8th Annual
World Sword Swallower’s Day 2015
Guidelines and Talking Points
Saturday February 28 2015 at 2:28:15 pm
at

Believe It or Not!

Participating Ripley’s Locations
Ripley’s New York Times Square
Ripley’s Atlantic City
Ripley’s Baltimore Inner Harbor
Ripley’s Myrtle Beach
Ripley’s Gatlinburg
Ripley’s St. Augustine
Ripley’s Orlando
Ripley’s Key West
Ripley’s Panama City Beach
Ripley’s Branson
Ripley’s Dallas Grand Prairie
Ripley’s Hollywood
Ripley’s San Francisco

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Sword Swallowers: RSVP on Facebook and register on the Ripley’s site

https://www.facebook.com/events/349741935210063/

http://www.ripleys.com/sword-swallowers-day

Sword Swallowers/SSAI Spokesperson Media Reps:
If you have questions, contact:

Dan Meyer, SSAI
(615) 969-2568
Halfdan@aol.com
http://www.swordswallow.org/wssd/

http://www.ripleys.com/sword-swallowers-day

World Sword Swallower’s Day 2015
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 2:28 pm
Thanks for taking part in the 8th Annual World Sword Swallower’s Day!

These talking points are designed to keep us all on the same page so we’re consistent, all giving similar answers about World Sword Swallower’s Day, sword swallowing, and Ripley’s worldwide.

Please read through the talking points below so you know how to answer questions from the media and general public, and rehearse your answers so you have them ready on the tip of your tongue.

**SWORD SWALLOWERS**
If you have NOT yet signed up for your Ripley’s property, please register on the Ripley’s site ASAP:

http://www.ripleys.com/sword-swallowers-day

If you have any questions about details of the event at your Ripley’s property, please touch base with your SSAI Spokesperson Rep to work out details with them THIS WEEK.

**SSAI SPOKESPERSON REP**
The SSAI Spokesperson/Media Rep assigned to work with the GM of your Ripley’s Odditorium will coordinate performance times and media interviews for sword swallowers at your Ripley’s location.

**SSAI Rep:** Please contact the GM at your Ripley’s location in the next 2 WEEKS to work out details for World Sword Swallower’s Day – directions, parking, performance staging location, changing area, show schedule, discount coupons to encourage ticket sales, promoting merchandise sales, areas set aside for media interviews, photos, autographs, etc. Then please relay these details with all the sword swallowers who will be showing up at your property.
WEEK BEFORE
Invite any and ALL SWORD SWALLOWERS you know to attend at a Ripley’s location near them.
If you know of other sword swallowers who say they are interested in joining us, please notify us
with their info so we can add them to our lists and coordinate with Ripley’s corporate office, then
please forward this info to them as an open invitation for them to join us.

Invite your friends, fans and followers on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to come, especially
those friends who are photographers or videographers who can capture the event on film for you!
The more who show up, the more Ripley’s and the media will consider this a big success, so please
help create a buzz and a big turnout! Hashtags: #SSAI #WSSD

Invite all the MEDIA you can to attend!
Why not? The whole reason we do this is to get YOU as much media coverage as possible!

MEDIA
We’re already doing local, regional, national and international media coverage in conjunction
with Ripley’s and the media buzz is already starting to grow! Please submit the press release to your
local media and keep us posted of any local, regional, national or international press you hear about!
(You can download the WSSD Press Release at www.swordswallow.org/wssd/)

Saturday, Feb 28 - Day of the Event
Here are a few things you can offer to do for the General Manager at your Ripley’s property to
help make World Sword Swallower's Day a big success for them.

CELEBRATE
The Ripley’s properties have been encouraged to put up banners, signs, posters, balloons, or even
cake to welcome us and help us celebrate “World Sword Swallower’s Day” as a festive holiday!
Feel free to bring balloons or other party treats, and do what you can to help make it a fun and
festive occasion, because this is a holiday that is celebrating YOU!

