

Riposte

Elvira's South African Fencing Newsletter



January 2002

Welcome 2002

A brand new year is here - and that would be the year 2002!

And who knows what might happen this year!

As you will see - this edition of Riposte is only four pages - just an introduction to the new year and a warm welcome back to all.

Hopefully everybody had a good rest and a wonderful festive season!

For those of you who worked throughout - don't worry - the remainder of the crowd is now also back in the office!

Fencing is starting early this year as usual - with Cape Open towards the end of February! For those of you who can manage to get off a week or more - it is worth your while to go down to the Cape earlier and participate in the False Bay Open - a weekend of fun and fencing just before Cape Open!

This year fencing will also see the sunny shores of Natal for a couple of championships. These

include Natal Open, Junior National Championships, Senior National Championships as well as the Student Championships!

It is great to see that fencing in Natal is up and

going again!

Other big championships this year will be Junior World Champs, Senior World Champs as well as Commonwealth Games towards the end of the year - all the best for all fencers who are working towards qualification!

Welcome also to all new fencers in the country - we hope that you will enjoy this challenging sport with us!

All the best for 2002!



A fencing wedding

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Next competition

The next national ranking competition is Cape Open to be held on 23 & 24 February in Fishoek, Western Cape (same venue as last year!) Trust we will see you all in the Fairest Cape!

Gauteng Fencing Association Committee

If there are any enquiries about fencing please contact any of the GFA committee members!

Chairperson: Louis Snijders
(lsny@mweb.co.za)

Secretary/PR: Elvira Whitmore
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082 772 5125

Youth representative:

Wim Dreyer (dreyer@icon.co.za)

Competition organiser: Christo Kriel (ckriel@iafrica.co.za)

Additional member: Gavin Oberholtzer (gavob@mweb.co.za).

Other provinces - please send me your committee members names and details!



You can e-mail contributions to elvira@fox.co.za. Any fencing stories/news is welcome. Should you wish to have your name added on the electronic distribution list - please contact me as well. You can download *Riposte* from www.fencingschool.co.za!

Riposte
Istanbul's South African Fencing Club

Editorial

Dear fencers

It is a brand new year - 2002 is here and if we don't take care - 2003 will be knocking on our doors!

Once again - welcome to fencing in SA! During the last couple of months I've had a lot of positive feedback on *Riposte* in this new PDF format!

I know there have been one or two enquiries about publishing it on the web etc - but it seems that in this way it works best.

One of the main features of *Riposte* is the many pictures that are published. However, get-

ting hold of these pictures isn't always that easy. So, if you've got pics - please forward them to me - be it in electronic format (.jpg) or actual prints - I can scan them for you - let me have them.

I'm also looking at compiling a *Riposte* looking back over the last couple of years - so fencers who have pics and interesting stories - please contact me (I know Kelly has some VERY interesting ones!).

Speaking of Kelly - welcome to a lot of fencers whom we haven't seen for a while - that includes Kelly, Daneil, Gabor, Ian Basson and

whoever else I might have left out - WELCOME back!

So here we go - tackling 2002 with a vengeance - remember - If you know about anybody that would like to be added to the mailing list - mail me!

For the rest - just talk to me and let me hear about the gossip going on in all the different clubs!

Thus - have an absolutely WONDERFUL 2002 and hope to hear from you all!

Enjoy

Elvira

Suippets



A fencing wedding!

Many of you know Dickon Jayes and Irene Broccardo fencing at Tyshler Fencing School in Johannesburg.

On 16 December these two were married in the Rivonia Catholic Church and soon you will see a change on poolsheets - Irene Jayes! Congratulations to you both and may you have a long and happy marriage!

Since your's truly was the official photographer - Riposte obtained the rights to publish a picture showing the happy couple on their wedding day! Pics of a rather worried groom waiting for his bride is also available...

The lighter side of fencing!!!

Lock up Your Silver: There's Fencers in Town You can pick them out of the crowd. They travel in little groups that have "Attitude" written all over them. They sneer. They like to jostle strangers and push elderly women into the bus lane.

They hold spitting contests on crowded sidewalks. They smell bad, and know it. They're fencers. And they're here for the weekend. Like many athletic groups, fencers travel to competitions on the weekends. Unlike many athletic groups they are required to register with the local constabulary on arrival.

