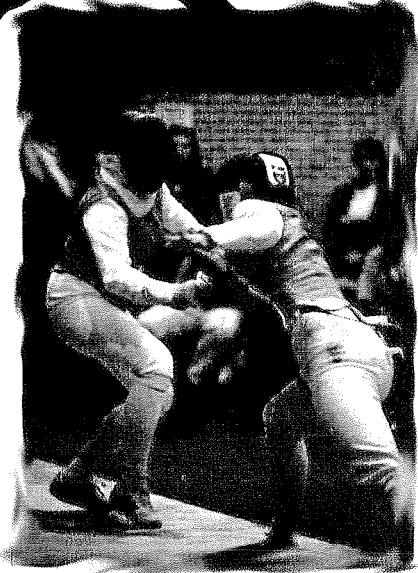




American **FENCING**

April 2000



Cover Story

Andrea Ament Takes on the World

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Photo Credit

Cover photos and design by Sam Lillard.

The United States Fencing Association
Member Services Directory

The United States Fencing Association is the national governing body for the sport of fencing in the United States. The USFA is affiliated with the Fédération Internationale d'Esprime, the international federation for fencing. The mission of the United States Fencing Association is to develop fencers to achieve international success and to administer and promote the sport in the United States.

The United States Fencing Association

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INSIDE FENCING

by Donald W. Alperstein



eager fencer he or she must forego an important competition because their appeal has been denied. I hate writing those letters.

Everything we do as an organization is geared toward encouraging Americans to fence and to providing them opportunities to do so. Saying no goes against our nature. Consequently, there isn't any task as disliked as having to tell someone they may not fence. But it happens to A-rated fencers and to the unranked; it happens to kids in the under-whatevers and to veterans in the older-than-Moses division. What's truly discouraging is that the most common reason for rejecting entries is so easily avoided.

Several times each year the National Office doesn't receive an entry form, or it arrives after the published deadline. Often there follows a series of pleas and appeals to the office staff, the Executive Director, and eventually, the Executive Committee, usually with an explanation for the tardy entry. This year those explanations have included: "I faxed it but I must have put the paper in the machine upside down," "I gave it to my coach and he promised to send it, but forgot," (that one is very popular) and "A big snowstorm delayed the mail." Many distraught petitioners conclude that the office must have their entry, but they have no evidence that it was ever sent. While some of these excuses are of dubious veracity, some are surely true.

Among the most heart-wrenching was the plaintive letter from a junior's mother. It was her son's last Junior Olympic opportunity, and he had worked very hard preparing for the tournament. The form was filled out right after the qualifier, a check for the fees was written and the hotel and airline reservations were in place. But mom forgot to mail the enve-

lope. She remembered it shortly after the deadline. On the day we had to say no to her emotional appeal, many of us wished we could be somewhere else or had volunteered for some other job.

In the case of NACs, the consequences of untimely entries are strictly financial, in the form of tripled fees. But for national championships, including the Junior Olympics, late entries are simply not accepted. Sound reasons underlie these rules.

As I have often recalled in this column, not so many years ago our national competitions were chaos. We had no way of accurately predicting the size of competition fields, and often ran tournaments with too few strips, armorers, bout committee members, and referees. On other occasions we had far more of these resources than needed. In the first instance, tournaments ran very late, often into the early morning hours. In the latter case, we courted financial disaster.

At the behest of fencers, coaches, and parents, and as a matter of economic necessity, we determined to bring increasing order and professionalism to our national tournaments. We have come a very long way in doing so, in no small part because the Board of Directors took steps to ensure that, well before the tournament, we know what personnel and facilities are required. The entry deadline had to be just that — a deadline.

Realizing this represented a change of policy, and understanding how disappointed fencers would be at the rejection of tardy entries, we resolved to make the importance of timely entries very clear. The NAC form states in bold and italic print: "**Important: MAIL EARLY. Postmarks are not considered...a late fee of triple the total fee will be charged.**" The National Championship form is even more overt, with "**NO LATE ENTRIES ACCEPTED**" emblazoned across the top and

an explanation of the deadline given at two other places. One cannot complete these forms without realizing that there is a deadline.

No individual, and no USFA committee or group for that matter, has authority to suspend these rules. Were it otherwise, the door would be open to cheating and neglect would soon have no consequences. In short order we would find ourselves back in the same disarray that engendered the policy in the first place. I simply cannot exaggerate the importance of taking care that entries are submitted early and properly and of following up to make sure that it has been received and processed.

The tragedy of these rejections is that we have provided so many easy ways to prevent them. We accept both faxed and mailed forms, and have provided several ways of verifying their receipt. At the outset, the form can be sent by registered or certified mail or by a private carrier that provides proof of delivery. Faxed and

mailed forms accompanied by return fax confirmation sheets are acknowledged upon receipt, and if a self-addressed postcard accompanies the entry, it will be returned immediately.

Entering early is the easiest and most obvious way to assure acceptance. Then, if official confirmation is not in hand well before the competition, ample time remains to identify and address any problems in delivery or processing.

The USFA processes over 10,000 tournament entries each year. Our fencers, coaches, and parents are much better positioned than the office staff to ensure that entries are timely received. And doing so is easy. It just takes a bit of attention, a little forethought and follow up, and most importantly, resisting the temptation to procrastinate.

We hate to say no. Please, don't make us do so! •

"The USFA processes over 10,000 entries each year. Our fencers, coaches, and parents are much better positioned than the office staff to ensure that entries are timely received. And doing so is easy."



An Open Letter to the USFA Executive Committee

by Gary Brian Copeland

Last summer I represented the USFA as the Developmental Coach of the Year at the United States Olympic Committee's Coach of the Year Awards Banquet held in Washington, D.C. The event was also attended by Vladimir Nazlymov, the National Coach of the Year representative and Donald Alperstein, president of the USFA.

The purpose of the USOC Coach of the Year Award is to celebrate the ideal of coaching. They essentially wined, dined and activated us for three days, treating us like foreign dignitaries. Beyond the simple celebration of coaching excellence, something else happened. Over the course of the weekend,



Gary Copeland receives his plaque from Charles Dillman, chair of the USOC's Coaching Committee, and USFA president Donald Alperstein.

the various sports representatives talked to each other about their successes and their problems. In virtually every instance, the concerns were no different than ours – getting new athletes, keeping athletes, motivation, tournaments, dealing with their national governing bodies, and so on. Several things became apparent to me that I would like to share.

We assume so readily that the USFA is a poorly run organization, filled with political factions and pettiness. Compared to other sports, as seen by their coaching representatives, we have fewer problems than most. I listened to other coaches explain how their sports organizations work. All I am left with is a profound sense of relief that I am dealing with the USFA and not one of the organizations I learned about.

I realize that as members of the USFA executive committee, you hear nothing but problems about fencing. You can hardly pick up a copy of *American Fencing* or *Veteran's Quarterly* without reading some complaint. Any conversation between fencers or coaches seems to be why isn't the USFA doing more.

I think the USFA is doing a fine job. It rewards development of fencers and coaching. Its programs make sense. So while fencers complain and find fault and while there is room for improvement, the great bulk of the USFA is headed in the right direction. Ten years ago there were 7,000 members of the USFA; this year almost 15,000. They must be getting something from the USFA. Our fencers abilities would not be improving if the USFA was not meeting the needs of athletes and coaches. I hope you will continue to make fencing one of the best organizations of the USOC. As a sport we will never be the most popular, but we can be the best managed. My sincerest thanks to you for naming me this year's developmental coach representative. •

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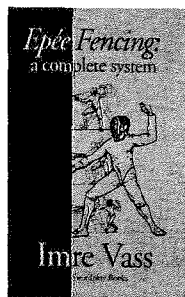
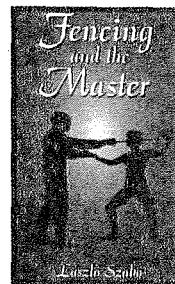


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2000 Junior/Cadet World Championships

by Michael Sullivan

Olympic Champions of the future will arrive in mid-April in South Bend, Ind., to participate in the 2000 Junior/Cadet World Championships. More than 500 athletes from 60 nations will participate. Building on its recent successes in international competition, the U.S. will field a team 30-strong with the talent and desire to achieve lofty goals.

The American team's home court advantage of personal coaches, family, and patriotic supporters will be enhanced further by the familiar surroundings of the South Bend Convention Center, site of several North America Cup events over the past three years. The local organizing committee, chaired by Mike DeCicco, Head Coach Emeritus at Notre Dame, has put together a floor plan that will create great opportunities for the athletes as well as improved site lines and crowd control for spectators. The finals will be held each evening on a specially designed raised strip in an 800-seat amphitheater adjacent to the main fencing halls.

All the great fencing powers will be sending their still-developing stars of the future. The German team appears to be the team to beat in the Nation's Cup tournament. In the latest Junior World Cup standings, German athletes currently stand atop all the lists except women's sabre. In fact, of the 18 fencers ranked in the top three of the six events, half hail from Germany. For more information on World Cup rankings, check out the FIE website by accessing the link provided by USfencing.org.

The American team will be led by the women's foil team of world championship bronze-medalist Iris Zimmermann (Rochester Fencing Center/Stanford), Erinn Smart (Peter Westbrook Foundation/Columbia) and high school junior Andrea Ament from

Gates Mills, Ohio. Iris and Smart appear headed for Sydney to represent the U.S. at the Olympics, while Ament is stepping up from the cadet ranks in which she won bronze medals in 1999 in both foil and epee. The experience of these three will provide stability and leadership to the cadet women's foil team of Emily Cross (Metropolis/New York City), Jacqueline Leahy (RFC), and Cassidy Luitjen (San Antonio). Cross, at age 13, will be the youngest competitor in the championships.

The U.S. women's epee team also has great depth and high expectations. Ament will once again support the experienced duo of Jessica Burke (RFC/Penn St.) and Arlene Stevens (RFC/St. John's), both ranked in the top five in the Junior World Cup standings before college studies took a priority. Raelyn Jacobson (Sacramento), Katy Szarwark (Nashville) and home town hero Eleanor Leighton from Mishawaka, Ind., will form the cadet team taking their first steps into international competition.

The men's foil team will include Steve Gerberman, fencing in both the cadet and junior events, winner of a silver medal in the January cadet tournament in Kloblenz, Germany. Kevin Eriksen (Northeast) will join him in the junior event along with Peter Cellini (RFC). Jeremy Sinkin (RFC) and Derek Snyder (Los Angeles) fill out the men's foil contingent.

The American men's epee team will bring experience and depth to the strip. Individual and team medals are realistic goals for Soren Thompson, Jan Viviani, and Wes Kelsey. Each has made Junior World Cup finals in the 2000 season. Thompson (San Diego, Calif.) took a silver medal in Nimes in January and Kelsey (Oregon Fencing Alliance), a 1999 Junior World finalist, narrowly edged out Rashaan Greenhouse for the third spot on the

team by taking the silver medal at Burgos, Spain, on the last weekend points were being accrued for junior world team selection. Viviani (NYAC/Notre Dame) took fifth in the Budapest World Cup and will be going for gold in front of a partisan Fighting Irish crowd. Michael Banks (Denver, Colo.), Tim French (Austin, Texas), and Ben Solomon (Chagrin Falls, Ohio) return in tact from the 1999 cadet men's epee team.

