFA is finding ways to help fencing grow.

#### Division I Status for Women's Sabre

The increasing success of women's sabre provides yet another example of how the USFA is working in the interest of an important and growing segment of the membership. In September, the weapon was elevated to Division I Championship status, the highest level of competition in American fencing. Later this year we added yet additional tournaments to the Women's Sabre calendar, with U-16 competition at Summer Nationals and U-17 at next year's Junior Olympics.

The USFA has been a leader in the push for FIE sponsored competition in the weapon, and we have begun to incorporate women's sabre into our international programs. We have reason to believe that the women's event being held by the USFA in conjunction with the men's New York World Cup competition in March will attract the largest and strongest international field ever assembled. Our female saber fencers can begin their preparation for world competition knowing that the Association stands firmly behind them.

As these examples demonstrate, the concerns of the USFA are the concerns of its membership, and the opportunities facing the organization are as diverse as the needs of a growing fencing community. With the help of its membership, the USFA will continue to identify issues important to the sport, the organization, the and the community, and to address those issues the best we can.

By working cooperatively to advance our mutual cause we simultaneously celebrate our diversity and individuality and promote our community interests. Announcing the:

### **EUROPEAN SUMMER TRAINING CAMP**

JULY 13-18, 1998



At:

#### CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Come and join high level fencers from across Europe and the United States! The European Summer Training Camp is designed for beginners as well as experienced fencers in all weapons and all ability levels. The European Summer Training Camp will provide individualized and group instruction to all participants. Two training sessions will be held each day except for Saturday, July 18, which is reserved for competition.

#### **Coaching staff includes:**

Maestro Marcos Lucchetti - Camp Director and Head Coach, Capitol Fencing Center

Mt. Regis Mantzer - French National Coach, Comite Departemental d' Escrime

Mt. Christophe Omnes - French Junior National Team Coach, Comite Departemental d' Escrime

Mt. Nicolas Henriot - Coach, Comite Departemental d' Escrime

Mt. Philippe Metine - Coach, Comite Departemental d' Escrime

(Our French Coaching Staff will be joined by 20 elite French junior fencers)

The European Summer Training Camp will be held on the campus of California State University, Sacramento. Resident campers will be provided with room and board at the Residence Halls and Dining Commons and have access to outdoor swimming pools, soccer fields, and basketball and tennis courts.

**Cost:** \$425 - without room and board, \$575 - with room and board (double occupancy), \$675 - with room and board (single occupancy).

**Registration:** To reserve a space at the European Summer Training Camp, participants must post a \$200 deposit by March 18. Register early to ensure your place at the camp!

This event is provided in conjunction with The Lucchetti Fencing Foundation.

For more information please contact:

#### CAPITOL FENCING CENTER

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## What if we had a tournament and the Bout Committee wasn't there?

Question: "When does the next round of my event start?" Answer: "In a 'bout' an hour." This seems to be the average perception of how a Bout Committee operates. How many of you really know what the Bout Committee does?

The Bout Committee is the first to arrive and the last to leave a tournament. While you are busy warming up, we check registration lists, seed the event, make pools, assign referees, assign strips, print pool sheets and post pool lists. While you are fencing, we are doing all of the foregoing for another event. After you finish your round, we check results, enter results in the computer, seed the next round, print bout forms, assign strips, assign referees and post information. When the event is over we compile and post results. All of this we do while answering all sorts of individual questions. And while you get to leave when you finish fencing, we have to stay until the last awards are presented in the last event of the day. Then, we get to do it all over again the next day.

"Do you know" this or "do you know" that? Those questions I don't mind. It's the verbally abusive statements that are directed toward the Bout Committee that really upset me. During NAC events, the Bout Committee is treated as if it doesn't have a clue. We work to run an efficient tournament only to be treated as if we are just sitting on our hands doing nothing. We are dedicated volunteers who are here because we love our sport. We all have families and friends we could be spending the weekend with, but we choose to be here to help our sport. Yet, when there is a problem, the Bout Committee is always blamed. Believe it or not, most problems are not our fault. While we are human and do make mistakes, most of the problems are errors that are brought to us to correct. Yet, somehow, they are still our fault. We don't intentionally try to delay the tournaments.

We do get suggestions about how to run a more efficient tournament but, too often, those suggestions are not presented to us in an appropriate manner. If you can't phrase your comment at the event with some civility, please refrain and send it to us in writing. We are always looking for ways to do things better.

We do appreciate it when people thank us for all we do and it's always nice to hear but please realize that we would probably serve on the Bout Committee anyway. Which I think may be another problem: being taken for granted. Until you are on this side of the table, I don't think you can fully understand what we go through. Some of you work at local events and we thank you. Multiply those events ten times and then maybe you can see where we come from.

Personally, I miss my children and husband, but I still enjoy being a part of this sport and making what I hope is a positive contribution. Please consider what we — the Bout Committee chair, Tournament Committee representative, Fencing Officials representative, computer operators and other Bout Committee members — are doing. We are here for the sport and the love of it. Please remember that the next time you approach the table. Thank you.

BARBARA LYNCH BOUT COMMITTEE CHAIR

#### The Care and Feeding of Real Spectators

"Fencing is not a spectator sport!" How many times have you heard that bromide? Like most bromides it diverts thinking about a

subject that might find exceptions or even call it in question. In this case it may also cover embarrassment over not knowing how to attract spectators to fencing. After all, are not spectators a sign of successful endeavors, social acceptance and value? Let us examine the subject in spite of the bromide.

I submit there are two kinds of spectators, fencing spectators and real spectators. The former come primarily to see the fencing, the latter come primarily to be entertained. The distinction is not a semantic one; they have differing needs, as I shall explain.

The most important thing real spectators need is a fixed schedule, so they know when to show up and what time to commit. Organizers rarely satisfy this critical need, so it is not surprising that real spectators don't show up. Three hours is about as long as real spectators will stay. Fencing spectators might like a schedule, but it is not critical, because they will attend and leave on their own schedules.

The second thing real spectators need is a degree of comfort about the proceedings. Information on directions and parking, comfortable seats, access to food and restrooms all fall into this category. Again, except for the latter, these are not critical needs for the fencing spectator; they have information, will sit on benches and bring their own food.

The third thing real spectators need is to learn what is going on. A program that explains the rules, a list of players, scoreboards to show bout and tournament progress, an announcer to explain the process are all necessary. The fencing spectator considers these niceties not needs.

The fourth thing that real spectators need is entertainment, a show, a reason for coming. Music, color, excitement, someone or something to cheer for, and above all instant replay video meet this need. Fencing spectators are entertained by the fencing, but can appreciate the above. They might even get used to them.

So, if we satisfy the needs of real spectators, will they come? They did at the Olympic Games, but that may be a special case. Why not test the premise at our reformatted National Championships in February and in May. Could we not have a three session individual schedule, say from 9am-noon for the preliminaries, 2-5pm for the direct elimination from 32 to 4, and a final of four from 7-9pm? Could we not have team finals in the relay format with a bronze medal match follow by a gold medal match? Even fencers could love this schedule, and it might work for any major tournament.

BILL GOERING COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

#### A Note from the Editor ...

If this issue of AMERICAN FENCING looks a little peaked, with fewer pages and fewer pictures, your eyes aren't playing tricks on you. Every committee has been asked to tighten its belt, to save money which can then be turned into programs to benefit fencing at all levels. While we investigate other cost-saving techniques, this skinny issue is our contribution to an improved financial picture for the USFA.

Thanks for your understanding. And, look for a more robust AMERICAN FENCING in June!

## Courage, Commitment, Disciplined Focus: Goals for 2000

The theme of the 2002 Winter Games could become our rallying cry for success in 2000.

BY JOHN HEIL, PH.D.

As I watched the Nagano Winter Games, my thoughts turned to the coming Summer Olympics in Sydney and with that the awareness that we are approaching the halfway point in the

quadrennium. As the Olympic flag was passed to Salt Lake City, the theme of the next Winter Games was declared to be "culture, change and courage." This seems a good theme for any sport, fencing included. From my perspective, the past years have been a time of great change in the culture of the sport of fencing. With this comes adversity and a measure of turmoil. Perhaps courage is a key ingredient in the mix needed to see us through.

Thoughts of courage were fresh in my mind, having recently given an interview for an article, "Fear, Courage and Performance" in the Penn State Sports Medicine Newsletter. Some of my thoughts are recounted below. Sport psychologists see courage built on a foundation of mental toughness. It goes well beyond tolerating the routine physical discomforts of training and competition, and the more rough stuff encountered occasionally. Mental toughness includes com-

mitment to one's goals, a disciplined focus on goal attainment, return to play after injury, dealing with disappointment, and the wherewithal to move one's game to a higher level. These qualities cannot be taught directly, but an environment can be created by coaches and athletes, administrators and parents where they can develop and thrive. Courage in sports is the product of a group process. When one person or group shows mental toughness, they lead by example and others become empowered. Cultivating courage invariably involves risk-taking. To have confidence is not enough; the skills most be there to back it up. When an athlete takes a well thought out risk and succeeds, the process is reinforced and becomes the basis for future actions. Others may act courageously but with poor judgement. If things don't work out the impact can be devastating. This is why guidance and support are so essential. The good coach will encourage athletes to take a chance on themselves when the challenge is right, and to exercise caution when time is not right. The wise mentor will do the same in any realm of performance.

