

Filipino Martial Arts



Women of the

Filipino Martial Arts III

Digest

Special Issue
2008

Madunong Guro Hiu Lila
Kali Majapahit

Master Librada Ramos
Arnis Batangueña

Cathrine Canete Knight
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IMAFP
Hong Kong



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Filipino Martial Arts Digest is published and distributed by:

FMA Digest

1297 Eider Circle

Fallon, Nevada 89406

Visit us on the World Wide Web: www.fmadigest.com

The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

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

Once again though it has been way to long, with great admiration and respect that the FMA Digest has put together a Volume III of Women of the FMA. Within you will find women Masters, Instructors, and students of the Filipino martial arts that are just as dedicated and skilled as men.

The FMA Digest would like to thank all the practitioners and writers that contributed to this Special Issue. You the reader will find Volume III Women of the FMA just as outstanding as the first two issues of Women of the FMA. The FMA Digest respectfully thanks each and every one of them for the honor of letting the FMA Digest share with the readers something about them.

In this Special Issue you will find women that practice different systems and styles, some that are professionals, others that are competitors in the art, and some who are just getting their feet wet at this time. However one thing they all have in common is their spirit and dedication to the Filipino Martial Arts.

Maraming Salamat Po



Women of the FMA I



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Women of the FMA II



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Madunong Guro Hiu Lila **Kali Majapahit Instructor**

By Fred Evrard



In year 2003, following a lifetime dedication to the martial arts, Madunong Guro Hiu Lila and her husband Guro Fred Evrard, left their home in Tahiti for a “martial arts and traditional medicines” trip around the world. Four years without going home, sleeping in dojo’s, temples, or directly at their instructors' homes; training all over the world with Masters of several martial arts, monks and healers.

They have visited and trained in China, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tibet, Philippines, Lebanon, USA, Hawaii, Tahiti, France, Germany, Canada, etc., searching for knowledge and sharing it, teaching seminars all over the world.

Finally in 2006, the tour was over, and life pointed to Singapore as their new home. This is where the Evrard family; settled down, and open their 3rd Filipino martial arts school, Ni Tien Martial Arts Singapore.

Madunong Guro Lila is the Co-Founder of the Ni Tien Martial Arts school in Singapore. She is the Senior Instructor, and the Kids program manager, teaching there professionally 5 days a week.

Even though she is Chinese Hakka, born and raised in Tahiti, she fell in love with the Filipino martial arts in 1999. Tough boxer and kick-boxer, comfortable with any kind of weapons (both hands), this ex lawyer, petite, gentle and feminine lady is listened and respected by all her students (kids and adults). She is fear for her interminable series of crunches, and her excellent physical condition, positive attitude and energy make her a great role model for lots of students.



Madunong Lila teaching a Kids class



Panuntukan (Filipino boxing)

Here is a resume of her certifications, training and background:

Diplomas and certifications:

- 2008: Instructor in Pencak Silat Titipinang
- 2006: Madunong Guro (2nd degree Instructor) in Kali Majapahit
- 2005: Kadua Guro (1st Degree Instructor) in Kali Majapahit
- 2005: IKAEF Kadua Guro (International Kali

Arnis Eskrima Federation)

- 2005: Kadua Guro (1st degree Instructor) in Kali Sikaran
- 2004: Certified disciple by Sekiguchi Komei, Soke of Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu (Japan)

Training:

- 2007: Starts training in Seni Silat Titipinang under Guru Utama M. Khamin
- 2007: Training in Pencak Silat Concept under Pendekar Jeff Espinous (Singapore)
- 2005: Seminar in Chen Style of Taiji Quan with M° Wang Fengming
- 2004: Training in Iaijutsu under Sekiguchi Komei, 21st Soke of Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu
- 2003: Starts training in Feng Quan Kung Fu under Sifu Amon (Hawaii)
- 2003 - 2006: 4 years of intensive martial arts training in Asia (China, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia...)
- 2003: Training at “Lanna Muay Thai camp” in Chiang Mai (Thailand)
- 2003: Starts training in Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Iaijutsu under Montgomery Sensei
- 2002: Starts training in Filipino Martial Arts under Guro Fred Evrard
- 1994: Starts training in Hapkido
- 1992: Starts training in Jujitsu
- 1989: Starts training in Kung Fu
- 1980: Starts training in Karate

Other systems studied:

- Panuntukan (Filipino Boxing)
- Inayan Eskrima
- Muay Thai (Thai Boxing)
- Jeet Kune Do
- Wing Chun
- Qi Gong (internal energy work)
- Yang style of Taiji Quan



Madunong Guro Lila with her husband, Guro Fred

College education:

- PhD in Law from the University of French Polynesia (France)
- Study Psychology at the University of French Polynesia (France)



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Compensates for Size - Rather Than Rewarding It

By Manai Stacy Desideri

I was a new mother with a 3-month-old daughter when my home was robbed. I asked myself-how do I defend myself? How do I protect my daughter in a dangerous situation? Thus I began training in the martial arts. What I noticed about most martial arts programs is that most of them are designed for a certain body type; the biggest, fastest, youngest athlete will win. While I appreciated that size might bring power, I was always looking for the art that would accentuate elements that can compensate for size, rather than rewarding it. Then I saw a demonstration with Grandmaster Pallen, in which I saw him absolutely decimate an opponent twice his size. I knew there must be something to this Philippine martial art of Senkotiros.



After seeing the demonstration, I went out of my way to find every opportunity to train in the Filipino martial arts. The studio I was being taught at had an annual camping trip that hosted a Filipino martial arts seminar on the beach, and I made sure to be in the front row. When I got my orange belt, I heard (wrongly) that intermediate students could begin training in the Filipino martial arts at our school. Ok, so it was really not until at an advanced level. But when I showed up in class with my new arnis sticks, no one had the heart to turn me away.

I continued training until I was told that I had completed the basic course, and had to stop coming, I kept going anyway. Eventually, they realized that I would never quit, so our master instructor recommended I meet Grandmaster Pallen and to apply to train as a lakan. I have been with Grandmaster Pallen ever since.

Grandmaster Pallen is incredibly adept at reading his students. The power he brings to any lesson is to create a powerful learning moment for each individual student. As he often says, he never writes a lesson plan, he takes it from above. He gives to his students truly from his heart, which makes each lesson that much more meaningful.

Often, as a woman, I am addressing an opponent more than 50 pounds heavier than I am. When he teaches a technique that I find difficult to execute due to my size, I can ask him to address the opponent directly.

He will size up my opponent and offers me the exact modification of the technique in order to take down a much larger opponent! The equalization of size, in this art makes the big ones little. It gives power to the smart and technically correct; not just the biggest and strongest. The fastest people in this art are the ones whose power comes from within, not from the biggest muscles. I like the fact that larger opponents have no greater advantage over me.

I have been training with Grandmaster Pallen for 8 years. The fact that I have grown is due to his influence over me. I like what his teachings have given me, both as a martial artist and as a person. Many of his lessons address more than what to do on the mat.

No matter how far I grow as a person and a martial artist, I find that what he has to teach me and give me grows faster. It is very clear that Grandmaster Pallen sees training his students as a means of growing himself as an artist and a person. The more I grow, the more I elevate him. The more he grows, the more he has to offer me. This is a powerful relationship. In everything he does and says, Grandmaster makes it clear that what he has to offer is only for the worthy. He does not offer his teaching to those he deems lacking in personal strength and moral character. By valuing what he has to offer so highly, he pushes his students to heights of personal strength and commitment.

What makes this art different from other arts is the adaptability. Other Filipino martial arts tend to rely on rote memorization of a prescribed set of techniques. There may be 12 different strikes, and 15 different blocks. Senkotiros describes their offensive techniques based on the angle of attack, not the target. There is only one block - the Cross Defense. This makes Senkotiros simple yet effective. Generally, when you train in a weapon art, your partner throws prescribed techniques and you react with prescribed responses. When someone doesn't throw you the right feeder techniques, you might not know how to respond. The improvisation of Senkotiros makes it eminently adaptable to any attacker.

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830 Crocus, San Leandro, CA. 94578



www.senkotiros.org



www.senkotirosphilippines.com



Master Librada Ramos

Arnis Batangueña

Master Librada Ramos was born in Liam Batangas, Philippines on January 23, 1959. She is the Founder and Director of Arnis Batangueña located in Rome, Italy. Master Ramos has been Residing in Italy for almost 23 years.

Master Ramos commenced her training in Arnis at the age of 11, under the guidance of her grandfather who was a member of guerrilla armed forces during World War II against the Japanese.

Master Librada Ramos training with her father





In 1986 Master Ramos departed the Philippines to work in Italy. After several years she met two Masters of Kali and started practicing with them. Master Ramos became a full instructor in 1998 and start teaching in different gyms throughout the city, most of her students were men and military personnel, only a few women joined and trained.