The U.S. women's sabre team will feature a trio competing in both the cadet and junior events. Fifteen-year-old Mariel Zagunis (OFA/Beaverton, Ore.) has recently climbed to fourth on the U.S. national rankings. Amelia Galliard has reached the finals of two Junior World Cup events in the past two months, and Sada Jacobson (Nellya/Ga.), fencing for just two years, has started to climb the rankings as well.

The emerging American men's sabre program will feature a strong junior team of Ivan Lee and Ahmed Yilla, both New York City products of the Peter Westbrook Foundation, and Jason Rogers (Westside Fencing Center/Los Angeles) who will be doing double-duty in both the junior and cadet events. All three have made Junior World Cup finals this year, including a bronze-medal performance by Rogers at Frascati. Mike Momtselidze (Kansas City, Mo.) and Marten Zagunis (OFA/Beaverton, Ore.) will add to their recent advances up the U.S. sabre ranks in the cadet men's sabre event. Both these 16-year-olds have recently been making regular appearances in the finals of NAC Open events.

A complete list of the team, including cadre and coaches was included in the spring USFA Newsletter. Complete results from the championships will be posted on the web. •



2000 Junior/Cadet World Championships

April 18-25 - South Bend, Indiana

Schedule of Events

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Competition</u>
Tues.	4/18	Cadet Men's Épée Individual Cadet Women's Sabre Individual
Wed.	4/19	Cadet Women's Foil Individual Cadet Men's Sabre Individual
Thurs.	4/20	Cadet Men's Foil Individual Cadet Women's Épée Individual
Fri.	4/21	Junior Men's Épée Individual Junior Women's Sabre Individual
Sat.	4/22	Junior Women's Foil Individual Junior Men's Sabre Individual
Sun.	4/23	Junior Men's Foil Individual Junior Women's Épée Individual
Mon.	4/24	Men's Épée Team Women's Sabre Team Women's Foil Team
Tues.	4/25	Men's Foil Team Women's Épée Team Men's Sabre Team

1999 World Championships....

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MIRACLE ON FIFTH AND WESTERN

NORTHWEST FENCING CENTER

by Roger Garcia, Salle Auriol

Never underestimate the power of a dream. Fencers in Portland, Ore., dared to dream of a state of the art fencing facility and now the dream is reality.

A miracle happened – the Northwest Fencing Center is in place. The center features 13,000 square feet of usable floor space. In the main fencing hall, there are 14 grounded electrical three-weapon strips with end lights on a two-inch thick shock-absorbing floor. In the teaching hall, there is a raised finals strip, bleachers, and a remote-controlled video camera to tape finals bouts, plus a large area for beginning group classes to practice footwork. Large restrooms with changing area and showers, and a kitchen area complete the first floor.

In the mezzanine, ground floor offices, conference rooms, a first-class armory, a playroom for kids, secure retail storage space, and the master controls for everything are strategically placed in the reception area. On the top of the mezzanine, there is an exercise area with weight training and exercise machines, as well as benches from which to view the fencing action.

Large video monitors are strategically placed around the center, with a character generator system to display

notices of upcoming events, strip assignments for tournaments, or video feed of what's happening on the finals strip. Closed circuit video allows the receptionist to monitor the upper floor of the mezzanine, the playroom, and the main fencing hall. A little change to our lighting, and we're ready for an after-tournament party or club social event, with dance music playing over our excellent multichannel stereo sound system. How did this miracle happen?

In 1996, Salle Auriol was running out of room – victims of our own success. The 3,500 square feet of loft that had served so well for so many years just weren't enough. Membership was growing, but we were in danger of losing members to overcrowding and lack of room for intermediate classes to keep them progressing.

Club president Bob Marx started looking at options. He asked our landlord, Chuck Richards, about expanding our floor space, from 3,500- to 5,000-square-feet. No go. But a few months later, Richards came back to us with an opportunity. One of his tenants across town wanted to move – would we be interested in the space? We looked and we were hooked. Marx's dream, originally kindled by his mother, Colleen, caught fire anew and spread to the rest of us. We could build a real fencing center, large enough to host regional meets, with facilities to support serious club expansion and training programs at the national and even Olympic level.

There were folks who didn't think it was a good idea. The usual objections: fencing is a small sport, we had all we could do to keep solvent as it was, where were we going to find the new members to pay the higher rent?

A quick check of the numbers told us otherwise. The greater Portland area had about 2 million people living within its city limits. If we could get just one in every thousand to be an active fencer, that meant about 2,000 active fencers. How many now? Much less than that number, maybe a couple hundred. Certainly, we could do better.

“With fencing growing as it has been over the last few years, we should have more training facilities of this caliber coming on-line. Let's use the Northwest Fencing Center, and all our resources, to keep our growth going.”

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continued on page 7



continued from page 6

Construction would cost a lot. We had to tear out walls, build new ones, put in restrooms, cut new entrances, and build a mezzanine. Lining up funding for construction took a while. We took a risk, starting with only 80 percent of our needed capital. Many generous donations made it possible, from the Oregon Sports Trust, the William G. Gilmore Foundation, the Oregon Sports Academy, Une Touche de Portland, Inc., along with contributions from club members in cash, stock, needed materials, and especially equipment, labor. Chuck Richards' construction company had between three and five professional construction workers on the job throughout and Salle Auriol provided several human-years of grunt labor over ten months of construction to keep costs affordable.

We broke ground in February 1999, and finally moved in around Christmas. We gained official occupancy in January 2000, working to finish up details for our grand opening celebration February 6th.

I confess I myself am amazed at how it all turned out. Some of our benefactors got carried-away with enthusiasm for the project, or we wouldn't have many of the fancy bells and whistles, so I guess maybe there is a Santa Claus after all.

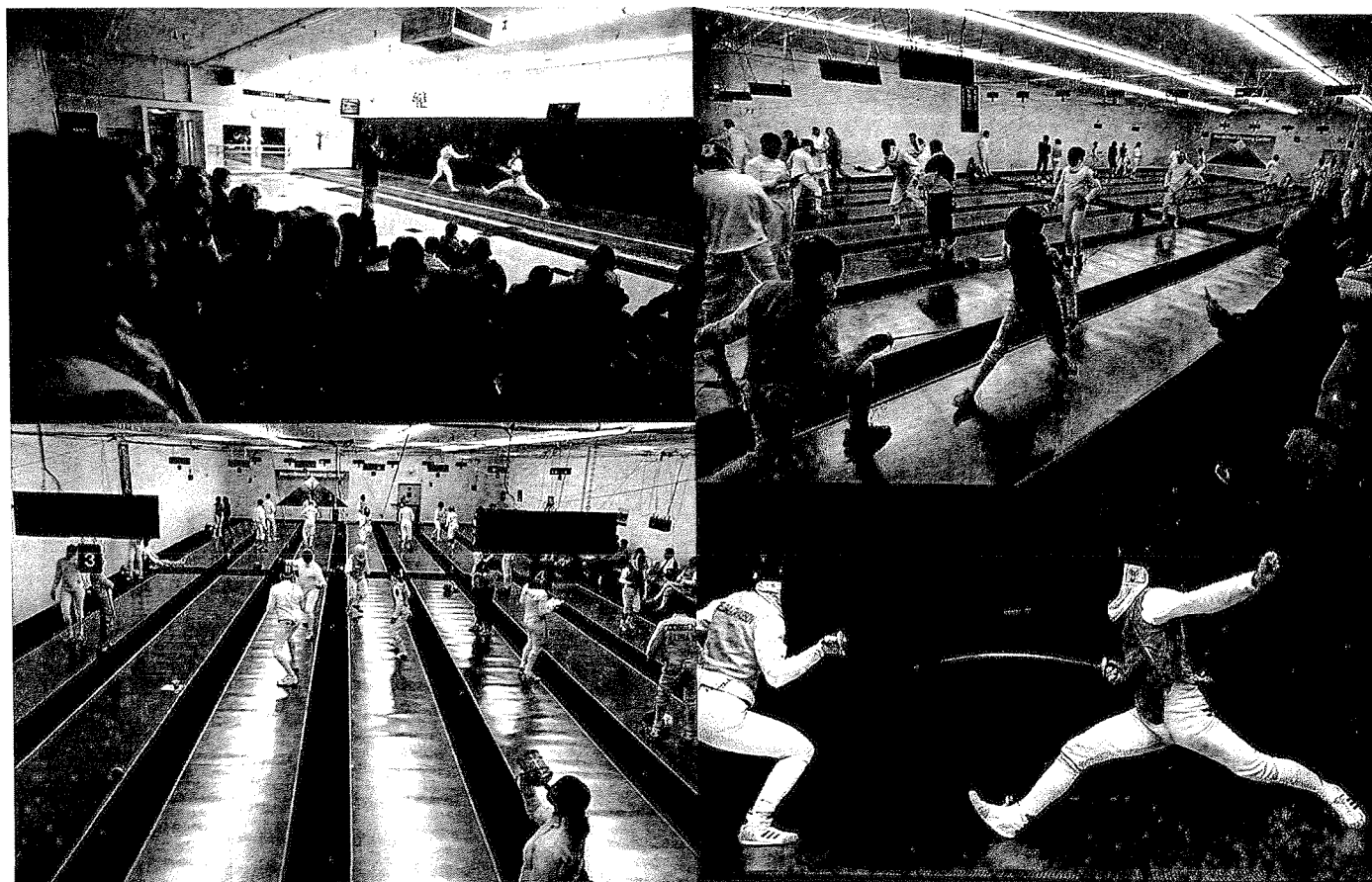
Donald Alperstein, visiting at our grand opening, told us we have the premier fencing facility in the U.S. and

certainly one of the finest in the world. I don't know if that's true; if so I certainly hope it doesn't stay so forever. With fencing growing as it has been over the last few years, we should have more training facilities of this caliber coming on-line. Let's use the Northwest Fencing Center, and all our resources, to keep our growth going. I for one have another dream – to outgrow this facility by 2005!