SSAI MEDIA SPOKESPERSON REP
Please coordinate with your Ripley’s GM to arrive at your Ripley’s property before 1:00 pm on
Saturday Feb 28 to set up the performance area with the General Manager and go through all
details of the day. When you arrive, ask the General Manager what you can do to help make the
day a big success for THEM, THEIR PROPERTY, EMPLOYEES and GUESTS. Always remember
that we are their GUESTS and we are here to serve THEM and THEIR GUESTS.

1:15-1:30 pm: If other sword swallowers show up that you weren’t expecting, please WELCOME
them, bring them up to speed, have them read this guidelines, and do your best to work them
into the performance schedule and media interviews as appropriate, but remember: YOU are our
designated SSAI Rep responsible for making sure the event runs smoothly and for overseeing the
media interviews and answering media questions with Ripley’s and SSAI talking points (see below).

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ALL OTHER SWORD SWALLOWERS
Please arrive between 1:00-1:30 pm to sign waivers and photo releases for the Ripley’s General Manager, and to check in with the SSAI Spokesperson Rep who will coordinate the performance schedule of mini warm-up shows between 1:30 or 1:45 to 2:20 pm (depending on size of venue, audience, and number of sword swallowers who are willing to perform non-sword variety acts).

PAPERWORK AND FORMS
When you arrive, the GM or his/her staff will have photo waivers and disclaimer forms for you to complete to acknowledge that you assume responsibility for your act and granting permission for Ripley’s and others to take photos/videos of you and use your likeness. Please complete and sign.

PROPS AREA
The Ripley’s properties have been asked to provide an area set aside for us to change and store our props, but in most of the Ripley’s props, there is not a specific green room or much room at all for changing clothes, so please come already dressed and as prepared as possible.

COSTUMING – WHAT TO WEAR
World Sword Swallowers' Day is our one big chance each year to show the world not only what we do, but also how we look, and that what we do is a viable entertainment option so they will book us for their events. Be professional and look the part to maximize your booking possibilities.

First impressions are important, especially when what we’re doing seems really “out there” to many people. Dress up and try to look your best so we can showcase our art in the best light. Think "Dress To Impress". Dressing well is a small but very important step in being professional.

The key is to look BETTER than your audience. You don’t want to look like one of them, because you ARENT! You’re a PERFORMER representing SSAI and Ripley’s and PERFORMING on YOUR holiday! Turn it ON! Wear something colorful or showy! Remember, photos and videos shot on this day may live on for many YEARS on the Internet!

CLOTHES to AVOID:
· Old jeans
· Shorts
· Sandals, beat up or worn out shoes
· T-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts
· “Novelty” shirts (crazy patterns/graphics)
· Clothing with text or logos (unless it promotes Ripley’s brand)
· Any tight or complex patterns or stripes (makes camera image flutter). Remember, there’s a good chance you may make it on a TV news feed, where solid colors are usually your best bet, except for all white or all black.
· Baggy clothes (can make you look misshapen and larger than you are, camera may not pick up on depth)
CLOTHES that COULD/SHOULD be worn:
• Stage attire (that doesn’t violate the above; it may look good in a packed house, but some crazy costumes or patterns may not look good on camera)
• Blazer, sports jacket, zoot suit
• Nice slacks or nice, newer, dark-colored or fashion jeans
• Ripley’s branded merchandise

ENTERTAIN THEIR GUESTS!
This is the main reason we are there! Guests love the opportunity to meet a real sword swallow, or better yet, a real Ripley’s Believe It or Not sword swallow on this special day!