Articles Editor Jim Brown seemed quite interested in my comments. I thought my comments might be a reflection of the company I keep in fencing, in particular. Let me offer some of the examples of courage I have been privileged to witness in recent years in fencing. I do so with the knowledge that many more have eluded my awareness. For example:

- ❖ Iris Zimmermann in the 97 Cadet World Championships dealing with the expectation of an American being #1 in an international event.
- ❖ The endurance and tenacity of Elaine Cheris, a finalist in the 98 World Cup in Cuba at age 50+.

But not all courage leads directly to great results. Witness:

❖ Terrence Lasker with a strong sabre performance in the 97 Junior Worlds team event after a painfully poor performance in the individual competition — followed by wining the 97 National Sabre Championship not long after.

Sometimes one athlete's example leads another as in

Felicia Zimmermann's come from behind performance in the next to last bout at the 96 Cuba World Cup Foil Team competition, followed by Ann Marsh who carried the momentum to the United States' first World Cup gold medal.

Courage is often shown away from the competitive spotlight. Consider

Nhi Le's return to competitive form after a serious knee injury, as her personal trainer says, "way better than I could do."

This is seen at all levels of competitive ability.. For instance

A near blind fencer whose name I unfortunately do not know seeking to compete in the 97 NAC in Palm Springs.

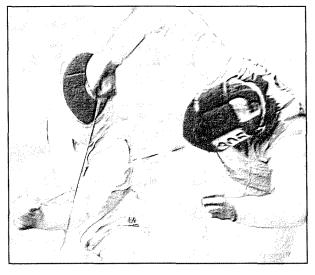
To my mind courage is most pervasive in the

coaches who have dedicated their lives to fencing. Take for example

\*Buckie Leach, declining Iris Zimmermann's request for advice during a difficult point in a bout at the 97 Junior World Championships, instead expressing confidence that she could find the solution herself which she did.

In fact, I have seen examples doses of toughness and dedication throughout the USFA. Let us not forget those behind the scenes who are responsible for creating the very opportunity to compete. Who in the struggle for constructive change have stood on their convictions, taken their licks and continued to do their best for the organization and for the sport of fencing.

For all of the developing sports striving to meet a higher level of excellence, adversity is the name of the game. The challenge of American fencing is a Catch 22 — to have the resources needed for success their must first be results, but the pursuit of results is hindered by limited resources. And, the solution? More of the same: tolerance of adversity, personal courage and an ever vigilant eye on the prize.



## How to Tame Fencing's Tangle of Cable, Cord & Wire

Power is only the beginning of the problem!

BY JOE BYRNES

We may be on the threshold of a brave new world of wireless fencing, but don't hold your breath, I'm not. There seems no reason to think that all our reels and floor cords, etc., are going to fade away overnight. In fact, I am reliably informed that the designer who may have the inside track on creating the wireless system that is hoped to be in place for the next Olympics has in mind a machine with a little switch on the back: in one position, the box works with the regular reels and floor cords, just as we are used to; in the other, it's a wireless wonder. The fact that the FIE (in an act of common sense not necessarily usual with that body) has decreed that any wireless system must work with the current foils, epees, and sabres, and their body cords, is a clear indicator, or so it seems to me.

Looking at the usual fencing floor, at a major competition, let's say, the thing that may strike an inexperienced spectator is the sheer amount of wire, or cable, or cord, that's all over the place. (I get my ideas for these columns, as I am sure you must realize, from what I see regularly at national, regional, and local events. I have recently attended a number of competitions, at all levels, which had certain features in common; they started me thinking. About what, you ask. Glad you asked. I couldn't help noticing the repeated pattern of certain—shall we say—problems. Herewith the first of a mini-series of observations on one problem area: what to do with, or how to tame, those cables, cords, and/or wires that we are still stuck with.)

For the present let's confine ourselves to the ones we will not easily be free from: the power lines. Unless you run all your competitions in the best-approved international FIE fashion, with messy 12-volt storage batteries running all your machines, you are going to have power cables stretching all over the place—one per strip, at least, unless you plan cleverly—delivering 120 VAC to power the machines, extension lights, clocks, and whatever else you may have in place. I know—many of you don't have the faintest interest in how these things are accomplished; they are just supposed to happen, for your benefit; it is somebody else's headache, isn't it? But someday it may be, or become, your headache; you may find yourself (ugh) having to help with a set-up, or even plan one.

General advice: for powering a fencing competition, you need sturdy cable—something better than zip-cord: 16-gauge wire, with ground, should be the minimum. Unless you have very long runs to cover from the outlets to your strips, you wouldn't need heavier 14-gauge wire, much less 12-gauge. (That is not to say that the heavier stuff isn't satisfactory; such cables would be wonderful, though bulky, but you don't need them.) Fencing machines don't put very much of a load on a line, fortunately. That means that more than

one—in fact, several—machines can usually be safely run off one fused line. The real problem of setting out one's cables has to do with



making the most economical use of resources and finding the shortest (feasible and safe) way of getting the power from there to here. The simply shortest way often won't do, obviously, since it would frequently run right across your other strips. In this connection, you would do well to have a blueprint, or at least an accurately measured floor plan—to scale—to work from. If you can get such a thing from the proprietor of your venue, fine; otherwise use a big tape measure to get the num-

bers yourself. (I recollect once being assured, at the advance inspection of a National Championship venue, by the assistant manager of the hotel, of the precise measurements of their ballroom, and how irritated he was when I whipped out my big measuring tape and took readings. I had been unconvinced by his numbers, though it was hard to be sure in that big space; but I was right in my suspicions: he was quoting total wall-to-wall figures, both ways, ignoring the overhanging balcony on three sides of the room, under which there wasn't blade room for a fencing competition.)

The best thing you can do is put your measurements onto graph paper, keeping proportion, naturally. Mark the <u>precise</u> locations of any pesky columns or such-like problem areas. Note also the locations of AC-power outlets: are they in the floor? at the walls? how high up? side walls, or end walls only, or both? at the base of columns? half-way up columns? Oh, and by the way, do they all work—i.e., are they all hot?

With this information on your graph paper, you can start what I call the paper-doll part of the plan. Cut up a 3x5 card or two (sturdier and more convenient than paper) to make rectangular stand-ins to represent the average strip (6' x 60'), at the scale you are working with, and start laying them out. You will soon see what will work, where there will be room for two referees, back to back, whether tables for machines will leave at least minimum clearance on each side from the strip, whether a strip may be covering a floor outlet, if you were planning on using it (and, if so, can you adjust to accommodate it?), etc. Be aware of the existence of the "brute force" older copper strip that sometimes, though infrequently of late, shows up, that is more like 66' long and 7' wide, and can throw off the best laid plan of mouse or man. Once all this prep has been properly done, there shouldn't be too many ugly surprises when the actual striplaying is carried out, and you won't have to move them, much, after you have started.

This column is really about power cables; but I hope you see why this seeming digression on strip placement is not out of order: you must have the strips in place, or at least planned for their places, before the power cables can be planned, much less put down. You

Continued on following page

will be able to lay out more efficient routes, using less cable, if the planning has been properly done. In my New Jersey Division, where for years we have been using certain high school gyms, more or less similarly configured, we have constructed some very long AC cables, with two and four outlet boxes set at appropriate intervals. One of these, running the length of a very long gym floor, along the ends of a series of strips which go off at right angles from the cable run, will serve half, or nearly, of the competition. Shorter, satellite, cables run up half the length of a strip to the area for the scoring machine(s), where usually two, facing each direction, are located.

The insertion of a short, GFCI-equipped, length of cable at the AC outlet (wall or floor) takes care of the general safety consideration. You do use GFCI's, don't you? The only small problem with so locating the GFCI's is that a trip anywhere in the protected area shuts down all the machines on that line. That should be considered

a small price to pay for the safety gained; and it's not likely to happen very often, anyway. The main point about a GFCI, is that, like insurance, you almost never get to use it, but if you ever need it, it had better be in place.

Now comes the other safety question: how do you keep people from tripping over your cables? They may injure themselves, quite apart from disconnecting your machines at critical moments. The answer is to tape them down. Does that mean complete tape over their full length in the manner of some Hollywood major motion picture shoot? Well, if you have their sort of budget.... Taping the stuff into place at spaced intervals so that it won't be so easily tripover-able will ordinarily have to do. In other words, you need not use rolls and rolls of tape. And please, when you, or the persons you are supervising, are removing the cables, try not to leave huge ugly lengths of tape adhering to them. (Topic to be continued.)

#### IN THE TRENCHES

## "Ave, Caesar"

The very idea of a benevolent despot ruling a division with a firm but gentle hand is antithetic to the principles of the USFA.