In 2006, Master Librada Ramos with a lot of courage, and the knowledge she had gained and the experiences she had gone through; opened her own school. Master Ramos feels that it is a great honor for her to be able to teach Arnis and bring the Filipino culture to Europe and the people of Italy.

Teaching and training young men and women regardless of age in the Filipino art of Arnis, is very important not only physically but also mentally.





www.arnisramos.info

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The Training of Nan Brenzel with Bais Tres Manos



Baraw



Kalis



Eskrima

Nan Brenzel Demonstrating the Bais Tres Manos System

Dr. Nan Brenzel earned a doctorate in counseling, research and education. She has directed domestic violence programs, counseled high school girls and has trained teens, women and families in self-defense for over 14 years. Nan has supported women and girls through teaching the Psychology of Assault and Attack, Conflict and Assault Verbal Techniques and Empowerment after Attack.

Nan began martial arts at age 42 when she felt certain she could focus, concentrate and provide the time and dedication it would take to gain speed, accuracy and power in her selected arts. Nan believes that trusting our first instinct is crucial because it is our own personal communication system about what is real and surrounding us at the moment. She is dedicated to the principle that we do not rise to the occasion in danger or attack rather we raise to the level of our training.

Trained by Grandmaster Chris Chan and Sifu Ralph Pinkerton in the art of Wing Chun, Nan is a Sifu in Wing Chung, Kung Fu and a student of Grand Maestro Jon Bais and his son Guro Elmer in Bais Tres Manos Kalis-Silat-Kuntaw Filipino martial arts. She has trained for the last five years with Walt Marshall, retired law enforcement officer, in Advanced Tactics and Weapons. An instructor of Walt's, Brain Everett, taught an edged weapon class and she enjoyed learning the skills. "I think it was because size and gender didn't matter and since I had always relied on angles in Wing Chun, combat and tactical skills came natural." For over 14 years she has studied martial arts and Chi Gong with a special emphasis on self-defense, health and healing. Focused on the impact of sensitivity and energy awareness in MMA, Nan is a Reiki Master. She has studied combat and tactical techniques and is no stranger to edged weapons...a favorite and expertise of Grand Maestro Jon Bais.

Why I Became Interested in Filipino Martial Arts

Brain Everett invited me to one of Grand Maestro Bais classes. I thought I was just going to go to one class to see some Filipino martial arts techniques and learn a few disarmament techniques.

What a surprise! I had read about Eskrima, Arnis, Kuntaw and Filipino martial arts, but the Bais Tres Manos system not only used techniques from all these arts, but also the open hand techniques were very familiar from my Wing Chun training with Sifu Pinkerton.

Within the very first minutes of Grand Maestro's class, I knew I was in the right place. Grand Maestro told us this was not an athletic class, it was a self defense, fighting class and if we were not there to learn to defend ourselves we should consider leaving now.

What I noticed immediately is that Grand Maestro Bais did not treat me like a woman (a plus for a woman martial arts student). Grand Maestro looked at my movement, my style of execution, my temperament and my tolerance. He watched me move and listened to what I said (in my case nothing, I strike silently) and then began teaching me according to how I would learn and develop technique. I am known among my friends for training heavy and training with heart... not always the student, who gets the drill or technique first, but the student who will practice it until it is my own and I can quickly and accurately execute the move accordingly.

Grand Maestro pushes one to the limit, which allowed me to see that I had a capacity beyond what I thought possible. I was also learning something very new in the Bais Tres Manos System. Grand Maestro focuses to the millionth degree on diligence and exactness when teaching basic techniques. He told me stories of how his Grandfather had made him practice one technique thousands of times in a single day, only to make him begin again the next day; and that getting the basics exact laid the foundation for swift and powerful attacks. There were no compromises or good enough in my training! Grand Maestro used many stories of his own training which served as an inspiration for me when I would become frustrated or unable to execute a move. Guro Elmer would step to my side on those days and twist and turn my body over and over until the attack could be executed with flow and force.

Counter Attack Technique Against Steel Baseball Bat



Step One - From the preparatory position anticipate to block the powerful two-hand attack with the steel bat of the opponent. Establish fighting stance; safeguarding body at the center with Olisis (stick).



Step Two - Execute with left augmented block to support right arm from the power double-handed bat attack by stepping 45 degrees to the right out of the line of force.



Step Three - Secure the attacking arm of the opponent with the left hand to off balance the opponent before the following counter attack.

Step Four - Follow up with tapi (tapping) technique with the left arm and simultaneously execute the right forearm strike to the temple of the opponent.



Step Five - Maintain the secure grip on the wrist of the opponent so that the right arm is aimed to execute the follow up (second attack).

Step Six - Swing forcefully with the follow up strike on the left side of the opponent's head while maintaining the control of the opponent's armed wrist.



Step Seven - Slide the right leg forward simultaneously executing the "*corto mano*" (short ranged) distance fighting technique by using the back of the Olisis (stick); hitting the opponent at the vital section of the body (throat/esophagus).

The Focus of My Training

These times I greatly valued because I could see how Grand Maestro had passed down not only the exactness of the family's fighting system, but the philosophy and patience required needed to teach others. It is in those moments that my heart felt deep respect for all who had come before me- some of whom had sacrificed their lives- and how very fortunate I was to be given this treasure. I was steadily able to combine my lessons into a sequence that allowed me to build on attacking and disarming.

"The Baklid is the System of Bais from Grand Maestro's Mother's side of the family using blocking and locking to off balance the opponent and the counter attack."



Synchronized training of Nan with Guro Elmer and Herbert Evans



Nan demonstrating the Baklid Trangkada technique with Herbert Evans

What continues to challenge me in the Bais Tres Manos System are the quick, efficient and direct attacks and disarmament techniques that put me in control within three moves (tres part of the system). It is a close in, efficient system where I learned quickly that the power in this system is because the end of one strike is the beginning of the next and that the body is an extension of the weapon...and anything can be a weapon.

Grand Maestro Bais has taught me to watch the striking hand and follow the weapon; a method that has increased my ability to disarm or counterattack with a high degree of speed and accuracy.

The Training of Nan from the Bais Family



Grand Maestro and Nan
Performing synchronized Sayaw
form of fighting technique



Guro Elmer teaching Nan
the proper disarming technique

In the first four months I trained daily with Grand Maestro Bais and his son Guro Elmer Bais, sometimes up to 5 hours a day. I trained total body awareness and conditioning. Grand Maestro Bais is an advocate of working the body, mind and spirit to understand about one's fighting space and capacity. I trained in the traditional style of the Filipino martial arts and continue to do so. With the help of Grand Maestro my awareness has heightened and my control with weapons has become more defined and accurate. My neighbors wonder why I have tires and bags hanging from the trees in my back yard!

Grand Maestro Bais is exacting in execution and had me start over if I failed to perform the technique according to his family's style of fighting. One I greatly respect because Grand Maestro took the time to teach me Filipino history and how fighting styles developed among families for the purpose of protecting family and their closest of friends. I have much respect and appreciation for the repetitions and restarts. If the strike or disarmament is executed exactly as taught it works regardless of the size or skill of an opponent. I train with all men, most of whom had much more experience in multiple martial arts or disarmament techniques than I. With Grand Maestro's guidance this does not prove to be an obstacle.

Having a doctorate in psychology, Grand Maestro's philosophy of "assess, control, break and eliminate" threats was quite compatible with my counseling techniques used to help clients change undesirable life habits. I found that that your mind, your heart, your hands and feet are the armor of your body just waiting to be reopened. Grand Maestro would remind me frequently that I already had all I needed and he was there to guide me in how to open up these skills.



Size and gender is not important if you
are taught to fight well



I am honored to be a student of Grand Maestro Jon Bais and his son Guro Elmer Bais of the Bais Tres Manos System of Filipino martial arts. For a now 56 year old woman who thought she would spend a few hours learning a few new techniques, I have begun to travel down a road that honors history, family, culture and courage. I hope I can remain worthy of carrying the Bais Tres Manos family's system forward to next generations.

“Each time I train with Grand Maestro and Guro I feel the infinite power and transformation of our auras guided by the Spirit of their ancestors.”



(Observe the Auras around this photo)



Guro Angel Ecdao

PAKAMUT International Association

By Felix Roiles and Kris Paragus



Angel Ecdao represented the WEKAF USA Team after she won all the regional and national competition. Ms. Ecdao trained with her father in a traditional Filipino martial art and as a law enforcement

officer, when she was young. Ms. Ecdao moved to Los Angeles, CA. area and is working at Warner Brothers. She then met Master Felix Roiles in 2003 and has constantly worked hard to be the best in Filipino martial arts.

Ms. Ecdao was also one of the first female certified Instructor of Filipino martial arts teaching PAKAMUT. She worked out a lot with her teammates Master Kris Paragas and Edwin Abo in preparation of the World Championship. She is so confident because she has trained with one of the best fighters in the Filipino martial arts.