PRE-SHOW WARM-UP (1:30/1:45 to 2:15/2:25 pm)
The SSAI Rep for each property will schedule any performers who wants to perform for the audience from around 1:30 or 1:45 to about 2:15-2:25 pm (depending on size of your audience and number of sword swallowers willing to perform). Work out with the GM as to where you’ll perform and what you’re going to do. In many cases, they are ok with fire-eating, blockhead, glass walking, etc., but check with the GM about any fire issues, and please remember that Ripley’s caters to a "FAMILY" audience, so please keep our shows clean and family-oriented.

Be prepared to demonstrate your NON-sword swallowing sideshow or variety act specialties (juggling, unicycle, human blockhead, fire-eating, glass-eating, bed of nails, etc.). But leave most of the real sword swallowing demonstrations and explanations for just before the Big Swallow at 2:28. Depending on the number of sword swallowers at your property, you might want to transition into the sword swallowing segment around 2:15 pm as a build-up to the Big Swallow at 2:28 pm.

PROMOTE THEIR RIPLEY’S ODDITORIUM!
Some guests show up only because they had heard about the free sword swallowing show. Talk to the manager before the event and ask what you can do to “turn the tip” and get the public to buy tickets into the museum. Some General Managers may offer a 10%-15% off or other discount coupon to patrons who buy tickets within 15-20 minutes after your warm-up show. If the GM wants to do this, make sure to offer this discount to the audience and encourage as many audience members to buy tickets into the museum as possible.

PROMOTE RIPLEY’S MERCHANDISE
Offer to autograph any Ripley’s books or T-shirts that guests may buy from the gift shop. This increases merch sales for the property, makes the GM appreciate you and want to bring you back, and gives the audience members a special memento to help remember this special day. Make sure the GM has enough Ripley’s books and Sharpies set up on a table in advance so they can sell them and you can autograph them right after the show.

PROMOTE THE FREE Ripley’s iSword app available FREE in the Apple Itunes app store. If possible, please pre-load the iSword app on an iPad to demonstrate to the audience, and invite the audience to swallow WITH us in the Big Swallow! This is a great way to promote Ripley’s sword swallowing, and offer the audience a FREE gift!

World Sword Swallower’s Day 2015
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 2:28 pm
THE BIG SWALLOW - 2-28-15 at 2:28:15

2:15-2:25: Explain to the audience the main talking points about why we are celebrating World Sword Swallower’s Day (see below), explain about sword swallowing itself, the difficulties and dangers, and the long history of sword swallowers with Ripley’s for 82 years.

2:25: Ask all sword swallowers to take their places at the predetermined location where the audience and media can film the event, encourage the audience to take photos and videos to post on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, and cue the audience to begin a countdown to 2:28 (counting backwards from :15 seconds is a nice touch).

At 2:28 pm and :15 seconds, sword swallowers all swallow together for the Big Swallow and hold the pose as long as possible for the audience/media to take photos and video before removing your swords. Offer to make yourself available for a group photo posing with your swords.

AFTER THE BIG SWALLOW
Make yourself available to the public and media as much as possible before, during and after the Big Swallow to:

1). Do media interviews
2). Autograph Ripley’s books and t-shirts,
3). Take photos, sign autographs, and answer questions from the media and public.

If another crowd develops after the Big Swallow and you’re up for doing additional shows, you might be asked to perform additional mini shows or stunts for the media or general public; If the GM approves, feel free to do another mini show at your own discretion.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS
First and foremost, we’re asking the SSAI lead Spokesperson to handle the main talking points with the media about SSAI and World Sword Swallower’s Day, sword swallowing in general, and Ripley’s involvement in co-sponsoring World Sword Swallower’s Day.

When doing media interviews, PLEASE MENTION at LEAST 3-5 TIMES in each interview:

WSSD - WORLD Sword Swallower’s Day
SSAI - Sword Swallower’s Association International
RBION - Ripley’s Believe It or Not and Ripley Entertainment

Since interviews are usually edited down, please make sure to mention Ripley’s and SSAI SEVERAL TIMES (at least 3-5 times) in each interview: THANK Ripley’s for hosting and co-sponsoring WSSD with SSAI, explain the long history of sword swallowers with Ripley’s, what an HONOR it is to be making history by representing SSAI and performing at Ripley’s on WSSD, etc.