#### BY EDWIN (BUZZ) HURST

In the one hundred and six years that our Association has been around, it has not been unknown that a division now and then would become a "one-man operation" and remain so for many years. These seemingly permanent division chairs have, for the most part, been pretty benign people, but there has been the occasional division treasury that wandered off into the forest, never to be seen again. However, benign or no, the concept of a benevolent despot ruling his fencers with a firm but gentle hand is completely antithetic to the governing principles of the USFA.

From top to bottom our national bylaws direct that we govern ourselves through executive committees or boards, groups that are in turn answerable to the members who put them there. In the case of divisions where officers have a term of only one year, it is less a question of accountability than one of input. When a chair is only discussing his ideas with himself, it becomes very hard to see any flaws in what he wants to do. If a chair is smart, she will look upon her executive committee as a resource, rather than an impediment to efficiency.

The composition of executive committees may vary slightly from division to division, depending on bylaws. Oh, and to answer a question that many of you have longed to know, the word bylaw came into English from Old Norse (Old Danish, to be specific): the prefix "by" meaning village or locality, hence "local law." The concept can also be expressed as "ways to keep Ragnar from hitting Bjorn with an ax over a stray sheep." The same source gives us the word Danegeld, which may be defined as "a way to keep Ragnar and Bjorn from hitting Edgar and Ethelbert with axes." But, I digress.

The division's executive committee should meet on some regular

basis, for I personally have never seen a division wherein issues didn't arise during the season which needed policy decisions. Most emphatically, any changes to the schedule, or fiscal expenditures that were not previously approved, must be thoroughly discussed and approved by the E.C. Your bylaws should specify what is the minimum number of voters required to conduct business (called a quorum - a Latin word which means "the minimum number of voters required to conduct business"). If the bylaws are silent on this point, as they often are if they haven't been seen in the last twenty years, then you must assume that a majority vote of the entire Committee is required. Remember, a chair may not act without the specific approval of the executive committee unless he or she has been previously authorized to do so through either the division bylaws or the selfsame executive committee. For those chairs who insist on doing otherwise, it would be well to remember that we still have Ragnar's telephone number.

A geographically large division might consider using telephone conference calls, and of course, there is our society's current opiate of the masses: E-Mail. The most obvious problem with E-Mail meetings is that they can only be employed if every member of the executive committee has a computer. Moreover, absent a reply, the sender does not know whether the addressee actually got the message (the trick of sending out a question and stating that "if I don't hear from you I'll consider it a yes" was old when they were still using talking drums). Lastly, I have seen more ill-considered and imbecilic things sent on E-Mail than I have ever heard spoken in a face-to-face meeting, where the addressee can get his hands around the throat of the sender. But aside from these concerns, I obviously think running a division by E-Mail is a marvelous idea! (or in, I believe, the current argot: really super neat!).

All of the foregoing doesn't let your executive committee members off the hook, incidentally. You have an obligation to attend meetings and to make your views known to the chair and the rest of the group when you think it important.

Virtually every chair who became an emperor over the years did not see him or herself as beginning with the Mandate of Heaven. What they discovered was that nobody else would participate in administering the division. Every adult member of a division has a responsibility towards its governance.

As Abraham Lincoln once delicately put it, "If you ain't skinnin', you can at least hold a leg."

# Only This and Nothing More?

Veteran fencing offers so many more options that mere competition.

#### BY ROBERT BLOCK

Ah, distinctly I remember it was just last December when this speculation about the role of competition crossed my mind.

After considering it for awhile, I would have to say it was the realization that the first mental image of veteran fencing that pops up for most of us is one of competition; the image of the older (or shall we say more "mature") fencer who wants to remain active in his or her club and still enter competitions. With apologies to Mr. Poe, is fencing for veterans really only this and nothing more?

I don't think so, or at least it shouldn't be. Competition is certainly a very important part of the veterans movement and, arguably, the driving force behind many of the advances that have been made thus far. Competition is also the focal point for much of the camaraderie and social activities that have come to highlight veteran events. Which is all well and good. But shouldn't we who continue to fence through mid-life and even later, and are able to reap the benefits of increasing competitive opportunities for veterans, also assume the responsibility of returning something extra back to the sport?

The obvious ways of making this payback are through administration, officiating, armory and coaching; and I'm sure there are others, especially at the club level, that I haven't mentioned. Since my personal experience, particularly of late, has been in the coaching arena, I want to share some first-hand observations that are related to my experiences at the USFA National Coaches College and I believe have some significance to older fencers. Part of it is about a generation gap, but a larger part is about our fascinating common bond.

When I entered my dorm room the first time I attended the Coaches College I discovered that my two roommates had already appropriated the choicest beds and living areas. A feeling of old college deja vu swept over me. But wait a minute, this was a little different; one of my roomies had just graduated from high school, the other was perhaps ten years older, and both of them seemed to be happily centered in the middle of

jumbled piles of clothing, equipment and luggage that had apparently just been dropped in place on the floor. It occurred to me that the ages of my own two sons back home approximated those of my new CD- and personal headphone-equipped roommates. This would, I could see, require a bit of adjustment on my part. Even if my muscles and joints aren't as flexible as they once had been, this doesn't mean that my attitude couldn't stand a little fine tuning. Right, dude?

The dining hall at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs is in my estimation one of the more important aspects of the Coaches College. Here youth and maturity mingle as athletes and coaches from many different Olympic sports dine on carefully calibrated food groups and help themselves to a limitless supply of cappuccino. It is a common ground where everyone can relax, share fencing experiences and get to know one another on a personal level. Initially, I think age differences are a factor and that this is evident in the way dining groups coalesce at tables on the first day. But the

Once upon a winter night dreary,
While I pondered the veterans
movement, fact and theory,
Over many a quaint and
curious volume of fencing loreWhile I considered competition,
sanctioned happening,
Suddenly there came a tapping,
As if some thought gently rapping,
rapping at my cerebral door.
"Tis some dissenting thought,"
I muttered,
"Pounding at my cerebral door-

only this and nothing more."

dents cope with long mornings, afternoons and evenings in the gym followed by late night study sessions. The curriculum is more familiar to some than others, especially if it is a weapon with which a student has little or no experience. It quickly becomes a group effort to pass the course. Study groups are formed, information is shared and a common goal of mastering the curriculum evolves. And, inevitably, those that are old enough occasionally break the tedium of the evening study binges by crossing Union Boulevard to the Finish Line, a local drinking establishment, to down a brewski or two.

situation gradually

changes as the stu-

The gym experience is probably the biggest test for the student coach/veteran fencer. Group

stretching and warm-up games start the morning. The emphasis is on movement, rhythm and flexibility. The students run and stop and change directions in competitive games. The quickness and stamina of the younger students is an obvious advantage in these games. The instructors, who are mostly in or around the same generation of their older students, don't push the veterans as hard as the younger ones.

In fact, the instructors seem particularly aware of the physical limitations affecting many of the older students and during the stretching and movement games constantly remind us that we don't have to subject our bodies to any unnecessary risks.

Drills develop a little differently. Fencers more experienced with the weapon being studied help those with less familiarity. Partners in drills rotate and offer constructive suggestions to each other. We are all struggling in a similar fashion to understand and digest the information overload that sometimes seems overwhelming. Nearly everyone, instructors and students alike, appear exhausted by the end of the day. At first the strange surroundings and spartan existence in the dorms contribute to the lack of a good nights sleep. But this is usually cured after the first night or two when the rigorous days and late study nights produce an enduring fatigue that makes must of us sleep like babies. The College is tougher than I expected, but hey, we're all here because we want to be. Our mission in common is to improve our coaching skills. That's right, we're not here to better our own fencing talents but to develop and improve our coaching skills!

The Coaches College sessions normally last about six days. All of the conversations that take place, whether in the gym, dining hall or dorm, and even at the Finish Line, are almost exclusively devoted to fencing talk. These are special times when invaluable fencing lore, that wealth of personal observations, priceless stories and colorful anecdotes, are passed back and forth among students, instructors and generations. These encounters are a very important supplement to the formal teaching sessions and structure of the College. It is a perfect environment for the coaches, young and older, who want to immerse themselves in the sport and absorb as much as they can in a limited time.

I think all of us would agree that there are other factors that can draw one into the coaching ranks in addition to, or perhaps in combination with, the simple urge to pass on the skills of the sport to others. There are those who go into coaching simply because they want to help younger fencers develop and take great personal satisfaction in seeing a caterpillar evolve into a butterfly. Some probably look around when their prime competitive days are numbered and see coaching as the only profession they seem equipped to pursue. Others may be confronted with an unexpected opportunity that inadvertently leads them along a long term coaching path. Some, such as myself, are at first curious to see if they are up to the challenge that coaching presents and then find that they thoroughly enjoy practicing the sport from the other end of the weapon as the designated target. A few undoubtedly enter coaching for the money even though ours is such a small sport that we are usually talking survival rather than profit. There is also what I like to call the "ego factor." No matter what other motivator impels one toward coaching, ego certainly has something to do with it. I'm convinced that to a certain extent coaches at all levels enjoy whatever amount of recognition and status comes attached with the grand historical tradition of being a fencing instructor.