The Northwest Fencing Center is operated by the Salle Auriol Fencing Club, Inc., located at 4950 SW Western Avenue, Beaverton, Oregon 97005 at the corner of Fifth and Western. We can be reached by phone at (503) 27-SABER, via e-mail at swords@nwfencing.com or you can find us on the web at www.nwfencing.com. •

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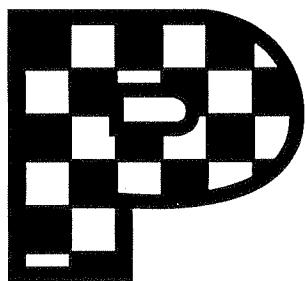
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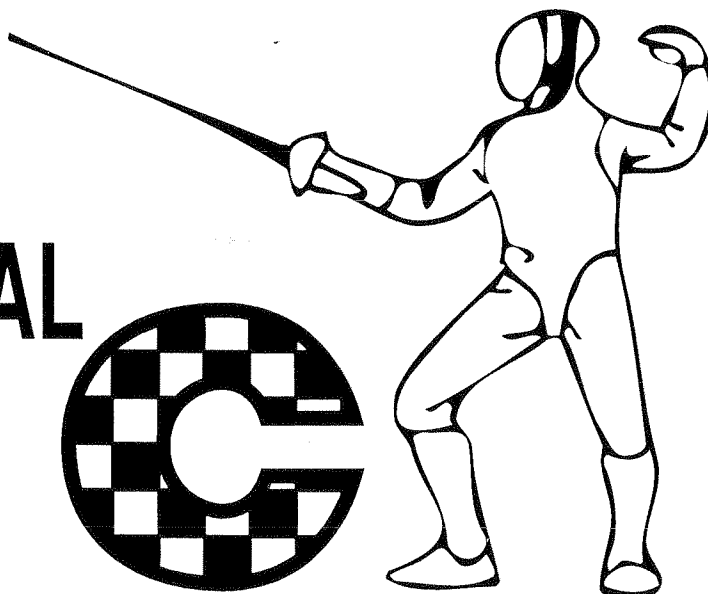
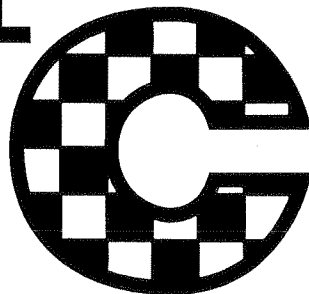
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A DISCUSSION WITH GAY JACOBSEN FACES OF FENCING

by Barbara Anderson

Gay Jacobsen began fencing in 1965 at the age of 11 in Ripon, Calif., where she was coached by A.L. Lale. In 1968, she became a student of Michael D'Asaro in San Francisco where he coached her the remainder of her career. Jacobsen was a member of the Junior World Team for three consecutive years from 1972-75 and was the 1974 and 1978 National Foil Champion. Twice a Pan American Games bronze medalist, she was also a member of the 1976 and 1980 Olympic teams.

After the 1980 Olympic boycott, an American dream shattered, Jacobsen retired from fencing. Upon putting down her foil, she became a nationally rated referee eventually becoming one of the first U.S. women to achieve an international B referee rating. No longer refereeing internationally, Jacobsen continues to be regarded highly as a national-level referee today and has served the USA as an active member of the Fencing Officials Commission since 1983.

Jacobsen is currently a resident of Ashland, Ore., and teaches fencing at a local school where she emphasizes recreational participation and general enjoyment over competitive training.

AF: Who were your biggest fans and supporters during your fencing career?

GJ: I'd have to say, first of all, my mother and father. My first coach, A.L. Lale, was completely supportive as well. Ripon, a two-hour drive from San Francisco, only had about two fencing competitions a year. My folks drove me to San Francisco as often as I wanted to go and compete, which was about once or twice a month. Then I met, which may be a question you're going to ask later on, Michael D'Asaro who talked my parents into letting him be my coach. From that point on, they started driving me twice a week to take lessons and compete. Up until that time, I was involved in fencing because I enjoyed the sport. I didn't understand about winning and losing.

AF: Would you consider your relationship with your former husband and coach, Michael D'Asaro, a fairy tale of the late 60s?

GJ: It certainly was a fantasy that I was this young fencer from the back woods going to San Francisco and not really knowing what I was doing. I was in this big city of San Francisco

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AF: What triggered you, an 11-year-old girl in 1965, to take your first fencing lesson?

GJ: I have to give the credit to my mother and father. I grew up in Ripon, Calif., a really small town of about 1,000 people in the San Joaquin Valley. When I was young, I was involved in every sport I could get my hands and feet on, from tether ball to organized games, even breaking the kitchen window trying to hit tennis balls against the garage door. A man named A.L. Lale was teaching fencing in his garage so my parents suggested that I take lessons. He became my first fencing coach.

AF: Who was your first fencing idol, then as a member of the U.S. team, and today? Why?

GJ: When I was 11, I was so young and so removed from the fencing world I really didn't have an idol. As I started getting involved in competition and fencing at Halberstadt Fencing Club in San Francisco, I learned about Helene Mayer, a fantastic woman fencer from Germany (1928 Olympic women's foil champion) who trained with Hans Halberstadt. She was such a good fencer and very successful. She be-

came my first idol. Later on, during my career, I started fencing with Harriet King, a great, successful woman fencer I greatly admired. Even later, I started competing against Ruth White who had some incredible successes in the fencing world as well. I was in awe of her. Unfortunately, she didn't stay in it and went off to become a doctor. She was a beautiful fencer. When I fenced overseas, the one fencer that always caught my attention was a Russian named Vladimir Smirnov. His form was perfect and he was incredibly strong and controlled.



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completely overwhelmed and awed. I noticed Michael when we were fencing at Letterman's club in San Francisco. He walked in wearing this purple satin shirt with these billowing sleeves, leather pants, and a big leather pouch belt. On his arm was this lady, a gorgeous woman, wearing a beautiful flowing skirt, low-cut blouse, and a star on her cheek. I looked at those two and said, "Wow, who are these people?" This was the 60s, and even though I was too young to participate in that movement, I appreciated and loved it.

After watching me fence, he approached my mother and father and said he would like to coach me. When that happened, I was totally excited. As we progressed in our relationship, we realized that we had fallen in love and wanted to be together. It was a bit of a fairy tale, I guess, because I had

never, ever expected anything like that to happen in my life. We were married in 1974.

AF: What single word best describes the feeling of fencing for you?

GJ: Beauty.

AF: Having been on the Pan Am, Junior World, University Games, and Olympic teams, which one was the highlight of your career?

GJ: Certainly the 1976 Olympic Games. It might have been 1980, but we didn't go because of the boycott. The highlight was walking into the stadium during the opening ceremonies. It was the most incredible experience because we were outside the stadium and we could only hear the drum beat and as we walked into the stadium the beat got louder and louder with people cheering and yelling. That is the ultimate. It didn't matter that we didn't

get a medal because making the team was a proud moment in itself.

AF: What changes in your life led to your retirement in 1980?

GJ: After I won the National Championship in 1974, I put so much pressure on myself to win again that I emotionally and psychically collapsed. At that time, I was one of the youngest, 19 to be exact, to win a national championship. Michael and I got together when I was 17, so fencing really became my life. I was eating, sleeping, drinking, and walking it. And of course, school. It wasn't until four years later, 1978, when I had matured, that I would win again. The big sacrifice was that I didn't have anything

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else outside the fencing realm as far as a social life. When I stopped competing and stopped fencing, a whole new world opened up to me. I thought, "Wow, I have been missing out on a lot." I have never regretted the years I spent as a competitive fencer though.

AF: What one bout stands out the most in your mind?

GJ: It was actually an entire pool in the 1978 Florida Nationals. The format in those days was pools of six all the way to the finals. There were no direct elimination bouts at that time. When we talk about the old days, we talk about national tournaments ending at 2 a.m. It was well after midnight and I just decided that I was going to win the damn thing. Four of the six finalists were teammates from Salle D'Asaro, so the competition was unusually quiet and subdued. None of our other teammates could cheer us on when we fenced each other.

In between each bout I would jump up and down and do ballestra lunges. I didn't allow myself to sit down long enough to get fatigued like everybody else. But for me, each bout I fenced happened in slow motion. It seemed like my opponents were moving slowly. I could clearly see every hand action, so much so that I can still picture some of the actions. It was an incredible experience.

AF: How did you train as a fencer and what would you do differently if you

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were just starting out today?

GJ: When I was competing and training, we'd put in several hours of hard work about four days a week. An hour of footwork, an hour of drilling, a 45-minute lesson, and then sparring on the machine. Every day I'd run. I'd alternate between distance running, 3 miles maximum, and interval training. Michael worked us to the bone! His philosophy was that when we went to a tournament it would be easier for us than in the club. He was right. We were in top physical condition and it paid off. Once or twice a week we'd put in some weight training. Today, there is so much more understanding and knowledge regarding weight training and conditioning that I would incorporate a stronger program of weights to develop the entire body. That wasn't such a big deal then.

AF: Where do you keep all your trophies and medals today?

GJ: My sword trophies are mounted on a board that I take with me to demonstrations and to my fencing classes. My 10- and 11-year-old kids go crazy over those double-sided broad swords. My medals are in my keepsake box that I also take to class with me to show the kids.

AF: If the sport of fencing didn't exist, what other sport would you have chosen?

GJ: My two other favorite sports were basketball and volleyball. At that time women's basketball, same for volleyball, was not like it is now where you have pro teams. I would have chosen basketball. I loved to play basketball.

AF: Fencing is such an individual sport. Why do you think your second choice sports are team oriented?

GJ: I never really thought about it that way. I can tell you I like having other people to support so that I'm not solely responsible for winning. The skill and

dynamics of team sports is a great experience. The cooperation required to compete is a reward in itself.

AF: What advice would you give to the youth fencers of today?

GJ: Work hard, get in the best physical and fencing condition you can, and compete as much as you can nationally and internationally. Work on everything – strength, flexibility, coordination, speed and agility. Learn the techniques and study strategy and tactics. Be the best that you can be.

AF: What sports figure, other than fencing, would you trade places with if you could? Why?

GJ: Pete Sampras comes to mind. I would love to have his skills, but also I like his personality. He's quiet, not flashy, tends to business, and doesn't waste energy by letting his emotions get in the way. He's a great competitor and seemingly good person.

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AF: What lesson from your experiences as a fencer do you carry with you through your daily life?

GJ: A level of self-confidence that made me to be a stronger person out in the world. It makes me more capable as a leader and teacher.

AF: What inspired you to become a referee after you retired as an athlete?

GJ: I don't think it was an inspiration. George Kolombatovich approached me and encouraged me to go into refereeing after I stopped fencing.

AF: Why did you stop refereeing internationally?

GJ: At that time there were only a few women referees internationally. At my first international event as a referee, the World University Games in Edmonton, there were three of us, two women from Canada and myself. After an afternoon of refereeing, there was a referees meeting and the FIE representative told us that the coaches and fencers did not want women to do any refereeing. We complained and I think I was used for one more round and that was it. That was the attitude at the time toward women. It really, really angered us. After going to one more international event and receiving similar treatment, I decided I didn't feel I wanted to fight that battle anymore. I felt it was up to younger women to pave the in-roads for women in the international scene. Several other women and I have done just that in the United States thanks to people like George Kolombatovich who pushed, promoted, and mentored us. Whether the FIE has changed its attitude, I can't say.

AF: What are the high-points of serving on the FOC and what are the qualifications?

