



10th Annual
World Sword Swallower's Day 2017
Guidelines and Talking Points

Saturday 2/25/17 at 2:25:17pm at

Ripley's
Believe It or Not![®]

Participating Ripley's Props

Amsterdam NL
Atlantic City NJ
Baltimore Inner Harbor MD
Branson MO
Gatlinburg TN
Dallas Grand Prairie TX
Key West FL
Myrtle Beach SC
New York Times Square NY
Orlando FL
Panama City Beach FL
San Francisco CA
St. Augustine FL
Williamsburg VA
Wisconsin Dells WI

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Haley Hall alice.hall2011@gmail.com
Fred Kahl fredini@gmail.com
Ted Campbell info@rottenbrothers.com
Dan Meyer halfdan@aol.com
Matthew Bouvier matt.molotov@gmail.com
Chris Steele stabtuggo@yahoo.com
Cyrus Pynn cyruspynn@gmail.com
Darrell Hunsley (no email) Tel: (219) 326-6745

All Sword Swallowers

MUST REGISTER on the Ripley's site for Ripley's and RSVP on Facebook:

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

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1209503189097143/>

Sword Swallowers / SSAI Regional Reps / Ripley's General Managers / Media:

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 2017

Saturday, February 25, 2017, 2:25:17



10th Annual
World Sword Swallower's Day 2017
Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 2:25:17 pm

Guidelines and Talking Points

Ripley's
Believe It or Not![®]

Thanks for celebrating the 10th Annual World Sword Swallower's Day!

These talking points are designed to keep us all on the same page so we're all giving consistent 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.

ALL SWORD SWALLOWERS

First, make **SURE** to register on the Ripley's site for **YOUR** participating Ripley's location:

<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**. Please **DO NOT CONTACT the GM directly at your local RIPLEY'S**, as they have been instructed to work with Ripley's corporate office, **SSAI** and your local **SSAI Regional Rep**.

SSAI SPOKESPERSON REGIONAL REP

The SSAI Regional 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 the week of February 1st to work out logistical details of **World Sword Swallower's Day** - **directions, parking, stage location, changing area, show schedule, discount coupons** to promote ticket sales, **promoting Ripley's book and merchandise sales**, areas set aside for **photos, autographs, media interviews**, etc. Then please relay these details to all your regional sword swallowers who are coming to your local Ripley's property.

World Sword Swallower's Day 2017
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2-3 WEEKS BEFORE WSSD

Invite ALL SWORD SWALLOWERS you know to attend at a **Ripley's** location near them!
If you know of other sword swallowers who have indicated they are interested in attending, please ask them to register and notify us with their info so we can add them to our lists and coordinate with Ripley's corporate office, then please forward this Guidelines on to them.

Invite your friends, fans and followers on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, 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 help us create a buzz and a big turnout! **Hashtags: #SSAI #WSSD #WorldSwordSwallowersDay**

Invite all the MEDIA you can to attend - Radio, TV, Newspapers, Videographers
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 PR department, and the media buzz is already starting to grow! Please submit the SSAI 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/)

TWITTER TWEETS

We're running a PR campaign using **sword swallowing trivia** to promote **WSSD**. We need **YOU** to post and spread this trivia on your **Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Linked-In** and other social media sites and get all your friends and fans to come watch **YOU** perform at your **Ripley's** location!

Links: On **Facebook**, include full links to the main page.
<http://www.swordswallow.org/wssd>

On **Twitter**, use the shortened link:
<http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

Hash Tags: **#SSAI #WorldSwordSwallowersDay #WSSD** and quote **@SwordSwallowers @Ripleys**

WSSD Promo video:

<http://youtu.be/yWQu3X8ELuQ>

Tweet these tweets randomly during the next few weeks leading up to Feb 25 to create a buzz on social networks to raise awareness of World Sword Swallower's Day, sword swallowing in general, and ultimately YOU in particular!

Did U Know? Feb 25 @SwordSwallowers around the world will celebrate 4000 years of Doing the Impossible on World Sword Swallower's Day @Ripleys

On 2/25 @SwordSwallowers around the world celebrate World Sword Swallower's Day: 4000 years of Doing the Impossible! <http://youtu.be/yWQu3X8ELuQ>

What? World Sword Swallower's Day is celebrated by @SwordSwallowers Feb 25 at @Ripleys Believe It or Nots around the world! <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

Did U Know? Sword Swallowers celebrate 4000 years of Doing the Impossible on World Sword Swallower's Day 2/25/16 @ 2:25:16pm <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

Did U Know? Sword swallowing started over 4000 years ago & requires overcoming automatic body reflexes to slide steel swords into the stomach! Believe It or Not!