Team PAKAMUT fighters who qualified for the National Championship that was held this February, 2008 in Mt. SAC College in Walnut, California, was Michael Lawrence, Edwin Abo, Jason Stanley, Marc Lawrence however because of the economy decided not to participate. Angel Ecdao was the only team member who participated in the World Competition. She was accompanied by her parents and family who are very supportive.

Guro Ecdao in the WEKAF competition took 3rd place in the competition that was held in Cebu, Philippines. She was a dominate competitor in her division, however she accidentally lost her weapon in the match against the British Team.

What goes into training for this event was explained by Master Kris Paragus, Angel's primary trainer. Master Kris explained his experience with Angel Ecdao.

I've known Angel for about 4 years now, back when Grandmaster Felix used to teach here in Colorado Blvd. in Eagle Rock. She's like a sponge who has just absorbed all the information that Grandmaster and I have taught her, especially knowing that she has a

Angel Ecdao is a member of PAKAMUT International Association under Master Felix Roiles. She competed in the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Championship in Cebu Philippines July 21-27, 2008.



Angel and her family with Master Felix



background in Serada Eskrima under her father. Not a lot of practitioners are that open minded like Angel.

As for preparing for any fight, it's pretty much "blood, sweat, and tears." I would wake them up as early as 7am during the weekends. We would prepare and train hard until we were totally exhausted and were left with a ZERO energy level. From running up hills, body conditioning, and sparring for hundreds of rounds every weekends three minutes each. And until now, I 'm surprised that she and the rest of the group have still stuck around.

Aside from the "hell weekend" training, she would devote her time going to her local gym to do some running to improve her cardio. She would take notes on everything I and Grandmaster tells her, from sparring strategies to her study to complete the Pakamut curriculum which eventually has earned her the title as the first female instructor of Pakamut. She her definitely pushed herself beyond above normal limits. Even though her doctor tells her to take a break and rest, she would still push herself to the limit and beyond.

Angel is a one hell of a female Eskrimador warrior and there's going to be more "rear" beating she'll contribute in competitions and we're lucky to have her as part of our Pakamut Family. More power to you Angel. Don't think that just because you have a world title, I won't wake you up early in the morning on the weekends and give you guys a hard training. Because I still will! Good luck Champ!



www.pakamut.com

Gigie Alunday
1st Female Representative of Filipino Combat Systems
By Rich Verdejo

As a child growing up in the Rampart district of Los Angeles, Gigie Alunday was first exposed to the Martial Arts through television and movies. Like most kids in the 70's, TV programs like "Kung-Fu" theatre and action stars like Bruce Lee played an important role in sparking the interest of the Martial Arts. Mimicking the movements as if an action star of her own, she began the journey that became her passion.

Unaware that her uncles and Lolo's were Eskrima players as well as combat tested fighters, they exposed Gigie to the Filipino art of the stick and blade when she visited them. Still at a young age of about 6, they told her it was a form of playing instead of fighting. It wasn't until her later teens that she realized that the Filipino's have their own fighting arts.

Being that most of her uncles lived in Northern California and Lolo's living in Ilocos Norte, Philippines, she wasn't able to formally train with them. As Karate and Tae

Kwon Do gain popularity in the 90's, Gigie began her first formal training in 1992 under Tae Kwon Do Master B.Y. Cho. Her spirited nature led her to be a force to be reckoned with in the TPA and Tae Kwon Do tournament circuit. This led a spot to compete in the U.S. National Invitational. After declining a spot to train and compete with what later became the U.S. Tae Kwon Do Olympic Team, Gigie decided to complete her college studies instead. She received two Masters Degrees in Business Administration and Negotiation and Conflict Resolution from California State University Dominguez Hills.

After taking a short break from Martial Arts, She witnessed an Ed Parker's Kenpo testing that resparked her interest in Martial Arts again. In 1995, she began training at the original Ed Parker's studio in Pasadena, Ca. It wasn't till 1998, where an instructor Rich Verdejo, took her training to a whole new level. Rich was disappointed in the way she was being trained because of her size and gender.



L-R: Tuhon Ray Dionaldo, Gigie, Sheri Parker (youngest daughter of Grandmaster Ed Parker), and Rich Verdejo



Gigie after a day of training

Gigie also agreed that the training was "soft" and never felt that her ranks were really earned. They began training together as if she was one of the guys and took it to her limits. She earned her black belt in Kenpo and this was also about the same time Filipino martial arts, was reintroduced into her life. Together with her business savvy, she along with Rich Verdejo maintained the Ed Parker's Kenpo Karate School in Pasadena until it closed in 2004.

The road to martial arts wasn't and is still not an easy one. Though the men of the family introduced it to her, the women often frowned at it. Gigie often heard their opinions of, *"It's not lady like"*, or *"You would've been a Doctor instead you keep PLAYING karate"*, or the infamous *"No man will want a girl that does what you do"*. martial arts should only be for fun, but not for Gigie. IT'S HER LIFE.



Gigie and Rich in action at a FCS gathering - Video [Click Here](#)

Even though she's highly respected, it still has its limits because of her gender. Some people just don't know how to take it. Here's a common scenario, "I'll take it easy on you because you're a girl". That's called insecurity. Then you have those that just get upset that a girl can out perform them. She's often asked "How do you deal with this?", and her usually reply is "Like any other prejudices, you just have to keep pushing forward".

With her new freedom, Gigie sought out new ideas and disciplines to broaden her understanding of Martial Arts. She shared and trained with various teachers such as Sijo Steve Muhammad in Kenpo, Muay Thai from Kru Ray Cole, Chi-gong and Chinese Boxing from Sigung Antwione Alferos and Arnis/Kali/Eskrima from Tuhon Ray Dionaldo, just to name a few. She has also been on the mat with MMA super-stars like Cung Le, Bas Rutten, B.J. Penn and John Hackleman with his Pit Crew.

It was the summer of 2002 when Gigie first attended an FCS Gathering in Clearwater, Florida. She immediately caught the family's attention with her high spirit and her will to learn. She has been attending the Gathering ever since.



Gigie training with Master Fred Lazo

Blade Fighting is now at Disney's Martial Art Festival, San Diego Grand Internationals, and Las Vegas' USA Internationals. They have also been invited to demo at Compete Internationals and Sayoc's Sama-Sama 2008.

Through Gigie's efforts and hard work, she has created a long list of accomplishment and contributions to martial arts. Gigie also created a company with her business partner, Rich Verdejo, for the martial artist as well as those that live an active life called "Da Best Quality Products". She has become an inspiration to lots of females, young and old, in the community as becoming the first female representative of FCS Kali. She has been called upon to represent and demo Ed Parker's Kenpo at Disney's first time ever martial arts parade. Gigie is also credited to host great events in Southern California as she promotes camaraderie amongst the Filipino martial arts community. With the amount of martial artist out there today, accomplishment like these are too hard to come by. For Gigie Alunday, this is just the beginning!



Top: Rich Verdejo, Tuhon Ray Dionaldo, and Gigie Alunday.

Bottom: Sigung Antwione Alferos and Sijo Steve Muhammad



Gigie and Rich at the 1st Martial Arts Demonstration at Disneyland California representing Ed Parker's Kenpo Karate



Gigie and Rich facing off at the Blade Fighting demo at Disneyland's Martial Arts Festival



Gigie and Rich performing the Subli representing Filipino martial arts in the evening show at the 10th Anniversary Show for the 2008 San Diego Grand Internationals at the San Diego Arena



Gigie receiving her Instructorship from Tuhon Ray Dionaldo



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Woman Training in the Filipino Martial Arts

By Mayan Jane Kessler



As a woman who has studied the martial arts for over 30 years, I often find it difficult to maneuver through the myriad of male egos in the process of learning. I have studied a very traditional Okinawan/Japanese martial art which had a heavy sense of hierarchy with all males in the lead. In spite of my personal sense of independence, I was really not inclined to venture out of that genre. However, I recently married a martial artist who studies a contemporary art and that opened my mind a bit.

It just so happened, that in 2003, Grandmaster Max Pallen was holding a set of seminars in San Leandro, CA, he sent out a flyer to other Filipino martial arts schools. My husband was in a school that received one and he really wanted to learn stick fighting so he signed up for the first seminar scheduled. I went with him to be supportive and so we could do a martial art together as we each practice a separate martial art.

I was really interested in learning another martial art but figured I would have to slog through the male condescension and/or fight my way through the typical male attitude. I did not expect what I received.

First of all, Grandmaster Pallen did not treat me any different than any of the males. I was the only female but I was just a student. That was very refreshing. I also realized that once you put a stick or a knife in your hand, it did not matter how much you weighed or how many muscles you have, it comes down to technique, sensitivity and especially, heart or fighting spirit.