GJ: Being on the FOC gives me part of the responsibility in helping to develop new people to become referees, getting them ready, and helping to teach them. I really like mentoring and increasing the number of referees in this country. I also enjoy having a little more involvement at the national tournaments rather than to just referee, like doing the role as assigner. This job requires me to assign referees based on how they are performing and making sure potential conflicts of interest are avoided. There was a time when the job was really difficult because the general quality of the referees was not as high as it is today. Qualifications include a high referee's rating, experience, willingness to work hard, and a willingness to attend a lot of tournaments. Members of the FOC are appointed by the president of the USFA, who, I suppose, consults with the FOC chair and others. However, I have not seen any written criteria for becoming a member of the FOC.

AF: What rules would you like to see changed or added?

GJ: I would like to see the off target in foil be eliminated. It would speed the bouts up by eliminating the stops and starts of off target lights. Point control would become even more important, though fencers might adapt by displacing target more.

AF: What is the most challenging thing you have done since you put down your foil in 1980?

GJ: Pursuing my private pilot's license. Robert, my sweetheart, is a licensed pilot and since we fly often, learning to fly is a wise thing to do in case something were to happen to Robert and he was unable to fly the plane. He has been working with me toward getting my private pilot's certificate for two years now. I have twice the amount of hours necessary, but I don't feel quite ready yet. It's a scary thing for me to do, to be in that plane by myself. I have done local flying on my own, but I haven't done what is called cross country where I must fly at least 50 miles out and land at three different airports.

AF: What one thing in all your contributions to the sport of fencing would you like people to most remember you for?

GJ: I strove for exhibiting the beauty of the art form of fencing. Hopefully, without sounding immodest, people will remember me for being a beautiful, classical style of a fencer. •

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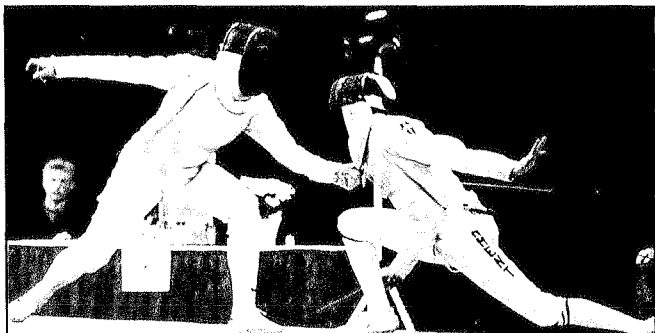
ANDREA AMENT

by Bob Schaller

Andrea Ament will enter the Junior World Championships in South Bend as the reigning cadet bronze medalist in both foil and epee. More recently, Andrea was a double winner at the South Bend NAC, taking firsts in open epee and junior foil. She also won the Junior Olympic Under 20 Championship in Sacramento to qualify for the junior world team in both foil and epee. She's ready to step up a notch and lead yet another generation of American fencers making their mark on the world stage.

Just 17 and a junior at Hawken High in Gates Mills, Ohio, Andrea Ament set a new standard for America's young fencers at last year's Cadet World Championships in Keszthely, Hungary, by taking the bronze medal in both the foil and epee. She became the first fencer from any country to win medals in two different events in the same year.

"It's an unusual achievement," said Buckie Leach. "Andrea is a talented athlete and very, very determined. What she did was, well, incredible."



Ament has already set higher goals. "I was really hoping to do that well last year. Medaling in both was great, but what I'm really excited about is our teams. We are getting very good." She later added, "My goal has always been to medal at a senior world championship or at the Olympics. The Games in 2000 might be too early for me, but my goal is still there."

Five-time Olympian Michael Marx sees Ament's double-medal feat as a kind of history. "What she accomplished will be hard to duplicate. She did a wonderful job. She is the ultimate competitive athlete, in my opinion. She trains hard, and when she competes, she is tenacious. Yet she keeps her head about her. She reminds me of Muhammed Ali – she can do the rope-a-dope and then knock your head off."

Felicia and Iris Zimmermann, members of the women's foil team that qualified for the Olympics at the World Championship last November, see Ament as an important part of the future of fencing in the U.S. "Two third places at the at the world championships is very good," Felicia said. "To me, it is impressive because the foil and epee are such different weapons, with different timing and different target areas." As the reigning NCAA epee champion, Felicia the foilist knows what she's talking about.

Iris, who will join Andrea in the under 20 event in South Bend, thinks Ament's attitude is what will make her a champion for a long time to come. "She works hard and concentrates. You can see the difference between her and

a lot of athletes because of how she understands the game. She's really smart and she's very humble which is great. I consider her to be like a sister."

Perhaps more interesting than even the double-medal feat itself is this fact: Ament trailed in every single match, except one, in both events during the medal chase. "She was behind, but she came back," Leach said. "She does not get tired or discouraged. Everyone watching was surprised to see it keep happening – that she'd get behind and rally. She's a fighter, so that in that regard it might be almost better that she gets behind because she really battles."

The difference between winning and losing, Ament admits, comes down to a variety of mental factors, from focus to concentration and keeping a consistent

disposition as pressure mounts. "It's really mental, not just the fencing, but not getting really frustrated when you are fencing," Ament said.

The long trips to competition and the practice itself have instilled a work ethic in her she will carry the rest of her life. "The fact that I've been doing this competitively for so long and missed school made me work harder and stay disciplined enough to get a lot more work done under pressure that maybe other kids my age don't face," Ament said. "And the pressure of the competitions – all of this can help me in the business world."

Ament, a straight-A student, was recognized for her accomplishment when she returned to Ohio from Hungary. At a school-wide meeting in the auditorium, Ament blushed enduring applause from her schoolmates as teachers and students prodded her to go to the podium.

"I smiled and said, 'No, thank you,'" Ament said. "I did stand up, at my seat. To get the support of my hometown like that was a surprise because as a rule, fencing doesn't always get a lot of media or attention." •

Excerpted with permission from an article by the same name printed in the July/August 1999 issue of Olympian.



JUNIORS IN LONDON USFA YOUTH TOUR

by Kate Hanna

There was no mistaking the third annual USFA Youth Tour in London the last week in November. They were the kids with the medals.

The yearly training trip took eight fencers ages 11 to 14 from across the United States on an adventurous, exhausting, and highly successful tour of fencing clubs and tournaments in and around England's largest city.

Doug Tracey, from New Jersey, announced the arrival of the U.S. squad at the Leon Paul Series Sabre Tournament in Bath, south of London. The only sabre fencer in the U.S. group, Tracey traveled down to Bath to fence his tournament the day after arriving in England. Jet lag didn't seem to be an issue for him though, and he fenced a very strong tournament. His silver medal in the under 13 age category was a personal best for him and a taste of things to come for the U.S. team.

One week later, at the Bedford Epee Tournament, an open regional event, the U.S. again collected a share of the medals. Aly Rush, a foil and epee fencer from Colorado, collected her own silver medal. She had to fight hard for it though. She met teammate Jessica Brown, from California, in the top four. After a close bout, Brown brought home a bronze medal.

All of the youth epee fencers who participated did very well in a tough field of experienced, adult fencers. Other U.S. fencers at the Bedford tournament included Tess Finkel and Dwight Smith, both of New York, and Mackenzie Gray, a foil and epee fencer from Massachusetts.

The foil fencers in the group, Kelsey Finkel of New York and Locky Stewart of California, provided support and cheers for their teammates at the Bedford tournament. Their foil event was unfortunately cancelled, but these strong young fencers proved themselves in training bouts all week long.

And the squad would agree that it was a long week. Days began between seven and nine o'clock, with a walk from their lodgings in the posh Kensington area to the nearest tube stop. Fencing bags in tow, they traveled by underground and train to reach the training venues arranged by

head coach Andrea Lagan, chair of the USFA Youth Committee.

During the course of the week, the team got to train at two British public schools, Whitgift and Brentwood, learning about Britain's tradition of education in between bouts. Brentwood especially is known in Britain both for its long and prestigious academic reputation and also for its fencing program. Several of Britain's top junior sabre fencers are Brentwood students.

At the schools, the American team drilled and fenced with their British counterparts and took lessons from tour coaching staff James Odom, Kate Hanna, Daniel Tibbetts, and Ann Sidenblad. There were also opportunities to tour the schools and interact with British students.

Evenings on the tour meant more fencing. The foilists visited Salle Paul, the premier foil club in Britain, to train with some of Britain's top foilists. Meanwhile, the sabre and epee fencers in the group went to the London Thames Fencing Club for training with an equally strong field of fencers in those weapons.

In addition to their own training, the group had an opportunity to watch some high-level fencing at the Eden Cup (men's junior foil) held near London on November 27. Serving as timers and scorekeepers at the event, the young U.S. fencers got a taste of the pace and pressure of a world cup event, and watched fencers from all over Europe and the world from their front row seats behind the scoring equipment. The group spent the entire day at the tournament and impressed many

with their professionalism and concentration on their jobs as tournament officials.

Of course, the tour wasn't all work. In addition to their training schedule, the young athletes found time to visit the British Museum and the Tower of London, and take a walking tour of the Westminster area by the houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. They visited shops, including world-famous Harrods department store and Hamley's (the largest toy store in the world) where they bought souvenirs of the trip and presents to take home. On the Thanksgiving holiday, they indulged in a real Thanksgiving meal complete with a turkey, stuffing, and decorations on the tables. The group even got to sing Happy Birthday to 13-year-old Jessica Brown amid balloons and chocolate cake.

Overall, the intense, hard-working week was a growing experience for these young athletes. A diverse group with a wide range of experience in both fencing and in international travel, they learned to function as a team, to provide support for each other, to navigate an unfamiliar city, to manage their own money and make purchases in foreign currency. They took responsibility for choosing meals and snacks to support their level of physical activity (with some guidance from tour staff), and for getting enough rest to maintain their energy.

"It was great to watch these kids grow," noted Coach Lagan. "Every one of them gained confidence and poise in their fencing and in their behavior. We were really proud of them." •



Members of the USFA Youth Tour pose for a picture during their whirlwind, week-long journey through London.



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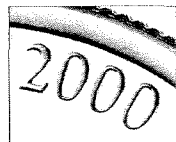


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L'ESCRIME WINES

by Sally d'Asaro

It's no secret that fencing can be an expensive sport. If you're a young, up-and-coming youth fencer, the solution is simple – you go to mom or dad for the big money you need to support your growing passion. But if you're mom or dad, that can be a whole other problem.

Diane Harder, head of Diane C. Harder Wine Marketing, has taken a unique and innovative approach to support her son Sean's fencing ambitions. Using her years of experience in marketing wine for a number of very highly regarded wineries, one year ago Harder launched a new label by the name of L'Escrime to help finance Sean's burgeoning fencing career and to show support and garner some publicity for the sport of fencing in general.

L'Escrime Wines does not just support the Harder family's fencing though. Harder is donating a portion of the proceeds from the sale of each bottle to the United States Fencing Association to help support the sport and other competitors as well.

