

Filipino Martial Arts

Women of the Filipino Martial Arts II

Digest

Special Issue
2006



Dora Chi



Mary Ann P. Presas



Lucy O'Malley
'The Crocodile'

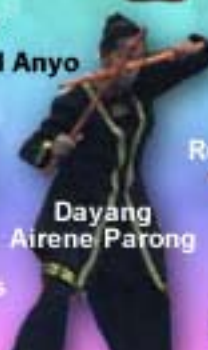
The Black Rose
Wileen Arellano

Gold Medallist
23rd SeaGames

Women Synchronized Anyo



Dayang
Catherine Ballenas



Dayang
Airene Parong



Dayang
Rochelle Quirol

Publisher

Steven K. Dowd

Contributing Writers

Edessa Ramos
Rey Galang
Lara De Ubago-Sia
The Laban Baston Eskrima Club
Patrick Armijo

Jennifer Tussing
MARPPPIO
David A. Bertrand
Dora E. Chi
Vince Palumbo
Heather Turnbull

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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

So it is with great admiration and respect that the FMA Digest has put together a Volume II of Women of the FMA. Within you will find women Masters, Instructors, students and practitioners of the Filipino martial arts that are just as dedicated and skilled as men.

The FMA Digest would like to thank Dayang Edessa Ramos for the lead in article 'Heaven and Earth, Darkness and Light'. You the reader will find Volume II Women of the FMA just as outstanding as the first issue 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 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



Heaven and Earth, Darkness and Light

By Guro Edessa Ramos

People take up martial arts for various reasons. Some for sports and the pursuit of excellence. Some for self-discovery and confidence building. Many for self-defense and protection. Still there are others whose reasons go far deeper, touching on the spiritual nature of the martial arts. Some study it to nourish the soul, to understand better the thin shifty line that divides right from wrong, and based on this understanding, to make the correct choices.

Why would a woman study martial arts? It is not an easy environment for a woman to be in. She knows that she must learn to endure pain, whose consequences on women are usually greater than on men. She knows that encountering male chauvinism is inevitable at some point in her journey. She knows that she will suffer the disapproval and rejection of friends and family. But then, she also knows that the reward is more profound and therefore capable of outweighing whatever hardship must be endured. A woman martial artist once wrote: To discover how to dance on the border between the two opposites, and to accept both sides as valid, is to know the internal meaning of empowerment. Thus for women who are in constant quest for empowerment, the martial arts bring more benefits than mere intellectual achievement or women's liberation movements can ever offer. Because it releases the true warrior within a woman. It teaches mastery of oneself, to prevail over the most difficult of life's battles - the battle within.

When I was introduced to Arnis, I found the missing element that was essential for completing my search for the true self. A deeper sense of personal identity. An even deeper appreciation for my people and my indigenous origins. These were my initial rewards. True peace came to me on the ground where I trained. This is, why for the past 12 years, I have been deeply involved in the Filipino Martial Arts.



I have always been aware that this is an art that continues to evolve. For this development to take place, it is vital to sustain a consistent pool of devoted practitioners. I decided to be counted among its devoted followers. And I chose Modern Arnis because it combines traditional styles with modern-day modifications and applications. It led me to the Flow.

Throughout decades of living away from the Philippines, it was always Arnis, which had sustained me, nourished me, and made me infinite. Far from the moral guidance and cultural traditions of the country I grew up in, Arnis gave me the Code that would forever guide my perspective on life and which would govern my relationship with others, making sure I always upheld truth and honour. Arnis cured the pain and loneliness of living far from home, far from the familiar language, far from family and loved ones. Later I found out that I could live anywhere on this planet because my home is in my heart and it is co-inhabited by Arnis. Guided by the "Flow", I developed the ability for soul-searching and tolerance, for understanding the differences among people and cultures and lifestyles, and I was able to accept each of them as valid.



Arnis showed me the way of balance. It showed me the wonder of symmetry. That in every action comes a reaction. In every strike there is a counter, and a counter to the counter, and so on. Just as our Filipino ancestors have always believed... that for every day there is night. Heaven and earth. Darkness and light. Woman and man, Despair and hope. Defeat and triumph. A life that stays in balance is one that accepts opposites, recognizes opportunities that can be won, accepts things that cannot be changed, and learns to control one's own responses to stimuli, be they mental, emotional or physical.

Why would a woman choose to focus on weapons? She would lose her femininity, many say. Guys would find her repulsive and she would scare them away. A woman should be protected by her loved ones, so they say, not feared and avoided. It would put her in the constant company of men, which is unavoidable in a male-dominated art. And such company can be regarded as inappropriate for ladies, I was told, or so one learns when brought up in a conservative family. I have been confronted with many more protests and reasons why women should not handle weapons. And even if you can come up with a hundred more, I will always have even more reasons why a woman should.

A weapon, particularly a handy bladed tool, is a woman's best friend. Knowledge of weapons and its usage gives her the resolve to walk where she wants, the alertness to recognize threat, the skill to manage threat, and the wisdom to know when to avoid the dark. Training with weapons teaches her that fighting is not a matter of physical strength or power alone, but more about the power and quickness of the mind, the skill of technique, the intelligence of recognition and choice.



Technique means to know exactly where to cut, and how to do it most effectively. Skill is the ability to decide up and down the force continuum, to know the moral consequences of applying lethal force, to know that there are alternatives for shutting down an attacker, and to act accordingly.

The tool itself does not determine right from wrong, good guy from bad guy. The heart of the person does. The steady heart of a person who knows the power within. The power of justice and love and freedom. A person in balance, one who is in touch with both the masculine self and the feminine self. Only an honest and authentic person can deal effectively with the worst kinds of terror. Such is the person that every woman must continuously strive to become.



Warriors know no gender. So were the words once spoken to me by my teacher, mentor and friend. A small animal can fight a bigger animal and win. The ability to function under duress is not tied to gender. And having a tool certainly helps.

To handle a weapon is to become immediately aware of how fragile life can be. How serious the art is. How important it is to be constantly reminded of our main mission: to protect life, to safeguard freedom. This is why we need

to train. This is why we uphold the art of weapons.

To dance on the line of contradictions. To be intimate with pain and sacrifice. To know life through the art of fighting. Heaven and earth. Darkness and light.

Write to Guro Edessa Ramos at edessaramos@solnet.ch or visit the following websites: www.silkensteel.com, www.imafp.com. Guro Edessa invites you tot the 3rd International FMA Festival in the Philippines in July 2006. Visit www.fmafestival2006.com.

Women Synchronized and Single Anyo Competition at the 23rd SeaGames

Fernandez saves day for arnis team

By Josef Ramos

When the country's bets in its own indigenous sport of arnis were taking a terrible beating, someone stepped up to save Philippine pride Sunday afternoon.

Anna Joy Fernandez refused to bow down against Vietnamese rival Le Thi Thanh Huyen to pull off a crucial 2-1 victory and take the gold in the women's singles full contact 52kg event at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym.

Hard pressed in the first round, Fernandez reeled back with a confusing 1-2 setback over her opponent who was illegally attempting to hold her sticks and the judges probably looking the other way.

The 22- year old Air Force lass, however, rebounded from a sluggish start and strongly hit her Vietnamese rival not once, not twice but over and over again with two sticks to storm in front, 4-1, in the second round and tie the game at 1-1.

Showing enough pride and guts, Fernandez didn't allow Huyen to do the dirty tricks anymore as she was blocked perfectly most of the time. From thereon, the momentum shifted back to Fernandez. The Vietnamese tried to hold her right stick for a good advantage, but the Singaporean and the Cambodian judges finally noticed the dirty tactics and eventually deducted some points.

With that, Fernandez edged out Huyen for the gold medal and avenged the loss of a teammate in the men's singles full contact event.

"I tried to read her movements but she's trying to hold my weapons, so it is very hard for me to move. But I don't want to disappoint the crowd particularly my relatives and of course my mother who are all watching at the sidelines," said Fernandez.

Before entering in the final round, Fernandez easily crushed Timor Leste's Elizabeth Yanti Almeda Dois Reis, 5-0, in the semifinals. Le Thi Thanh Huyen settled for silver and Dois Reis got the bronze.



Philippine Women's Team in Arnis (Anyo Event) are all smiles after capturing the Gold Medal in their respective event, from left are Catherine Ballenas, Airene Parong and Rochelle Quirol.

Photo by: Ben Avestrus

SeaGames - Arnis

December 3 - 4 2005

Filipino Art of Modified Arnis Federation
(FAMAF)

Block 5, Purok Rosal

Tacurong City, Province of Sultan Kudarat

Lakan Alexis Apresto

The 23rd SeaGames of Arnis Players, Women's Synchronized Anyo Gold Medallist and Women's Single Anyo Players Silver Medallist are the students of the Filipino Art of Modified Arnis Federation (FAMAF). The Filipino Art of Modified Arnis Federation trained the students for 10 days before they competed in the 23rd SeaGames. The Anyos' that were performed by the competitors are the Anyos' that were created and practiced by the Filipino Art of Modified Arnis Federation (FAMAF).



Left - Right

Mylene Garson, Catherine Ballenas,
Airen Parong and Rochelle Quiroll

The competitors are bona fide members of FAMAF; the Founder is Rajah Efren L. Apresto, who founded the FAMAF in 1994.



The winning form of RP Women's Team during the finals of the Arnis (Anyo Event) at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym.
Photo by: Ben Avestrus

The following Players are listed below:

Women Synchronized Anyo
Gold Medallist of 23rd SeaGames

- Dayang Rochelle Quirol
- Dayang Aireene Parong
- Dayang Catherine Ballenas

Women Single Anyo
Silver Medallist of 23rd SeaGames

- Dayang Mylene Garson

The Black Rose

Wileen Arellano

By Rey Galang

Although there is a multitude of female members in Bakbakan International in the Philippines and Australia, there is but a single female full-fledged member at the World Headquarters in Lodi, New Jersey. Her name is Wileen Arellano, fondly referred to by her fellow members as “The Black Rose” and, sometimes, “The Black Widow.”