I have always believed that the martial arts are meant for those who are of smaller stature to defend themselves against those more strong and powerful. In Filipino Martial Arts that seems to be the case. In the last 5 years I have noticed that the larger, very muscular (and tight) males seem to have more difficulty adapting to the softness and flow of the way of the stick. Once a woman gets a little confidence it is not so overwhelming and it is amazing what you can do! And Grandmaster Pallen makes it seem so effortless you just want to try harder and learn more.

In the Senkotiros School Grandmaster Pallen teaches with concepts, not techniques. This is very advantageous to females because it is not dependent on power. He uses basic movements and builds on them until you find yourself doing a very complex set of movements. He loves it when his students finally “get” something. He gives a big smile and a high five and you feel really good about yourself. Yet, he is a staunch traditionalist, philosophically as well as physically. He wants the students to be of sound body, mind and spirit and trains us in that way. Though we have fun and enjoy learning the art, we do not play when it comes to fighting. He is the real thing and has the experiences to back it up.

As a female it is an awesome feeling to suddenly realize that you can fight! Grandmaster Pallen sets such an example that you know you can do it too, all it takes is time and effort. It really builds your confidence.

Arnis comes alive in our Senkotiros classes. It is not just stick banging against stick or two people in a contest to see who can do the coolest technique and “get the other guy”. We learn blending and cooperation in order to continue the flow of movement and maintain composure and sensitivity.

I really like the softness and flow of technique to technique. Women, once they relax, can be very good at this. Most styles other than the internal arts are hard and stop after one or two well-placed techniques. Senkotiros Arnis flows and you need to learn how to see without looking, feel without touching and sense just by knowing. That comes in time and I think is easier for women to accomplish.

My hope is that more women will join and follow the Filipino Martial Arts to enhance their sense of security and boost their confidence in their physical ability. Just get a stick in your hand, find an instructor who has fighting spirit and integrity and you can be unstoppable!

Senkotiros Incorporated
830 Crocus San Leandro CA 94578



www.senkotiros.org



www.senkotirosphilippines.com

The Modern Maria Clara

By Emmanuel ES Querubin

The Filipina has always been typified as *mayumi* (demure) and *mahinhin* (gentle in act or behavior). Their rightful place was the kitchen. Their recreational activity was sewing, cooking and everything domestic. Sports or physical activity was not their domain. The likes of Gabriela Silang, was the exception rather than the rule.



A bevy of Maria Clara in baro at saya

The atrocity of the Second World War changed all that. The urgency to mend lives shattered by the cruelty of war transformed the Filipina from a “walk behind the man” existence to a “take charge” presence. The influence of changing times altered the attitude of the Filipina and exigency brought about a metamorphosis from “a butterfly to an eagle.” The Filipina “invaded” what was once uncharted territory. Slowly they encroached in the male-only dominated world. This encroachment turned to infiltration and now Filipinas have even outrun the Filipino male in the Philippine chauvinist sexist society.

The once locked doors of the male-controlled trade and labor occupations were blasted open by the Filipina, not by explosives but by assertive determination.

The upper echelon of the business world, once an exclusive field of male executives has been overrun by skirt-wearing, high heeled administrators. Even politics, once a preferential turf of the privileged men turned into a wide-open arena for the Filipina. A Filipina housewife successfully ousted a dictator who ruled for decades. She became the first female president of a country of over seventy million people. And she did this without shedding blood, wearing not baro at saya but a western-inspired executive yellow suit.

This is the Filipina of today, the modern Maria Clara. With the change of role, the Filipina also changed her native attire of baro at saya.

There was a time when the Filipina covers herself from the neck down to the ankles and the elbows. It is now considered “fashionable” to wear see-thru dresses, micro-minis, body-hugging tights, exposed midriff shirts and pants, sleeveless and backless tops, plunging necklines and other garments once considered “decadent.”

Perhaps, the most surprising transformation is the fact that the Filipina now dons martial arts uniform and exchange blows and sometimes bested men they once considered superior in the field of combat.

The Filipina took up the martial arts for varying reasons. Martial arts offer physical exercise that promotes health and fitness. Some took it for health reasons. Some took it to learn a system of self-defense. Some took it for fun and to while away the time in a more exciting and challenging way. Some were persuaded or influenced by friends, family member, and the movies. Some took the martial arts as part of their chosen profession. Sometimes it was all of these motivations. Whatever their reason was, the Filipina of today, the modern Maria Clara who wears martial arts attire is now the rule rather than the exception.

SIKARAN

Gloria Rapsing, took up SIKARAN. Taking advantage of her natural abilities, she competed in and won full-contact tournaments.



Showing off the trophies she won in full contact Sikaran tournaments.



Delivering biyakid against her Sikaran instructor Jaime Geronimo.

SIKARAN

Mayumi Querubin, an only child, influenced by her martial artist parents, took up SIKARAN.



www.SikaranPilipinas.com



Mayumi Querubin trading blows with her SIKARAN teacher and father.

KARATE



Showing off the medals she won in a High School Goju-ryu Karate Tournament.

Japan Goju-Ryu Karate-Do

Jessica Ricalde, after being victimized by a snatcher, decided to learn a system of self-defense.



Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate

Asuncion Diente, influenced by her Karate Instructor neighbor and friend, took up Karate.



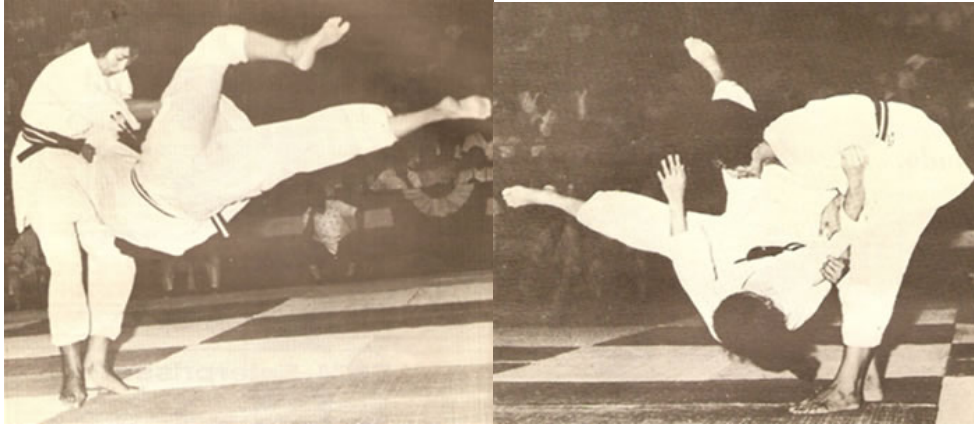
Here she is showing her tile-breaking form.



Angelina "Karate Tigress" Galvez, trained with Okinawan Karate Grandmaster Katsuya Miyahira, to learn a means of self-defense.

Japanese Kodokan Judo

Aurora Rodriguez, a Physical Education teacher chose Judo as her main curriculum and became the first female University Judo Instructress of the Philippines.



Japanese Kodokan Judo

Warlita Jorda, and friend decided to while away their extra time learning Judo to keep in shape at the same time learn how to protect themselves.



Amara Arkanis

(Stick Fighting)

Kathlou Lledo, a sickly child needed a form of physical exercise. Amara Arkanis not only made her healthier and stronger but the timing and rhythm of the maneuvers, also help her in the music she writes and plays, including the advertisement jingles she produces.



Kathlou Lledo, pretty and pretty deadly. She took martial arts for her health and gained much more.



Kathlou showing brother Mark the finer points of Amara Arkanis.



Kathlou Lledo with her father Matawguero Louelle Lledo (founder of Amara Arkanis) to her right and brother Guro Mark Lledo (heir-apparent to Amara Arkanis) to her left.



amara-arkanis.com



Catherine Canete Knight

Carrying on Her Father's Legacy

By Zena Sultana Babao, MBA

The dream, the hope, and the goal of this devoted daughter is to make sure that her father's contribution to the Filipino culture and the Filipino martial arts world continue to spread throughout the world, and that her father's skill be recognized as a true art, not just a fighting skill or technique.

Catherine Canete Knight (Kitty for short) is carrying on her father's legacy. Her father, Supreme Grandmaster Cacoy Canete, is a living legend and a world-famous martial arts icon. He is the creator of the Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima/Eskrido, a mixed martial arts system combining Doce Pares Eskrima, Boxing, Japanese Jujitsu, Kodokan Judo, Wrestling, Aikido and Karate.

Kitty can do it! She is not daunted by this awesome task, and in fact, she is enthusiastic about it. Kitty is focused, dedicated, smart and savvy. And "deadly" too! Branded as a "deadly female" while studying and practicing several kinds of martial arts while still in Cebu City, Philippines (where she was born and raised), she was also nicknamed "Diana" - a reference to Diana Rigg of "The Avenger" TV series at that time.