Harder has traveled throughout the various wine growing valleys and mountains in Northern California to select small lots of premium varietal wines to be bottled under her striking L'Escrime label. The first wine, released in the winter of 1999, was a Napa Valley Sangiovese 1996. This is the grape variety that is the base for the famous Italian Chiantis. Though well-known as a cheap wine that comes in a kitschy squat flask with a wicker basket, Chianti, especially from the central-most Chianti Classico region, is regarded by wine connoisseurs as one of the great wines of the world.

Sangiovese as a variety has only come to California in the last ten years and is slowly building a following amongst wine aficionados as wine makers continue to learn how to grow the grapes and vint the wine.

The fall of 1999 saw the release of four more L'Escrime wines. One was the 1997 version of the Napa Valley Sangiovese. The second was a Mendocino County Riposte

Rouge, made 100 percent from the Cabernet Franc grape, a variety that is found in most French Bordeaux wines and responsible for some of the great wines from the Pomerol and St.Emilion area of Bordeaux. A third was a Napa Valley Merlot Moulinet Reserve 1997. It is made mostly from the very fashionable Merlot variety of Bordeaux with a 10 percent addition of Cabernet Sauvignon, the mainstay variety of Bordeaux.

Finally, and probably the best, was the Napa Valley Spada de Duello Syrah Reserve 1997. This variety, responsible for many of the great wines of the Northern Rhone Valley in France like Hermitage and Cote-Rotie, has been making some of the greatest red wines ever produced in California in the last few years.

As new L'Escrime wines are scoured out from the nooks and crannies of various prestige wineries, Harder plans to label each one with various moves from the fencing nomenclature. Spring of 2000 will see the release of a 1997 Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Prise de Fer Reserve and also L'Escrime's first white, the 1999 Balestra Blanc, made from the Sauvignon Blanc variety. In view of the rich French and Italian terminology in the sport of fencing, it would seem that the L'Escrime venture could support Sean well into his veterans level fencing career.

The Harder family is very much a fencing family in every sense of the word. Sean's older brother, Patrick, has picked-up sabre and fences under Daniel Costin (national sabre champion and Olympic coach of Romania) at Westside. Diane takes lessons at Westside, but disclaims any ambitions to fence competitively. And to close the loop between her marketing operation and the fencing community, Sally d'Asaro, wife of Mike d'Asaro, Jr. and the daughter-in-law of Maestro Michael d'Asaro, Sr., is the marketing manager of L'Escrime wines.

L'Escrime wines were introduced to the fencing community at the Palm Springs NAC in December 1999. Harder

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L'Escrime Wines was launched in 1999 as a means to support the Harder family's fencing habit. There are currently five varieties available under the label, with at least two more available in 2000.



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and Sally d'Asaro manned a booth through the entire event to display the wines and answer questions. Bottles of the Syrah were awarded to the gold medalists in the wheelchair and veterans categories.

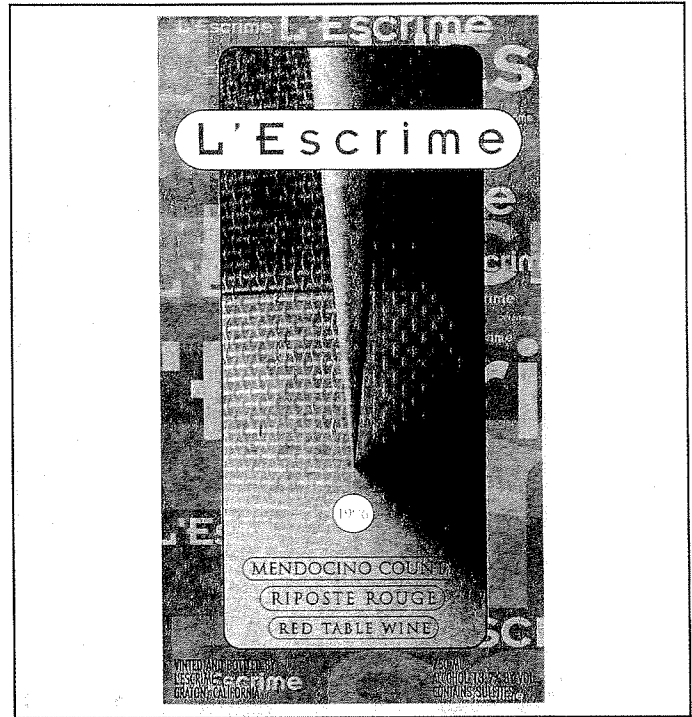
On the first two nights of the NAC, a tasting of all four L'Escrime wines, with exquisite bread and cheese, were available. A raffle was held both nights of a magnum bottle of the L'Escrime Syrah. Bottles of the L'Escrime were recently awarded as raffle prizes at the most recent Duel in the Desert in Las Vegas, a Pacific Coast Circuit event.

Alas, the L'Escrime wines are produced in very small quantities and are difficult to find even in California. It's unlikely that they will ever be found at the neighborhood wine shop. For those fortunate residents of those states that allow individuals to ship in wines from other states, the wines can be ordered directly from

Diane C. Harder Wine Marketing
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FENCING RETURNS AS A SPECTATOR SPORT

DUEL IN THE DESERT

by Eric Dew

From January 6-7, the first Pacific Coast Section Circuit event of the new millennium was held in Las Vegas. The Duel in the Desert tournament has a long history and has been capably organized by Evan Raner for eight years. The Pacific Coast Section, ably led by section chair Frank Van Dyke, has one of the strongest and well-organized regional circuits in the nation. The events offer not just strong competition but great prizes, wonderful locales, and well-staged finals.

A Hawaiian beach backdrop, yacht cruise tickets, and decorative Xena Warrior Princess swords are all part of the circuit's offerings. Host organizers looking for ideas for creating memorable events would do well to visit a few PCS circuit tournaments. To give you all a taste of what to expect, here is a diary of my time at the Duel.

After landing at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas, my friends from The Fencing Post, Saul and Vickie Mendoza, and I picked up our bags and went to the Palace Station Hotel and Casino and checked into our rooms. I won't discuss all the things I did for the remainder of the evening, since they don't pertain to fencing. Let's just say Binion's Horseshoe takes no prisoners and I fell into bed, defeated, at 4:30 a.m.

Friday morning, or shall I admit afternoon, we had breakfast and ventured to the venue for a quick look. It was quite roomy, easily holding the twelve copper strips with plenty of room for the bout committee and armorers' tables. Evan Raner, the organizer and impresario for the event, directed the volunteers on setup procedure and locations. He was everywhere. After eight years with this event, Raner knows exactly how he wants to stage the show.

The tournament started Friday night with veteran men's foil, women's epee and women's sabre. Sabre fencer Bethany Cox from Orem, Utah, defeated Mary Wilkerson of Tuscon, Ariz., for the first gold medal of the new millennium (if people are inclined to accept 2000 as the first year of the new millennium). Daisy Gilker from Arizona defeated Janet Wertz of San Diego to win the women's epee gold and earn the first A2000 of the tournament. The evening ended with Las Vegan Heik Hambarzumian, former national

foil champion, defeating Kevin Osborn of Santa Cruz, Calif., to win the veteran foil.

The Palace Station, like many hotels in Las Vegas, has a complete ensemble of money-unmaking games. Once bitten, twice shy, I spent the rest of the evening enjoying the company of two fencers from Los Angeles, Ken Chilton and Dawn Gentry.

Saturday was the big day for the Duel in the Desert tournament. The epeeists checked in by 8:30 in the morning. The field of 99 was strong: 21 A's, 13 B's and 11 C's. Michael Aufrichtig from New York, Walter Dragonetti from Ohio, and Bob Cochrane from Florida were some of the many out-of-the-region combatants.

The other Saturday events included men's sabre and women's foil. The open sabre fielded 23 entries for a Group C1 event. Women's foil had 35 fencers and was a Group B1 event.

All the DE bouts were officiated by competent referees, including Derek Cotton, Michael D'Asaro, Jr., and George Nonomura. After my exit from epee in the round of 32, I refereed women's foil through to the bronze-medal bout, the last event before the gala show.

The finals for the three Saturday events were held in the walled-off area of the venue. A disc jockey kept the place upbeat while fencers and spectators filled the room. Many spectators dressed elegantly in suits or evening gowns. The emcee for the evening, sixth-place sabreur Larry Dunn, and several referees were decked out in tuxedos. The finals raised piste cut through the room with comfortable chairs, tables, finger foods, and friends distributed equally on both sides of the strip. A well-stocked bar and an able tender completed the evening's ambience.

On with the show. The evening's competition began with defending champion Sasha Zucker from Stanford fencing Nikolai Logatchov of Colorado in the open sabre gold medal bout. Michael D'Asaro, Jr. officiated while Larry Dunn's dry wit and smooth voice provided the play-by-play. The fencers trade leads several times before ending with a 15-13 upset win for Logatchov. Logatchov, as the name suggests, is from Russia and has fenced and coached for many years.

Few knew him, so he snuck into the finals as a ringer.

In the women's foil gold-medal bout pitting Utah's Bethany Cox against Laura Horton of Los Angeles, Cox dominated the bout after trading the first couple touches. The Utah contingent near Cox's side of the strip

continued on page 19

DUEL IN THE DESERT

L A S V E G A S

January 5-7, 2001

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continued from page 18

cheered wildly after every touch. The California contingent, scattered throughout the room, cheered for Horton's fierce defense, but to no avail as Cox pulled away to victory, defending her Duel in the Desert women's foil champion title. Bethany is now the two-time pan-millennium dual-gold medalist in sabre and foil.

Between bouts, Larry Dunn and the Las Vegas organizers raffle donated prizes to the spectators. By doing so, they kept the audience busy during the dead time. No one left the room while the medals were awarded to the top eight finalists in each event. What a surprise, eh?

The main event, men's epee, was next. Dunn announced championship match Petar Toschov from San Jose versus Ingo Grausam of Bakersfield. Grausam, the defending champion and prohibitive favorite from Germany, was once ranked in the top ten in world and is currently studying at Bakersfield. Toschov was a top junior epeeist in Bulgaria. After the announcement of the fencers, Linda Dunn rolled out a tray stacked with ten racks of one thousand one dollar silver Palace Station chips. One thousand dollars, winner takes all.

Aside from the prize money, the format for the finals was different as well. The finals was best four-out-of-seven five touch bouts. The best-of format is designed to prevent runaway scores which could make the event less engaging to the audience. That's show business.

Both fencers fought hard, keeping the scores in each encounter close, but Grausam raced ahead three wins to none. Toschov came back to tie the match, forcing a seventh and deciding bout. The crowd was screaming and cheering for both fencers. Every touch brought loud, raucous cheers. Dunn, meanwhile, kept the commentary humming with witty, lucid description of the actions. At the end, Grausam beat Toschov 5-3 to take the gold medal and spilled the 1,000 silver chips all over himself. A truly memorable scene.

Sunday, the last day of the event, consisted of open foil and veteran's epee and sabre. There were 79 entries in the foil event with 6 A's, 9 B's and 9 C's, making this event a very tough Group A1 event. I came out of the pools seeded tenth. All right, no need to name victims, but suffice it to say I didn't lose any bouts that day, capping it with a 15-12 victory for the gold. I took home a gold medal and a large bottle of Syrah, courtesy of L'Esprime Wines.

