

# Philippine Martial Arts

Digest

Mini Issue  
2009



**Philippine Faire 2009**  
**111th Philippine Independence Day**  
**Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall**

**June 6, 2009**  
**National City, CA.**



*Babao Arnis*

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**Contents**

**From the Publishers Desk**

**Brief History of the Philippine Declaration of Independence**

**Philippine Faire 2009: A Resounding Success**

**Babao Arnis: A Family Tradition**

**Westfield Plaza Bonita**

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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## From the Publishers Desk

### Kumusta

June 6th at the Westfield Plaza Bonita Shopping Center located in National City, California. COPAO which is a collaborative of Organizations united by a common concern for the economic, social and political empowerment of its members through developmental programs and projects, held the Philippine Faire 2009.

Demonstrating their family art was Grandmaster Narrie Babao, family and students. The FMA Digest has had article about each family member and students if you can recall such as:

Vol4 No2 "The Evolution of Babao Arnis"

2006 Special Edition FMA Law Enforcement & Military Trainers "Babao Arnis and the Expandable Baton"

2006 Special Issue FMA Young Practitioners "Babao Arnis Bloodline"

2008 Special Edition FMA at Ang Daga II "The Daga in the Babao Arnis System"



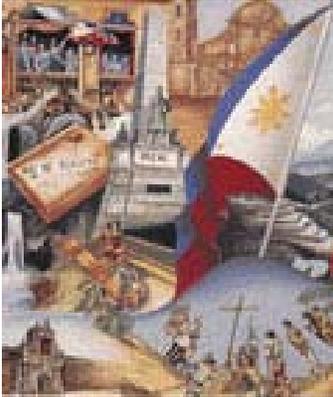
The FMA Digest wants to thank Grandmaster Babao wife Zena Sultana Babao, who has written about her family and numerous other articles for the FMA Digest. A little about Zena Babao: a professional journalist, writes the columns "Light and Shadows" and "Making it in America" for the Asian Journal U.S.A, San Diego Edition, and now also writes for the prestigious "Elvis International" magazine circulated worldwide. She is also the "Vegas and Around the World" reporter with [www.ladyluckmusic.com](http://www.ladyluckmusic.com), a website in Canada that features Elvis impersonators and fans from around the world. In the Philippines, she wrote for the Philippine News Service (now Philippines News Agency), and still contributes articles for Manila Times and Sun Star Manila.

So enjoy this Mini Issue and learn a little about Babao Arnis and just one of many celebrations that went on throughout the world for the Philippine Declaration of Independence.

**Maraming Salamat Po**



## Brief History of the Philippine Declaration of Independence



The Philippine Declaration of Independence occurred on June 12, 1898 in the Philippines, where Filipino Revolutionary forces under General Emilio Aguinaldo (later to become the Philippines' first Republican President) proclaimed the sovereignty and independence of the Philippine Islands from the colonial rule of Spain after the latter was defeated at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.

The declaration, in the form of a proclamation, was done in the presence of a huge crowd, at the ancestral home of General Aguinaldo in Cavite el Viejo (now Kawit), Cavite,

some 30 kilometers South of Manila. The event saw the unfurling of the National Flag of the Philippines, made in Hong Kong by Mrs. Marcela Agoncillo, Lorenza Agoncillo and Delfina Herboza, and the performance of the *Marcha Filipina Magdalo*, as the nation's national anthem, now known as *Lupang Hinirang*, later *Bayang Magiliw*, which was composed by Julian Felipe and played by the San Francisco de Malabon Marching Band.



The declaration, however, was not recognized by the United States or Spain, as the Spanish government ceded the Philippines to the United States in the 1898 Treaty of Paris, in consideration for an indemnity for Spanish expenses and assets lost. The June 12 proclamation was later modified by another Proclamation done at Malolos, Bulacan, upon the insistence of Apolinario Mabini, who objected to the Original Proclamation, which essentially placed the Philippines under the protection of the United States.

The United States recognized Philippine independence on July 4, 1946 in the Treaty of Manila. Independence Day was observed in the Philippine on the July 4 anniversary of this event until, upon the advice of historians and at the urging of nationalist politicians, President Diosdado Macapagal (father of current Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) signed Republic Act No. 4166 into law on August 4, 1964, designating June 12, which had previously observed as Flag Day, as the country's Independence Day.