A top-notch martial artist, Kitty is a Master in her father's system of martial arts, a 3rd Dan Black Belt in Shotokan Karate, a 3rd Dan Black Belt in Shorin-ryu Karate, and a Judo expert.

In carrying on her father's legacy, Kitty is being helped by the Grandmasters, Masters, and practitioners of her father's art, and of course, Senior Grandmaster Cacoy's other children. The Canete kids were named in alphabetical order by their dad and their late mom, Herminia. They are: Alex, Bernadette, Catherine, Dennis, Edgar (deceased), Faye and Glenn.



www.docepares.com



Front row (L-R) Edgar (deceased), Glenn and Faye
Back row (L-R) Dennis, Catherine (Kitty), Mom Herminia (deceased), Dad Cacoy, Alex and Bernadette.



(L-R) Alex, Catherine (Kitty), Dennis, Bernadette, Dad Cacoy, Glenn, Mom Herminia (deceased), Edgar (deceased) and Faye.

How does Kitty feel about her famous father? In an interview with this writer, Kitty said: *"I feel so proud of my dad's accomplishments! The martial arts system that he created is his prized token. Now that my father's twilight time is fast approaching, my observation about his efforts to continue propagating his style all boils down to love and joy. He is sharing his profound love for the art with his loyal students, and he is delighted in their progress."*

Senior Grandmaster Cacoy's students have personally experienced that "love and joy." As everyone knows, before and after the seminars, the Supreme Grandmaster is fond of telling jokes. He has a unique and endearing sense of humor, and I am truly blessed (though I'm not a student but a devoted follower) that I am one of those he tells his jokes to.

Kitty's hope, and goal, is to make sure that her father's great contribution to the martial arts, and to the Filipino culture, will continue to spread throughout the world. She would like her father's skill be "recognized as a true art - not just a fighting skill or technique." It is!

"I dream that the Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima/Eskrido will remain forever," she enthused. "In fact, the young members of my family, and my other relatives, are being prepared for the next generation to come. They will be the ones to carry my dad's art forward!"

Are "fame and fortune" important to her and the Canete family? Kitty's answer: *"I wished that my father and the whole family had both, but he is a true martial artist, and is most interested in the development and propagation of his art."* According to Kitty, peace of mind is more important than material things "for how can one enjoy spending when the mind is troubled?"

"Prayer," she continued, "is very much a part of my family's spiritual strength and without it, we don't know what else is there to hope for and be thankful for in our short lifetime on earth." I know that wherever Senior Grandmaster Cacoy holds seminars, he makes it a point to attend Catholic mass every Sunday, as he did here in San Diego when we hosted two seminars for him.

Forehand upper-cut strike to Kitty's left



1. With her right foot forward, Kitty blocked the attacker's oli, while her left hand, with the fist down, grabbed the butt end of his oli.

2. With her olisi hand slipping under the attacker's olisi, Kitty twisted it, fist up, to hit the attacker's left neck. At the same time, she pressed her olisi against the crook of his elbow. Simultaneously, she pulled her olisi to her armpit and locked it there.
3. While Kitty's olisi is pressing against the attacker's neck and elbow, and his olisi locked in her armpit, her left hand grabbed her olisi, pulling hard to the left.



Forehand strike to Kitty's left shoulder

1. With her right foot forward, Kitty blocked Bing's olisi while her left hand grabbed his olisi.
2. Kitty struck Bing's right rib with her olisi. She then inserted her olisi under his right arm as a lever, while raising up the butt end of her olisi.
3. With the butt end of her raised olisi pressing the inner part of Bing's olisi, Kitty pushed towards the left. At the same time she pulled the left side of her waist twisting her body to the left.



While growing up in Cebu City, Kitty watched her father perfect the art of Eskrima/Eskrido behind closed doors. He practiced it only with a select few. At that time, her dad's eskrima techniques were top-secret because of "the intense competition and rivalry among eskrimadors of various groups and styles."

Senior Grandmaster Cacoy earned his reputation by breaking tradition and revolutionizing the original Doce Pares style, as well as winning in many actual martial arts combat. The techniques of Eskrido are definitely advantageous in actual

fight. Kitty recalled that there were no staged tournaments during those years - only real and dangerous full combat challenges.

In August 19, 1979, however, Senior Grandmaster Cacoy was the Grand Champion in the Masters Division in the First National Invitational Arnis Tournament in Cebu City, sponsored by the NARAPHIL (National Arnis Association of the Philippines).

Touching on the background and history of her father and his art, Kitty said that Senior Grandmaster Cacoy helped to pioneer the progress of Kodokan Judo after World War II. Before the war, her dad was an amateur boxer. He studied Japanese Jujitsu, which he combined with the original Doce Pares style to form the early stages of his art. The final stage is what Senior Grandmaster Cacoy has been teaching in the Philippines, here in the United States, and in some countries in the world.

Kitty said that their original gym, which was just a step away from their house, was the playground of the Canete kids. The olisi (sticks) and wooden daggers were their

toys. At the end of their dad's working sessions, the kids were exhausted, and they usually fell asleep on the mats. Their dad had to carry them one by one to their house.

At age 10, Kitty seriously started Eskrima and knife disarming. It was not just play anymore! She studied, practiced, and became good in several martial arts. During that time, there was always a clamor for her entire family to perform at the coliseums and arenas in different parts of the Philippines. The Canete brood was like a circus family traveling from place to place.

In every performance, Kitty partnered with male opponents who used real daggers and/or olisis in their series of attacks. Kitty would defend by applying rapid-fire parrying and disarming techniques. Like her dad, she is lightning-fast! And like her dad, she has always advocated mixed martial arts because it enhances the effectiveness of any technique.

Attack to Kitty's left shoulder



1. Kitty first slipped her olisi under Bing's olisi hand. She then twisted her olisi hand, fist up, over the attacker's locked olisi towards her right side. With the palm facing down, her left hand catches her own olisi with both her hands. This position is called "X" since the forearms are crossed.
2. She pressed the attacker's olisi down to the left with her olisi in a downward diagonal position; then applied pressure with her right hand while being steadied with her left.
3. She then slipped her right hand under the upper part of her olisi towards the left side of the attacker's head, and finally pushed his head with her right hand to the left using the full force of her body.

Attack to Kitty's right shoulder with a backhand strike



1. With her right foot forward, Kitty blocked Bing's olisi while her left hand grabbed the butt-end of his olisi.
2. She then hooked the butt-end of her olisi against his elbow. To achieve this hooking, she slipped her olisi under his wrist while at the same time bringing her olisi under her armpit and locking it.
3. Kitty is now ready to apply pressure on his elbow using the butt-end of her olisi.

4. While locking his olisi in her right armpit, she moved her left hand down to catch her olisi's butt-end with her left hand and applying pressure to his elbow.
5. Kitty moved her left hand to the top of his olisi, fist up, while her right hand is still holding her olisi over his elbow. She then pressed Bing's elbow downward, using the full force of her body.



Backhand strike to Kitty's right shoulder

1. With her right foot forward, Kitty blocked the attacker's olisi while her left hand held the butt end of the attacker's olisi.
2. She then hooked her wrist with her olisi's butt-end. Simultaneously, her left hand pulls his olisi top towards the crook of her elbow and locked it there. Kitty's left hand grip is facing to the right and is on top of his grip, which is facing left.
3. With the upper part of her olisi locked in the crook of her elbow, and the lower portion of his olisi locked against her inner thigh, Kitty moved her left hand to his right elbow and at the same time applied downward pressure.

This remarkable Filipino martial arts woman has been in the United States for 26 years. She came to America to finish the 1982 BBC documentary video "Way of the Warrior" with Dan Inosanto. Dan is another world-famous martial artist who was the training partner of the late Bruce Lee. An actor, Dan was in the movie "Game of Death" which starred Bruce Lee.

I am proud to say that Dan is our "kumpadre" being the "ninong" (godfather) of Kris, my youngest son.

How does a "deadly female" like Kitty chill out? She cools off by listening to jazz music, Sarah Vaughn and Diana Krall. Her whole family is very musical and some family members are professional musicians. Kitty loves to read books by Leo Tolstoy, Voltaire and Ayn Rand. Right now, Kitty is finishing the book "When We Were Orphans," the fifth and latest novel of world-famous British author Kazuo Ishiguro.

On the personal front, Kitty is married to James Knight, a former professor in Experimental Psychology. They have an adopted daughter, Kate Ann Janine. Kitty is working full time as an accountant and she has such a busy life maintaining a family. The Knights found time, however, to visit Monaco, Israel, England, France and many more. They have made friends all over the world, are always looking to meet new friends and give them a tour of New Jersey (their American hometown) and New York, the "Big Apple."



Monaco



Sinai



Versailles



England

Kitty and her nephew, Fernando “Bing” Canete (who often visits from neighboring Pennsylvania) shared with this writer various Eskrima/Eskrido techniques, with Bing as the attacker, and Kitty showing effective defenses to the attacks.