Becoming a target, a receiver of touches instead of giver, takes a certain amount of adjustment. But the point of this column is that there can be a tremendous amount of personal satisfaction in giving back to the sport as a coach. I'm by no means an expert, but even in my relatively short coaching career I've come to realize that coaching fencing requires many qualities including organization, preparation, skill, understanding, patience, and dedication, let alone a sense of humor. And even possessing all of these qualities doesn't neces-

sarily guarantee that you will ever be able to produce a legitimate contender. As a coach you are only part of the fencing equation and, frustrating as it sometimes seems, not the part that scores the touches. Coaching isn't for everyone, but for those who do possess the right qualities the reward can be extremely gratifying.

So, I commend those veteran fencers who realize they owe a personal debt to their sport and want to repay it, while I challenge others who still have the attitude that veteran fencing equates solely to competition (Only this and nothing more) to live their fencing lives more fully...Ah well, perhaps just some dissenting thought tapping at my cerebral door...Tis the wind and nothing more.

#### Tournament Notes:

OK, it's a slippery slope to tread, but now that I've finished dissing competitive tunnel vision, permit me to sing a different tune and update the changes that have been made to the veterans competition at the 1998 World Fencing Championships in La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland. Since the previous column appeared in this magazine, the FIE has added a womens foil championship event to the veteran competition. Like the mens epee championship event, womens foil will consist of two age categories, 50-59 and 60-69, with each country restricted to three entries in each age category. The qualifier for veteran womens foil at Worlds will be the 1998 Summer Nationals veteran competition, while the qualifier for veteran mens epee will be the cumulative results from NAC-H and the 1998 Summer Nationals veteran competitions. Sorry, sabre fencers, but stay tuned....



## Lifestyles of the Rich & Fencing

Let's not allow the economics of fencing to deny us international success.

#### BY ERIC ROSENBERG

aving read Peter Burchard's article on the "Bravinization" of Lefencing, which essentially faulted the USFA for devoting too high a proportion of its resources to elite fencers, I felt compelled to respond. While the generation of fencers to which Peter and I belong never received subsidies at the level of today's top competitors, we rarely achieved comparable results. The average expenses for a top senior fencer in the 1980's could be broken down as follows:

0.00
0.00
0.00
00.00
0.00
00.00

For top Juniors, subtract the World Cup component, reduce the number of Circuits to 2, take 60% of the equipment costs, and add the J.O.'s for an approximate total of \$4200.00. Since most of us were gainfully employed adults indulging our passion, \$6100 was not an outrageous amount of money. It was not uncommon for equally obsessed amateur skiers, golfers or tennis players to spend comparable amounts annually. The key word in the preceding sentence was amateur. When I first began attending World Cup competitions, I quickly recognized the vast qualitative differences between top American and European fencers. As I became increasingly familiar with the training programs that produced these fencers, I realized the Europeans are professionals - that is to say, they are the products of carefully designed longitudinal training programs supervised by high level coaches, attend full schedules of World Cup competitions, receive all necessary equipment - all for free. This process does not begin at adulthood. Nearly all top Europeans begin training under these conditions as pre adolescents. The average American fencer of my generation never attended Junior World Cup competitions; trained a maximum of 2-4 times weekly for about 2 1/2 hours per session with little to no competent supervision; worked with coaches of widely varying levels of expertise who were unable or incapable of creating training programs geared towards developing high level competitors.

In short, by the time we were qualifying for international teams, we were already far behind our European counterparts. While the USFA. "powers that were" (who today largely remain the powers that be) debated our failure to produce Olympic results and vainly sought some magic formula or fencing "messiah" as a solution, the answer was always starring us right in the face. If you want professional results you have to train like a professional. If you expect athletes to train like professionals they must be subsidized.

So how much does it cost to fully fund a serious competitive

fencer? Let's take a top Junior with the potential to qualify for a Senior team as an example.

1. Open N.A.C.'s4 @ \$700.00	\$ 2800.00
2. Canadian Event	\$ 700.00
[Junior Olympics -(optional)	\$ 700.00]
3 Div. 1 Nationals	\$ 700.00
4. Entry fees	\$ 450.00
5. Junior. World Cups 5 @ \$1100.00	\$ 5500.00
6. Senior. World Cups3 @ \$1100.00	\$ 3300.00
7. Equipment	\$ 2000.00
8. Lessons/training fees	\$ 5000.00
Total:	\$21030.00

Assuming the athlete is achieving respectable results on an international level, here is a fair assessment of what grants and subsidies they can expect from the USFA.

3 top 16's @ Junior World Cups	\$3200.00
2 top 32's @ Junior World Cups	\$ 800.00
2 top 32's @ Senior World Cups	\$ 800.00
USOC basic grant	\$2500.00
Total	\$7300.00

While additional funds may be granted by the National Weapon Coach on a discretionary basis, these amounts are highly variable.

Allowing for the differential amounts of these contributions, we can conservatively state that the net expenses covered by an athlete or parent varies from \$8,000.00 to \$12,000.00 per year.

I deliberately chose a top Junior/Senior fencer as my example for several reasons: there are fencers in the Peter Westbrook Foundation/Fencers Club. development program that fall into this category, and I am intimately aware of their annual expenses; the average age of Senior World team members (both here and abroad) is decreasing, making it essential to fund younger fencers so that they may accrue the necessary experience at the appropriate developmental stage; it was the "Bravin" generation that first made the effort (which was nearly completely self funded) to train on a comparable basis with the Europeans at an early age.

Next rhetorical question: how many typical American families can afford to spend between \$8,000.00 to \$12,000.00 on fencing expenses? This amount is roughly 22% of the after tax income of a family of four earning \$50,000.00. I know of two fencing families who took out second mortgages on their homes to cover fencing expenses. What kind of return can you expect for this considerable investment? In some cases, a college scholarship is the payoff, but these are limited in number. Most of the time, it is virtually impossible to recover the total expenditures involved in preparing a world class fencer.

So, is the USFA. spending too much money on elite fencers? If the stated goal of the organization is to produce Olympic medalists, then the numbers suggest that not enough is contributed. Only high net worth families can afford this kind of long term financial commitment, and unfortunately for the USFA, talent and wealth do not necessarily correlate. I believe that there are several steps that can be taken to help alleviate this financial burden, particularly on vounger developing fencers.

The USFA must seek private sponsorship for it's elite athlete programs. Currently, the organization's primary source of revenue consists of USOC funding and membership dues. USOC funding is based on fulfilling stated performance benchmarks culmi-

Continued on page 20

Until this year all we knew about the 1907 National Foil Champion was that his name was either C. Waldbott or C. Waldbott. In January, official USFA Historian Andy Shaw started looking at old newspapers from Boston, Chicago and New York. Shaw discovered that the lost foil champion was from Chicago, but none of the articles mentioned his first name. Shaw researched the name on the Internet and telephoned everyone in the US with a last name matching any of its various spellings. After many false starts Shaw found a Waldbott in Michigan who volunteered to contact the oldest living Waldbott, currently living in Florida. This elderly Waldbott recalled a woman named Janet Siegel who might have been related to the fencer. He said, however, that she would be about 90 years old if she were still alive. Shaw found her living conveniently enough in West Hollywood and she agreed to share the lost history of her father with him and with us.

# Finding a Lost Foil Champion

#### BY ANDY SHAW, USFA HISTORIAN

The Middle West section was formed in 1934 but Midwest history began long before that ...

"The name 'Waldbott' originated when the Pfalz became French in 1804. Under the new rule of Napoleon, all Jews of the left bank of the Rhein had to take German names. The Jews of Steinbach were invited to the Mayor's office in 1806 where a clerk opened up, at random, a page of a reader. Each noun (in German) was given in order to the Jews standing in the line. From a passage, 'The river flows by the castle of Count Waldbott von Bassenheim,' came the Waldbott name." FROM A DOCUMENT BY LEO WALDBOTT FROM SPEYER/RHEIN IN 1933.

Camille Waldbott was born November 12, 1875 to a Jewish couple, Samuel and Rosa Waldbott in Alsace Lorraine. As a young boy Camille, his brother Eugene and sister Frida were put aboard a ship sailing to America to live with relatives near the northside of Chicago. The son of a language teacher, Camille spoke German and French but was put in the first grade of his Chicago elementary school because he didn't speak English. He was ridiculed and called "dumb" because he was older and bigger than the other boys in his grade. At recess, he retaliated by beating up the other boys.

As an adult he became a very accomplished boxer. He was also respected as a wrestler, bowler, cyclist, ice skater and gymnast. As a young man still living at home he was intent on riding in a bicycle race through the city of Chicago during an extremely hot summer. His mother was concerned and asked him to promise that he would not compete. He promised. The next day he sneaked his bike down to the starting line of the race and was off! He won the race ... and the next day, Camille Waldbott's picture was in the newspaper.

The ladies of the day regarded him as a marvelous dancer. His next door neighbor, Fannie Goodman, was so impressed that she married him. But fencing is where he received national recognition. He began taking private foil lessons at the Chicago Turn Gemeinde where he trained in boxing. He quickly demonstrated great talent and entered local competitions.