Did U Know: World Sword Swallowers Day started 2008 by @SwordSwallowers Assoc Intl #SSAI & is cosponsored at @Ripleys Believe It or Not!

Did U Know? Ripley's has been home to @SwordSwallowers for 83 years since 3 sword swallowers performed @Ripleys in 1933! Believe It or Not!

Did U Know? Sword swallower Daniel Mannix, author of "Memoirs of a Sword Swallower" also wrote Disney's "Fox & the Hound"? World SwSw Day #WSSD

Did U Know? Dr. Adolph Kussmaul developed the rigid endoscope in 1868 using a SWORD SWALLOWER! <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc> #WorldSwordSwallowersDay #WSSD

Did U Know? In 1897 Scottish Dr. Stevens studied digestion by having sword swallowers swallow metal tubes w holes filled with meat! #WSSD

Did U Know? In 1906 Dr. Cremer performed the 1st esophageal electrocardiogram on a sword swallower in Wales <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc> #SSAI #WSSD

Did you Know? Sat Feb 25 is World Sword Swallower's Day @Ripleys worldwide! <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc> #SSAI #WorldSwordSwallowersDay #WSSD

Know what kind of diet a sword swallower goes on? High iron diet Pins and needles! Happy #WorldSwordSwallowersDay 2/25 <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc> #WSSD

Know what kind of car a #SwordSwallower drives? A CUTLASS! Happy #WorldSwordSwallowersDay 2/25! #WSSD <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

Know what kind of car a #SwordSwallower drives? A LeSabre! Happy #WorldSwordSwallowersDay 2/25! #WSSD <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

Know what a @SwordSwallowers favorite cheese is? SHARP cheddar! Happy #WorldSwordSwallowersDay 2/25! #SSAI #WSSD <http://ow.ly/1SDwyc>

HAPPY WORLD SWORD SWALLOWER'S DAY! Hug a #SwordSwallower on 2/25 #WorldSwordSwallowersDay @Ripleys just NOT while he's swallowing a sword!

World Sword Swallower's Day 2017
Saturday, February 25, 2017, 2:25:17

Saturday Feb 25 - 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**, their staff and customers.

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 our own unique weird festive holiday! Feel free to bring balloons or other party treats, and do what you can to help make it a fun and festive holiday occasion to attract the media and celebrate **YOU!**

SSAI MEDIA SPOKESPERSON REP

Please coordinate with your Ripley's GM to arrive at your **Ripley's** property **between 12:00-1:00 pm** on **Saturday Feb 25** (or earlier) to set up the performance area and go through all details of the day with the General Manager.

When you arrive, introduce yourself to the General Manager, and ask the GM what you can do to help make the day a **big success for THEM, THEIR PROPERTY, EMPLOYEES and GUESTS**. Some GMs will offer discount tickets into their attractions after the Big Swallow, or set up merch tables to sell Ripley's books that you can autograph for the public. **Always remember that we are THEIR GUESTS and we are here to serve THEM and THEIR GUESTS.**

CONFIRMED SWORD SWALLOWERS

Please arrive **between 1:00-1:30 pm** to check in with the **SSAI Coordinator Rep** who will give you waivers and photo releases to sign for the Ripley's General Manager. Your **SSAI Rep** will coordinate the performance schedule of mini warm-up shows between **1:30 or 1:45 to 2:15 pm** (depending on size of venue, audience, and number of sword swallows who are willing to perform non-sword variety acts).

OTHER NON-CONFIRMED SWORD SWALLOWERS

Because we extend an open invitation to **ALL** sword swallows to attend WSSD, sometimes other veteran or unrecognized sword swallows show up that we weren't aware of or expecting. If an unexpected sword swallower shows up, please **WELCOME** them, get all their contact info, have them **COMPLETE the WAIVER FORMS** and **READ THESE GUIDELINES**, explain the day and bring them up to speed, and do your best to work them into the performance schedule and media interviews as appropriate. But remember: **YOU** are our designated **SSAI Rep** in charge and responsible for making sure the event runs smoothly and for overseeing all media interviews and answering media questions with Ripley's and SSAI talking points (see below).