For women and young ones just entering the martial arts world, her advice is this: *“Don’t be afraid to get hurt a little during practice, for that is how you will learn the proper techniques regardless of your weight and height.”*

Forehand Strike to Kitty's left



1. Kitty applied a left scooping block to the attacker's olisi, and locked her olisi in her armpit. At the same time she struck the attacker's left shoulder. The attacker applied a scooping block to her olisi strike, and locked it in his armpit.
2. With both olisi interlocked, Kitty moved her left hand rightward and pressed the attacker's left forearm against her olisi. She turned her body towards the right.
3. Kitty grabbed the attacker's olisi with her left hand and locked it behind her right elbow pressing it against her right rib. At the same time she swung her olisi over to the left and locked her elbow against the attacker's right wrist and his olisi. While the attacker still has her olisi locked in the left armpit, she pressed-locked her left hand to his chest using her locked olisi. Kitty moved her body forward to apply pressure.
4. Kitty then slid her left hand towards the left side of the attacker's head and pushed his head to his left.



About the author: Zena Sultana 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, 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.

Women in the Art of the Blade

By Ka Abner Anievas

KEAT FMA Chief Instructor

It is no secret the women are always the target of hold-ups, robbers and snatchers in the Philippines. With so many Call Centers now operating in the Philippines many of these workers are young female employees. And due to working hours they have to go out of the workplace early in the morning, making them target of the criminals.

A Sample Case: [Click Here](#)

I believe that your safety and the safety of your family are your own responsibilities. Law enforcement is around, but if an attack happens, in the next 1 to 2 minutes, then you might be on your own. A 100lbs woman can't simply win against a determine 150lbs Criminals, but give this woman a 3inches Knife could make a big difference.

Training women in the Art of Blade can give them a feel of security; it can boost their confidence and can make them aware of a dangerous situation. As a martial arts practitioner I believe that is our duty to arm woman with the knowledge in the Art of Blade.



See them training: [Click Here](#)



keatfma.webs.com

Email

Schiwa Niku **An Adventure at the 4th FMA Festival** By Frank Ayccho

Schiwa Niku began her training under Grandmaster Dieter Knuettel of DAV, in pursuit of her career in the study of Filipino martial arts she participated at the 4th FMA Festival held in Boracay and in Iloilo, Philippines.

Schiwa Niku is a lovely silent lady, approximately 5'8" tall and has spent a time and money to travel to the Philippines to learn Arnis from the different Grandmasters and their systems.

She traveled with her trusted friend Joerg Heutmanek her partner in arnis training. During the 4th FMA Festival she suffered of skin blisters on her hands in handling the baston, however with determination to finish Arnis and knife fighting and street fighting combat lessons she continued on for the knowledge is priceless.



Schiwa Niku and Joerg Heutmanek stated, *“The idea of learning different Martial Art Styles from different Masters, Senior Masters and Instructors caught our attention and so we jumped at the chance and applied for the camp”. “With the possibility to gain an insight into a lot of different Arnis Styles using sticks, knives and other amazing Filipino weapons”.*

At the end of the day, the Officers of DAV headed by Grandmaster Dieter Knuettel followed by Senior Master Philipp conducted a promotional test to promote the lady Schiwa Niku and her partner to the next higher belt level.

The following day Schiwa Niku attended training in Kuntaw Arnis Umbag system, the reality street combat fighting of Senior Master Frank Aycocho, “Umbag is a common Filipino word refers to a powerful strike or smash by hand knocking out an opponent in a single to triple strikes without touching opponents weapon, this applies the philosophy of Aycocho Silat fighting without weapon with an armed opponent”.

Schiwa Niku and Joerg Heutmanek stated: *“Master Frank Aycocho, taught the Kuntaw style with some very interesting techniques which are transferable when using sticks or knives. The techniques of Kuntaw are, like always in traditional Filipino martial art techniques, very simple but very effective to strike down an opponent or to defend against attacks. Specially the short distance techniques and in-fight moves are very interesting and contain a lot of special details to make your strike more effective”. “As every style it has its own characteristics but also many of the techniques are common with Modern Arnis, we had the possibility to upgrade our skills in Modern Arnis and enhance them by learning new styles”.*



At the completion of the FMA Festival of 2008, at the Iloilo airport on my way back to Manila, Schiwa Niku and Joerg Heutmanek were on their way to Cebu to catch up with WEKAF and to train with Grandmaster Nick Elizar of Balintawak Arnis. Schiwa Niku and Joerg Heutmanek made reservations to visit and to train with me at my Kuntaw Gym IKF/KNP NCR Chapter in Quezon City, hopefully when they return from Cebu.

Contact Senior Master Aycocho at: (0919)883-1120

or **Email:** frankaycocho@yahoo.com

Sibak Frances Peterson

By Tasi Alo

On March 30, 2008 Frances Peterson was promoted to the rank of Black Belt by Professor Anthony Ramos and witnessed by Grandmaster Emil Bautista, Professor Cheyenne Corpus and Affiliates of the Northern California Headquarters, KSDI.

Frances Peterson



Sibak Frances first started her Kajukenbo training under Ahgung Tony Ramos with Pete, her husband of 25 years, from 1979-1981. Both reached the status of blue belt before they moved from the area. In 2003, Frances met Sigung Anthony Ramos at the Suisun Joseph A. Nelson Center and continued her training in the Ramos Method of Kajukenbo. On November 2006, Frances performed and received the ranking of brown belt from her previous status as a green belt achieved in October 2004.

It was at this time that Frances Peterson came into contact again with Filipino martial arts, having previously learned some Doce Pares from Ahgung Tony Ramos. Ahgung Ramos had gone to the Philippines to learn from Great Grandmaster Cacoy Canete, and then returned to California, continuing on to Hawaii to add Filipino martial arts to his Ramos Method of Kajukenbo. In 2006, Master Tasi Alo introduced Wahiawa Kajukenbo to 'Eskabo Da'an' to help promote that style of Filipino martial arts throughout America. In 2007 Frances was introduced to the fundamentals of Pedoy/Derobio Escrima. She is an assistant instructor under Master Tasi Alo and Professor Anthony Ramos helping with Kajukenbo and Derobio Escrima students. She is valuable, as an assistant instructor with both men and women for she has such insight to the students needs in training. I count myself blessed to have her on the team of instructors at Wahiawa Kajukenbo Ohana.

Frances Peterson with Master Tasi Alo

Today, Frances can be found assisting with both the children's and adult classes. Sibak Frances has committed herself to the tournament competition group Team NorCal HQ. During circuit trainings, when all the affiliates meet, Sibak Frances will assist and also train. Sibak Frances competed her first full year of competition in the 2007 Gold Cup Circuit and was recognized and ranked 1st place in forms competition for 35 years and up in the Kaju/Kempo and Chinese/Wushu division.



Francis Peterson and Master Alo



Wahiawa Kajukenbo
 Ramos Method
 611 Village Dr.
 Joe Nelson Community Center
 Suisun City, CA. 94585



Ilustrisimo Kali (A Student Viewpoint)

By Carlen Lavigne

I am hardly an expert in Kali, but I have been a grateful student of the art for a little over a year. My martial arts background is varied; I've also studied Tae Kwon Do, Hung Gar, and Wing Chun. Primarily, I am a practitioner of Wing Chun; I hold a blue sash rank at Heritage Martial Arts in Ottawa, Ontario, and I teach a weekly women's class in Red Deer, Alberta. However, my Wing Chun training is currently done at a distance, or during vacations - so another two nights per week in Red Deer, I study Ilustrisimo Kali at Kali Martial Arts Academy, under the tutelage of Maestro Norman Suanico. There are shades of Wing Chun in Kali, particularly when we practise open-hand disarming techniques; I occasionally recognize a block, or a hold, or a particular piece of footwork. Each art relies on speed, accuracy and fluidity. For the most part, however, training with sticks and swords is a new and exciting challenge.

I first encountered Kali during occasional weekend seminars in Ottawa, taught by Sensei Gordon Legace. I liked the novelty of hearing my sticks whistle through the air, or puzzling out the logic behind a sequence of quick, sharp blocks. Now that I have the opportunity to study Kali on a steady basis, I enjoy the art for several reasons. The friendly atmosphere, the physical and intellectual challenge, and the sense of personal accomplishment fostered by my studies all come into play to keep me coming back week after week.



Maestro Suanico and Carlen Lavigne



lock. Moreover, I learn about the other people in the class - the salesman, the construction contractor, the high school student, or the brothers who teach guitar. Kali class is a great place to make new friends.