Wileen Arellano, looking all feminine and sweet, belies the fact that she has consistently won several championships in the Filipino Martial Arts. Even in internal Bakbakan coed tournaments, she has managed to garner 2nd place much to the chagrin of the 3rd and 4th place male participants. At various workshops and seminars all around the world, many male participants gravitate towards her, charmed by her sweet disposition, only to suffer and lose like many others when sparring bouts are called. Her moniker “Black Widow” came about because of many instances like this.

Consistently mistaken and assumed as the daughter of Master Rey Galang, Wileen enjoys this misconception and takes pride in the fact that she bears a close facial similarity with her mentor. She usually takes time off from her professional career to occasionally enjoy lunch with Master Rey at their favorite restaurants around the Lodi area where the WHQ is located. She enjoys her relationship with Master Rey as both her friend and father figure.

Wileen enjoys most the art of Tulisan, the knife fighting system taught in Bakbakan. She also finds intriguing and satisfying the many Sinawali or double stick forms that are part of the Bakbakan curriculum.



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Among the many mentors and masters in the Bakbakan fraternity that she has studied are Rey Galang, Christopher Ricketts and Yuli Romo. At the WHQ, she has trained with Guro Roger Agbulos, Tuhon Ray Dionaldo, GM Bobby Taboada and Catch Wrestling coach Bill Cogswell. She has also met trained with renowned Grand Masters Tony Diego, Vic Sanchez, Bert Labaniego and others during her 2005 trip to Manila. She garnered a 1st and 2nd place in two of the international tournament events during the same period.

As the sole female member at the WHQ, Wileen is treated as an equal and like a sister by her fellow members. She enjoys this feeling of having all these big brothers looking after her, despite the fact that she has no need to depend upon them if push came to shove. Wileen has been featured in the books "Complete Sinawali", "Classic Arnis", "Warrior Arts of the Philippines" and, most recently, in "Masters of the Blade".

Despite the many achievements of Wileen, she is content to remain a student of Bakbakan although she occasionally assists in teaching and helping newcomers at the WHQ. Already a qualified advanced practitioner of Bakbakan Kali, Wileen enjoys being a student and looks forward to constantly discovering the many treasures of the art.



At the 2nd World FMA in Las Vegas.
(L - R) Wileen Arellano, Rey Galang,
Arnold Provideo, Christopher Ricketts,
Bruce Ricketts and John Jacobo.





John Jacobo, Roger Agbulos and Wileen Arellano



Visit the Website
www.bakbakan.com

Making a Difference with Knowledge

By Lara De Ubago-Sia



Lara De Ubago-Sia

I started learning the basic principles of martial arts from my father who once was a university Judo player. I used to go with him to his dojo to watch him throw and get thrown on a thickly matted wooden floor. I remember being amazed at how strong he and his teammates were and how quick they could throw each other over each other's shoulders. Sometimes, I watched them practice grappling and locks and I remember how much I wanted to be like them. I desired so much to study martial arts that I would always remember the self-defense and martial arts techniques my father taught me as I was growing up.

In college, I joined the schools' TaeKwonDo Team to try my luck at formal martial arts training. There, under the careful leadership and coaching of Sir Ian Ampongan, I learned how to deliver the basic punches and kicks as well as how to parry and dodge blows. It was also in the same team that I met a very strong and talented martial artist, who would later be one of my best friends and sparring mates. Rica Serapio.

Our journey as martial artists and best friends extended beyond college and into our working life. We put martial arts on hold as we built careers and ventured into corporate life. However, martial arts was still a vital part of our lives and on one inspiring day, we thought of putting together a basic training module that would teach the basics of women's self defense, this was in November of 1999.

From the start we knew that we would need to learn more in order to teach more. After a short TV appearance with a renowned Filipino martial artist, Monsour Del Rosario (TaeKwonDo and Arnis), another member of our team, Omi Bautista and myself were inspired to learn and understand the principles of Filipino Martial Arts (FMA's). I enrolled myself in a Filipino martial art called Yaw Yan (short for: Sayaw ng Kamatayan,

in English, Dance of Death), which was conducted by none other than Sir Henry Yap-Kobayashi, Charter President of the KickBoxers Training Center of the Philippines. Sir Henry taught me many new principles and like all previous coaches, the value of discipline and independence. After a few months, Omi enrolled in the same FMA and had her share of Yaw Yan.

The next chapters of our learning include our venture into PIGSSAI (Philippine Indigenous Games and Sports Savers Association). This was a community of martial artists introduced to us by Master Tony Vasquez, the founder of another FMA called Dulac. At this point, Omi had left to pursue further studies in the US and two new members who happened to be men joined our team. One of them was Guro Gam Sabio who instructed me in Arnis Lambago-Balintawak and the other was Jae Ranjo, another of my best friends who himself had martial arts background in Greek wrestling and joint lock techniques.

Jae and I studied Arnis Lambago-Balintawak under Guro Gam. This particular form of Arnis uses mostly single stick attacks and defenses with a stick only 14-16 inches long, a kind of short-range stick fighting form. Around this time, I was already writing articles on Women's Self Defense for a local newspaper, The Manila Times. It was through writing my column, Playing It Safe (discontinued in 2003), that I met more martial artists and widened our teams' knowledge and view of Filipino Martial Arts. In the year 2001, my mother became interested in learning Filipino Martial Arts she signed up with Guro Gam, and later on received her certification as an instructor in Arnis Lambago-Balintawak. Before Guro Gam left for the USA, my mother decided to expand her skill (as well as mine), she signed us up to study Arnis Rapado, under it's founding Master, Limuel "Maning" Bonsa. Arnis Rapado is more traditional in the sense that it uses the common long stick, which is 22-24 inches in length. Master Maning was the Arnis coach who finally inspired Rica to study Filipino Martial Arts.

Rica, Jae and myself studied and continue to study under Master Maning. Other notable personalities in the Filipino martial arts who have inspired us to go one with our teaching and learning are: Daniel "Mumbakki" Foronda - Dumog and Filipino Knife Fighting, Grand Master Profirio Lanada and Master Boy Ong - Arnis Lanada, Grand Master Meliton Geronimo - Sikaran-Arnis, Grand Master Pallorina - WEDO Arnis, and Dakilang Guro Jose Mena - Arnis Doblele Rapelon and Arnis Kali Escrima.

Studying Filipino martial arts has made us connect more to our country and culture. It is through Filipino martial arts that we learned about our indigenous tribes, how they lived and fought for their lives and land. It is also through Filipino martial arts and martial arts in general that our values like discipline, courtesy and respect for life are reinforced.



Rica and Lara

Today, we continue to teach self-defense for women and are proud to say that in our own little way, we have made a difference in society. To mark our 7th year, we are launching an e-book on Women's Self Defense that will hopefully be out on the net by November 2006. It will be given away free of charge through e-mail orders. Donations will happily be accepted to fund an actual printing of the book that will be given away to women here in the Philippines.

CBCM

CLEAN BODY CLEAN MIND: WHOLISTIC HEALTH, FITNESS, and MARTIAL ARTS

Contact Information:

Website

E-mail: defense.specialists@gmail.com / cbcm.manila@gmail.com

Mobile: +63 (917) 832-4875 (SMS and Calls)

Luci Evans

Guba Doce Pares Multi-style Eskrima
The Laban Baston Eskrima Club



Bill Lowery and Luci Evans

Although it makes the hand fast, the emphasis is on the dominant hand, and the feet and legs are not used as weapons.

In Luci's final year at university she became the beginners' foil coach. When a handsome young man called Iain asked her for extra lessons, she thought he was interested in fencing. He was, but he was also interested in her! They are now married and both study Guba Doce Pares Multi-style Eskrima.

Luci's interest in martial arts began when she met some guys on a fencing course who also did karate. It sounded very exciting, so when Luci and Iain moved to London, they took up Shotokan karate. Their Sensei had been taught by the Japanese, and was

Lucinda Evans studied classical ballet from age 3 until 16, but felt more at home fighting with the boy next door. However, all this ballet was not wasted, as it helped her develop strong legs and good balance.

Luci took up sports fencing at university at 19, because she wanted to get some exercise in something, which might be useful for self-defense. First off she learned the foil, and then epee and sabre. She competed in all three weapons for Surrey University, where she was women's captain. As the team competed all over England, the students got the chance to fight against national team members, and improve their standard of fencing. Their coach, Ron Bright, went on to take the national pentathlon team to a gold medal in the Olympics.

Sports' fencing is fun, but very linear, due to the fact that bouts take place on long narrow pistes.

excellent. Luci learned to focus her techniques, and developed more stamina, she also gained her purple belt before she and Iain went to work in Hong Kong.

While in Hong Kong Luci worked as an attorney for Filipina domestic workers, dealing with their claims of ill treatment by employers as well as immigration problems. She met a lot of lovely Filipina women, who were very brave. Most of them were poor because they had just lost their jobs, but Luci really enjoyed the food they used to bring her when she helped them win their cases! Luci and Iain also went to Manila and Cebu for holidays and so saw both the capital of the Philippines and the beautiful beaches.

As a commercial advocate, Luci has to be mentally tough. Fighting a case in court, she finds, involves the same emotions and feelings as fighting a person in a martial arts class. The results are the same: if you make a mistake, your opponent will take advantage of it. If you can get back up and fight, after having been knocked down, you will have the persistence to take on and win a long legal battle.

In 2001 Luci returned to the UK and joined a group, which puts on historical battles and sword displays for the public. She enjoyed fighting for fun, and especially enjoyed fighting with a hand axe, but was disappointed that most of the men in these groups were untrained in any martial art, so there were very few good fighters with which to practice. She began to feel the need to take up a martial art again. In 2002, thumbing through the phone book, she saw an advertisement for "Filipino Martial Arts." Having met and worked with so many Filipinas, she decided to try this, rather than go back to Shotokan karate.

The advert was for Bill Lowery's Laban Baston Eskrima club in Newcastle upon Tyne, England. Luci: "I rang Bill and asked him about the club and the beginner's course. He was very friendly and invited me along to the club to train".