PAPERWORK: DISCLAIMERS and PHOTO WAIVERS

When you arrive, the GM or his/her staff will have photo waivers and disclaimers for each of you to complete to acknowledge that you assume responsibility for your act and grant 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 areas for us to change and store our props, but since most of the Ripley's props do not have much room for changing clothes, please come already dressed and as prepared as possible. Please coordinate with the GM where to store your props.

COSTUMING – WHAT TO WEAR

World Sword Swallower's 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!** Dress as **FLASHY** and **PROFESSIONAL** as possible so we can showcase our art in the best light. **LOOK YOUR BEST!** Think "**Dress To Impress**". Dressing well is a small but very important step in looking professional.

The key is to **look BETTER than your audience**. You don't want to look like one of them, because you **AREN'T!** 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, or possibly even in Ripley's photos or books.

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 the Ripley's brand)
- Baggy clothes (can make you look larger than you are, camera may not pick up on depth)
- Any tight or complex patterns or stripes (makes camera image flutter). Remember, there's a good chance you may make it on videos or a TV news feed, where solid colors are your best bet.

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)
- Bright colored blazer, sports jacket, zoot suit
- Ladies, colorful but family-oriented show costumes
- **Ripley's** branded merchandise

ENTERTAIN THEIR GUESTS!

This is the **MAIN REASON** we are there! Ripley's guests **LOVE** the opportunity to meet a real **Ripley's Believe It or Not sword swallower** on this special day! You're a legend! Play it up!

PRE-SHOW WARM-UP 1:30/1:45 to 2:00/2:20 pm (depending on size and turnout)

The **SSAI Rep** for each property will schedule any performers who wants to perform for the audience starting around **1:30** or **1:45** to about **2:00-2:20 pm** (depending on the size of your Ripley's location, audience, and number of sword swallows willing to perform).

Work out with the GM where you'll perform and what you're going to do. In most cases, they will be ok with fire-eating, blockhead, glass walking, blade ladder, bed of nails, etc., but check with the GM about any fire issues, and please remember that Ripley's caters to a "FAMILY" audience, so please keep all shows **CLEAN** and **FAMILY-ORIENTED**.

Demonstrate NON-sword swallowing sideshow or variety specialty acts FIRST to gather a crowd and entertain them (juggling, unicycle, human blockhead, fire-eating, glass-eating, bed of nails, blade ladder, etc). Then around **2:00**, begin transitioning into a **build up to SWORD SWALLOWING as the BIG FINALE**, by transitioning into a description of sword swallowing, medical descriptions and physiology of sword swallowing, dangers, deaths, 80+ year history with Ripley's, and any other information on sword swallowing leading up to the **Big Swallow** at **2:25**. Depending on the number of sword swallows at your property, you might want to begin transitioning into the **sword swallowing** segment about **2:00-2:20** as a build-up to the **Big Swallow** at **2:25 pm**.

BEFORE THE BIG SWALLOW: PROMOTE THEIR RIPLEY'S ODDITORIUM!

Some guests show up only because they heard about the free sword swallowing demonstrations. Talk to the GM before the event and ask what you can do to "turn the tip" and get the public to buy tickets into **THEIR Ripley's museum**. Some GMs may offer a **10%-25% off discount coupon** to patrons who buy tickets within **15-20** minutes after your warm-up show and pitch. If the GM wants to do this, make sure to **offer this discount** to the audience just before the **Big Swallow** and **encourage** as many audience members to buy tickets into the museum as possible. **Turn the Tip!**

BEFORE THE BIG SWALLOW: PROMOTE RIPLEY'S MERCHANDISE

Then offer to **autograph any Ripley's books or T-shirts** that guests may buy from the gift shop immediately after the **Big Swallow**. 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 you on 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!**

THE BIG SWALLOW 2/25/17 at 2:25:17

2:00-2:20pm:

Explain the history of the ancient art of sword swallowing itself, the difficulties and dangers, and the long history of sword swallows with Ripley's for 83 years.

Explain **WHY** we celebrate **World Sword Swallower's Day**:

World Sword Swallower's Day was started in 2008 by the **Sword Swallowers Association Intl**

- * to dispel myths and explain the dangers of sword swallowing,
 - * to celebrate the daring courageous performers who risk their lives to entertain audiences,
 - * to honor veteran and injured sword swallows,
 - * to raise awareness of the contributions sword swallows have made in the fields of science and medicine,
 - * to raise contributions for **Esophageal Cancer, swallowing disorders, and the Injured Sword Swallower's Relief Fund,**
 - * to celebrate **83 years** of sword swallows doing the impossible for Ripley's Believe It or Not
 - * and to prove that after **4000 years**, the ancient art of sword swallowing is still a **viable and exciting entertainment option today!**
- * If you have time, you might want to do a **Q&A** with the audience, let them ask questions, and let your fellow performers answer as appropriate. Audiences seem to love this.