Kali also challenges me on both a mental and a physical level. I have tried gym memberships in the past, and my use of the treadmills or weight machines always dies off after a few months; I am too easily bored by repetition. With Kali - with every martial art - I learn something new every time I go to class. When I repeat activities and drills, it's because I can improve my performance. When I perform well enough, I am promptly rewarded with some new variation or technique. I am seldom bored, and if I lose focus, few things call back my attention like the need to avoid a swinging stick. Through Kali, I improve my manual dexterity, my fitness, my concentration, and my understanding of technique. Maestro Norman is a true master of his art; he spent years studying Kali, even living in the home of Grandmaster "Tatang" Antonio Ilustrisimo. He is both patient and thorough in his teaching. Guro Sonny Padillo also often stops by the school to check in on classes and offer his own expert advice. I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from them both.

What they teach me is both exciting and useful. I am not a particularly strong person; I have thin wrists and fragile hands, and I've never felt entirely comfortable punching things. With Wing Chun, I frequently use elbow or palm strikes; with Kali, I add weapons to my repertoire. I can use my full strength when I strike, without being worried about damaging my knuckles. Hearing the sharp crack as my stick slams into a tire or a practice dummy is satisfying; so is managing to block a padded blow from a sparring partner. I am not looking to fight, but I appreciate that I am developing the ability to defend myself in a new way. All of my martial arts studies have taught me self-confidence and discipline; Kali in particular teaches me how to use sticks or swords as extensions of my body.



Lavigne training with Guro Padillo

I am currently studying Level 4, which is the last single-stick level in the Ilustrisimo system. I have reached the point where things are starting to make sense to me - where I understand how one move can lead into another, and how the simple strikes and disarms I learned in Level 1 have built the foundation for a more complex understanding of the art. I am looking forward to Level 5, when I can begin to use two sticks in tandem. Each Tuesday and Thursday evening, after I finish a long day of work, I have the opportunity to shed my daily stresses and immerse myself in a friendly, multicultural environment filled with smiling people. At the same time, I am engaged in a serious study of practical skills.

The best thing about martial arts is that I never stop learning. With the guidance of Maestro Norman, I anticipate the day when I can feel truly comfortable with my Kali sticks. I have faith that perseverance will pay off - and I am certainly enjoying the journey.



www.kaliacademy.net

Modern Arnis Hong Kong

International Modern Arnis
Federation Philippines - Hong Kong

“2nd Basic Modern Arnis Seminar”

High Court, Admiralty, Hong Kong

By Rene V. Sorezo

Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) was successfully with their 2nd Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar. This is in fulfillment to the pledged and commitment of Guro Rene V. Sorezo, MAHK (IMAFP-HK) President and Guro Eric T. de Leon, MAHK (IMAFP-HK) Vice President, to the Filipino community in Hong Kong in promoting Filipino Culture, Arts, Sports and Heritage. It also in response to the numerous requests of those who missed the opportunity to participate in the 1st Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar held on September 16, 2007.

The Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar started with the introduction of the Modern Arnis History, its disciplines and principles, followed by the step by step teach-in on the actual execution of the basic strikes both on stationary and body coordinated movements on different vital points of the opponent, basic blockings and basic disarming techniques has been also shown and performed by the participants. Single Sinawali drill on single stick and double stick were also introduced and



learned by the participants on the second part of the seminar. All participants received Certificate of Attendance from Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) after successfully completed the seminar and was offered the privilege and welcome to join the group in their regular training practice.

Guro Rene and Guro Eric expressed their thanks and appreciation to all participants and to the Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) members who showed up during the seminar and extend their valuable assistance on this event.

Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) will continue to conduct “Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminars” to interested individuals and Filipino organizations in Hong Kong to continuously promote and embrace our own culture. We must be proud to be a Filipino.



Participants and Members of Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK)

3rd Basic Modern Arnis Seminar

On December 9, 2007, the third “Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar” was held in Hong Kong with twenty six (26) participants including Junior Arnisadors. The Basic Modern Arnis Seminar always started with the introduction of the Modern Arnis History, its Disciplines and Principles, followed by the step by step teach-in on the actual execution of the Basic strikes both on stationary and body coordinated movements on different vital points of the opponent body, basic blockings and basic disarming techniques has been also shown and performed by the participants. Single Sinawali drill on single stick and double stick were also introduced and learned by the participants on the second part of the seminar. All participants received Certificate of Attendance from Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) after successfully completed the seminar and was offered the privilege and welcome to join the group in their regular training practice.

The main objective of the seminar is to pass the culture on among the Filipinos working and living in Hong Kong and give them a clear understanding that “Arnis” is an authentic Filipino Martial Arts, and part of our Heritage.

A series of “Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminars” will be continuously offered to other different OFW organizations as the primary project and part of the Community Service of the newly revived Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) and be an offering to the Filipino community specially OFWs.



4th Basic Modern Arnis Seminar

Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK), one of the International Chapter of the International Modern Arnis Federation Philippines (IMAFP) launched their 2008 opening salvo of the Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar on January 13, 2008 at High Court vicinity, Admiralty, Hong Kong. It was the 4th edition of their offering to the Filipino community in Hong Kong and twenty seven (27) out of forty (40) registered participants showed up in the seminar and most of them have a touch of Arnis skills during their school days in the Philippines on their Physical Education classes.

A brief introduction of the Modern Arnis profiles, history and structures started the seminar followed by the Modern Arnis traditional stretching and warming-up exercises to revive joints and muscles of the participants. Stick twirling on both forward and reverse direction was also performed before proceeding to actual execution of the Standard Basic striking techniques on a stationary and with body coordinated movements. Basic blockings and disarming techniques were also part of the seminar.



Guro Rene V. Sorezo, MAHK (IMAFP-HK) President and Guro Eric T. de Leon, Vice-President and Chairman on Training and Seminars demonstrated to the group the proper execution of basic striking, blockings and disarming techniques which was followed by the participants with the assistance from the regular members. Single “Sinawali” single stick, a head and knee strike pattern was also learned and performed which refresh the high school memories of some participants and aroused their interest to join the modern arnis group on their regular training every Sunday.

The seminar was concluded by distributing Certificate of Attendance to the participants and taking souvenir pictures with the MAHK members.

Modern Arnis Hong Kong is inviting interested individuals and OFW Organizations on their Free Basic Modern Arnis Seminar and be a part of our culture.



For Seminar Details and Arrangements

Contact Modern Arnis Hong Kong (IMAFP-HK) at:



www.imafp.com

Email

Guro Rene V. Sorezo

President, MAHK (IMAFP-HK)

IMAFP Coordinator, Hong Kong

(852) 6198-9661

or

Guro Eric T. de Leon

Vice President, MAHK (IMAFP HK)

Chairman, Training & Seminars

(652) 9687-2584



Senior Guro Ginalyn J. Relos

Woman of the Year 2007

Modern Arnis

Senior Guro Ginalyn Relos is a native Visayan, she was born and raised in Barrio Nagustan, town of Nabas and province of Aklan in Panay Island. She started learning Martial Arts (Arnis) when she was in her first year of college, in Manila. When she was a young girl, she used to play with the boys using fighting movements she saw when she watched Jackie Chan movies. From that, her wish and aim was to learn that beautiful art she had seen in movies and to show people that a woman could do it also. In her mind, men are not all the time superior to

women.

So when she went to Manila and started to study her courses in college, she use to look for some kind of physical fitness class and would hope to find a karate class, “not familiar with Filipino Martial Arts-Arnis.” Senior Guro Relos thought that it could be a stepping stone, or maybe a starter for learning karate, so she enrolled in an Arnis class, never thinking that it will be the start and it would be a continuous love for the Filipino martial art.

The only style that Senior Guro Relos ever learned was Modern Arnis from her senior instructors in the College Arnis club, which was thru Senior Master Bambit Dulay's supervision, and until she was able to directly train with Senior Master Dulay and has continued up to this date.

Senior Guro Ginalyn Relos favorite aspect about Modern Arnis is the way of learning and teaching... the openness of the art.

Senior Guro Relos thoughts on women in the Filipino martial arts are that not all men are capable of doing the martial arts. Women are capable of doing the martial arts with grace, a flowing smoothness, and form that some men cannot accomplish.

For the future my only thought is to accomplish my training to the best of my ability and looking to the future of the IMAFP as an outstanding Federation that supports all groups doing their art even if it is not modern arnis for a strong Filipino Martial Arts Brotherhood. Everybody must be happy.

Senior Guro Ginalyn Relos is the Secretary for the International Modern Arnis Federation - Philippines, and continuously sends information to up date the IMAFP website with the latest news. She has supported, taught and has been overall in charge of various programs for the IMAFP.



www.imafp.com

At the present time Senior Guro Relos is in Dubai, U. A. E. promoting Modern Arnis.



“Golden Falcon Karate Centre,” in Al Karama, Dubai, U. A. E.



Teaching in Abu Dhabi, U. A. E.