World Sword Swallower’s Day 2015
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PERSONAL INTERVIEWS
After you have discussed the main WSSD talking points with the media, you and the other sword swallowers are welcome to discuss personal details of your background in sword swallowing, personal acts, feats, history, injuries, etc.

IMPORTANT! FINAL TALLY of SWORD SWALLOWERS and SWORDS
Please collect the NAMES of all sword swallowers, NUMBER of SWORDS, and BLADE LENGTHS for each of the swords swallowed, and send us that information AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after the event so we can tally up the total number of sword swallowers, swords and inches of steel for our final comprehensive TALLY and PRESS RELEASE immediately after the event!

PHOTOS and VIDEOS
Please try to get as much good photos and video as possible! Then please submit them to Halfdan@aol.com immediately after the event so we can forward them to Ripley’s and add them to the SSAI YouTube channel and website!

HAVE FUN, SMILE, and ENJOY YOUR DAY!

Happy World Sword Swallower’s Day!

Dan Meyer
Sword Swallowers Association International
Halfdan@aol.com
(615) 969-2568 cell
TALKING POINTS

WHAT:

WSSD = WORLD Sword Swallow ER’s Day

NOT: National or International Sword SwallowING Day

WHAT:

SSAI = Sword Swallowers Association Int’l

NOT: International Sword SwallowING Association

WHY:

Q: WHY celebrate World Sword Swallower’s Day?

A: SSAI founded World Sword Swallower’s Day in 2007 to:

* Raise AWARENESS of CONTRIBUTIONS Sword Swallowers have made in the fields of SCIENCE and MEDICINE - In the development of:
  Rigid Endoscope (1868 Dr. Adolph Kussmaul in Germany)
  Electrocardiogram (1904 Dr. Cramer in Wales)
  Bronchialscope (1930s with SwSw Delno Fritz in USA)
  Develop Endoscope, Radiology Technology (X-rays), Fluoroscope, etc.
  Study digestion, swallowing disorders, gerd, dysphasia, etc.

* To RAISE AWARENESS and CONTRIBUTIONS for: (CAUSES)
  Esophageal Cancer Research (Esophageal Cancer Action Network: ECAN)
  Injured Sword Swallowers Relief Fund (SSAI)

* To HONOR VETERAN & INJURED Sword Swallowers (HISTORY)

* To EDUCATE the public and DISPEL MYTHS about sword swallowing

* To put on DEMONSTRATIONS for the public, MEDICAL FACILITIES and the MEDIA to PROVE that sword swallowing is still is an EXCITING and viable ENTERTAINMENT option today! (Translation: to BOOK YOU!)

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* To give SWORD SWALLOWERS an annual day to attempt major stunts, to set personal records before the media at a highly visible location, to network and learn from other sword swallowers, and as a benchmark to compare personal growth over past years (to showcase YOU!)

* To CELEBRATE 4000 Years of DOING the IMPOSSIBLE!

Q: **HOW MANY** Sword Swallowers are there today?

**NOTE:** NEVER give a specific finite number, as that number is constantly changing due to accidents, injuries, and sword swallowers quitting or learning - as a result, any finite number is always **INACCURATE**.

Any number you say will not only be incorrect, but it may create a challenge for someone to try to break it. For example, if you say there are “48” sword swallowers, someone will then want to become number “49”.