"I had been living in China for six years, and when I first went along to Bill's club in Newcastle, all the big guys with their shaved heads, armed with sticks, looked so large and aggressive, compared to the Chinese. I decided just to watch a class at first, and noticed how varied it was compared to a traditional karate class. Some people were working with sticks and some empty hand, some grappling, others practicing with sticks, but at a fighting distance. I watched for the whole hour and a half without becoming bored. Bill occasionally came across to me and explained what was going on. By the end of the lesson, the guys had no serious injuries and I had decided that I definitely wanted to give it a try.

"I found that I really enjoyed studying Guba Doce Pares, - it was more than just a synthesis of elements I had learnt in fencing and karate. Also there was so much to learn, that I had to concentrate and it was a challenge".

"Bill is an excellent instructor, and has taught me a lot, especially about body mechanics and economy of movement. Having done fencing and karate, Iain and I often



Luci and Peter Mills

have questions. Bill doesn't mind if you ask questions, unlike some instructors in other arts who seem to take them as a personal affront, like you are questioning their ability.

"I was not as quick to learn as when I had learned to fence in my twenties, but I looked forward to each class, and couldn't help smiling as I walked across town to the club on a Saturday. I soon started training twice a week and later enrolled on the instructors' course.

"Unlike some experts, Danny Guba is very approachable and you can learn in an atmosphere that is not threatening. I was nervous at our first instructors' lesson, so much so, that when he was watching me doing my amarra, I fumbled and dropped my stick! But Danny just laughed, and gave me one of his lighter ones to try with".



Luci working out with husband Iain Evans

"I am now working on my blue belt material and look forward to getting better at this absorbing martial art." Luci trains with Bill Lowery at the Laban Baston Eskrima Club in Newcastle upon Tyne, England.



The Laban Baston Eskrima Club

Mr. Bill S. Lowery

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne & Wear - NE7 7ZF

[0798] 558-2159

Email

Website

Veronika Pajnogac
By Patrick Armijo



Veronika is 23 years old and has 7 years experience in Shito Ryu and Goju Ryu Karate. She currently studies Filipino martial arts at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center in Bellingham, Washington, from Patrick Armijo. She decided to study Filipino martial arts because of her interest in weapons. Veronika sees similarities between the arts that she has been involved with to Filipino martial arts and believes that her previous training is helpful. She finds that the concept of flowing from one technique to another is a new concept to her. She finds the transition from hard style karate concepts to Filipino martial arts concepts of

flowing combinations to be challenging. Veronika is right at home when it comes to hitting hard with the sticks or with her empty hand techniques. She feels that she has grown a lot and enjoys her training. Her instructor warns the guys that Veronika will hurt you if you are not careful.

When she is not in class, Veronika can be found working at a local Starbucks coffee house. She feels that her martial arts training gives her confidence and that she is capable of taking care of herself on the street. When asked if she has ever been scared of a street situation, she smiles and answers no. Veronika dances like a butterfly and stings like a bee. Your hands can't hit what eyes can't see. She is an excellent student and a pleasure to work with in class.



Pat Armijo has studied Modern Arnis and is the Pacific Northwest Region Representative for Cables Serrada Escrima. He instructs at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center Pat Armijo teaches

Arnis/ Kali/Escrima.
Contact Pat Armijo: [Email](#)
Website - [Click Here](#)

Lucy O'Malley 'The Crocodile'



I could tell you I have this title and that title and it all came easy, but that would be exaggerating beyond all levels. It has probably been the hardest challenge of my life and one of the toughest journeys I have taken.

I was a Thai boxer and never felt the need for anything else. I mean, when you have found the sport you love, why look any further?

I was 18, just left home, bought a house miles away from all my friends, so I could be close to work, but soon found I was sitting around watching television as my only pass-time and also felt I was losing the confidence that I had always had. So I began my journey looking for something exciting to do. I started out with hockey, as I knew I had been good at this sport in school, lasted about one year, but found it to be too much of a clique between long term team-mates, little groups within their own groups. Not for me. So I tried cricket because someone

suggested it. This again was too bitchy for me and so I found football (soccer) that suited me down to the ground. Almost immediately I felt more confident, just enjoying a hobby and soon felt the need to look for something else in addition, due to the fact that football was seasonal.

I then thought back to my younger days as a 13 year old and how good I was at Karate, not something I boast about now. My mother took me to the doctors around this time as I was becoming very angry with people and many walls (ouch). They suggested an investment in a punch bag and some extra curricular activities. Thus I went to karate, being the only club around in our area. So thinking about my past, I thought martial arts has got to be a good direction for me to look into.

Almost within a few days of me thinking along the martial arts lines, I saw an advertisement for a new kickboxing club opening at the local leisure centre and it was starting that day, so I had no time to even think about it. It was now or never. So I nervously went along and absolutely loved it. I continued to go for three months and really enjoyed the experience, buying all the required equipment and making friends along the way. We split up for Christmas, excited about going back. We all turned up after Christmas but the instructor failed to show. We continued to turn up week after week to more no shows. We all sat back and decided to accept we had been robbed. The guy sold as much equipment as possible and done a runner, it was quite upsetting, but a few of us decided not to leave it at that and found an alternative club to crash in on.

Looking back, it was meant to be and one of the best decisions we could of made. The club was run and instructed by no other than John Harvey. I loved it and couldn't get enough. He taught us mainly kickboxing but also elements of JKD as he was a qualified JKD instructor which was always good for the self-defense side of things.

It did not take long for me to realize I needed more. After going to a couple of Thai boxing shows I sought out some of the best Thai boxing gyms in a 30 mile square radius. Which found me learning with the likes of Eagles gym that had a very good reputation and Minotaur's, which are definitely one of the best Thai boxing clubs in the UK.

It was not long before I was sparring full contact on a regular basis. But this was when women were very few and far between around 1994 time. Which meant I had to spar the men if I wanted to get any better. Before I knew it, I was as good as any of the men around my weight and I often heard people saying I was a force to be reckoned with.

I never got big headed and still to this day can safely say it is not an issue I have had to deal with. I am always scared when fighting and I always have respect when I am training, just fear does good things for me. I believe skill always outweighs power shots, as good technique generates power with it, although it is fair to say power can give you a lucky break early on in a fight. This is not to say that I do not have power, I do. But my power also comes with skill. I never loose my head.

In the end I found myself training two to three times a week Thai boxing and twice a week kickboxing. I knew I was happy and did not need anything else.

One day John Harvey said, "Would any of you like to try some stick sparring?" My friends jumped straight in saying yes, this will be great; I thought well I would have a go. This was the worst experience of my life, someone bashing me as hard as they could with a lump of wood. Why?? I came out with a bruise the size of a tennis ball on my shoulder and bruises all over my body. To be honest I could not see the point in this exercise. Why would anyone stand there trading such punishments? It seems stupid now, just that was the level everyone was at. It had not occurred to me at the time that you could be better and there was an art behind it involving blocks and evasion, but hey I still meet people now with the same view. It is just naivety and lack of knowledge.

I knew this was not a sport I was going to ever do again. But, my friends were hooked. Which resulted in me chauffeuring them to and from a stick class 20 miles away on a weekly basis, as I was the only one with a car. It was initially with the promise from John that he would have someone to train with me kickboxing in the corner while I was there. This lasted about two weeks and the guy that was supposed to train with me stopped showing, then I just sat and watched the others for the next year. Boring but I did not want to let my friends down.

It was during this period that I was trying to get a fight in the ring, but to no avail. There just weren't any women competing in Thai boxing. Not to say that there was entirely none, just not my weight and even when I agreed to fight anyone, heavier or not. Most confirmations only lasted a week or so and all possibilities ended in pullouts. I was starting to wonder if I was the only one. I even offered to fight men but obviously this was never going to happen.

The next thing that happened was never on my mind. I was asked, no, begged to even out the numbers in an Arnis class one Sunday and after many refusals I caved in and said "this once". But what happened next was not expected. I was by far the best in the

class, yet these people had been training for a year or so in the art side of Arnis. I suddenly realized there was more to it than wielding a stick and bashing each other. It was quite technical. This was definitely more my kind of thing. It required skill and the use of my brain. I liked it.

I continued to train on a regular basis in Arnis as well as my other arts. Then I decided to try out at a British Eskrima, Kali Arnis Championships, after many weeks of getting used to the armour as I found it very claustrophobic to then meet my worst fear. I was rubbish. I think my first fight consisted of me hitting the woman about twice in three rounds. Every time she hit me, my eyes were wandering around looking for the hits to the head and that was when I was not double and triple blinking. Where did she go, there she is, no, she's gone again.

I think this was the first time in my life; I was not naturally good at a sport. This bothered me a lot. Why was I so bad? I decided I was going to beat this thing. So trained and trained and watched everyone else carefully to see how they did it so well. I thought I had got considerably better before my next attempt at the British Championships, to find myself losing in the first bout again. But this time I remember the fight and held my own, which was some improvement. I just did not lead the fight at any point. I knew this, so went away and worked on it.

I spent every waking moment thinking about combinations and just winning one fight and wishing for a medal. I was becoming quite good in my class among regular training partners but still was not good enough at the following British as I did not achieve medal status but did reach fourth place. I was reasonably happy although it seemed like a slow progression and then to my surprise I was selected for the British team. Usually you needed a silver or gold medal to gain a place. Just women were few, for the amount of divisions available at the European Championships that year.

I was over the moon and at the same time nervous that I was not good enough, so decided to step up my training. I began running two to three miles every other day, cycling five miles to work everyday stopping on the way for a swim in the mornings and the gym on the way home. This was in addition to two Thai boxing lessons, two kickboxing lessons and one Arnis class every week. My fitness levels were increasing in leaps and bounds, but my skill was only improving steadily. I decided to get myself a tyre and hit it for at least an hour every day. Working through combinations and repetitive strikes in order to gain power and perfection. I often put my walkman on and just done the same strike over and over 200 times or so to the music, then beat the tyre up for a ten minutes and then change to another strike for another 200 and so on.