After showering and calling home with the news, I killed time waiting for a table at the restaurant by winning \$60 at roulette. That's enough for dinner and a nice way to end the evening and the weekend.

What makes the Duel in the Desert so uniquely special? Without a doubt, Evan Raney is the key. His vision to stage the finals as spectator-friendly as possible is both commendable and enjoyable. The pomp and elegance and all the little touches surrounding the finals at the Duel in the Desert makes for a most pleasant experience, whether you are a

competitor or spectator. The preliminary pools and all direct elimination bouts are given the same amount of care and attention as the very last bout. No fencer is slighted. The bout committee and the armorer run the events professionally, but pleasantly.

Some may sniff that offering money or betting on outcomes is offensive or inappropriate for an amateur sport such as fencing. Quite the contrary. The money as prize or bet does nothing to detract from the honesty or determination of the fencers. The money aspect is just a whimsical diversion adding to the evening's entertainment value. Raney and his crew's deft touch in this respect brings levity and enjoyment to the evening without devolving into seediness.

Fencers and friends planning to attend next January might consider bringing something dressy. Raney has already scheduled the ninth Duel in the Desert for January 5-7, 2001. Without a doubt, Las Vegas is a choice destination for many fencers. The town offers many diversions so that fencers knocked out in the early rounds aren't relegated to watching the shopping channel in their motel room. Aside from the obvious gaming aspect, Las Vegas offers unparalleled show packages, great dining, and many non-gaming activities.

As for myself, I'm recruiting all those aged A97's who haven't picked up a foil in three years, begging them to attend.

Next year's Duel in the Desert will be held January 5-7 2001 in Las Vegas at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino. Once again, the winner of the open epee will win \$1,000. If open foil and open sabre can achieve Group A status in 2001, the winner's prize will be \$1,000 for those events as well. •

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HANDLES TECHNICAL TALKS

by Joe Byrnes

I haven't had occasion to say much about handles for a long time now. Maybe it's time, especially considering the problem case I had wished on me for assembly at a recent NAC.

Now when we talk about handles, I hope we all realize that the conventional sabre handle is not likely to be part of the discussion. Nor is the conventional French foil (or epee) handle going to make it into this causerie.

No, it's the orthopedic (talking about sneers) or pistol grips that we always mean when we say handle. If you have fenced for any time, are you still using the handle you started with (even the type you started with)? I have always been a bit amused at the sort of Hollywood marriage, and divorce sequence, that seems to afflict so many of our competitors and their handles. See them at the beginning of a season, they have found the perfect match. The next time you see them, they are using something different.

However, if you are going to vary the type of handle you use, there are a number of factors to be considered to make life easier for yourself and anybody who has to work on your equipment.

Despite the fact that there have been international rules written for all sorts of things relating to fencing and fencing equipment, no one has ever dared to curb the individualistic propensities of fencers and handle makers. The specifications that are in place are general and relate more to exterior dimensions. You would think that it would be possible to write rules for the interior dimensions of handles like how wide the bore shall be to accommodate the washer(s) and nut, how long a tang should be, or how deep the bore should

be to allow enough tang for the nut to be threaded onto it.

But nobody has ever done it, or even suggested it, as far as I know. However, such is our noble sport that we shall doubtless be living with the situation for a long time to come. So what else is new?

Then there's the related question of whether the handle can actually accept a weapon tang without monumental metal working (on handle, tang, or both) to get them to work together. I am not speaking here only of the problem that arises from those fencers who want a tremendous drop in the tang to throw the handle at an angle that is (at least for the moment) perceived as favorable to the competitor's style.

I have had my say a long time ago, and more than once, about the error of putting too much bend in a tang, especially when the fencer insists on using a foil guard of the maximum-permitted diameter. Such an assembly will be flat-out illegal under FIE rules, and there's no sense in

getting used to this sort of thing when you aren't going to be allowed to use it at the highest levels.

What I am speaking of here is whether the handle can let the tang slip on to it, just for a start. If it won't, then either the tang is too thick or the opening (the square one at the front) is not big enough. You see what I mean about the usefulness of some simple specifications for things normally out of sight? The amount of grinding, filing (on both blade and handle) that is sometimes required to create a match can be really outrageous and time-consuming.

It is common enough to encounter the fencer whose foil blades (it's usually foil) have all been cut to fit last

month's favorite, a deep-bored handle. Suddenly they find the perfect replacement (at least for now) and want every blade to be swapped, only to find that the length of tang left on the blades is too short to reach back beyond the bore of the new handle and allow a nut to be fitted on. This fencer will be in a truly pitiable state, especially if the new handles have been paid for and were expensive (is there another kind). Sometimes in a shop (not at a competition unless it's a very big and fully equipped one) it is possible to drill down into the rear of a handle to deepen the bore. But that is dicey and cannot always be done.

What got me going on this topic was the aforementioned problem case that I was expected to deal with. I succeeded (after all a man has his pride and I don't like to be beaten by inanimate objects). But it took half a morning, and if I had spotted at first just how aberrant that handle was, I wouldn't even have started. The manufacturer had managed to get the two parts of the bore, the square part up front and the round at the rear, out of proper alignment and it was worse than first appeared.

What is the lesson for the individual fencer in all this? If you are carrying spare equipment, whether blades, handles, or anything, check it or have it checked for you in advance, to be sure they do match and will fit together quickly and smoothly. •

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WINNING FENCING

by Dr. John Heil

Is there more to winning than being the best, being number one? In each fencing competition there is only one winner, one gold medalist. Does that make everyone else a loser? There are many ways to win. A personal best is a win. So is fencing with the right attitude and showing personal courage in adversity.

Before defeating Olympic champion Giovanna Trillini en route to her bronze medal performance at the 1999 World Championships, Iris Zimmermann thought, "She is my hero. I have watched her fence all this time. Now it's my turn to win." In that instant, Iris committed herself to do what it would take to move her game up a notch. She took on a winning attitude. Though she didn't bring home the gold, she was still a winner, breaking new ground for herself and for American fencing.

Excellence is as much about the way you do things as it is about the results; as much about the journey as about the final destination. There are wins and losses every day in fencing and in life. Learning to fence with a winning attitude will make you a success on and off the strip.

The competitive fire that drives the pursuit of victory is a potent force generating awesome displays of physical excellence and compelling moments of personal courage. What makes a winner is endlessly debated. One idea for which there is widespread agreement is that among equals in physical talent, the mental game makes the difference. As simple as the idea of winning is, how to best harness it as a force remains to be discovered.

Gold medal goals have given athletes direction through tremendous adversity and been the driving force behind sport's greatest moments. When Hall of Fame baseball player Yogi Berra was asked what he thought about

when he was hitting, he replied "You can't think and hit at the same time." The same is true of fencing.

Negative thoughts are a spoiler of success. For example, fear of a bad outcome undermines confidence and focuses the athlete on what not to do, making that very result more likely. When things go wrong frustration and anger often follow. As feelings run amuck, the fencer loses control over emotional intensity and is taken out of the mental game. In either situation the fencer needs to refocus on fencing, on what to do next.

Even how to use positive thoughts of victory to one's best advantage is elusive to the point of paradox. If you are thinking about how nice it would be to win your bout at the instant your opponent attacks, you are disadvantaged because you are trying to think about two things at the same time – fencing and winning. Your attention is divided, split between what to do now (fencing) and how things might feel later (satisfaction of winning). Thoughts of victory while still fencing are premature, causing you to get ahead of yourself, taking you away from what is happening as it happens. To fence your best you need a total focus on what is happening as it hap-

pens; to be focused on now!

When top athletes are asked about their greatest experiences in sport, they describe intense concentration coupled with feelings of control and confidence. Often there is little awareness of anything but the actions as they unfold from moment to moment. Thoughts of winning or losing are notably absent. This mental state is often called the zone, short for the zone of optimal functioning as coined by Russian sport psychologist Yuri Hanin. Of course, this does not just happen. It is the byproduct of intense practice and dedication to excellence, and that begins with how you approach your training.

Much has been said of winning and the mental game. The 10 simple ideas that follow point the way to winning fencing and suggest that winning comes from how you play the game.

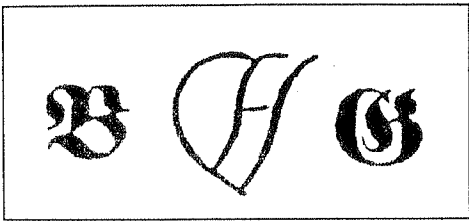
Dr. John Heil is chair of the USAFA Sport Science, Safety and Technology Committee. He can be contacted at Lewis-Gale Clinic, 4910 Valley View Blvd., Roanoke, VA 24012. Dr. Heil's phone number is (540) 265-1605 and his e-mail address is jheil@rev.net. Special thanks to Sherry Posthumus and Col. Jeanne Picariello for their review and comments of this article. •

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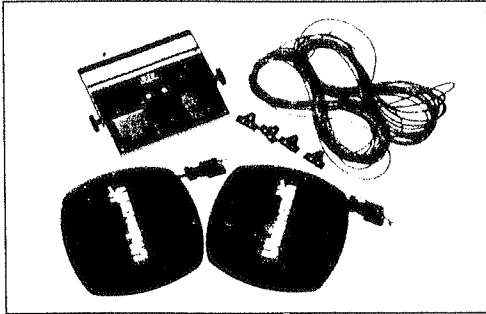
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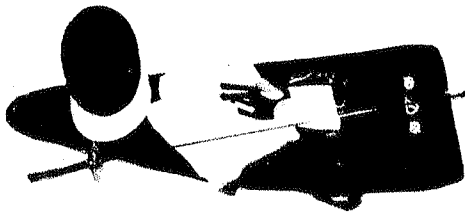
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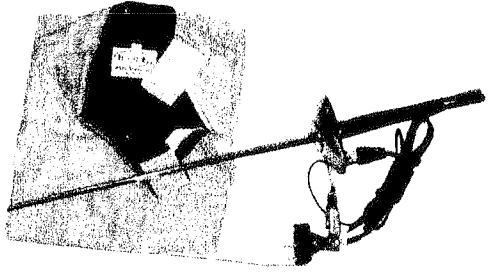
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WHERE GLORY DOES NOT STAY

by Robert Block

*"Smart lad, to slip betimes away,
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows,
It withers quicker than the rose."*

— From *To An Athlete Dying Young*
by A.E. Housman

Although A.E. Housman was describing a young runner in his 1896 classic poem *To An Athlete Dying Young*, I think it provides an important message for fencers. Fame and glory tend to be ephemeral and are traditionally won on the athletic field while one is young. As the years go by and one grows older, those early accomplishments wither and, while the fragrance of the victory may remain, the bloom of the moment is bound to fade. Enjoy the moment now with the knowledge that, as all athletes do, you will gradually "...slip betimes away."