**Instead**, in order to keep our answers factually honest, true and consistent with what other sword swallowers and Ripley’s employees are saying to the media in other interviews around the world, our standard answer for media interviews is one that Showman P.T. Barnum might have answered to imply **small numbers** to stress that sword swallowing is extremely **RARE and DANGEROUS**:

**A:** The Sword Swallowers Association Int’l reports that there are **“LESS THAN a FEW DOZEN FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL sword swallowers ACTIVELY PERFORMING around the world TODAY.”**

**PLEASE NOTE and STRESS** the **KEYWORDS:**

“LESS THAN...”  “...FEW DOZEN...”  “...FULL-TIME...”  “..PROFESSIONAL...”  “...ACTIVELY PERFORMING...”  “AROUND the WORLD...”  “...TODAY”
History of Ripley's and Sword Swallowers

Q: Why is Ripley’s co-sponsoring World Sword Swallower's Day?

A: “Because it’s GREAT ENTERTAINMENT! Sword swallowers and Ripley’s go way back to the very first Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium at the Chicago World’s Fair of 1933. There, three sword swallowers, two of whom were ladies, mesmerized huge crowds. Ripley’s has been home to sword swallowers ever since!”

"We are honored that RIPLEY ENTERTAINMENT has partnered with SSAI to co-sponsor World Sword Swallower’s Day at Ripley’s Believe It or Not properties around the world!" (Promote RIPLEY’S)

Ripley’s has had a long history of presenting sword swallowers, ever since Robert Ripley started using sword swallowers at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1933. Over the years, Ripley’s Believe It or Not! has shown a fondness for Sword Swallowers with many of the best performing for Robert Ripley himself at various BIONs around the world.

Ripley’s Long and Colorful Relationship with Sword Swallowers

• Ripley's very first Believe It or Not Odditorium appeared at the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair Century of Progress Expo, which marked a century of scientific triumphs including the telegraph, telephone, automobile, and airplane.

• Sword Swaller Mimi Garneau performed in the original Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium in 1933. Additionally, sword swaller Edna Price swallowed her neon tube at the RBION Odditorium in 1933, and sword swaller Joseph Grendol joined Ripley’s show in 1934 when the run expanded.

Many Sword Swallowers have performed for Ripley’s over the years, including:

• 1930s - Prince Lucky Ball
• 1933 - Mimi Garneau - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World’s Fair
• 1933 - Edna Price - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World’s Fair
• 1934 - Joseph Grendol - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World’s Fair
• 1935-36 Mimi Garneau - Ripley's BION at California Pacific Expo San Diego
• 1938-39 - Edna Price performs at Ripley's properties
• 2007 - SSAI celebrates 1st World Sword Swallower's Day!
• 2009 - Ripley's co-sponsors World Sword Swallowers Day. Since 2009, more than 45+ sword swallowers have “dropped steel” at Ripley's museums around the world!
• 2015 - The world’s TOP 50 Sword Swallowers at World Sword Swallower's Day

World Sword Swallower’s Day 2015
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2015 is the 82nd anniversary of that first Odditorium and the 82nd year that Ripley’s has supported sword swallowers, and SSAI’s 8th World Sword Swallower’s Day.

Ripley’s recognizes the art as unique, family, cutting edge entertainment.

“We’re proud to share such a long history with sword swallowers who put their life on the line every time they perform! Believe It or Not!”

Quote from Dan Meyer, SSAI:  (Feel free to use or edit these quotes for yourself):
“We established World Sword Swallower’s Day to promote this ancient art, to raise awareness of the medical contributions sword swallowers have made to the fields of science and medicine, to honor veteran performers, to dispel myths and correct misconceptions, and educate the public and medical professionals by putting on demonstrations for medical facilities, the public and media around the world.”

“Ripley’s Believe It or Not! has a long and colorful history of highlighting the death-defying achievements of sword swallowers. Sword swallowers were a big part of the very first Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Odditorium at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1933. There, three performers, two of whom were women, mesmerized the huge crowds. Ripley’s has been home to sword swallowers around the world ever since.” —Ripley Entertainment

SWORD SWALLOWING PRIMER
“The art of sword swallowing began over 4,000 years ago in India, and requires the practitioner to use mind-over-matter techniques to repress natural subconscious automatic body reflexes to insert solid steel blades from 15 to 25 inches down the esophagus and into the stomach. With the demise of the circus sideshow, there are LESS THAN a FEW DOZEN FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL SWORD SWALLowers ACTIVELY PERFORMING around the world today! Believe It or NOT!”

