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MASTER SWORDSMAN TO SHOW SAMURAI SKILL AT HATSUME

Master Bob Elder demonstrates Japanese swordsmanship during Hatsume Fair, Feb. 28-29, 2004

DELRAY BEACH, Florida – January 28, 2004 – Recent films, such as *The Last Samurai*, starring Tom Cruise, and *Lost in Translation*, and popular Japanese TV anime, have boosted interest in Japanese martial arts. But just how hard is it to do that leaping kick or swing a weapon with deadly aim?

Audiences are invited to find out at **Hatsume Fair** at The Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens on Saturday, **February 28**, when master swordsman Bob Elder will demonstrate his martial art prowess, which will include a showcase of Samurai swordsmanship.

According to Elder, a little bit of a big star, like Cruise, can go a long way.

“There has been a definite upswing in interest, and we’ve doubled enrollment in our sword school due to those films,” he said. Elder Sensei, owner of East Coast Martial Art Supplies and *shibucho* (branch president) of the Orlando *Toyama-Ryu Iaido Dojo*, is the American representative of the *Toyama Ryu Batto Jutsu Ren Mei*.

“We used to sell about 50 swords a year (through his martial art supplies business), and now we’re selling about 50 swords per week.” he said.

Toyama Ryu swordsmanship was first developed by some of the best classically trained swordsmen in Japan in the early 20th century with roots going back to feudal times. “*Toyama Ryu* involves a new style of dealing with an old art,” Elder said. “Instead of using it for combat, the martial art is now done for mental and physical conditioning. However, we’ve added the cutting aspect. It’s really appealing and exciting to students and audiences.”

Elder, who has been studying swordsmanship for 14 years, is a student of Hataya Sensei in Tokyo, Japan. He also is a frequent traveler to Japan, where he furthers his knowledge in Japanese swordsmanship and competes in tournaments. Students of *Toyama Ryu* start by using wooden

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swords and progress to sharp metal blades (weighing approximately two pounds, handle included) as they become more proficient. The focus of *Toyama Ryu Batto Do* is *tameshigiri*, which is the cutting of *tatami* mats or bamboo that have been soaked in water to offer the resistance comparable to that of human bones and flesh. *Toyama Ryu* students learn a series of *katas*, or pre-arranged, choreographed cutting patterns and compete by demonstrating their knowledge in the sport. In addition to teaching sword classes mainly to adults and some teens in Orlando, Elder Sensei teaches seminars and gives demonstrations across the country and around the world. For more information about *Toyama Ryu*, visit www.toyama-ryu.org.

Hatsume Fair features three stages with continuous entertainment including Japanese tea ceremonies, flower arranging, martial art demonstrations, bonsai and orchid demonstrations and more. Visitors can also enjoy artisan booths, plant sales, Asian and American food and various children's activities in *The* (Fort Lauderdale) *Sun-Sentinel* Children's Tent. It is held from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Feb. 28-29.

Admission Information: Adults/\$10; Morikami members/\$7; Children ages 3-12/\$5; Children under the age of 3 are free. The Morikami is offering a group rate for groups of 10 or more – group rates are adults/\$8, members/\$5 and children/\$3. Group-rate tickets must be ordered by **February 13**. For tickets and more information on group pricing, please call 561-495-0233, ext 310.

Hatsume is presented by The Morikami Museum and *The* (Fort Lauderdale) *Sun-Sentinel*. Other sponsors include McDonald's; Coldwell Banker; BellSouth; the Palm Beach County Department of Parks and Recreation; Palm Beach County Tourist Development Council; The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council; Pepsi-Cola; Avalon Natural Spring Water; Delray Medical Center; Blood's Hammock Groves; and Kirin Beer.

The Morikami encompasses a 200-acre park and internationally renowned Japanese gardens and museum dedicated exclusively to the living culture of Japan. The Morikami is located at 4000 Morikami Park Road, just west of Jog Road, between Linton Boulevard in Delray Beach and Clint Moore Road in Boca Raton. For more information about The Morikami, its exhibitions and programs, call 561-495-0233 or visit www.morikami.org.

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