



FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 9, 2010

Sword Swallowers Association International

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President Proclaims World Sword Swallower's Day

100 Feet of Steel to be Swallowed at Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museums Worldwide

HARTSELLE, AL – Imagine sliding a steel sword down your throat! Now imagine **25 sword swallowers swallowing over 100 feet of solid steel down their throats!** That's just one of many unbelievable sword swallowing stunts in the works for the 4th Annual **World Sword Swallowers Day** at Ripley's Believe It or Not! locations worldwide on Feb 27, 2010!

Sword Swallowers Association International (SSAI) President Dan Meyer proclaimed the 4th annual "World Sword Swallower's Day" for the last Saturday in February, "National Swallowing Disorders Month", with stunts occurring throughout the month culminating with World Sword Swallower's Day on February 27. World Sword Swallower's Day is co-sponsored by Ripley Entertainment, who with SSAI, is inviting sword swallowers around the world to put on incredible sword swallowing demonstrations at Ripley's Believe It or Not! locations worldwide.

Why World Sword Swallower's Day? "We sword swallowers risk our lives every time we swallow a sword, but many people don't believe it's real, or they think the art has died out," explains Meyer, a sword swallower and Ripley's Believe It or Not! himself. "We established World Sword Swallower's Day to raise awareness of the medical contributions sword swallowers have made to the fields of medicine and science, to honor veteran performers, to raise funds for esophageal cancer research and the Injured Sword Swallower's Relief Fund with donations matched by Ripley's, and to correct myths by putting on sword swallowing demonstrations for the public and media around the world."

Why is Ripley's co-sponsoring the day? "Because it's great entertainment!" said Tim O'Brien, VP of Communications for Ripley 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 in 1933. There, three sword swallowers, two of which were ladies, mesmerized huge crowds. Ripley's has been home to sword swallowers ever since."

On February 27 sword swallowers will perform worldwide, with some attempting to set individual or small group records at Ripley's Believe It or Not! locations around the world. "Most of us usually perform solo," Meyer says. "World Sword Swallower's Day gives SSAI members a chance to work together to be part of something much bigger, and performing at Ripley's Odditoriums helps bring us all together!"

Just a few of the incredible feats planned for February 27 at Ripley's Believe It or Not! locations:

* Ocean City, MD – Dai Andrews will attempt to swallow a dangerous 120 degree curved sword!

* Hollywood, CA – World's tallest sword swallower George the Giant will attempt to swallow a giant 33 inch long sword!

* Atlantic City, NJ – Red Stuart will attempt to swallow a world record 52 swords at once!

Even more incredible stunts are scheduled for February 27 and celebrities are invited to make surprise appearances to remove swords from the throats of sword swallowers, with details kept secret until the event. All Ripley's performances will take place on 2/27/10 at precisely 2:27:10

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pm local time. At the end of the day, a tally of performances and stunts will be submitted for consideration for a future "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" cartoon, book or film clip.

"It's a huge honor for us to carry on the great tradition of sword swallowers who have performed at Ripley's Believe It or Not! museums over the years," Meyer explains. "In light of this, SSAI is issuing an open invitation to all sword swallowers worldwide to contact us to join us in swallowing swords at Ripley's Believe It or Not! locations on February 27!"

Since some sword swallowers perform charitable work for the medical community during February "National Swallowing Disorders Month", SSAI is encouraging all sword swallowers not located near a Ripley's Believe It or Not! location to perform medical demonstrations at local medical facilities throughout the day to help raise awareness of esophageal cancer, dysphasia, GERD, and other upper gastro-intestinal and swallowing disorders. Sword swallowers will also perform at hospitals, nursing homes and orphanages for those who otherwise have difficulty getting to theaters to see live performances. "Sword swallowers who participate in these activities find them rewarding," explains Meyer. "On February 27th, many people will have the opportunity to witness sword swallowing first-hand who would not otherwise have a chance to experience it."

"Many of us have been entertaining for years, and we love our work," explains Meyer, who earned his place in the Ripley's book by swallowing a sword while submerged underwater in a tank of sharks. "World Sword Swallowers Day is a great opportunity for us to show the world what we really do, and performing at Ripley's locations helps us get the word out!"

The art of sword swallowing began over 4000 years ago in India, and requires the practitioner to use mind-over-matter techniques to control the body and repress natural reflexes to insert solid steel blades from 15 to 25 inches down the esophagus and into the stomach. With the demise of the traveling circus sideshow over the past several decades, there are currently less than a few dozen full-time professional sword swallowers actively performing the art of sword swallowing around the world today.

About the Sword Swallowers Association International

The [Sword Swallowers Association International](http://www.swordswallow.com), founded in 2001 to preserve and promote the ancient art of sword swallowing, is comprised of sword swallowers from around the world and maintains a site with general information on sword swallowing for the general public at www.swordswallow.com.

About Ripley Entertainment

Ripley Entertainment Inc. (www.ripleys.com), keepers of the venerable Ripley's Believe It or Not! brand, is a global leader in location-based entertainment, entertaining more than 13 million annually at its 80 attractions in 11 countries. In addition to its 31 Believe It or Not! museums, the Orlando-based company has publishing, licensing and broadcast divisions, best-selling books and the popular syndicated cartoon strip, Ripley's Believe It or Not!, that runs daily in 42 countries. Ripley Entertainment is a Jim Pattison Company, the third-largest privately held company in Canada.

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Medical Facts and Trivia about Sword Swallowing – Believe It or Not!

- Sword Swallowing is a 4000 year old art that originated in India around 2000 BC.
- 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 50 pairs of muscles and can take from 3-23 seconds to complete.
- Sword swallows use mind-over-matter techniques to repress the 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 blades from 15-30 inches in length.
- Sword swallowing can take from 2 years to 7 years to learn, and even after years of practice, some people never learn to master it.
- SSAI reports that there are on average between 5-7 serious sword swallowing related injuries reported around the world each year that require hospitalization, with dozens more that go unreported each year.
- Treatment of sword swallowing injuries can cost from \$50,000-\$80,000 per injury.

This might help explain why there are currently less than a few dozen full-time professional sword swallows left actively performing around the world today! Believe It or Not!