This was definitely a step in the right direction. My sparring ability improved amazingly but was still lacking style. I was just the same as everyone else, just stronger and faster from my obsessive training. I knew I had to find my own style. I simply just imagined what I wanted to look like and what others were not doing. I watched competition footage of other good players and cringed at footage of my own seriously bad fights. I picked strikes that others found impossible and worked them into the ground. I walked round permanently with a stick in my hand. If I sparred with anyone, I used to set myself targets without their knowledge. I knew I could pull off the bog standard survival skills so often said to myself, I want to block 10 hits in a row or I want to pull off this particular strike or disarm. It did not take as long as I thought for me to start pulling them off and I soon looked different to everyone else.

I then went to a couple of small competitions held by other groups around the country. My first attempt gained me a silver medal. My first medal. The training was worth it. My next two tournaments found me gold medals and then came the European Championships in Spain 1997. I knew I was confident from my recent wins, but this did not help me. I was a gibbering wreck in the toilets throwing up every five minutes all day. However, my training was definitely the reason for my success. I won gold in the women's singlestick division and Gold in the women's double stick division. This also involved me beating other British women, who were at this time the best in Britain. I was so happy.

I then went on to win the following British championships that year, single and double stick categories, achieving best female fighter and reselection for the British team. I could not have asked for anything else. My hard work and dedication was starting to show results.

The World championships in Cebu, Philippines for 1998 brought me a gold medal in the women's lightweight singlestick division. I could not of imagined ever achieving these levels when I first started out. The training I had done was now paying off.

Over a five-year period, I won 19 British titles, 5 European titles and 3 World titles. The two world titles (single and double stick) in 2000, were won 4 months after giving birth to my son and suffering from kidney failure for two months. I had the skill already so just had to concentrate on my attitude and some fitness leading up to the event and it was here that I got the nickname 'the crocodile'. I was followed by this man with a hat everywhere and I did not know who it was, after winning my titles he came up and shook me by the hand, saying I was the only one there fighting old style and I deserved to win, he said, "they were throwing meat to the crocodile and you are just snapping them all up, you are the crocodile", he then introduced himself as Yoling Canete. It is even comments like this that gave me the reason to stick around a bit longer.



One medal I am particularly proud of though, was silver in the men's lightweight division at a British Championships, which at the time was the largest and strongest division running. And even then there was many people saying I won, as I had also disarmed the bloke (World Silver Medallist) in the final, twice. Some say it was political, as they did not want me in the men's division in the first place, but I did not care, I was really chuffed anyway.

Also during the period of these achievements I became the first female Black Eagle Society member. Fighting no rules, with just a stick, headgear and gloves up against men on three separate occasions/events. This involves 3 minutes of stick hitting on bare flesh, kicking, punching, throwing, grappling, anything goes. This is something no other women can claim.

In 1997 I was featured in a women's special supplement of Martial Arts Illustrated and took part in a Rapid Arnis training video. It was also this year that after mixing with top class players at international levels and getting to know people, I realised there was far more involved and knew I wanted to get good at the art side of Arnis too,

not just the sport. I had passed a couple of grading's but had not really found my happy place practicing the art. Although I was quite good at it, I was still just going through the motions rather than taking it all in. Stick had always been secondary to me at this point, but I knew this was all to change.

In 1998 I was asked to teach Thai boxing at the Doce Pares Headquarters and later this year went on to pass my first-degree black belt in Rapid Arnis, which was far from easy. The grading was 5 hours long, partnered up against a 24 stone bloke for most of the duration, loosing both my big toe nails just from small steps that my grading partner had administered to my feet, I also received injuries and cuts to my hands and head. It was just so fierce the whole time. But I can quite honestly say, it was only now I really started learning. Up to this point, yes I had got good basics but had so much more to learn and then to everyone's surprise even after years of not getting on with Pat O'Malley I found myself involved with him and engaged by the end of the year. Not sure really what happened there. But hey we all make mistakes somewhere in our lives. Ha Ha.

1999 I became a full time instructor, It was this year that saw my first challenge when Pat and I arranged a seminar for Grand Master Dionisio Canete and got to train with him everyday for a couple of weeks which led me to fall in love with Doce Pares systems as well. I was now really enjoying Arnis and being 7 months pregnant at this time it gave me more opportunity to concentrate on Arnis and we hosted the British championships at our club.

In 2000 I gave birth to my first child with complications due to high fitness levels, believe it or not. I then became the Assistant British team coach for the World Championships in Cebu, Philippines and Grandmaster Dionisio Canete arranged for Pat and I to get married the day after the championships. Later that year I came second in the Yorkshire sportswomen of the year and also received my second-degree black belt. We had Master Percival Pableo from Doce Pares stay with us for a couple of weeks and host a seminar, which was great. It was also this year that I set up my company Eskrimador Supplies, which has fast become one of the leading suppliers of Eskrima, Kali, and Arnis equipment in Europe.



Doce Pares International

2001, I ceased competing as I had kidney problems over the last year and for a further two years after. However, even with my bad health, my husband Pat O'Malley thought it would be funny to accept someone's request for me to fight in a British Vale Tudo (no rules) title fight, with only two days notice as a fighter had pulled out. I turned up purely for the money to find a 6-foot skinhead with tattoos up her neck. I nearly cried, I even tried to tell the Doctor that I was not well with my kidneys and I think his ears were blocked as he still signed me in. It was supposed to be a fifteen minute fight, but I was so scarred I beat the girl in just over a minute and she was rushed to hospital too.

It must be something to do with deciding to have some time out that all the offers come to your door. I was then given the opportunity to audition for a martial arts television game show called 'Masters of Combat' on a Vale Tudo team. I got through but not with the team that I had auditioned with. They wanted me on another team. But this later fell through a day before production after all the rehearsals, when two of the team

members pulled out, so they had to drop our team completely for a replacement team. But I still went to help out behind the scenes, which was a great experience.

When I eventually got to take a bit of a break, I watched people teaching and training and found I learnt a lot just from watching too. I think this is when the art side all started to fall into place for me and my teaching skills improved. I began training on an equal basis with my husband and started to play with it more, trying and testing stuff for myself. I had previously started teaching seminars with John Harvey on occasions, but Pat and myself began teaching seminars all over Europe together about five years ago and this is possibly when I found my own style in the art. Just listening, watching and teaching people from many different styles and the backgrounds with different levels of experience. Just the experience of teaching complete strangers in a short amount of time, meant I had to be confident with my own abilities and have a rock solid style of my own and a good method of teaching. I think it has to be the hardest but fastest way to learn even about yourself but extremely enjoyable too.

I have learnt from other people how hard it is to learn something for the first time, and I can honestly say I can remember exactly how I felt and this shows in my teaching, be it with beginners or advanced students, I know what they need to improve and have confidence.

2002 I was promoted to third-degree black belt and assistant chief instructor of Rapid Arnis International, which a year later was changed to chief instructor. I was shocked when I was given the title but knew I had worked harder than anyone else, so if anyone deserved the position, I did.

Arnis also gave me the confidence to work the doors of pubs and nightclubs for four years (2000-2004), mainly due to the fact that it is a devastating art with so much control, ideal for the doors and obviously my fighting ability had something to do with it too, but I had to call it a day when I fell pregnant with my second child which led to further kidney problems.



2004 although eight months pregnant with my second child, I decided to participate in the Sayaw/forms event at the British Championships, as I was there anyway, supporting some students and won the gold medal, bringing my British gold medal count up to twenty now.

I will happily admit though, I struggled for many years in some areas, particularly with double weapons. Not the double stick pair drills, but more the free flowing stuff with disarms, lockups and picking up the weapon hands, I just did not enjoy it as much as single weapons with a free empty hand for picking up and striking with. I learnt to do double weapons in the end with a single weapons mentality, but this was how I found it easy to learn and absorb the techniques, which soon gave me the confidence I needed to pursue those areas further so I can safely say I am quite good now in those areas too.

I think it was also this year that I noticed I was included in the back of Grandmaster Dionisio Canete's book, which brought a smile to my face.

2005 I was awarded 4th degree black belt in Doce Pares 'multi style' Systems and I was put solely in charge of the Doce Pares system under the Rapid Arnis International banner.

The end of 2005 and into the new year of 2006, I went to the Philippines for six weeks initially to compete in the '1st World Arnis Invitational Championships' (padded stick) in Manila, where I won silver. Not bad considering I did not know the rules prior to attending the tournament.

I then went to Cebu to train everyday for a month solid and on attending the Doce Pares headquarters 73rd anniversary, I was asked to demonstrate my skills in front of an audience of masters and grand masters from various Eskrima/Arnis styles.

Also while I was out there, I filmed the first of the new Rapid Arnis DVD's on location, which was good fun.

I am now 4th degree black belt in Rapid Arnis and have been informed by many that I am Europe's leading female authority in Arnis. I don't know how true this is, but I can say I do not know of any other women to date, at my level or with the same experience.

I am very lucky to have had unique opportunity's to train with some of the worlds top 'Masters' and 'Grand Masters' such as, Dionisio Canete, Ondo Caburnay, Loloy Bonifacio D. Uy, Dan Nalasco, Tony Diego, Romi Macapagal, Percival Pableo, Danny Guba, Joe Borces and Rey Galang, to name but a few in no particular order. And I have had the honour to meet many other top people and well known names.

I will continue to seek out other Masters to meet and train with, with the intention of understanding the Philippine martial arts further as a whole, which is also encouraged within the Rapid Arnis open policy.

I can honestly say I found Arnis to be the most complete art out there and no longer look for anything else, and now solely study Arnis although I still find myself falling into Thai boxing on occasions. But it is funny, even after taking the sport side of Arnis so seriously in the beginning, I now look at it as just a sport for a bit of fun, although I know it was probably the making of me, it gave me the determination and drive to become good at other aspects of the art too.

So I would like to leave you with a simple stick and dagger drill, which I found opened the world of stick and dagger up for me. It is simple, fluid and fun to pull off at high speeds. Influenced by Doce Pares 'multi style' systems but with a Rapid Arnis touch.





Rapid Arnis International
 Tuhon Pat O'Malley
 United Kingdom
 [7861] 302202
 Email
 Website



www.eskrimador-supplies.com

Phone Number: 0 [7932] 746642
info@eskrimador-supplies.com

Sarina Loo and Charmaine Lye **Monash University Arnis Club**



Guro John Chow and Sarina Loo

Sarina Loo and Charmaine Lye train with the Monash University Arnis Club, which principally teaches Kalis Ilustrisimo and is headed by Guro John Chow, a student of Grandmaster Antonio 'Tatang' Ilustrisimo, Tony Diego and Romy Macapagal. They are both office bearers of the club and Sarina has been part of its demonstration team since 2003.