1907 was a big year for Camille. He teamed with Olympian Alfred Sauer and William Eckard and won the Illinois Division Foil Team title representing the Chicago Fencing Club. He and his wife had a baby, Janet Rose Waldbott. And, last but not least, on April 5,

Camille competed in the Illinois Division Preliminary, the qualifying tournament for the National Championships. The other divisions holding qualifying events — New England, District of Columbia, Eastern Pennsylvania, Long Island and New York — sent their winners to New York City where a two-day event would determine

national titles.

On April 26, two pools of five fencers each competed with only two advancing to the super final of four to be held the next evening. This format, according to one of the organizers, "would ensure that the finals would be short and exciting enough to keep people's interest." Federico Lage (3-1) and Camille Waldbott (3-1) advanced from the first pool; Victor Curti (4-0) and George Breed

(3-1) from the second. On the following evening the "final four" met in the gymnasium at the New York Athletic Club in front of a crowd of beautifully dressed spectators representing New York society.

The New York Times reported that "after six spirited bouts with the foils, Frederico Lage and C. Waldbott tied for the champion-ship. Their engagement in the fence-off proved a fiery combat. The latter was the most skillful and aggressive and he (Waldbott) won the championship title with something to spare in the estimation of the judges. Shortly before the bouts began, there was a conference of the judges. Several of the competitors had openly protested on the first night (preliminaries) that the judging was woefully inadequate." It doesn't take much to imagine how difficult it might have been for the first Jewish National Champion. (Jews could not be members of any New York clubs until the 1930s.) In addition, Waldbott was not from the East Coast. And, all the officials were from New York City!

In 1908, Camille Waldbott did not defend his title and was never seen again at the National Championships. Locally, however, he continued to be active for a few years and was the Illinois Division Foil Champion and Chair of the Illinois Division. In addition, he officiated at many collegiate tournaments in the Chicago area.

"He was an extremely well-like and charming man," his daughter recalled, "Mild-mannered and very cheerful .... It took a lot of doing to get him angry but once he got there, watch out!"

Laszlo Szepesi, renown Hungarian sabre coach, psychologist and respected academic, needs little introduction. A far Physical Education and Sport in Budapest, which produced hundreds of world famous fencing masters, Szepsi was Coaching Academy in Paris. A few short years later, the French sabre team became a major international force, prounified pedagogical school of sabre in France so successful that even after his return to Hungary, French sabre femotraining program — from introductory to the highest level of professional certification, Szepesi's success reinforces Coach is to lead the coherent, consistent and cohesive education of coaches to create a lasting legacy of success. We five lesson program for sabre, in the hope that it will give an insight into the basics of the Hungarian method of teap preparatory exercises for correct coordination and tension free movement. Introduction by Aladar Kogler, Ph.D., (

# A Five Lesson Program

#### BY LASZLO SZEPESI

n 1982, when I began to work in France, French sabre was suffering from a lack of success that resulted from having seemingly ignored a serious fundamental problem. Not only was their sabre fencers' knowledge of basic technique incomplete, but practically each maitre d'armes was working with differing systems applying varying primary methodologies and techniques. It was a very curious situation, since the foilists (and their maitres) - a population 20 times that of the sabreurs - had already reached an accord on such fundamental questions as, for example: "what is the correct parry six position? ....etc." More important than their larger numbers was the fact that they agreed to work with a technique that had a common base. This has resulted in one key fact; the French foil school is coherent and well defined. This is evident in the fact that there are no significant differences in the methods used by foil maitres concerning preparation, tactics or training loading. Above all, maitres d'armes speak a common language: that of a technique with a unified basis.

Years of working repeatedly within an established system had given me the understanding of the principles necessary to establish a teaching method for sabre fencing that could put it on an equal footing with the other weapons. The five lessons presented below have the following goal: to give a helping hand, a tool for working with young coaches in the education process for this weapon. To them I offered my services - in the creation of a basic common technique and pedagogy - the building blocks of actions necessary to formation of a basic technique

The exercises consist of a series of actions which follow sequentially. Their order is most important, because each exercise helps to prepare for the execution of the next. Our treatment also involves educational exercises and sometimes special actions which foster the reduction of tension and promote the relaxation of the student.

Later, it will be easy to choose one or another exercise in order to

correct deficiencies and problems. (From the beginning, the student must work without a glove)

One element which is repeated many times is that the student must execute actions with eyes closed. From the earliest stages, this will demonstrate the degree to which the actions called for in each exercise have been automatized. This practice is also important for advanced fencers in their training at the beginning of the season, because it helps in stimulating muscle memory and the coordination they had previously developed.

In certain cases, it can be very useful, if, in the course of an action, the student holds his arm in place rather than hitting the target. The temporary change from a peripheral to a more central view, particularly in the case of compound attacks involving complex coordination and many actions on the blade, can be a very effective method, from a pedagogical viewpoint.

The five lessons can be perfected during a one week course of training. Each morning, you have to analyze and study one complete lesson. Instead of focusing on general technical problems, it is necessary to understand the technical aspects, methodology of execution, and the educational value of each exercise as they relate to the development and shaping of practical fencing actions. During the afternoons, coaches have to give the lessons that they analyzed and memorized during the morning sessions to members of a selected group of athletes. Consequently, they are not limited to doing the exercises amongst themselves only, but under practical training conditions as well. This group process creates an effective training milieu, and at the end of the practical work period, the coaches participating have greatly contributed to my training program, and benefitted the junior and senior sabreurs who take part as students in this process.

I hope that this series of lesson will give you some helpful ideas that you can use in your work.

Szepesi serves as Adjunct Professor and Chair of Combat Sports at the University of Physical Education of Hungary; and Professor of Sports of the Ministry of Games and Sport in France

y member at the prestigious Hungarian College of Higher ed by the French Fencing Federation to teach at the ing Olympic and World Champions. He established a flourished. Empowered by the French to create a coaches idea that the single most important task of the Head this in mind, we present the first installment of Szepesi's ng sabre technique, especially the importance of facilitative mbia University

# or Sabre

#### Lesson 1 - 15 to 30 minutes

## GOAL: Head- and side-cuts with advance lunge

- 1. Head cut from en guard distance and from lunge distance <u>Facilitative Preparatory Exercises</u>
  - a) 3 to 5 head cuts from en garde position, repeated frequently.
  - b) from en garde in the head cut position, the student makes repeated beats against the master's blade (which is held in a horizontal position with arm bent, a little like a feint to flank): then, the student makes a firm head cut from en garde position.
    - If the student's arm remains stiff or tense, then after the beats, they must execute not one, but two or three head cuts.
  - c) the previous exercise with lunge
  - d) head cut while lunging slowly
  - e) with eyes closed, head cut while lunging slowly
  - f) the student and coach are engaged in tierce position; only the weak part of the blades are touching; the coach applies slight pressure against the students blade, and the student responds by pressing back with equal amplitude. After repeated exchanges of pressure (which should be hardly noticeable), the coach releases the engagement and the student executes a head cut with lunge.
  - g) the previous exercises with eyes closed.
  - h) from an abnormally close distance, the student makes eight or ten continuous tierce head cuts (starting from and returning to tierce position); in between each cut, the coach gently cuts the students blade in tierce; as the exercise continues, the coach gradually lengthens the distance from extremely close to a short "correct" distance, then back to extremely close. (This exercises must be done slowly)
  - i) after making 3, 4, or 5 quarte beats, the student executes a head cut from en garde distance or with lunge.

- j) after multiple upper hand cuts, the student makes a head cut with lunge
- k) head cut with lunge: at least 8 to 10 repetitions, executed with correct coordination and clear execution of the head cut. (naturally, as with the majority of the previous exercises, the student starts the action in his own tempo)

#### 2. Head cut with advance lunge

#### Facilitative Preparatory Exercises

- a) The coach has his hand in tierce position with an extended arm; the student advances, and upon completion of the step, the coach moves his hand to second position; to this invitation, the student makes a head cut with lunge
- b) the previous exercise but with slower lunge
- as the coach gradually accelerates the transition from tierce position to second, the student must begin his lunge more quickly after completing the advance.
- d) on his own initiative, the student executes a head cut with lunge 8 to 10 times.

#### 3. Side cut from en garde distance or with lunge

#### Facilitative Preparatory exercises

- a) from tierce position, side cut from en garde
- b) repeated side (flank) cuts from en garde position
- straight thrust with lunge: the student executes the thrust by circling under the coaches' tierce en garde position (the thrust and the side cut are very similar from the aspect of coordination)
- d) the coach is in quinte position: from en garde distance, after more cuts to the hand, the student executes a side cut (then, the same exercise with lunge)
- e) the previous exercise with eyes closed
- f) after more tierce beats, side cut with lunge
- g) from en garde distance, fluent tierce (parries) and riposte to flank sometimes, the coach retreats and the student makes the riposte with a lunge, then recovers to tierce en garde position and begins executing side cuts (from en garde or again with lunge) 5-6 times without stopping.