I wonder what poetic message Housman would give us after a look at fencing at the beginning of the 21st Century? That half of the USFA's members are juniors and the youthful energy of our North American Cups and Summer Nationals would seem to support the idea that fencing strips are fields of youthful glory. But, he could not have known when writing his verse that one day the end of shamateurism would open-up the possibility of earning a living as a competitor. Nor could he have known that, combined with improvements in training methods, diet, mental preparation, and sports medicine, some talented senior fencers would maintain the bloom on their competitive careers well into their thirties and even into their forties.

What would the poet have thought about even older fencers competing in veteran world championships? The notion that athletic glory can be found well into one's twilight years if the fencing

strip were leveled a bit to account for age would have been unthinkable a century ago.

The leadership and promotion of the founding fathers of the veteran fencing movement, Henry De Silva in Great Britain, Laki Dobridis in Ger-

many and Mac Garrett in the U.S., are the primary reasons we have international veteran fencing championships today. The inclusion of events such as the World Veterans Championships and the World Masters Games on the international fencing calendar signifies that fencers now have the opportunity to embrace a new tradition allowing us to compete for new laurels as we enter successive stages of life and enjoy the sport for life.

Germany, the U.S., and Great Britain have dominated the international competitions held to date. The role of these countries in developing the sport and their competitive success is no coincidence. Other Western European nations like France, Italy, and Hungary have been less enthusiastic about participating and this is reflected in their lagging results. However, based on their fencing histories, these nations can be expected to develop a much greater appetite for veteran competition as the movement expands.

If you're intrigued by the numbers, at the 1998 World Masters Games and the 1998-99 World Championships combined, Germany collected a total of 41 medals, the USA 40, and Great Britain 17. The next closest countries were France with a total of five medals, Austria with four, and Hungary and Italy with three each. They are followed by eight countries that have won a total of one or two medals.

So where are the countries from the former Soviet Bloc that have been so prominent on the victory stand in jun-

ior and senior fencing since the 1950s? I think the answers, some of them rather obvious, can be found in a combination of circumstances that relate to economy, geography, and tradition. Veteran fencers from most countries have to pay their own way to competitions. Consequently, relatively affluent fencers from countries with prospering economies have dominated veteran competitions.

And then there is tradition. I would argue that, in addition to some tremendous economic obstacles, the former Soviet Bloc countries are not really a factor in veteran fencing because they still follow the tradition of slipping away at a relatively young age — "From fields where glory does not stay." Some of my Latvian and Russian friends have explained that their fencing system was designed to produce world championship and Olympic medals. It was expected that fencing activity would end by 30 years of age. The concept of fencing as a sport for life or as healthy recreation was not part of the equation.

When the Veteran World Championships are next held in 2000 in Godollo, Hungary, and then in 2001 in Martinique, France, and when the World Masters Games occur again in 2002 in Melbourne, Australia, it will be interesting to see if the early dominance established by Germany, the USA, and Great Britain continues.

As an American, I view our international success as something of a two-sided sword because the real sign of vitality for the veterans movement will be the day when a significant number of athletes from many different countries are climbing onto the victory stand to accept their medals. It will mean that the new model of competing for life has gained global acceptance in the fencing world, and that, instead of slipping away too early from their chosen field of glory, juniors everywhere can look forward to competing for laurels as the veterans of tomorrow. •



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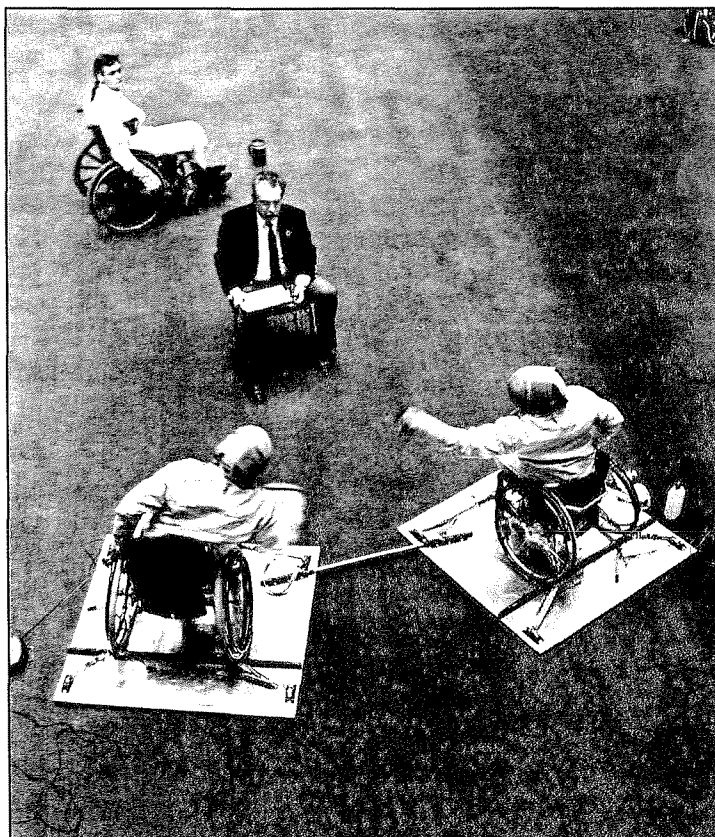
OPEN	VETERAN
Men's Epee (203)	[55]
1 Jan Viviani/MET	1 Walter Dragonetti/NoOH
2 Eric Hanson/NOCAL	2 Bruno Goosens/OR
3 Charles St. Hillaire/CAN	3 William Cromer/AZ
3 Justin Tausig/MET	3 Thomas Vrabel/S.Diego
Men's Foil (202)	[57]
1 Jon Tiomkin/Long Island	1 Tom Lutton/New Eng.
2 Josh McGuire/CAN	2 Ed Kaihatsu/IL
3 Yale Cohen/Gulfcoast	3 David Drake/SanDiego
3 Steve Gerberman/GULF	3 Rob McCormick/Mt Val
Men's Sabre (107)	[40]
1 Patrick Durkan/MET	1 Joshua Runyan/S.Diego
2 Ivan Lee/MET	2 Alfredo Lara/S. Diego
3 M.-Olivier Hasoun/CAN	3 Jim Royal/S. Diego
3 Jeremy Summers/KAN	3 Ted Smith/Mt. Valley
Women's Epee (109)	[17]
1 Jessica Burke/WNY	1 Karen Johnson/SoTX
2 Magda Krol/CAN	2 Patricia Bedrosian/SoCal
3 Stephanie Eim/CenPA	3 Diane Kallus/STX
3 Foellmer-Suchorski/Cap	3 Cindy Runyon/SanBern.
Women's Foil - (95)	[11]
1 Iris Zimmermann/WNY	1 Lisa Slater/WNY
2 Ann Marsh/WNY	2 Nina Keller/MET
3 Cynthia Bent/Wpa	3 Patricia Ehler/CenCal
3 Patricia Szelle/Columbus	3 Cheri Langenfeld/CenCal
Women's Sabre (83)	[15]
1 Sada Jacobson/GA	1 Leslie Taft/San Bern
2 Christine Becker/OR	2 Yvonne Wong/Mt. Val
3 Yelena Kalkina/KAZ	3 Jean Finkleman/CAP
3 Julie Smith/UT	3 Delia Turner/Phil.

South Bend NAC F 1/14-1/17/00

OPEN	JUNIOR
Men's Epee (200)	[93]
1 Jon Normile/MET	1 Cody Mattern/OR
2 Jan Vivanni/MET	2 R. Greenhouse/MET
3 R. Greenhouse/MET	3 Ben Solomon/NoOH
3 Justin Tausig/MET	3 Jan Viviani/MET
Men's Foil (176)	[163]
1 Ozren Debic/CROATIA	1 Josh McGuire/CAN
2 Peter Maruchajew/AZB	2 Joe Fisher/MET
3 Greg Chang/NE	3 Scott Clarke/CO
3 Josh McGuire/CAN	3 Gabriel Sinkin/WNY
Men's Sabre (107)	[113]
1 Aki Spencer-EI/MET	1 Ivan Lee/MET
2 Herby Raynaud/MET	2 Darrin Whitmer/Mich.
3 Patrick Durkan/MET	3 Harvey Miller/MET
3 Keeth Smart/MET	3 Mike Momtselidze/KAN
Women's Epee (128)	[109]
1 Andrea Ament/NO OH	1 Kamara James/MET
2 Elaine Cheris/COL	2 Arlene Stevens/MET
3 Stephanie Eim/CEN PA	3 Maya Lawrence/NJ
3 Foellmer-Suchorski/CAP	3 Catherine Szarwark/TN
Women's Foil - (124)	[111]
1 Julie Smith/UT	1 Andrea Ament/No.OH
2 Anna Anguelova/BUL	2 Katy Cavan/MET
3 Jujie Luan/CAN	3 Emily Cross/MET
3 Tasha Martin/OR	3 Metta Thompson/WNY
Women's Sabre (79)	[74]
1 Elena Jemayeva/AZB	1 Mariel Zagunis/OR
2 Sada Jacobson/GA	2 Sada Jacobson/GA
3 Catherine Pack/NJ	3 Amelia Galliard/GA
3 Julie Smith/UT	3 Julia Gelman/MET

2000 Junior Olympics 2/14-2/17/00

JUNIOR	CADET
Men's Epee (149)	[120]
1 Wes Kelsey/OR	Joshua Guevara/NoTX
2 Cody Mattern/OR	Ben Solomon/NoOH
3 Tim French/SoTX	T. French/SoTX
3 Ben Solomon/NoOH	Julian Rose/CT
Men's Foil (163)	[153]
1 Steve Gerberman/Gulf	Steve Gerberman/Gulf
2 Roland Breden/CAP	Gabriel Sinkin/WNY
3 Joe Fisher/MET	Ian Schlaefler/MtValley
3 Derek Snyder/So.Cal	Scott Sherman/ILL
Men's Sabre (113)	[96]
1 Harvey Miller/IL/MET	Marten Zagunis
2 Marten Zagunis/OR	Ilan Chernov/So.Cal
3 Jared DeMatteis/NJ	Tim Hageman/MET
3 David LaValle/MET	Dwayne Smith/MET
Women's Epee [109]	[87]
1 Andrea Ament/NoOH	Jasmine McGlade/CO
2 Catherine Szarwark/TN	Erica Korb/Phil
3 Maya Lawrence/NJ	Kathy Delahanty/KY
3 Eleanor Leighton/IND	Sherice Gearhart/SoTX
Women's Foil [111]	[96]
1 Katy Cavan/MET	Hannah Thompson/WNY
2 Hannah Thompson/WNY	Jacqueline Leahy/WNY
3 Emily Cross/MET	Emily Cross/MET
3 Jacqueline Leahy/WNY	Amy Delahanty/KY
Women's Sabre [74]	[]
1 Mariel Zagunis/OR	Mariel Zagunis/OR
2 Valerie Providenza/OR	Amelia Galliard/GA
3 Julia Gelman/MET	Amy Macarow/Mt.Valley
3 Catherine Pack/NJ	Valerie Providenza/OR



Athletes compete in the wheelchair event at the Palm Springs NAC.