Guro Chow's Arnis teachers have also included Masters Yuli Romo, Edgar Sulite, Rey Galang, Chris Ricketts, Raymond Floro, Bobby Taboada, Dan Inosanto, and his father Henry Chow. Guro Chow is well versed in the complete system of traditional Tai Chi Chuan, which he also teaches.

Sarina has trained with the Club since 2000. Under its auspices, she has also studied under Shamim Haque (Director and Chief Instructor of Kalis Ilustrisimo for the UK and Ireland, and a personal student of Tony Diego). Sarina was first attracted to the style because of its apparent directness and efficiency. There are no wasted or "flowery" moves. She also likes the fact that Ilustrisimo relies on skill rather than strength and power. Prior to starting Arnis, Sarina had never studied any martial arts, but rather was an avid dancer. "I wanted to learn a martial art and found that Ilustrisimo combines the grace and rhythm of dance with practical, no nonsense application for self-defense". Sarina has also been pleased to observe the increase of confidence and coordination herself and in her fellow students at the Club.

Charmaine had studied Thai boxing for a few years before discovering Arnis when she started looking for a style involving the regular use of weapons. She started Pekiti Tirsia with Agapito Gonzales in New York City but was unable to persist for any length of time as life got in the way and she moved to Melbourne, Australia. There she located Guro Chow on the Filipino Martial Arts database in 2002 and hasn't looked back. The subtlety, swiftness and directness of Ilustrisimo appeal strongly to her. Having also studied Tai Chi Chuan with Guro Chow, she finds it intriguing to observe the similarities between such apparently divergent styles, and the way each one can influence the other. The Tai Chi has helped her to gain, a lot faster than she would have otherwise, an understanding of how effortless Ilustrisimo can be. Much of



Charmaine Lye

the training is an ongoing education in movement, and the idea that proper movement allows economy (and therefore speed) and integrity of body structure (and therefore stability and force). This education results in the avoidance of injury, both from repeated stress on joints and from impact.



Sarina Loo using dagger

Guro Chow's teaching to senior students includes guidance on how to instruct new Club members. As a natural development of their training, Sarina and Charmaine expect to progress to instructorship in the normal course of events.

Monash University Arnis Club Website

Phonexay Lala

By Patrick Armijo



Phonexay (*fon-say*) is 21 years old and currently studies Filipino martial arts from Patrick Armijo at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center in Bellingham, Washington. This class is her first experience in dedicated martial arts training. Phonexay has taken a Brazilian Jujitsu class at Western Washington University and her college instructor, J.T. Taylor, also teaches at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center. Phonexay says that she is interested in weapons and likes the circular flowing movements she experiences in class.

Phonexay asserts that these movements happen everywhere in nature and that her training is just a natural manifestation of movements found in nature. Phonexay likes how techniques transform or adapt to different weapons like a kris, knife, stick or empty hand application.

Phonexay says that she likes to kick butt and that the class is a fun outlet for her competitive nature. She does very well in sparring and surprises the guys with her footwork, combinations, speed, and ferocity. She says that



her sparring sessions are fun especially after a long day at work at the Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, Washington.

Phonexay is a natural athlete and when questioned by her instructor about how she became so mean, she smiles and says that she was a 'Tom Boy' when growing up. She used to play hard with her brothers and other boys at school. She says that one time in the sixth grade, she beat up three boys who taunted her about being Asian; assuming that she was supposed to know kung fu. She did not know any martial arts, but took them to the school of hard knocks just the same.



When not in her Filipino Martial Arts class at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center or at work, Phonexay can be found studying hard at Western Washington University. Phonexay says that her martial art training has helped her to focus on her schoolwork. Her busy schedule forces her to arrange and plan her schedule to fit in all of her activities.

Phonexay's parting message is that everyone should get involved with martial arts training because it is healthy and has positive affects on other aspects of her life. She has learned to be more disciplined and prioritizes her tasks to fit her busy life style. As she gets better in her training, her quality of life improves.

Phonexay's smile and laughter are infectious. She is a good student and we wish her great success in her martial arts career and with her studies at Western Washington University.



Pat Armijo has studied Modern Arnis and is the Pacific Northwest Region Representative for Cables Serrada Escrima. He is a fifth degree black belt in Kempo Jutsu and instructs at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center. Pat Armijo teaches Arnis/ Kali/Escrima.

Contact Pat Armijo: **Email**

Website - **Click Here**

Guro Sherril Johnson

“The Only Thing That is Consistent About Me, Is change”
Quoted to me, Sherril Johnson, by the Legendary Grandmaster Cacoy Canete



So, who am I? I'm a Student of Grandmaster Cacoy under the direct direction, of one of his USA Master, Master Christopher J. Petrilli. I started my training under Master Petrilli in 1991. I first learned of him and his teacher through a student of his, Jeff Bennett. Jeff would use me as his practice dummy after learning Master Petrilli's techniques from the night before. I at that time, I was studying the art of Kajukenbo Chuan Fa

Wun Hop Kuen Do.

The art of stick fighting had been a dream of mine, since the age of three. I had seen a documentary of the Zulu tribes men fighting. I was glued to the Television screen; with every blow I knew that someday I to, would be a Zulu tribesmen. My mother tried to explain to me that I couldn't be a tribesman. I thought that it was because the color of my skin. So, I found a marker a colored my entire body brown. My family was in shock, and tried desperately to remove the markers color from my body. I then was told that I couldn't be a Zulu tribesman because I was a woman, not a man. From that day forth I have tried everything I didn't see girls doing. Martial arts had been one of those things that I didn't see women in. The pictures in all the martial arts books that I had found had no girls. Also, no great fighting women, in action movies and then there was the sport of football. Really, all the things my brother, my dad and grandfather liked to watch on TV is what set me into action.

My first exposure to Martial arts came from Bruce Tegner's book "Judo Do." I had practiced every move in that book, every day on my bed. Doing leg sweeps, hip and shoulder throws on my over sized stuffed animal, an orange, purple and white stuffed Turtle. His name was Super Turtle, with a superman "S" drawn by me, onto his chest. I was four years old then.

I was seven years old; I had found a flyer with a silhouette of a man throwing another man over his shoulder. I had shown it to my Mom and the very next day, she took me to the gym and had signed me up. She has always been supportive of anything since that marker day. She even took me to Uwajimaya's to buy my first brand new piece of clothing, a Gi. I have never forgotten the smell of that new Gi.

I trained with Mr. Uchita for two years, and then trained in a Judo Dojo in downtown Seattle. Then onto Kung Fu, with the toughest of instructors, for a kid, that I have met. Then onto karate with Mr. Miser, a Vietnam vet, that had the warrior spirit like my Grandfather. When I was eighteen years old, I had found the Kajukenbo System. This is where I had encountered my first face to face, since the marker day, of someone doing stick fighting. I practiced Redondo; the sinawali drill called heaven and earth and 12

basic block and strikes that had been shown to me, by Sifu Austria. I had trained the concepts every day and thought it was the best thing ever.

Kajukenbo is where I had met Jeff Bennett, an Army Ranger, he didn't mind giving and taken hits with a women...well, maybe it was just me that didn't mind. And from him I had met Christopher J. Petrilli, an Army Ranger as well. Through Chris I had met Grandmaster Cacoy Canete. So you can put it all together form the passion I had since the age of three to finding Stick fighting in my neck of the woods. I'm hooked. I did met with Burton Richardson and he has trained with the Zulu tribe. We had discussed the movements of the Zulu fighters and I still want to go to Africa and train with them, someday. I have a long way to go in the art of Cacoy Doce Pares and it is my first stick fighting art, that has let me be what I am, A Stick Fighter!

Thank you to all my training partners, many that don't even know that I believe them to be one. I will name the following people with maybe a little "google searching" you to can find them and train with the best. These guys will train with a female training partner, just like a real training partner. Women around the world of martial arts you know what I'm saying here. So, Thank you to all these men, that have done just that and made me into the Stick Fighter that I am today, and to what I will become.

"Wow!" that is what I had said, after my first meeting of the Legendary Grandmaster Cacoy Canete in 1993. I have to ask you, if you have ever met Grandmaster Cacoy Canete, can you think of the first word you used to describe the man and his stick skills? It was Wow, wasn't it? Sure, you then had something like the following statements after that first word; "he's amazing!" "Did you get that?" "He's really not that old, is he?" "Did he really just toss that big guy?"



Christopher J. Petrilli - Sherril Johnson
Grandmaster Canete

"Wow!" is still the first word out of my mouth in the year 2006. After all the years of training under him, since our first meeting, he still seeks to make him (his art) an experience that you won't ever forget.

Awe is what I felt the first time I touched hands with Grandmaster Cacoy Canete. And the many others that have had the chance to touch hands with him, they will all agree with me. It is awesome.

Awe is what I felt, when he has thrown me into the air. It is as though, I'm a small piece of tissue that he has crumpled up and then tossed out for the ground to catch. When he locks me, it's like he has become the mightiest of python snakes and has constricted me into making only two choices: submitting to the pain or the breaking of one of my bones. When the flurry of his stick strikes is unleashed on me, it is as though a machine gun is being unloaded. When he blocks my strikes, it is as though I'm striking at a semi-truck going sixty-mph. When he is demonstrates his disarms it is as though he is doing a magic trick or like he is a hypnotist and willed you to let go of the stick. And then, there are his checking hands. They have the strength of a gorilla, the gentle touch of a feather

floating around, your hands, and all with the speed of a flash of lighting. But during it all, he has the greatest of smiles. A smile that only can be taken as it is his expression in his overwhelming delight, in that he is sharing the art with you. When you are all confused about how you got Thrown, Locked, Struck, Blocked, Disarmed and Checked, you will hear his little charming giggle that brings your right back to reality and the realization “WOW, that was Awesome” and a plea inside your head “I hope he’ll do that again.” For those that haven’t met him, ‘Grandmaster Cacoy Canete’ you need to find him and experience him and his art. For those of you who have been around the Filipino Martial Arts for a while, you know that a great Master can be, one day, only found in just some book or archived video, from an unseen event. Don’t let an opportunity pass you by, find him... for your training, for your experience, and your growth in the arts.