#### 4. Side cut with advance lunge

#### Facilitative Preparatory exercises

- a) The coach has his hand in tierce position with a slightly extended arm; the student advances, and upon completion of the step, the coach moves his hand to the quinte position; to this invitation, the student makes a side cut with lunge
- b) as the coach gradually accelerates the transition from tierce position to quinte, so the student must execute a more fluid advance lunge.
- alternating the "a" and "b" exercises. During the more fluid advance lunges, sometime the coach can wait longer before moving to the quinte position. (by this way he can observe and control the coordination of the advance lunge)
- d) on his own initiative, the student executes 8 to 10 side cuts with advance lunge (sometimes with eyes closed).

The remaining lessons will be presented in subsequent issues of AMERICAN FENCING. Upon request, Dr. Kogler would be willing to organize a practical demonstration for any coaches who are interested.

Every couple of years our armorers are deluged with questions about reels. This year, with the prospect of reel-less fencing a very real probability for the millennium, the deluge takes on El Niño proportions.

# The Current Reel Story

#### TED LI

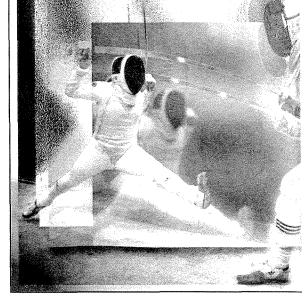
t seems to run in three or four year cycles. The phone rings with innumerable questions about purchasing new or used reels. "Are there any used reels to be bought cheaply?" "What are the cheapest new reels?" "What are the cheapest good reels?"

To address the first question, "Are there any used reels to be bought cheaply?": There are very few used reels on the market, and the ones that are usually have massive problems. For a club or school to decide to sell a reel, one or another of the major components must have failed catastrophically: the springs are broken, the wire has disintegrated, there is an "undiagnosable break somewhere in the internal circuit." Occasionally, there are the complaints, "it would cost too much to refurbish the reel," or "we don't know where to get the parts." With a few minutes conversation and lots of new information, the callers usually decide to have the old reels refurbished, as ultimately it is a lot cheaper to rebuild a reel than to purchase a new one. So, if you're really in the market for used reels, you had better find a club or school program which is going out of business or wants to upgrade their equipment.

Personally, I have equipped my team with a number of reels pieced together from the carcasses of abandoned reels which have been collecting dust in some closet for years. The key has been to know where to buy replacement parts. For openers, the major distributors of fencing equipment usually have stocks of reel parts, and if a particular part is not in their inventory, they are more than happy to custom order it for you. It may take some time, but there are few parts which they cannot get, usually because the manufacturer has discontinued production of it, or the manufacturer isn't in business. Usually, someone, somewhere has the parts. It's just a matter of asking questions of the network of distributors and armorers. George Santelli, Inc. has a large inventory of reel parts for Leon Paul reels, and can get parts for both generations of Uhlmann reels. Blade Fencing can get parts for the Allstar reels. American Fencers carries parts for various types of reels, and Triplette can supply parts for the

French and German reels.

The one thorny problem with reels is the reel wire itself. Often a reel wire was

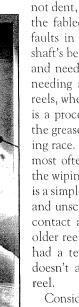


designed to work with a particular reel, and substituting another type can lead to accelerated wire breakage, jamming, or internal damage to the reel drum. Check first with the distributor of a particular manufacturer's reels to see if there is an exact replacement; and if there isn't one, what a suitable substitution might be. Or ask one of the national level technical people in your area. The national armorers and technicians have a lot of experience improvising, and usually can find the answer to almost any question regarding sourcing.

Then there are the questions about what is the best buy in new reels today. Currently there are four brands of reels being sold in the US. The cheapest is the Russian reel, based on an old contactless, winding arm, French design. This reel, while build more sturdily than the original French model, has some drawbacks. One of the primary ones is that it is no longer in production and replacement parts may be very difficult to obtain. The only current source for replacement parts is Blade Fencing, and their supply is not extensive. Another problem is that the reel wire is not very sturdy. Currently, the only replacement wire is the red-yellow-white French reel wire. A third problem is that the security device for securing the connection between a fencer's body wire and the reel wire isn't very good as it was designed for the Russian body cord end which few people in the US use. But if you have someone in the club who knows how to work on the reel, and can maintain it periodically, the contactless design is a good one, and the price is right, about \$200.00 per reel.

The Leon Paul reel is a work horse for many clubs and school programs. Some still in daily use are over thirty years old. The design philosophy behind the reel was that it could be easily disassembled, cleaned, repaired, and reassembled, with a minimum of tools, usually just a small screwdriver and a pair of pliers. These reels do require periodic maintenance, maybe three or four times per season, to clean the wiping contacts, and maybe to repack the springs.

A reel which probably has the strongest case is the Allstar. Made of cast aluminum, the Allstar reel has not been a very popular reel in the US, but it is a very substantial reel. Drop it, and the case will



not dent, crack, or shatter. Its wire is as durable as the fabled Uhlmann reel wire. If there are any faults in this geared reel, it is that the central shaft's bearings are a part of the electrical circuit and need to be cleaned periodically. While not needing as frequent cleaning as the Leon Paul reels, when the Allstar reels need to be cleaned, it is a process which involves chemically washing the grease and grime from a non-removable bearing race. The parts of the Allstar reels which fail most often -which isn't really that often-are the wiping contact and the end of the reel wire. It is a simple matter of unsoldering two connections and unscrewing one screw to change the wiping contact assembly if it needs replacing. On the older reels, the fencer's end of the reel wire also had a tendency to come apart, but this really doesn't affect the electrical functioning of the

Considered by many the ultimate reel, the current Uhlmann reel is quite expensive (just a little

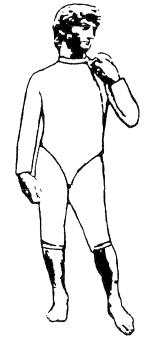
less than \$500.00 per reel). It is designed for minimum maintenance; but when they do break, it can be a very expensive proposition to get replacements. Some of the reels from the original production run are still just fine, performing flawlessly after fourteen years. Granted, they haven't spent their lives bouncing from one competition site to another in the dank recesses of someone's car trunk, but they still are among the most durable reels available.

But before you run out and purchase some Uhlmann reels in a paroxysm of ecstasy, you should be aware that there are some flaws. While the wire, the mercury wetted contacts, and the spring are designed for longevity, the plastic piece which guides the reel wire in and out of the reel case is quite soft. If the reel is not positioned correctly, the wire will soon abrade its way into the case, causing the reel to jam and causing the wire to break. And then there is the myriad of tiny screws which can disappear when almost very part of the reel is disassembled. If an Uhlmann reel does need repair, it can be long painstaking, expensive process: German parts are not cheap!

There is one other factor which should be factored into any decision to buy reels now: the promised advent of wireless —read "reel-less"—fencing. The F.I.E. wants wireless fencing to be in place for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, and according to the current rules, that means that there will have to be wireless fencing on the international level by 1998! Currently, there is a functional Japanese wireless scoring box being tested in various international tournaments, but its viability is being questioned.

Other manufacturers are busy dumping large amounts of energy and money into developing wireless fencing, so there is the very real prospect that, in the near future, reels may become an anachronism for competition. But there will still be a place for reels in clubs, in practice salles: wherever the "latest and greatest" is too expensive to have. Whichever option you choose, choose wisely!

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Kleinman, Gabriel R (ARIZONA)

Woodhouse Enoch(NEWENG)

Sabino, Nicholas A (NEWENG)

Dewey, Colin (WEST.PA)

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Ivy, Adam J (NORTHEAST)

128T Ahtone, Tristan G (GULFCST TX)

128T Ledbetter, Michael S (TENN)

Webber, Clay J (OKLAHOMA)

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Erickson, Peter S (CENT.CA)

Banks, Michael (COLO)

Lindblom, Derek (WEST-ROCK)

Rechsteiner, Jordan (PL.TEX)

Echave, Christophe (CAPITAL)

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Waddoups, Andrew N (NO.TEX)

Kleinman, Gabriel R (ARIZONA)

Sanders, Michael A (SO. TEXAS)

Pechstedt, Christophe (SO. CAL)

Chen, James (ILLINOIS)

Kugajevsky, Adam S (CAP)

Basek, Alex V (H-B)

Suber, Cory (NJ)

Thomlinson, Victor M (MT. VAL) | 50.