## **Philippine Faire 2009: A Resounding Success**

By Zena Sultana Babao

It was predicted that rain would pour on San Diego County last weekend. But the weather cooperated, and the weekend turned out sunny - just perfect for a Philippine-style town fiesta. The fiesta was this year's Philippine Faire 2009 in honor of the 111th Philippine Independence Day, held Saturday, June 6, at the Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall parking lot.

With the theme "Embracing Diversity, Unity and Change," the event was a resounding success! It started with a Festival of Festivals parade at 9:30 a.m. along Plaza Bonita Road in National City, featuring the Philippine Faire beauties, civic and community organizations, school marching bands, the National City and County public officials and their representatives, and others.

There were booths and exhibits on Philippine Arts and Culture, Philippine History, Filipino Language and Heritage, Health & Wellness, Business, Non-profit Groups, Faith Based organizations, Filipiniana Costumes, Filipino Food, Music and Dance, Lions Medical Mobile, San Diego Police Department, and Blood Pressure and Diabetes Screening.

At around 1:30 in the afternoon, the show started.



The Babao Arnis Demonstration team relaxing before they were called up to do the demo for the Philippine Faire 2009.



Grandmaster Babao with his former boss, Capt. Manny Rodriguez, who is now the assistant Chief of the National City Police Department.

Among the performers were: Music and Friends, Sean OneSon, Pasacat Dance Company, Samahan Performing Arts, Sharon Rose, Granger Junior HS Jazz Ensemble, Chin-style Taiji, Heali'I's Polynesian Revue, The Magic 6, DOC (Definition of Creativity), Babao Arnis Academy, Filifinesse Creations Fashion Show, and the

Philippine Faire 2009 Royal Court.

Among the sponsoring partners of the Philippine Faire 2009 were: COPAO (Council of Pilipino-American Organizations of San Diego County), County of San Diego, City of National City, Westfield Plaza Bonita, Union Bank of California, American Red Cross, Western Union, AT&T, Walmart, Moneygram, Sycuan Casino, San Diego Airport Authority, Sweetwater Authority, The National City Times, The Filipino Times, Philippine & Asian Report, Filipino Press, and the Asian Journal.

Two days after the Philippine Faire 2009 celebration, COPAO Director Ditas Yamane wrote a "Thank You letter" to all who took part in the event. Her letter said in

part: “I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for all your support, commitment to service, and love for community. All these helped in making the Philippine Faire 2009 - Festival of Festivals - a success!”

Yamane gave special thanks to Westfield Plaza Bonita for their generosity in having the Plaza Bonita parking lot be used as the venue for the Philippine Faire event. She also thanked the COPAO Board of Directors, led by President Merly Ferrer, the Philippine Faire 2009 Committee, the volunteers, participants and performers, and especially the schools and the entire community who came, visited and enjoyed the event.

Several Philippine Independence Day celebrations were held concurrently last Saturday in different places here in San Diego County. These Independence Day celebrations are major events to rekindle our roots and heritage, and to commemorate our home country’s independence from Spain.

The Philippine Independence Day celebrations are held annually here in San Diego and National City not only to create awareness of Philippine culture and traditions, but also to raise funds for charity projects in the U.S. and the Philippines. Philippine Independence, as a celebration in America, is largely an invention of the last decade, rather than having a distinct cultural significance.



Members of the Babao Arnis Demo Team taken prior to the demo: (Kneeling, L to R) John Newenhouse, Marc Fox, Edwin Estigoy and Justin Delgado; Standing, L to R) Narrison Babao, Zena, Juan Barajas, Narrie, Don Dizon, Bayani Abueg Jr., Chris Montano and Domingo Agnas Jr. (Not in the picture) Jack Babao and Kris Babao.

## Babao Arnis: A Family Tradition

By Kris Babao

Babao Arnis is a fighting system in Filipino martial arts. This particular fighting system and its propagation is a tradition in our family for over half a century: taught from father to sons, and on to the next generation of Babaos. As of now, there are no girls yet in our family except for my Mom.



The Kali salutation

Grandmaster Narrie Babao, my dad, and Zena Sultana Babao, my mom, opened up the private Babao Arnis Academy here in San Diego, not as a commercial school, but as a way of propagating the fighting arts of the Philippines.