Learn more about Dayang Relos:



[Click Here](#)

Bella Marie “Peachie” Baron-Saguin

Woman of the Year 2008



Today, Peachie has resigned from the business world and has devoted her time promoting the Filipino martial arts. Her goal is for ARNIS to gain recognition not only in other countries but in her own country as well. She has continuously rallied ARNIS, wrote articles about it and has promoted the art whenever given the chance. She is the secretary of the National Filipino Martial Arts association and has organized mall tour for the different clubs. An arnisador herself and continuously training with the Grandmaster of Kalis Ilustrisimo Antonio Diego, she not only love the Filipino culture and the art, but has embraced it as well.

Peachie has had the urge to practice the martial arts since childhood in her own words, *“this is how she got engrossed in the Filipino martial arts”*.

Ever since I was a child I have always dreamed of becoming a good martial artist. I have always imaged myself involved in a fight, fighting and clawing my way to victory, reigning over my vanquished opponents. This deep ambition burned in me for a long, long time.

At first, I was just contented with simply fantasizing and using my imagination. Later on this desire turned into a consuming passion and martial arts became an obsession. This prompted me to watch and observe martial arts and their champions. All of the ones I’ve observed had their own unique qualities and superior techniques but none had the type of “action” I was looking for. My search finally ended when I chanced upon an old acquaintance who invited me to attend and observe a Korean discipline he was training in. As I watched with keen eyes, I noticed that it was like a combination of different martial arts disciplines all rolled into one. I was fascinated and captured by this martial art and decided to join.

My first day of training was really exciting. For me it was the realization of my dreams. I was oblivious of the time, of the hard training and of the rigid discipline. I was

in ecstasy. I was always looking forward to each and every training session. My enthusiasm never waned, instead it seemed to increase more and more as my stamina and skills increased. However, a time came when I felt that the art that I was pursuing was not enough. I needed more and craved for more. I could not identify what was missing and yet knew that I was not fulfilled.

I eventually enrolled in another martial art as well, making sure that the sessions were not in conflict with each other. For a while this arrangement seemed to fill the gap that nagged at me.

One day I arrived early for my scheduled training session. I could hear commands being barked at where the Taekwondo classes were usually held. Curiosity got the best of me since I knew that there were no Taekwondo classes scheduled for that particular hour. I climbed the stairs and sneaked a peek at whatever was going on.

There before my eyes were two guys fully equipped with head gear, body protectors, and boxing gloves sparring at full force. Not a single blow was held back. Kicks and punches were being exchanged with precision and dodged and parried with grace and speed. I looked and asked myself: What discipline is this? I looked around and saw the other people in the training hall, men in black with this curious looking logo on their shirts. I did not see any familiar face. None of them were of the Taekwondo group. I focused my eyes back at the two combatants. I was mesmerized by the intensity and seriousness of their training.

I was thrilled and filled with excitement. Deep within me, my spirit was shouting “This is it, Peachie. This is what you’ve been looking for!”

I was to learn later on that I had eavesdropped in on a Bakbakan training session. The group present then was Ramon Tulfo, Miguel Zubiri, Edgar Aristorenas, Benny Litonjua and trainers Dodong Sta. Iglesia, Peter Sescon and Torry Seas.

Conducting the classes were Masters Christopher Ricketts and Tony Diego. I stayed and watched and waited until they finished their training. From that time on, I always arrived early and took my position at the stairs to watch, making sure that I was inconspicuous and out of their way. For several sessions I was content to be at what I now considered my perch, watching and admiring their training sessions.

One day there Master Christopher Ricketts approached me and gave me a chair to sit on telling me it was more comfortable than the steps I was sitting on. I realized then that I was talking to the Topher Ricketts whose name was held in high esteem by most serious martial artists in the Philippines. Later during that session he would return and ask me about my interest in the martial arts. I explained to him that I had been taking up two disciplines of martial arts but have recently dropped one and now concentrated only on one.

Summoning my courage, I asked him if he could teach me. His answer only made me admire and respect him more. He said, “*I could only help you, but your loyalty should*



Ramon Tulfo, Bakbakan’s Public Relations Officer and noted columnist, practices his dodging techniques against Peachie’s kicks.

remain in the discipline you are in right now." And true to his word, he did help me. He assigned Dodong Sta. Iglesia to be my trainer. My training suddenly took an abrupt turn; I was back to the basics. The training was very rigid; I was pushed to the limits. I would finish each session exhausted but fulfilled. The training was very different. It opened up a new dimension for me. I then realized that I no longer had any interest in my one other remaining discipline. All the enthusiasm I had for it was not just waning but gone. The magic was no longer there. I realized that I would only be disillusioning myself and my instructors if I continued training with them.

I made my exit gracefully and with their blessing. They realized something happened to me for my performance improved leaps and bounds since I started training with Bakbakan. They were happy that I found what I was looking for.

From then on, Master Topher Ricketts and trainer Dodong Sta. Iglesia trained me on a regular basis. My stances were corrected, my form checked, my punches and kicks were made more defined. I was taught different styles of offense and defense. I was trained in unarmed combat as well as in weaponry skills, including sticks and knives. I was also taught different katas from several disciplines to develop and improve my intrinsic energy. Because of this intense and rigid training, my skills have improved and my self-confidence bolstered to the point where sparring sessions have become the norm rather than the exception.



Peachie undergoing focus mitt training with Chief Instructor Christopher Ricketts

Looking back, I know and realize that I have become a different person, a far, far cry from what I was before. I owe it all to my teacher, Master Christopher Ricketts, to whom I have so much faith and reverence. Also to my trainer Dodong Sta. Iglesia who has been very patient and understanding. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the members of Bakbakan who have been very supportive of me, then the only female member of Bakbakan, and most of all to God who answered my fervent prayer and gave me a good mentor and a solid, supportive group.

When Master Christopher Ricketts left for the States, I started training with Master Diego on a regular basis with his Binondo group, the Kalis Ilustrisimo. My training then took on a leap. I was showed the proper way to hold the blade, not to grip the handle too tight, to prevent it from being disarmed when struck heavily with another sword. I was then taught the different kinds and forms of striking and blocking, and the footwork and stances that goes for each attack and counter attack. I was asked to repeatedly execute a particular strike before moving on to the next. Master Diego has always reiterated the importance of a repetitive exercise for one to gain mastery of the form.

Soon enough Master Diego taught me how to use the stick and knife at the same time. This style is called Puntai y Daga. From this style, my interest grew more and more and I always look forward to a sword play with Master Diego, where my speed and accuracy to block and strike are put to test, my distance and movements, checked and corrected. There are moments when Master Diego would attack me when my guard is down to find out how I would react. If I stopped, he would tell me not to think but just to react, otherwise I get hit. The word “sorry” is never use in the gym. If you get hit, it’s your fault.

After considerable drills with a wooden sword, Master Diego gave me as a gift, a real sword to practice with. Again my strikes and counter strikes were checked. Using the real sword, Master Diego would ask me to execute the different strikes and counter strikes. The purpose of this exercise, he said, is to gain better control of the blade and to prevent improper techniques from developing, and thus trains the student to hit at the right angle. My first swordplay using a real sword with Master Diego was really scary, but then I passed with flying colors.

Suffice it to say, I was taught not only to defend and attack on a standing position, but on a sitting and lying down position as well. The exercise of ascending and descending the stairs during a duel is so difficult and tiring. Disarming is also part of the drills.

Training with Master Diego is not easy. I often find myself catching my breath during the swordplay, while Master Diego is laughing and comfortably attacking and parrying my strikes. At the end of each session, I am totally exhausted. My shoulders ache and I could hardly lift my arms. At home before going to bed, I would take a muscle relaxant to relieve the pain so I could train again in the next session.

As I continue my training with Master Diego, I am learning not only the art of bladed weapons but also, the essence of a good swordsman, the discipline and the commitment that one must have to the art.

Christened as Antonio Ramoneda Diego Maestro, Mang Tony as he prefers to be called has truly lived up to his name, a “Maestro” in bladed weapons... a Master by name and by heart.

In promoting the Filipino martial arts Peachie has continuously given in demonstrations, organized practitioners together so they could demonstrate their art as you will see in the following.



Peachie Baron-Saguin training
with Master Tony Diego

Grandmaster Tony Diego - Kalis Ilustrisimo
Peachie Baron Saguin - Bakbakan
Punta y Daga



Peachie also organized and coordinated with the help of the NFMA a series of Malls in the Manila area for demonstrations of the Filipino martial arts, and Philippine culture.

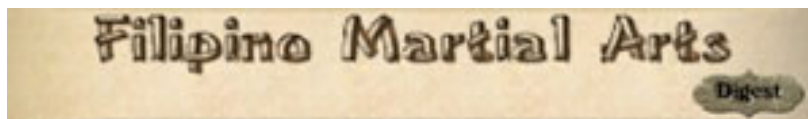
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Bella Marie “Peachie” Baron-Saguin:**



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