- Cadet Men's Epee Chilen, Luke P (SO. TEXAS) 2. Kelsey, Weston Set (OREGON) 3T St. Francis, John M (COLO) 3T Viviani, Jansson J (METRO NYC) Mattern, Cody (OREGON) 5 6 Lafving, Brandon (NO.TEX) 7. Ng, Brian Q (ILLINOIS) 8. Thompson, Soren (SAN DIEGO) 9. Gonzalez III, Trey (AK/LA/MS) 10 Stroud, Andrew N (CENT.FL) 11 Laiacona, Daniel J (H-B) 12 Jones, Christophe (WEST. WA) 13. Garcia, Javier (NJ) Guevara, Joshua (NO.TEX) 14 15 Carlson, Brian (NO.CA) 16 McConnaughy, Matthew (S CAL) DesRoches, Joshua A (GEORG.) 17 18. Alpern, Noah (BORD.TEX) 19 Leeds, Chris (COLO) 20. Rose, Julian M (COLO) 21. Huang, Sean C (NO.TEX) 22. Wilcox, Adam K (NO.OHIO) Method, Joseph C (CAP) 23. 24 Singletary, Keita S (S.BERN.) 25. Bralow, Robert (PHIL.) 26 Jones, Alan F (SO, TEXAS) Ungar, Jonathan P (MET NYC) 27. 28. Buckner II. Lloyd H (CAP) 29 Karasin, Mark (NJ) 30 Wangner, Ryan P (LONG ISLND) 31. VanLandingham, Ben B (IND) 32. Nemcosky, Christophe (CAP) 33 Richardson, Chris D (CENT.CA) 34 Anderson, James B (BORD.TEX) 35. Loftin, Colin K (COLO) 36. Burchard, Byron M (NO.CA) 37. Wilson, Joseph L (NJ) 38 Carey, NO.J (NEW MEX) 39 Inan, Ali (CENT.CA) 40. Durante, Eric T (CENT.CA) 41. Rom, David S (NJ) 42 Rando, R. Gian-Ca (NO.TEX) 43 Meidell, Philip R (ARIZONA) 44 Wanless, Eric N (OREGON) 45 Rohrbach, James H (CAP) 46. Merriam, Dylan A (NORTHEAST) 47 Handfinger, Ben R (NO.OHIO) 48 Snyder, Derek P (SO.CAL.) 49. Williams, Bryn A (MT. VALLEY) 50. Sinkin, Joshua A (WEST.NY) 51 Kilgore, Justin B (NJ) 52T Johnson, Nick G. M (NO.CA) 52T Schlafer, John T (KENTUCKY) 54. Solomon, Benjamin J (NO.OHIO) 55T Beaird Robert P (AK/LA/MS) 55T Moyston, David K (NJ) 57. Erbele, Isaac D (S.BERN.) 58 Hartman, Conor D (WEST-ROCK) 59. Chiu Christonhe (INDIANA) King, Robert F (CAP) 60 61 Lee, Martin J (CENT.CA) 62 Pascal, Brian (CAP) 63. Jung, Ken (CENT.CA) 64 Harris, James (NJ)
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- 51. Durante, Eric T (CENT.CA) Ward, Conor C (MINNESOTA) Hesky, Andrew A (WEST, PA) Dunn, Ryan M (ARIZONA) Carlson, Brian (NO.CA) Dwyer, Brendan C (NO.CA) Everett Jr. R. Lee (VIRGINIA) St. Francis, John M (COLO) Ferland, Benjamin S (NEWENG) Pencavel, Chris J (CENT.CA) Waddoups, Andrew N (NO.TEX) Mosca, Nicholas D (OKLAHOMA) Lee, Won Chul (METRO NYC) Carey, NO.J (NEW MEX) Hartman, Conor D (W-ROCK) Alpern, Noah (BORD, TEX) Jones, Christophe (WEST.WA) McConnaughy, Matthew (S.CAL) LaFond, lan (NJ) Pasinkoff, Michael (LONG ISL) Easterling, Torian J (NJ) Stanbro, Patrick W (NEW MEX) Carbone, Vincent A (SO.CAL.) Sherman, Scott K (ILLINOIS) Lence, Bryan R (UTAH/S.IDA) Petrev. Cal C (TENNESSEE) Decker, Alexander (CENT.CA) Mayer, Joseph L (NJ) Sinkin, Gabriel M (WEST.NY) Wilson, Peter C (NORTHEAST) Todaro, Nicholas S (AK/LA/MS) Galanter, Craig R (BORD.TEX) French, Timothy L (SO. TEXAS) Mitchell, John-Paul (TENN) Gonzalez III, Trey (AK/LA/MS) Olver, Otra L (NO.CA) King, Robert F (CAP) Mellman, Sasha (CONNECTCUT) Wijenavake, Michael (SO.CAL.) Elfman, Beau A (SAN DIEGO) Bland III, Richard L (NJ) Bhutta, Daniel E (WEST.PA) Sanders, Michael A (SO. TEXAS) Goodman, Jacob (WEST-ROCK) Metzner, Simon (SO. TEXAS) Ray, Jason K (AK/LA/MS) Jimenez, Ricardo E (BORD.TEX) Chen, Dan (ILLINOIS) Goddard, Nick O (MT. VALLEY) Shainwald, Aaron P (PHIL.) Santi, Jared E (LONG ISLND) 102T Humber, Jordan M (NEWENG) 102T Norskog, Andrew (NEW MEX) 104T Gallegos, Maxx A (NEW MEX) 104T Wollenberg, David L (NJ) Williams, Bryn A (MT. VALLEY) Anderson, James B (BORD, TEX) Kahan, Jeremy S (CONN) McClain, Chris H (NORTHEAST) Barry III, Francis J (LOUISIANA) 111T Gates, Matthew W (NJ) 111T Hendricks, Benjamin J (UT/S.ID) Kaplan, Justin S (SO.CAL.) Rickford, Luke M (CENT.CA) Eaton, Christian (CENT.FL) McDaniel, John-Todd (AK/LA/MS) Curtis, Clarke S (OREGON) Singletary, Keita S (S.BERN.) Jung, Ken (CENT.CA) Wood, Nick D (CENT.CA) 121T Burriesci, Matthew S (CENT.CA) 121T Quan, Michael S (SO.CAL.) 121T Yeager, William R (MT. VALLEY) 124. Tobia, Joseph S (NJ) 125. Zeitlin, Jeremy G (NO.CA)
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Fagan, Charles J (OREGON)

Ghattas, Patrick E (OREGON)

Gasthalter, Adam B (W-ROCK)

Krul, Alexander (SO.CAL.)

Palatsky, Brent J (NJ)

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- 57T Aldama-Chase, Camilo (S.CAL) Petrey, Cal C (TENNESSEE) 59. Pagel, Derek E (MT. VALLEY) Boorstin, Adam (SO.CAL.) 60. Newman, David A (S. JERSEY) 61 62. Bayer, Jason S. (SO.CAL.)
- Tedder, James A (AK/LA/MS) 64. Roberts, Joshua B (AK/LA/MS) Paul, Jason (SO.CAL.) 65
- Catalano, Marc E (TENNESSEE) 66 Walker, Patrick B (AK/LA/MS) 67. Davis, Alex F. (PHIL.)
- Diacou, Nicholas S (METNYC) 69. Kanin, Matthew D (SO.CAL.) Smith, Edward (MT. VALLEY) 70T 70T 72T Dubois, Scott D (NORTHEAST)
- Lieu, James J (ILLINOIS) Burriesci, Matthew S (CENT.CA) Ferraro, Matthew F (MET NYC) 74T 74T Sudia, David M (NO.CA)
- Ledbetter, Michael S (TENN) 77. Meahan, Tracy S (NO.CA) 78.

#### Cadet Women's Epee

- Ament, Andrea E (NO.OHIO) Chilen, Hannah (SO. TEXAS) Brodsky, Anya G (METRO NYC) 3T
- Campbell, Lindsay K (NO.OHIO) Leighton, Eleanor T (INDIANA) 3T Walton, Kerry E (NORTHEAST)
- Hobstetter, Sarah W (NO.CA) Sun, Hong Joo (METRO NYC) 8.
- 9 Chin, Meredith M (NEWENG) 10. Conley, Monica A (NJ)
- 11. Megowan, Christine (SO.CAL.) McMenamin, Sarah (CONN) 12
- Doherty, Kathleen (ILLINOIS) 13
- Jacobson, Raelyn P (CENT.CA) Klein, Sophie V (LONG ISLND)
- Harris, Caitlin E (SO. TEXAS)

- Manning, Joshua W (NATIONAL) | 17. 18. McGalliard, Amanda (PHIL.)
  - Blount, Ellen M (PHIL.) Lewis-Turner, Jessica (PHIL) Golia, Jennifer S (METRO NYC) 21.
  - 22. Cockburn, Ashley J (AK/LA/MS) 23. Li, Natasha K (ILLINOIS)
  - 24. Rurarz-Huygens, Livia D (CAP) 25. Pieper, Anna M (MINNESOTA) 26. Punaro, Amy A (NO.TEX)
  - 27. Call, Meagan B (OREGON) 28. Hagerty, Dawn M (INDIANA) FENCER EXCLUDED
  - Brown, Beth J (NO.OHIO) 30. McGlade, Jasmine A (COLO) 31
  - Caputo, Elizabeth (NJ) 32. Connell, Alexandra (CENT.CA) 33.
  - Hamor, Ashley J (COLO) Chrissoverges, N (AK-LA-MS) Park, Sarah S (OKLAHOMA) 36.
  - Spivey, Rachel E (AK/LA/MS) 37
  - 38. Horwitz, Lisa E (NO.TEX) 39. Sargent, Stephanie (NJ) Kranz, Ashley A (NJ) 40.
  - 41. Smith, Danielle L (MT. VALLEY) 42. Sjogren, Hanna C (ILLINOIS)
  - Park, Gaelyn M (KENTUCKY) Wendelsdorf, Kate V (KENT)
  - Watts, Katherine (OKLAHOMA) Remaly, Jessica L (NJ) 46.
    - Modiano, Sarah A (CAP) Mangones, Andrea (LONG ISL) Willock, Lauren W (KENTUCKY)
  - 49. Cheng, Nancy (S. JERSEY) 50.
  - Li, Margaret S (NEWENG) Maibauer, Alisa M (NO.OHIO)
  - Rendell, Rebecca R (NJ) Blank, Julia (NJ) 54.
  - Levine, Randi S (LONG ISLND) 55. Clouatre, Erin M (OKLAHOMA)