2:20 pm:

Ask all sword swallows 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 with #Hashtags #WSSD @Ripleys @SwordSwallows.** Then cue the audience to begin a countdown at **2:25** (counting backwards from **:17** seconds).

At 2:25 and :17 seconds, all sword swallows 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. Then **make yourself available for a group photo posing with your swords.**

AFTER THE BIG SWALLOW (2:25-3:00)

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** who missed the show, if you're up for doing additional shows, and if the GM approves, please feel free to allow performers to perform additional mini shows, records, or stunts for the media and audience at your own discretion.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

First and foremost, we are 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 often 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.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

After you have discussed the main **WSSD** talking points with the media, you are welcome to discuss personal details of your background in sword swallowing, personal signature acts, feats, history, injuries, highlights, etc.

Please do **NOT** mention "WORLD RECORDS", and especially do **NOT** mention "Guinness World Records" which is often seen as competition to Ripley's!

Ripley's features "ODD, UNUSUAL, and UNBELIEVABLE ODDITIES"

Guinness features "World Records"

Please do not promote **Guinness World Records** while performing for **Ripley's**!

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

Try to get as many good photos and as **MUCH** video as possible! Then submit them to Halfdan@aol.com immediately after the event so we can forward them to **Ripley's** and add them to our **SSAI** YouTube channel and website! Thank you!

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



World Sword Swallower's Day 2017

Saturday, February 25, 2017, 2:25:17

TALKING POINTS

WHAT:

WSSD = WORLD Sword SwallowER'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 2008 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)
 - Digestion (1897 Dr in Scotland)
 - Electrocardiogram (1904 Dr. Cramer in Wales)
 - Bronchoscope (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!**)

- * 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 swallows, and as a benchmark to compare personal growth over past years (*to showcase YOU!*)
- * To **CELEBRATE** over 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 on a day-to-day basis due to accidents, injuries, and sword swallows learning or quitting. As a result, any finite number is always **INCORRECT** and **INACCURATE**.

Any number you say will not only be incorrect, but it may create a challenge for someone to try to want to break it. For example, if you say there are "78" sword swallows, someone will then want to become number "79".

Instead, in order to keep our answers factually honest, true and consistent with what other sword swallows 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 Swallows Association Int'l reports that there are
"LESS THAN a FEW DOZEN FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL sword swallows 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** museums around the world!"* (Promote **RIPLEY'S**)

Ripley's Long and Colorful Relationship with Sword Swallowers

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 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 Swallower **Mimi Garneau** performed in the original **Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium** at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. Additionally, sword swallower **Edna Price** swallowed her neon tube at the **RBION Odditorium** in 1933, and sword swallower **Joseph Grendol** joined the Ripley's show in 1934 when the run expanded the next year.

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

- 1933 - Mimi Garneau - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World's Fair
- 1933 - Edna Price - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World's Fair
- 1933-34 - Joseph Grendol - RBION Odditorium at Chicago World's Fair
- 1935-36 - Mimi Garneau - Ripley's BION at California Pacific Expo San Diego
- 1937-39 - Prince Lucky Ball at Ripley's
- 1938-40 - Edna Price performs at Ripley's New York World's Fair & Atlantic City
- 1941 - Lady Vivian and John Dunning at Ripley's Ohio
- 1950s, 1955 - Mighty Ajax at Ripley's NYC
- 1960s-70s - Estelline Pike at Ripley's NYC
- 2008 - SSAI celebrates 1st official 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!
- 2017 - YOU and world's TOP Sword Swallowers at World Sword Swallower's Day!

World Sword Swallower's Day 2017
Saturday, February 25, 2017, 2:25:17

World Sword Swallower's Day 2017 represents the 83rd anniversary of that first Odditorium and the 83rd year that Ripley's has supported sword swallowers and SSAI 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 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.

- Sword swallowing can take some people 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
- **SSAI** 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 Swallower's Day is a special day during February, "**National Swallowing Disorders Month.**" **WSSD** was created to raise awareness of the contributions that sword swallows 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 swallows 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". This research was later awarded the **2007 Ig Nobel Prize in Medicine** at Harvard University.

Questions?

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