In the east, and in many European countries, city police departments cancel all leaves and days off when there's a fencing tournament in town. Hospitals double up their emergency room staffs. Many downtown businesses hire private security. Some just board up their windows and stay closed for the weekend.

Fencers in their home cities are always uneasy customers. In many eastern cities there are specific zoning laws restricting size, activities, types of entertainment allowed on premises,

and locations, of fencing clubs. Many insurance companies refuse to cover business situated in neighborhoods where these clubs operate. Real estate values invariably drop when a new club comes to the neighborhood. So the question becomes: why put up with them? If they are this much trouble why not merely ban them altogether?

This question has been proposed many times and in many jurisdictions. The fact of the matter is that fencers spend money. It has been estimated that fencing and ...

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fencing-related activity generates millions of dollars yearly. For smaller centers the multiplier effect of the economic activity generated by a large and active fencing club can contribute substantial revenues to the municipal coffers.

Other estimates suggest that fencers at large tournaments will spend \$500-\$1000 each over the course of the weekends; on food, lodging, entertainment, transportation and retail purchases. The sum of money spent by fencers on CD's and tape cassettes alone is staggering. There are those who say that if we outlaw fencing only outlaws will fence. There are also those who feel that this would only formalize an already existing situation. There are three types of fencer: epeeists, sabreurs, and foilists.

Fencers tend to prefer the company of their own kind, sometimes going so far as to restrict club membership to proponents of a specific weapon or style. Moreover, each group has its own distinctive style of dress and behavior which sets them apart from the others.



Sabreurs

Sabreurs - or "sabreurs" fence sabre - a single-edged weapon characterized by sudden charges and wide, slashing attacks. Sabreurs prefer tight black leather clothing. Studded collars and wristbands are also quite common, as well as dog-collars, leather hoods, multiply-pierced body parts and grotesque or obscene tattoos.

While many wear highly-polished pointed-toed boots with silver toe caps and spurs, most prefer heavier stompin' boots of the Doc Marten variety. Sabre fencers tend to be more heavily

built than the other two. In sharp contrast to the casual brutality of the epeeists, or the studied, exquisite cruelties practiced by foil fencers, sabreurs are most often prone to random behavior.

Screaming is a common manifestation of this, and the source of much amusement for groups of sabreurs out on the town. (Particularly when touring libraries, museums, retail outlets, and hospital wards.) Occasionally a sabre fencer will leap without warning into heavy traffic. His compatriots will generally take advantage of the ensuing confusion to loot the nearest music store.



Epeeists

Epeeists are tall. Very tall. A group of very tall men and women lounging on a street corner are either basketball players or epeeists. The difference is that basketball players will help a little old lady across the street, while epeeists are more likely to take her purse and throw her over. There is no real epee "costume", except that they tend to wear track suits and shave their heads.

Their women are the most beautiful of all the fencing women, but also the most likely to knife random passers-by and take their wallets. All epeeists wear very expensive running shoes which they have invariably stolen. It is a mark of shame in the epee subculture to wear legally-purchased footwear.

Naturally this is difficult to ascertain merely by looking, and of course asking about it can lead to other complications.



Foilists

Foilists tend towards bright colors

and flashy outfits. White sports jackets with pink shirts, gold chains and floppy white hats are common foilist attire.

Foilists are usually smaller and slighter than their colleagues in the other weapons. This has bred in them a furious temperament and a tendency to pick fights with anybody at any time for any reason. It is said of foilists that if the chips on their shoulders were any bigger they could fly to tournaments on the next stiff breeze. Certainly it is true that after a night on the town any given 5'6" foilist considers himself a match for any two members of the local police department.

Additionally, foilists have a thing for knives - not surprising, given the nature of their sport. Most foil fencers carry at least one secreted about their persons, which they are prone to pull on people who upset them.

Bar staff take note: junior and cadet-age foilists invariably become upset at persons asking them to provide proof of age at licensed drinking establishments.

Unlike epeeists and sabreurs, few foilists will stoop to common looting or shoplifting to support their lifestyle.

Extortion, protection rackets, and credit card fraud are their thing. And while a sabre fencer might bodily throw a blind person in front of a bus, the more subtle foilist will merely suggest to one that it is now safe to cross.

It is this delicacy of disposition, combined with a propensity towards sudden, directed violence, which makes the average group of foilists walking down the street as cunning and as dangerous as a bag full of mutant Wolverines.

Certainly it is this last group which is most to be avoided when traveling the streets of our fair city during a tournament weekend.