- Wangner, Lauren M (LONG ISL) | 19T | Lobanenkov, Ilya V (WEST.WA)
  - Carlson, Jesse (SAN BERN) Eriksen, Scott J (NO.EAST)
  - Martemucci, Marco J (CENT.PA) Leeds, Chris (COLORADO)
  - Katsoff, James D (NJ) Bansal, Avin (NJ)
  - Solomon, Benjamin J (N. OHIO) Capdet III, Juan (SO. CALIF.)
  - Sullivan, James S (AK-LA-MS)
  - 30. Miller, David W (ILL) Speights, Eric V (CAPITOL) Csonka, Paul J (OREGON)
  - Leslie, Joshua A (OREGON) Method, Joseph C (CAPITOL)
  - 35. Peterson, Kraig A (WEST.NY) 36. Baby, Brendan (CENT.PA)
  - Laiacona, Daniel J (H-B) Chilen, Luke P (SO. TEXAS) Garcia, Javier (NJ)
  - Rabiega, Greer M (OREGON) Rose, Julian M (COLORADO) Artiaco, Brian (OREGON)
  - Borden, Daniel E (WEST-ROCK) Fitzgerald, Matthew C (NJ)
  - Guevara, Joshua (NO. TEX) Chandra, Nitin (LONG ISL) Anderson, James B (BORD.TEX)
  - Afrasiabi, Parveez J (NJ) Grant, David A (ILL)
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  - Hromada, John (MT. VALLEY) Erickson, Peter S (CENT.CA)
  - Jordan, Matthew J (COLORADO) Jones, Alan F (SO. TEXAS)
  - Lindblom, Derek (WEST-ROCK)
  - Wirz, Severin I (NJ)

- Elder, Jeff W (WISCONSIN) 60.
- Karasin, Mark (NJ)
- 62. Gelman, Jason L (NJ) 63.
- Monnier, Camille S (NO. OHIO) 64. Hogg, Russell T (NO. TEX)
- 65. Wolf, Brian A (WEST.NY) Dirksen, Nathaniel (WEST.WA)
- Silva, Steven M (ORANGE CST) Tomlinson, Alexis R (NJ)
- McConnaughy, Matthew (S.CAL) 69. Wilson, Gray V (TENN)
- VanLandingham, Ben B (IND.) Lawlor, Lee (CENT.PA) 72.
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- Mautone, Steven M (NJ) Carlson, Brian (NO. CA)
- Aminoff, Jonathan C (NO. CA) Allen, Graham S (ARIZONA) 77.
- 78. 79T Griffin, Russ (NJ)
- Kirby, Benjamin J (SAN DIEGO) Banks, Michael (COLORADO)
- 82. Wilcox, Adam K (NO. OHIO) Compton, Robbie (S.CAROLINA) 83T
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- Tsinis, Alex (MET NYC)
- Schnabel, Glenn A (LONG ISL) Rando, R. Gian-Ca (NO. TEX)
- Gray, Dan C (NEWENG)
- Sinkin, Joshua A (WEST.NY)
- Kilgore, Justin B (NJ)
- 96. Montgomery, Joshua (S.BERN) Flanagan, James P (MINN.)
- Grant, Randolph T (NO.EAST)

- 100. Pfeil, Shawn H (NO. CA)
- 101. Hohensee, Michael A (NO.EAST)
- French, Timothy L (SO. TEXAS)
- 103. Barlow, Corey A (NO. OHIO)
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- 105. Williams, Bryn A (MT. VALLEY)
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- TEXAS) Taylor, Reed W (VIRGINIA)
- 112. Peterson, Jordan (LONG ISL)
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- Kanavel, Charlie (CENT.CA) Richardson, Chris D (CENT.CA)
- Gaseor, David J (ST. LOUIS)
- 117. Kelly, Eric M (SO. CALIF.)
- 118. Lutke, Cody C (AK-LA-MS)
- 119. Caputo, Jr., Steve (NJ)
- 120. Hack, Jason (MT. VALLEY) 121T Feldon, Jon (NEWENG)
- 121T Richards, Scott (LONG ISL)
- 123T Johnson, Nick G. M (NO. CA) 123T Ray, Jason K (AK-LA-MS)
- 125T Lewis, Brandon C (AK-LA-MS)
- 125T Wood, Nick D (CENT.CA)
- 127. Carlino, Gregory J (NO. OHIO)
- 128. Carbone, Vincent A (SO. CALIF.) Gummeson, Chris M (SO. CAL)
- Hendricksen, Marc R (PHIL)
- 131. Slifka, Gabriel A (NJ)
- 132. DesRoches, Joshua A (GEORG.)
- 133. Baskin, David S (SO. CALIF.)
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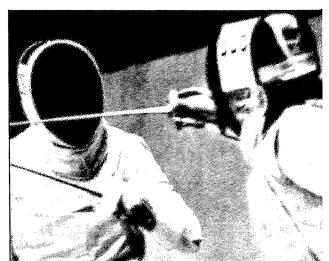
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nating in an Olympic medal. Unfortunately, the dollars granted to us by the USOC are insufficient (as the text of this article illustrates) to adequately fund the programs or fencers capable of achieving these results. It should be the primary responsibility of the Executive Director (as it is in all not-for-profit organizations) to raise sufficient funds to get the job done.

2. The USFA should invest more money at the grass roots level by promoting successful club programs. Clubs which consistently produce top Youth, Cadet and Junior fencers should receive grants to facilitate the development and identification of potential talent. The coaches who organize the programs in these clubs should have discretion as to how these funds are administered. Grants should be made strictly on the basis of the performance of the fencers who represent the club at national and international competitions and be re-evaluated on a yearly basis.

3. The USFA. should develop a system of regional competition for all age categories, with the ultimate goal of regional qualification to all national events. Currently, anyone can enter an NAC, provided that he or she has enough money for the entry fee, an airplane ticket and a hotel room. The result has been large, bloated entries, with more than 60% of the competitive field eliminated after 6 or 7 bouts (one 6 or 7 person pool plus one DE bout) while top fencers meet only 2 or 3 tough opponents. No one benefits from this structure. Regional competitions would allow developing fencers to gain valuable experience at the appropriate level at an affordable cost; stimulate the development of regional infrastructure throughout the country, allowing a greater number of fencers access to quality competitions; ultimately, reduce the size (and the logistical burdens and expense) and increase the strength of national level events. Additionally, smaller national events could easily be held in regions with the greatest demographic representation of fencers, lowering the associated costs for the majority of top fencers.

In conclusion, the USFA. must be sensitive to the economics of competitive fencing as it affects the rank and file of it's membership, from recreational fencers to Olympic hopefuls. Unfortunately, as Mr. Burchard stated in his article, the most talented and successful fencers from our past, from Albert Axelrod to Peter Westbrook, would not have had the financial means to compete in the 90s. American Fencing cannot afford to return to it's elitist roots if it is to survive and flourish in the 21st century.

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#### Three Decades of World Cup Medals!

George Masin, pictured right, won a bronze medal in men's epee at the Australian World Cup in late 1997, making this the third consecutive decade in which he's medalled at one of these international elite events.



#### Coaching Positions Available

Culver Academies, a private boarding school in Indiana for students in grades 9-12, is seeking an additional coach for its varsity/ junior fencing program. Other supervisory duties may be required as well. Applicants should send a cover letter and resume to:

Kathy Lintner

Principal, Culver Academies

1300 Academy Road, #156

Culver, IN 46511-1291

Redlands Fencing Center of Tulsa is seeking a fencing coach. Redlands has a permanent location in a well known Tulsa shopping center with good exposure in a high traffic area. RFC has nearly ten years of successful experience operating the Oklahoma City Center; all this experience and the Redlands Program will be yours to draw upon. Interested coaches should send a letter and resume to:

Redlands Fencing Center

3627 NW 23rd St.

Oklahoma City, OK 73107

#### 1998 USFA Coaches College

Directors Vincent Bradford and Alex Beguinet have announced the dates for the 1998 Coaches College, held each summer at the Olympic Training Center and open to all members of the USFA. This year the July 18 - 26 camp offers Level 1 Sabre, Level 2 Sabre and Epee, Level 4 Epee, and Level 5 Sabre and Epee. The July 27 -August 4 camp offers Level 1 Foil, Level 3 Sabre and Foil, Level 4 Sabre and Level 5 Foil and Sabre. August 5 - 13 offers Level 1 Epee, Level 2 Foil, Level 3 Epee, Level 4 Foil and Level 5 Foil and Epee.

Please call the USFA National Office at 719/578-4511 to request an application. Application deadline May 1, 1998



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