IN MEMORY

FENCERS REMEMBERED

by Jeffrey R. Tishman



JACK A. BAKER

JACK A. BAKER (1919-1999)

Jack A. Baker, who played a leading role in the development of the Northern California Division during the 1950s and 60s, and narrowly lost the presidency of the AFLA, died on Dec. 12, 1999, at the age of 80.

Baker was chairman of the Northern California Division for 15 years (1951-1966) during the division's greatest period of growth. Along with the work of Fred Linkmeyer in Los Angeles, Baker is credited with making the Pacific Coast Section of that era the strongest region after Metropolitan New York. His divisional work was recognized by his fellow fencers in 1961, when he was presented with a life membership in the AFLA and a bronze statue.

Concurrent with his divisional post, Baker was a national vice president of the AFLA (1962-1966) during the administrations of Dr. Paul T. Makler and Norman Lewis. In 1963, when Dr. Makler ran for re-election as president, Baker was persuaded by Jose R. deCapriles and a number of others to seek the office. It was the AFLA's first contested election since 1938. When it was over, Makler had defeated Baker by eleven votes, the closest election in our federation's history. Baker then continued to serve as vice president.

Among his other services to fencing, Baker served as a member of the rules committee and the U.S. Olympic Fencing Committee in 1964 and 1968.

Baker was runner-up for the Pacific Coast Sabre Championship in 1955 while representing the Olympic Club. Thereafter, he fenced for the Pannonia Athletic Club, where

he was a member of that club's AFLA national championship sabre team in 1960 and 1961. His coach at Pannonia was George Piller, the 1932 Olympic sabre champion for Hungary who was coach of the 1956 Hungarian team that defected en masse at the Melbourne Olympics.

Baker was a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. During World War II, he served on the Liberty ship Fremont in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean. He was an executive with several organizations dealing with newspaper publishers and advertisers. There are no immediate survivors.

ALBERT E. DAVIS (1938-1999)

Albert E. Davis, former NCAA foil champion for New York University and one of our leading directors, died on November 3, 1999. He was 61.

Al Davis began fencing in the 1950s while a student at Beverly Hills High School in Los Angeles, where his early coaches were Ralph Faulkner, Joseph Vince, and Aldo Nadi. His college years were interrupted by service in the U.S. Army, during which time he was a member of the Armed Forces fencing team and competed throughout Europe in CISM events.

At NYU, Davis won the 1966 NCAA foil championship and led NYU to its sixth NCAA team championship. The following year he was team captain. After college, he fenced for the New York Athletic Club (1967-71) and the New York Fencers Club (1971-80), where his coaches were Csaba Elthes and Michel Alaux. He was a member of two national championship foil teams: 1971 for the NYAC and 1975 for the Fencers Club.

Davis was fourth in the 1968 and 1974 Nationals. He earned a berth on the 1975 Pan American team at Mexico City, where he was a silver medalist in foil team. Davis was an alternate for the 1968 and 1972 U.S. Olympic team. For nearly forty years, he was among our most highly regarded directors.

Davis was a financial analyst in the oil industry. His avocations included an easy familiarity with the history of art. Like a figure in one of his favorite books, *The Elegant Auctioneers* by Wesley Towner, Davis was a habitue of the museums, galleries, and auction houses of New York and London. His connoisseurship as a part-time art dealer enhanced several specialized collections, including one particularly fine collection d'escrime. Davis's own collecting interest was ancient Egyptian art. His erudition allowed him to easily convey a fellow visitor to the Metropolitan

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Museum's Egyptian galleries back through forty centuries.

Davis remained a resident of New York until 1990, when he and his family moved to Phoenix, Ariz. He is survived by his wife, Betty, their son, Albert, and daughter, Alexandra.

A. JOHN GERACI (1919-2000)

A. John Geraci, a former coach at West Point and Rutgers University, and the former president of the coaches association, died on January 31, 2000. He was 80.

Geraci began fencing while a student at Newark College of Engineering in 1937. After graduating in 1941, he fenced in the New Jersey Division at a club in Verona, briefly at the New York Athletic Club (1952), and then at the New York Fencers Club (1952-1968).

He was a former New Jersey division epee champion, a finalist in several North Atlantic sectional championships, and was nationally ranked as high as seventh in epee.

In the 1960s, he was involved in the operation of the New Jersey Division during its greatest period of growth. Geraci was chairman of the bout committee for the 1964 AFLA National Championships in Atlantic City. He was a member of the Board of Directors during most of the 1960s and was chairman of the AFLA public relations committee for several years. In the latter capacity he played a large role in the creation of the AFLA's earliest promotional brochures.

In 1968, Geraci was nominated by petition for president of the AFLA and lost the election by 45 votes to Alan Miles Ruben.

Geraci then turned professional and became a coach at Army, initially sharing the duties with Ronald McMahan from 1968-1970, and later assuming full responsibility from 1970-1976. He then coached at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn for the 1977 season. The next year he became coach of Rutgers, remaining there until 1981.

Geraci operated the Salle Geraci in Madison and Livingston from 1975 to 1985. He officiated high school and college fencing matches in New Jersey extensively over the last fifty years. Since 1980, he was also successively a line umpire, chair umpire, and national referee at USTA tennis tournaments, officiating at the U.S. Open and the Pathmark Tennis Classic in Mahwah.

Geraci was a member of the U.S. fencing team that took part very successfully in the World Masters Championship in London in 1970. He also coached U.S. teams to the world championships in 1973, 1974, 1975 and to the world military championships in 1971. In 1976, he was invited by the International Olympic Committee to take part in an Olympic solidarity lecture series in Mexico City. In 1981, he was again invited by the IOC to participate in a lecture series in Guatemala.



Geraci was secretary-treasurer of the NFCAA (1972-1980) and its president (1980-82). During his term as secretary-treasurer, he edited *The Swordmaster* newsletter for six years.

During World War II, Geraci performed research engineering for the Celanese Corporation, continuing until 1948. At that time, he switched professions to become a commercial photographer, specializing in advertising and medical shots. His written and photographic work was published extensively in *Modern Photography* and *Infinity* magazines in the 1950s and 60s. He served as president of the American Society of Magazine Photographers. An exhibition of his fencing portraiture and action shots toured the country promoting our sport. He retired from photography in 1990. Geraci made his home in Livingston, N.J., and was an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He is survived by his wife. •

2000 U.S. FENCING SUMMER NATIONALS DIVISION I NATIONALS AND OLYMPIC TRIALS



June 30 through July 9, 2000 • Austin, TX

Check out the Spring Issue of the USFA National Newsletter or go to www.usfencing.org for registration materials, schedule and information. Entry deadline for Summer Nationals and Division I Nationals is **May 25, 2000**.



US Fencing Logo Contest

The United States Fencing Association initiated a logo contest through our website at www.USFencing.org. The purpose of the logo contest was to select an identifiable image through which we can promote our sport. Originally, the USFA placed a proposed new logo on the website for member approval. Based on the membership feedback, we then decided to solicit logo submissions from the entire membership. The USFA received tremendous response as over 100 logo designs were submitted.

The logos had been organized into 16 pools of six. After initial voting, the top four designs from each pool advanced to a Direct Elimination Table. The Direct Elimination continued until we reached the final eight, which appear in this magazine. All logo submissions and results can be viewed at www.USFencing.org. The USFA Board of Directors has final logo approval.

With the success of our athletes leading to unprecedented media coverage for our organization, it is important that we have a logo that identifies who and what our organization is to the general public. Equally important is that we have a logo that any member would be proud to display. We would like to once again thank those who submitted designs, and encourage everyone to complete and return the ballot below to the USFA. Remember, a logo should clearly communicate who we are and what we do in only a single glance.

Logo Submission Artists

Jason Alger, MI
Curtis Andrus, CA
Barbro Barklund, KS
Randy Bergerac, MO
George Bodley, HI
Darla Bruno, OH
Garry Buck, ID
Kelly Crandall, FL
Timothy Crosby, FL
Marcy Dillon, CA
Donahue
Jane Eyre, NJ
Mark Fischer, AZ

Joseph Fisher, NY
Rebecca Gallant, NH
Peter Gargiulo, NY
Gary Gegan, CA
Eric Hassler, AZ
Mary Hightower, AR
Joseph Himmelheber, IA
Brandon Hoover, FL
Doug Jauer, IA
Eric Johannsen, WY
John Johnson, NV
Lisa Juarez, CA
Margaret Kosmala, MA

Justin Locsei, OH
Essex Lockett, FL
Ted McElhiney, IA
Bram Meehan, VA
Angelique Milo, IN
Jordan Morris, NY
Laura Pierce, WA
Carla Preli, CT
Tom Records, RI
Jessica Remaly, NJ
Elizabeth Rock, AL
Kevin Sefton, IL
Sam Signorelli, CA

Please complete and return the ballot by June 1 to:

USFA Logo Contest, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909 or FAX: 719-632-5737

CHOOSE ONE

- Logo 1 Logo 2 Logo 3 Logo 4
- Logo 5 Logo 6 Logo 7 Logo 8
- None of the Above

Your USFA Member# _____

Why did you choose your logo? _____

Would you make any changes to the logo you selected? _____

The Ballot Deadline is June 1. Thank You!

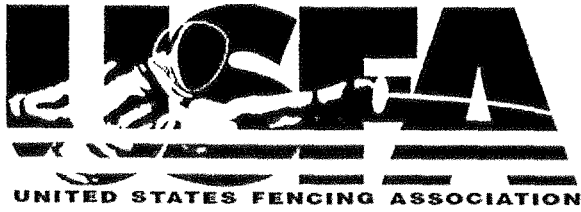




LOGO 1



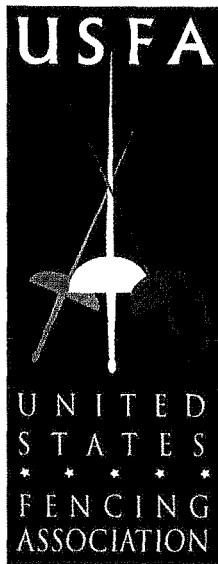
LOGO 5



LOGO 2



LOGO 6



LOGO 3



LOGO 7



LOGO 4



LOGO 8

Name: Cliff Bayer

Sport: Fencing

Weapon: Foil

Age: 22

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 170lbs

Hometown: New York City

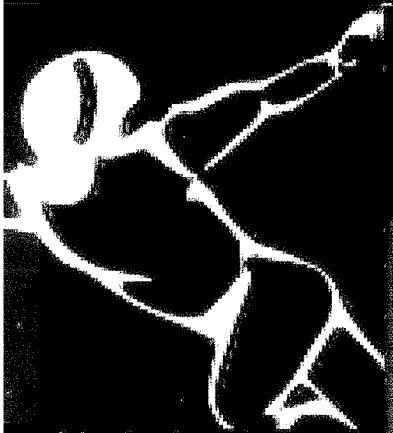
National Rank: 1st

International Rank: 9th



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