Grandmaster Cacoy Canete – Seminar in Mexico

A special Thank you to:

Grandmaster Cacoy Canete for all the warrior spirit, **Christopher J. Petrilli** for believing that a women can be the best training partner, even though many people think different.

Tom Weissmuller “we had fought in a war together, in a past life.”

And to my throwing partner, **Robert Stitler** with out your trust and time I wouldn’t be where I’m today.

To the others that have help in my growth:

Hope Brown, Ken Koenig, Tom Peebles, Ted Setelo, Carl Hinkson, Jason VanFredenberg, Kevin Cornwell, Robert Thornton, Michael Witgen (sorry about the egg on your head), Bobbe Edmonds, Tony Macadangdange, Kelly Worden, Guro Dan, Guro Richardson and to my students.



Guro Sherril Johnson
Yin Yang Arts Center
 6059 California Ave SW
 Seattle Wa 98136
 (206) 935-2315
 Website: www.yyac.com

Sunny Graff

Modern Arnis and Lapunti Arnis de Abanico
 Frankfurt, Germany



Sunny Graff – Demonstration
 European FMAfestival

I have been in martial arts for almost 35 years, the last twenty of which I have trained extensively in the Philippine arts of Modern Arnis and Lapunti Arnis de Abanico. My path to the martial arts was through the women's movement in the early 70's. When I was 17, a good friend was murdered while hitchhiking. Her death left me angry and defiant. With the new wave of the women's movement I was drawn to anti-violence work and began a Rape Crisis Center in Columbus, Ohio. Another dear friend was brutally murdered and as her body was found piece by piece, I resolved to see if "maybe" a woman too could learn self-defense. At that time there were no self-defense classes and no role models. The sexism in martial arts was intense, the schools exclusively male and women were not welcome.

I enrolled in a Korean martial arts school and changed in the broom closet, as there was no dressing room for women. The Kung Fu training was very traditional and although I learned nothing useful in the way of self-defense, I fell in love the powerful flowing movements. I am still a member of the Oriental Martial Arts College and will be testing for my seventh dan in Taekwondo this summer. For self-defense though, I returned to the women's movement and developed a curriculum based on women's need for accurate information, assertiveness training, verbal and physical skills.

I switched to Taekwondo after winning the Taekwondo National Championships in 1978. I was a member of the first US Women's national team and won Gold medals at the World Games in Taiwan in 1979 and at the Pan American Games in Puerto Rico in 1981. It was exciting to be part of the first wave of women in competition but challenging since we spent as much time fighting sexist discrimination and prejudices as we did fighting our opponents.

Although we were isolated in our schools, individual women training in various styles and cities began networking and bonded together to support each other. We shared

our styles, our skills, our frustrations and our enthusiasm with each other. It was at a gathering of women martial arts instructors that I was introduced to modern arnis and immediately loved it. From age 5 I had been a baton twirler, which was surprisingly valuable training for stick fighting. In the middle of the 70's we founded the National Women's Martial Arts Federation, to support women and girls in the arts and I served on the first board of directors. The organisation is still going strong and celebrates 30 years of Special Training Summer Camps this July in Chicago. (www.nwmaf.org)

In 1984 I earned an LIM in comparative law at Columbia University and received a fellowship to do post graduate work in Germany. When I arrived in Frankfurt, there was a huge demand for self-defense courses for women and girls and no teachers. I began a self-defense teacher-training program, which supported me nicely and gave me the freedom to start my own martial arts school and to pursue my own training. Last fall "Women in Movement" celebrated our 20th anniversary. We currently have 250 women and girls training in Taekwondo, Lapunti Arnis de Abanico, self-defense and the Being in Balance! ® exercise program.

In 1985 I began training with a local black belt in Arnis. At my first test I met the national trainer of the German Arnis Federation Datu Dieter Knüttel and he became my teacher. I traveled two hours each way to his school in Essen. I have been blessed with excellent teachers but they have always been in distant cities and in the Philippines. My training took a big step forward ten years ago when I met Bernd Vieth, head instructor of one of the largest arnis schools, who has been a consistent and dedicated training partner. We both hold the rank of 4th Dan in Modern Arnis. I was honored to have Grandmaster Remy Presas preside at our third Dan test at my school in 2000.



DAV



Sunny Graff - Grandmaster Ondo Caburnay - Bernd Vieth

traveled monthly to Luxemburg for an intensive instructor's course with Master Raoul Gianuzzi. Each year we fly to the Philippines for two weeks for private training on the beaches of Cebu with Grandmaster Caburnay, who awarded us

In 1997 Bernd and I attended a seminar in Lapunti with Grandmaster Ondo Caburnay and were spellbound by the speed, beauty and fluidity of the Abanico style. Lapunti uses explosive Abanico combined with Kung Fu footwork, most notably the cross stance. For the next several years we



our 4th Dan's in 2005.

My personal training in FMA has been exclusively with men and I miss the presence of other women. Even after 20 years in the German Arnis Federation there are only a handful of active female black belts and none that I know of in Lapunti. I teach both Lapunti and Modern Arnis and although 95% of my students are women, overall fewer women are drawn to weapons training than to empty hand arts. We need more role models and better visibility of women in the FMA, as well as instructors and classes that are welcoming to women. This issue of the FMA digest is a step in the right direction. Thanks for asking me to participate.

Sunny Graff

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Basisgymnastik und Lapunti

Gauß-Str. 12 HH

60316 Frankfurt

www.fib-ev.com

Email: **info@fib-ev.co** or **fib@fib-ev.com**

Tel. 069-59794590

Fax. 069-59794591

www.egoscue-methode.de

Sunny.Graff@t-online.de



Lapunti Arnis de Abanico

Life's Principles and Doce Pares

By Jennifer Tussing

The first time I attended a Doce Pares Seminar, was in 1994, taught by Grandmaster Cacoy Canete. I witnessed Grandmaster spar with “Big Tom”, a broad shouldered, stocky, Hawaiian Filipino who towered over Grandmaster. He would smile as he deftly anticipated and parried Tom’s strikes. Then like a magician who loves to make his audience curious about the smooth complexity of his movements, Grandmaster would exclaim “aha” as he flipped Tom five feet in the air. After several years of training in Doce Pares, I was slowly overwhelmed by the realization that Grandmaster had not just a lifetime of skills to teach us, but that he was demonstrating principals of living through his own life that have been the backbone of his success in Doce Pares.

One of the most powerful of Grandmaster’s principles, for me, was his confidence that each person is important and that as an individual, my personal journey and growth can positively influence people. I recognized that Grandmaster believed in this confidence for himself and then invited us to follow. This antidote for low self-esteem helped me to overcome person discouragement which tried to persuade me that I simply lacked the skills needed to excel in Doce Pares, that my learning challenges were too much of an obstacle to conquer, or that I was pursuing a “hobby” that didn’t have relevance in any larger context.

As a mother with young children, I was experienced with feeling impatient both with them and myself. So I marveled at Grandmaster's patience and joy in teaching, as he would demonstrate for us in a seminar, often five consecutive times, a drill or striking pattern. We would break up into pairs and attempt to duplicate what he skillfully showed us.

As Grandmaster walked around the room assisting others, sometimes he would catch an exasperated look on my face, which said, "I should know how to do this after 3 or 4 years in Doce Pares, but here I am again stuck in kindergarten." Grandmaster would smile and give me one of his quizzical looks and chuckle softly. Gently he would alternately feed me and my partner strikes, or receiving strikes from each of us. As he kept showing us the proper method with his hands and stick as well as a skilled use of non-verbal cues with his eyes and facial expressions, he would engage us in a self-awareness game. Then as we experienced our own moment of revelation, he would say "aha" and point his finger as if to say, "see I told you, you'd get it".

Through numerous circumstances like this one, Grandmaster challenged my doubts about my ability to unlock the mystery of how to do a technique so it works. His message to me has consistently been, "If you want to be a willing learner, it involves owning the belief that you possess learning strengths, and that you're committed to being persistent and patient with yourself in the exploration of them."

Grandmaster greeted me at one seminar and inquired if I had been practicing every week, with his characteristic penetrating gaze. In my insecurity, I thought he was referring to his disappointment at my lack of growth in Doce Pares, so I felt compelled to explain to him my learning challenges in some detail.

Grandmaster looked concerned and thoughtful as he let me finish. Then he told me the story of when he was a young boy, how he wanted to play basketball so bad. He kept trying, but he finally realized he wasn't built physically for basketball. So he said with a, "so what?" look on his face as he spread his palms up, "I focused on what I was good at and I put my energies into the Filipino Martial Arts."

I felt relieved that he understood how it felt to have "challenges", but in a practical way, he showed me that we all have limitations. Yet Grandmaster also encouraged me to refuse to let myself be defined by my limitations, and as a result, I would find ways to let my natural strength of learning guide me as I practice Doce Pares.

Sometimes in the past, I would lose sight of the importance of the "life principles" that I have learned, and I found myself asking the question, what relevance does my training in Doce Pares have with everyday life? Then I remind myself of Grandmasters belief that the growth of an individual is important. That even if we don't see how it impacts others positively his life's journey is an example that it does.

Ultimately my experience with Doce Pares helped me to realize that the lessons you learn through your own growth can carry with you through the rest of your life as you share them with others.



Jennifer Tussing back row left



Yin Yang Arts Center

6059 California Ave SW

Seattle Wa 98136

(206) 935-2315

Website: www.yyac.com

Mary Ann P. Presas

MARPPPIO



Mary Ann P. Presas is the second daughter of the late Grandmaster Remy A. Presas. She is the Arnis prodigy of the Presas women. Childhood memories of rigorous "sinawali" drills and repetitive practice of "anyo" in their gym in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines, instilled within her a great love for the art of Modern Arnis. Her training officially started at an early age of seven, but as far as she could remember, her father Grandmaster Remy A. Presas, had been conditioning her since she was four. He would accompany her in all his training sessions, exhibitions, and seminars local and abroad since their

settling in Manila until he left for the United States. She assisted her father in all his endeavors, even appearing in all three of her father's Modern Arnis books.