My dad first learned the “Babao Arnis”, at that time called “Batangas Arnis” system from his father, the late Buenaventura “Turing” Babao, of Batangas, Philippines. Then my dad passed on the knowledge to his three sons, two of whom are now Guros (instructors), my elder brothers Narrison and Jack. And me of course! I am not a Guro yet, but I hope to be sometime soon.

Last Saturday, June 6th, our school’s Demonstration team performed at the Philippine Faire 2009 held at the Westfield Plaza Bonita parking lot in National City. Our demo team was one of the two martial arts featured during the Philippine Faire to celebrate the 111th anniversary of the Philippine Independence. Our demo team members are graduates and students of our school.



Grandmaster Narrie Babao explaining the history of the Filipino fighting culture.

At the start of the demo, Grandmaster Babao explained how the term “Arnis de Mano” came to be. The conquering Spaniards coined the term after seeing the colorful wrist bands called “harness de mano” (harness of the hand) that the Filipino natives wore. When used as the beginning of a word, the letter “H” is silent in the Spanish language, i.e. “Hasta la vista”. Thus, the spelling of harnes de mano was later corrupted to spell as “Arnis de mano” by the ancient Filipinos.

Three fighting systems were shown to the public: Arnis de Mano, Kali and Doce Pares Eskrido/Eskrima. The Batangas Arnis system was the art that came from my dad’s

dad. The system of Kali was taught to Narrie by Kali Grandmaster Ben Largusa, while the Doce Pares Eskrido/Eskrima was the system created by Supreme Grandmaster Cacoy Canete of Cebu City.

The demonstration started with Moro-moro, with the performers showing



Guro Jack Babao and younger brother Kris perform Kuntao and Sikaran.

the various weapons they practice with: rattan baston, bangkaw or sibat, bolo, espada y daga, and the kris or zigzag sword (where I was named after, My godfather is legendary Eskrimador, movie star and JKD practitioner Dan Inostanto, who taught Bruce Lee the use of nunchako. That makes Diana Lee Inosanto (Ninong Dan's daughter), also an Eskrimador and movie star, my godsister.). We also performed bare-hand fighting.

The accompanying percussion music of drums, kulintangs and gong accentuated each and every movement. In ancient Philippines, the sounds of these instruments are the music used not only for martial arts, but for folk dances as well.

I performed the barehand fighting part, and I demonstrated how to zoom like a whirlwind in the ipu-ipu (whirlwind) techniques, both flying and on the ground. The ground ipu-ipu technique has been practiced in the Babao Arnis Academy long before hip-hop and break dancing came into existence. I mentioned hip-hop because I am a professional dancer and choreographer of this particular type of modern dance. I also do other modern dances and Latin dances as well.

The Moro-moro was followed by a partnered reaction drill using the weapons that each of us in the demo team wanted to use. Guro Bayani "Joe" Abueg Jr. and his student Justin Delgado showed the use of double sticks. This was followed by another partnered drill, the barehanded arts of Kuntao and Sikaran.

The Doce Pares Eskrido techniques were then shown by my older brother, Narrison, and his student Edwin Estigoy. Guro Joe came back to the floor, and performed an advanced empty-handed form called Kinamutay Sayaw.

Grandmaster Narrie then demonstrated how to defend barehanded against a sharp knife. His partner Chris Cross attacked with the knife from several directions simulating a real life confrontation. Cross is a deputy sheriff with the San Diego Sheriffs Office and is the Defensive Tactics coordinator of the San Diego Regional Public Safety Academy.



Chris Cross attacks Grandmaster Babao with a sharp knife.



Grandmaster Babao disarms the knife.

Another performer, Aikido Master Marc Fox was Cross' partner and they did the reflex sinawali drill and Kuntao. Fox, who studies with the Babao Arnis Academy, has his own Aikido dojo in Alpine, and also teaches defensive tactics at the Public Safety Regional Academy.

My brother Jack then wowed the audience with his twin bastons twirling like propellers in his Sinawali Sayaw form. Jack started training when he was two years old, and when he was ten, became the 1982 International Pee Wee Weapons



The Babao brothers performing Sinawali

forms Champion at the famed Ed Parker's Long Beach Internationals Competitions.