FAST FACTS to Tweet on Twitter: DID YOU KNOW…
• The average person swallows about 600 times per day - 350 while awake, 200 while eating, and about 50 times while asleep.

• The average swallow uses 22-50 pairs of muscles and takes from 3-23 seconds to complete

• Sword swallowers use mind-over-matter techniques to repress the natural gag reflex in the back of the mouth, the peristalsis reflex in the throat, and the retch reflex in the stomach to "swallow" solid steel swords ranging from 15-25 inches in length.

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• Sword swallowing can take from 2 to 10 years to learn, and even after years of practice, some people never learn to master it.

• The longest sword swallowed on record was 33” long swallowed by 7’ 3” George the Giant

• At least 29 people have DIED from sword swallowing injuries over the past 150 years

• SSAPI reports there are between 3 to 8 serious sword swallowing related injuries reported around the world each year that require medical attention and hospitalization, with dozens more that go unreported each year.

• Treatment of sword swallowing injuries can range from $25,000-$75,000 per injury.

**MEDICAL HISTORY OF SWORD SWALLOWING over the past 150 years**

*World Sword Swaller’s Day* is a special day during February, "National Swallowing Disorders Month.” WSSD was created to raise awareness of the contributions that sword swallowers have made in the fields of science and medicine. A few examples:

1868 - Dr. Adolph Kussmaul enlists a sword swallower to develop the first rigid endoscope at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Kussmaul was so pleased with his success that he took the sword swallower with him to perform demonstrations in various clinics, and later enlisted other sword swallowers due to their ability to voluntarily relax the cricopharyngeal muscle which allows passage of the rigid endoscope from the pharynx to the stomach.

1894 - Doctors at the Metropolitan Throat Hospital in New York are amazed when sword swallower Chevalier Cliquot swallows 14 swords at one time. When the sword swallower appeared to be in pain, Dr. G.B. Hope rushed forward and yanked out the swords, causing lacerations in the esophagus and injuring the performer, leaving him incapacitated for months. After recovery, Cliquot performed lectures for doctors at the Rush Medical College in Chicago, and the University of Liverpool in England, among other places.

1897 - Dr. Stevens, a Scottish physician, conducts experiments on digestion by enlisting a sword swallower to swallow metal tubes pierced with holes filled with pieces of meat. After a length of time, the sword swallower disgorged the tubes and the doctor observed the degree of digestion that had taken place. This sword swallower also showed the doctors how far the pharynx could be stretched, resulting in the invention of the tube of Faucher, the esophageal sound, lavage, and illumination of the stomach by electric light.
1906 - Dr. Cremer performs first esophageal electrocardiogram on a sword swallower in Wales.

1908 - In an article in the American Journal of Medical Sciences, Dr. Hald reports his observations in esophagoscopy in a sword swallower. The esophagus had been largely distended due to the sword swallower's practice, and the cricoidean zone of the pharynx was patent and larger than normal, with an excoriation on the posterior wall of the cricoid cartilage.

1930s - Sword swallower Delno Fritz dies of pneumonia as a result of a screw that came loose and lodged in his lung while testing a bronchialscope for doctors in Pennsylvania.

2006 - The British Medical Journal publishes the first internationally recognized medical research study on sword swallowing injuries: "Sword swallowing and its side effects". Results of the 2-year study show that sword swallowing injuries "...are most likely to occur when multiple swords are swallowed, when unusual feats are performed beyond the scope of a “regular” sword swallow, or after a previous minor injury when tissue is tender and swollen". The research paper won its authors the 2007 Ig Nobel Prize in Medicine at Harvard University.

Questions?

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