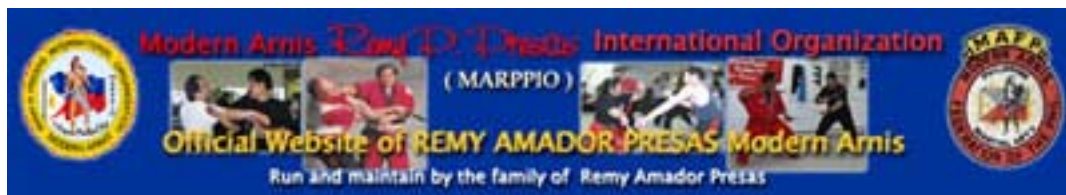
In 1972 and 1974, Mary Ann Presas, together with her father, Grandmaster Remy A. Presas and other expert arnisadors went to Osaka, Japan to represent the Philippines' Department of Tourism at the International Trade Fair, where she performed several Modern Arnis exhibitions. In 1974, the Japanese government was impressed with her

skills and conferred her a special award. Mary Ann receiving the award was televised nationally in Japan. The same year, she accompanied her father to the First International Martial Arts competition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

When Grandmaster Remy A. Presas left for the United States, Mary Ann, her brother Remy Jr., their mother Rosemary, the rest of the family, and the first generation of Modern Arnis instructors, continued to teach and spread Modern Arnis in the Philippines, holding numerous seminars in various universities and military camps, while they continued to maintain their gym (NAKO/MAFP) in Manila.

In addition to her father's training, she complemented her knowledge in martial arts by having independently studied Karate, Fencing, Kendo, and Judo. Mary Ann Presas holds black belts in Karate and Judo.

She worked her way through school earning Degrees in X-Ray Technology and Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Punong Guro Mary Ann loves to practice and give lessons in Modern Arnis while maintaining her full time job in the housing industry and at the same time, attend to her small retail business.



www.modernarnis.com

Mary Ann Presas

1701 Emeric Ave, San Pablo, CA. 94806

Phone: (510) 237-1397

E-mail: marppio@modernarnis.com



Grandmaster Babao with Guro Liza
after a First Place Win

Detective Liza Prodigalidad

The First Female Guro of Babao Arnis

By David A. Bertrand

As she placed her headgear and bastons in her duffle bag, Liza glanced at her forearms. The bruises were already starting to throb and change color. After four hours of testing, the adrenalin was finally wearing off. Although the pain was setting in, she had to smile. Detective Liza Prodigalidad had just become the first female Guro ever promoted by Master Narrie Babao.

"I remember thinking to myself,"

reflected Guro Liza. “I can’t believe how much this training would have helped me throughout my law enforcement career. If only I could have gone through this training when I was a brand new police officer, it would have made such a difference during my career.”

When Liza Prodigalidad entered the San Diego Police Academy in the early 1980’s, she was issued a revolver, a uniform, and a paper bag filled with other equipment. Within a few days, she would attend her first “arrest and control” class (a politically correct term for “hand-to hand combat” or “defensive tactics”). “The instructors were all big guys,” explains Liza. “They showed us a bunch of techniques that worked fine when they demonstrated them on the recruits, but when we tried them on each other, we looked ridiculous.”

A few sessions later, it was time for Liza to learn how to use her shiny new PR-24 side-handled baton. “The instructors told us how great this thing was supposed to be for controlling violent criminals,” laughs Liza. “When we lined up to hit a heavy bag with our batons, one of the recruits went full-power. The baton bounced back and hit him in the elbow. He immediately dropped it on the ground and started howling in pain. The rest of us looked at each other and started laughing. The instructors didn’t think it was so funny. We had to do a lot of push-ups that day”

When Liza and her fellow recruits graduated from the police academy, they quickly discovered that the only “arrest and control” technique that seemed to work effectively was the “carotid restraint” (politically correct term for “choke hold”). “I remember being resentful,” explained Liza. “I had never studied any martial arts. This was my only training experience, and the techniques did not work in a real confrontation.”

It would be many years before Detective Prodigalidad would give the martial arts a second chance. “I can laugh about it now,” said Guro Liza. “I actually thought all martial arts training was like my academy experience. I never took the time to research the variety of systems and styles that exist.” All that would change, however, when Liza was introduced to Babao Arnis and the Filipino Martial Arts.

“Some of the departments patrol officers and SWAT Team members were training with Master Babao when they were off-duty,” explained Liza. “A new group of defensive tactics instructors were teaching the recruits at the police academy. They were adding Babao Arnis techniques to the curriculum, and eventually brought Master Babao on-board as an instructor. Word started to spread about the effectiveness of his system, so I figured I would give the martial arts a second chance. Besides that, I’m half Filipina.”

When asked about allowing Detective Prodigalidad to join his Arnis Academy, a smile comes to Master Babao’s face. “Guro Liza is only about 5’ 2” and weighs about 115



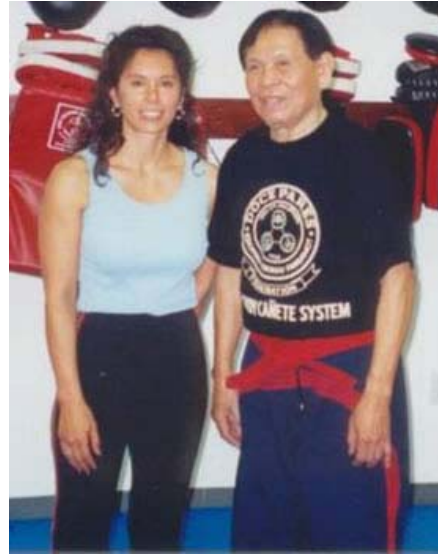
Grandmaster Narrie Babao and his first female Guro, practicing Mano-Mano vs. Daga

pounds,” said Master Babao. “She is assigned to a specialized Task Force that is made up of law enforcement officers and detectives from several federal, state, and local agencies. Their primary job is to crack down on drug dealers and gang-members who are on probation or parole. It is very dangerous work.”

“When she asked me if I would be interested in accepting her as a student, I agreed,” said Babao. “I figured that if there was anyone around who needed some effective training, it was Liza. Although I admit being a little skeptical at first, Liza has trained with me for almost six years. She’s tougher than a lot of the guys that I have seen training in the martial arts these days.”

The Babao Arnis Academy in San Diego is Master Babao’s main headquarters. In addition to Babao Arnis, the curriculum of the school includes Grandmaster Ciriaco “Cacoy” Canete’s Eskrido, Villabrille-Largusa Kali, Doce Pares Eskrima, and a variety of empty hand arts such as Kuntao (“Fist-Way”) and Panuntukan (Philippine boxing). “I teach each art as a separate entity at a specific level in the curriculum,” explained Babao. “Liza has also earned a black belt from Grandmaster “Cacoy” Canete.

Like most ranking martial artists, Guro Liza views her success as the start of a long journey, not the completion. “The more I learn, the more I realize that I need to keep training,” said Liza. “I look forward to continuing to develop my understanding of the Filipino Martial Arts. They are extremely effective in the types of confrontations that I encounter at work. I feel like I’ve just scratched the surface”



Guro Liza with
Grandmaster “Cacoy” Canete



About The Author

Guro David Bertrand is a retired S.W.A.T. Officer and former U.S.M.C. Platoon Commander. He has over thirty years of martial arts experience and has earned black belts in a variety of traditional Japanese systems, as well as, the Filipino Martial Art of Babao Arnis and Eskrido.

To learn more about Master Narrie Babao and the Babao Arnis School, view their web page at **www.Babao-Arnis.com**.



Training the Art of Latosa Escrima

By Dora E. Chi

As someone who has spent most of my life on my family and my career, learning martial arts or even self-defense was the furthest thing from my mind. When it came to defending myself, or my family, I believed that I would revert to my mammalian instinct to defend. Although instinct is always good, my subconscious mind always knew that it would likely not be enough in a true self-defense situation.

My son then introduced me to Latosa Escrima. He raved about how much I would love the training style and we went to class together -- he was right. After my first class with Michael Casey at Santa Monica Self Defense I was addicted forever. Soon thereafter, I attended a seminar with Grandmaster Rene Latosa and I knew I was in the right place.

During my initial training it helped me to find similarities between the main concepts I use in a business deal and the concepts of Escrima. As in any transaction and negotiation that I have been involved with, I must keep a sharp awareness of my adversaries, their tactics, reactions, strengths and weaknesses. I found this no different in training Escrima. As I began my training, initially with sticks, I found the box defense and five strikes very similar to understanding the unlimited defenses and most important offenses experienced intellectually as well as physically. I was fortunate to begin my training with Michael whose unassuming and calm manner made it easy and fun for me to train Escrima in a non-threatening environment. Generally when taught this way, more information is absorbed as you are less concerned with being overly challenged by someone with more advanced training. Although there is an underlying fear of the unknown and unexpected strike, so long as I stuck with the basics of the style my confidence continued to grow.

As my training progressed I began to understand that the concept of balance was most important. However factors equally affecting balance are speed, through timing and distance, power, focus and transition. All of which are major equilibrium and/or advantage factors at a negotiating table. My intrigue with the art only grew with excitement from this point forward as did the intensity. As expected, Michael continued to test my ability as I transitioned to using different weapons. He stressed the importance of body awareness and use of the entire body when striking rather than just using the arm.

The beauty of my progressive training was realizing that I have the ability to use all of the Latosa Escrima concepts with any type of weapon or no weapon at all. At this point in my training, I began training more often with Grandmaster Rene (Grandmaster



Rene), which was an all-encompassing experience. As Grandmaster Rene allowed me the freedom of moving and striking, creating my own style that better fit my body type, strength and speed. The idea of having “no rules” really appeals to me as I find rules much too restrictive and boring. As I progress I become more aware of how my analytical ability and physical structure develops the power, strength and explosiveness that allows a more confident attitude throughout day-to-day life. I find myself more confident in my ability to physically defend myself, if ever confronted or attacked.