The double sticks drill

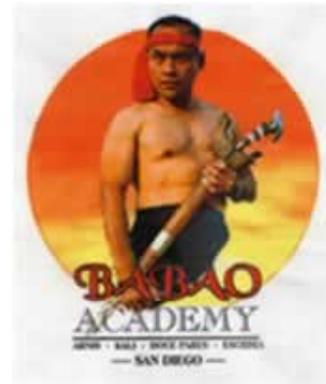
Grandmaster Narrie also demonstrated the Batangas Balisong form, both single and double. The finale was the partnered double sticks drill called sinawali, where the performers synchronized their moves to the beat of the drums.

The rest of the performers were Domingo Agnas Jr., who started Arnis when he was twelve years old; Juan Barajas, who works for the San Diego County; CDR Don Dizon of the U.S. Navy; John Newenhouse; and George

Alfonso, a hard-working member of COPAO.



Guro Jack Babao, Guro Narrison Babao, and Guro Bayani Abueg Jr. are shown heading the Arnis Demo Team.



The Kris Babao dance group the DOC Dancers had a booth at the Philippine Faire 2009.



The DOC dancers poses for a picture with famous Filipino boxer (the next Manny Pacquiao) Mercito Gesta who's record is 16-0. He is second to last on the right in the picture.



Jessica Love and Jen Booty with Professional Dancer and Choreographer Kris Babao who is sponsored by AKP Apparel

## Westfield Plaza Bonita Shopping Center

3030 Plaza Bonita Road #2075

National City CA 91950

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[westfield.com/plazabonita](http://westfield.com/plazabonita)

The mall opened in 1981 as the first fully-indoor mall in the South Bay Area anchored by JC Penney, Mervyn's, Montgomery Ward, and May Company. The original design include large sky lights, orange and silver ceiling banners, muted browns, wooden fixtures and railings, smooth surface concrete planters with wood benches, musky brown tiles, and lush greens throughout. The mall would be characterized as having an "autumn" tone. Lining the first floor were several full glass-counter kiosks for smaller or seasonal retailers which in time were joined with additional "cart kiosks". The entire complex was celebrated in the center by a two story onyx-glass water fountain where patrons could sit around the water works. At one point it was also the location for the mall's kids club. This original motif stayed with the mall until mid-2002.



In mid-2006, the former Wards store, which had been the location of seasonal retailers (Halloween costumers and art shows) was stripped and gutted and a new plan was announced to the public that the South end of the mall would be demolished and rebuilt. Westfield Plaza Bonita is underwent a full renovation from 2006 until 2008. In 2006, Mervyn's closed its mall location, in lieu of a standalone location elsewhere in National City. The former Mervyn's location became a temporary outlet for faux-French furniture, with no planned retailers opening in the near future. Numerous new stores and entertainment options were opened, most prominently were Target, AMC Theatres, and Borders bookstore. To accommodate the expected influx of new patrons to the area, a new parking garage, the first in the mall's history, was opened. In addition, numerous new retail stores and outdoor restaurants were opened.

The first part of the expansion opened in March 2008, with several other stores opening during the summer including the Target in July 2008, with a final completion date of Fall 2008. However, because of an on-going recession in the United States tied to the housing market crunch in San Diego County, several stores were slow to open and projected numbers were not as high as originally predicted, but the mall operator plans to see brisk business with the Holiday 2008 shopping season.

Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall in National City is conveniently located off the 805 and 54 freeways. It offers hundreds of stores with a plethora of goods. From popular stores like Gap and H&M, to unique kiosks, a



new 14 screen AMC theatre, El Torito Restaurant and Target Store. Westfield knows what shoppers want. Providing expected mother parking, a concierge shopping team and carry-out service, shopping in National City has never been so easy. Shop in National City and experience the difference!

## **Council of Philippine American Organizations of San Diego County, Inc.**

### **Mission Statement**

COPAO is a collaborative of Organizations united by a common concern for the economic, social and political empowerment of its members through developmental programs and projects.

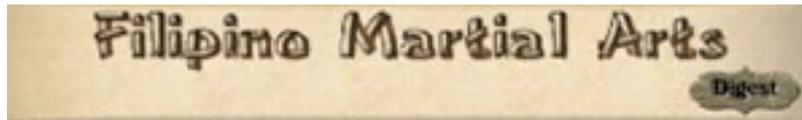


[www.copao-sandiego.org](http://www.copao-sandiego.org)





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