I continue working with Michael and Grandmaster Rene on realigning myself to keep my balance and force my opponent off center and vulnerable to my attack. I attack using anything in my hand or within reach, yet I am certain that I could be effective as well with no weapon if necessary. I try to keep my opponent off balance using any tactic available, even if it pushing him away creating sufficient distance to effectively strike with a weapon. Thereafter, I also begin to focus on using multiple weapons, one in each hand. I am now confronted with new physical tests - specifically using the non-dominant side of my body. I quickly learn how important it is to develop my “weaker” side and because of this training I have improved my speed and ability to transition quickly, effectively and powerfully, not only physically but in life as well.

The training offered by Michael continually moves forward with my abilities and a little beyond. I enjoy using all of the weapons and training all of the newly learned techniques with empty hands. Most often an attacker would not expect their chosen “victim” to react even with no weapon. The element of surprise of course helps, but the attitude and ability developed with Latosa Escrima are keys in reacting to an attacker with aggression and vigor. One of the greatest benefits of training with Michael and Grandmaster Rene is that they maintain the integrity of the art of Latosa Escrima and unlike no other are willing to train you using all of their knowledge and experience without holding anything back.

I have always been a firm believer that all women should know some type of self defense and I highly recommend to all to try Latosa Escrima. It allows the freedom yet discipline to gain the strength, power, confidence and body awareness that help us in every day life and in the toughest of situations - whether physical or intellectual. If you are ever fortunate enough to have the opportunity to train with Grandmaster Rene and/or Michael Casey I am certain that your experience will be at least the equivalent of mine. As my training moves forward, the benefits also continue to mount and most important I personally find the style extremely entertaining and challenging.



For more information on classes and instruction contact:

Rene Latosa: www.eskrima-concepts.com

EBMAS – Guro/Sifu Michael Casey: **Email** Website:

www.santamonicaelfdefense.com

The Fighting Doctor

By Vince Palumbo

On Saturday April 8th there was a tournament held in Wollongong of New South Wales, and was sanctioned by the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation representative, Mr. Peter Mc Nalley. The tournament was the 2006 WEKAF Invitational NSW Stickfighting Championships and it had some of the best stickfighters in the country come and compete at the games.

The two representatives from South Australia were Master Vince Palumbo 8th Dan, and his student Dr. Andrea Wheatley who went to fight in the women's stickfighting division at the tournament.



Dr. Andrea Wheatley is a student of Master Vince Palumbo, and she has been training for about 3 years now at the International Combative Martial Arts Academy on 96a Grange road at Welland in South Australia.

She is one of Adelaide's leading Osteopath Specialists, and she has her clinic in North Adelaide! Dr Wheatley specializes in treating children that have suffered different kinds of head traumas.

Andrea has competed in the 2005 World Championships, which were held in Los Angeles, and she just lost the contest in a great bout on a 'split decision' to the current female World Champion Stickfighter.

Unfortunately when Andrea turned up in Wollongong to compete for the Women's Stickfighting title, she was told that there were no female competitors for her to fight against, so feeling some what disappointed, she asked the organizers if she could compete in the Men's under 75kg division, then to her shock and dismay, the organizers discussed the idea with Master Vince Palumbo, and he also felt that she was more than capable of holding her own against the men in that division. (Andrea weighs 58kg!)

Andrea went on to have 6 fights on the day, she won the double stickfighting division, and won a Silver medal in the single stick fighting division, and she also won a Bronze medal for her great effort in the Open Filipino Martial Arts Forms Division.

Andrea received a standing ovation from the other competitors, and the entire crowd as well, they all acknowledged her tremendous warrior spirit on the day of the competition.

Both Andrea and Master Vince are preparing themselves to compete in the World Championships, which will be held here in Adelaide, in the month of November later on this year!

The special guest of Honor at this event, will be the youthful Grand Master Cacoy Canete of the Philippines, he is renowned for having over 100 'NO-RULES' stickfighting matches in his country, the 87year old warrior is expected to make a demonstration of his incredible skills at the games!



Grandmaster Cacoy Canete and Dr. Andrea Wheatley



1st International Mixed Martial Arts Seminar
February 10 – 12, 2006 JY Square Mall, Lahug, Cebu City, Philippines

About Master Vince Palumbo



Vince Palumbo won 2 World Titles at the 2005 Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima World Federation World Full Contact Stickfighting Championships in Los Angeles, CA. He won the middleweight and the open weight world titles after having 13 very demanding fights on the day!

After giving a wonderful demonstration of skill, fitness and technique, he was also asked to make a guest appearance in the new movie which is yet to be released, 'Confessions of a Pit Fighter' starring Hector Echavarria, and the movie was produced by Art Comacho. It was actor Bob Wall from the Bruce Lee movie 'Enter the Dragon' who introduced Vince to the main producer of this movie, and Mr. Wall described Vince as a 'Real Deal' martial artist and fighter. Bob Wall played the part as the scar faced villain 'O'Hara', in the classic Bruce Lee movie!



**International Combative
Martial Arts Academy**

Master Vince Palumbo
96A Grange Rd. Welland
Adelaide - 5007
08 [8] 340-4588

**Email
Website**

Guro Laura Holmes

By Heather Turnbull

Photos by Robert Bergman of Primal Pictures

Credit Hapkido for introducing Guro Laura Holmes to what has become an exciting and rewarding career in Arnis.



Her journey into the world of Filipino Martial Arts began in 1991 purely by chance, when escrimadors visiting her dojo conducted a brief stick and knife demonstration. Picture a young green belt (with two years of Aikido training) anxious to add a little competitiveness into her life, sitting on the sidelines witnessing sinawalis, disarms, takedowns, and knife drills for the first time: “I remember them twirling and hitting each other’s sticks in what seemed a disorganized way”, recalls Guro Holmes. “One person disarmed and took down his partner, then quickly drew a blade and flashed it using various cutting and self-defense movements. I was absolutely fascinated and thought, ‘this is exactly what I’m looking for - something flowing and powerful, yet practical and complete in its art’.”

What followed this timely seminar were years of focused study and application, with Guro Holmes challenging herself to master the basics in a culturally rich and diverse martial art. The list seemed daunting: sinawalis, hand to hand combat, single and double stick systems, flow drills, weapons systems and traditional anyo. “I realized that no matter how much I knew I could always keep learning”, says Holmes, an attitude she maintains today.

Curious about FMA’s roots and eager to expand her skills, she traveled to the Philippines and trained with several masters and grandmasters. “Once they saw how enthusiastic and committed I was to the art, they were more than willing to show me as much as I could take



in. Learning from these talented artists really broadened my horizons and opened up my mind to the cultural impact Filipino Martial Arts has on the Martial Arts World in general”, she recalls. Training in the Presas system, Combat judo/escrima, Lightening System, and many others also helped her see the relationship between the stick/knife and hand, and the seamless integration from weapon to hand, and vice versa.

It wasn’t long before Guro Holmes developed a passion for the competitive side of Filipino Martial Arts, attending many WEKAF tournaments in the USA and Canada, as both a competitor and event organizer. “I did well, bringing home medals and trophies. But I also discovered that the competition and camaraderie brought out the best in me, as well as greatly improved my skills. I was finally learning to break down movements and understand checking, hitting combinations, movement/angling and defense, and how to make them all work together.” Subsequent participation at WEKAF World Championships (most recently in Cebu) garnered top medals and titles in numerous categories, as well as advanced training and certification under Filipino Martial Arts Masters and Grand Masters.



Shortly after this experience Guro Holmes established her own dojo, transforming some “loyal workout friends” into full-fledged members of her ever - expanding Combat Science-Warrior Arts of Asia club in downtown Toronto. “I wouldn’t have been able to do it without the love and support of my close friends, family, and fellow martial artists (including the influential Grand Master Professor Remy Presas) who stuck by me during that challenging period”, admits Guro Holmes. “Having Aikido in my life, which I continue to study, was a huge help too in facilitating my steps to

independence. It’s such a wonderful complementary art to Kali/Arnis/Escrima.” Since opening the school she has expanded its curriculum to include a comprehensive offering of Espada Y Daga, Serrada, Bunkaw and Doble Baston, Herrada Batangua, Pananadata and 12 strikes system, Cinco Terros, Kuntow Silat, Sikaran, Kombaton and other smaller mixed weapons styles.

These days, Guru Holmes’ martial arts life is jam packed, to say the least. Moving Combat Science to a new expanded dojo, conducting demonstrations and seminars across North America, and readying her students to compete in the upcoming WEKAF World Championships in Orlando, Florida (all qualified at the recent Canadian Championships) is a daunting schedule, but one on which she clearly thrives. “I find it encouraging that so many people are interested in getting involved in FMA, whether it’s to add to their current curriculum or just for their own personal training”, she notes. “Through my students and teaching I will continue to promote both the sport side and the traditional systems and



styles in Arnis/Kali/Escrima. The end game is spreading the word about this wonderfully complete and culturally rich martial art.”

Guro Holmes also holds a 3rd Dan in Aikido, and is Chief Instructor at her own Aikido Sandokai School. To find out more about her seminars, private instruction, as well as on-going curriculum classes, please visit her websites:



www.combatscience.net
www.aikido-sandokai.com
or contact her directly: **Email**
(416) 423 – 5793

About Heather Turnbull:

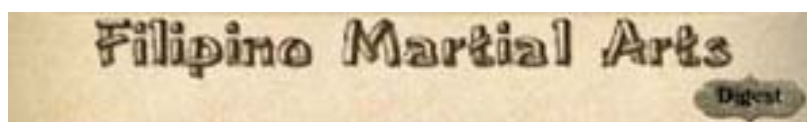
Heather Turnbull Sensei is a 3rd Dan in Shotokan Karate and Shaolin Chuan Fa Kung Fu. She regularly trains with the Black Belt Institute in Toronto (**www.blackbelt-institute.com**), as well as conducts personal safety and martial arts wellness programs for women through Goddess Martial Arts (**www.goddessmartialarts.com**). She met Guro Holmes “purely by chance” three years ago, and has been honoured to train with her ever since.



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