



**PAWMA**  
Pacific Association of  
Women Martial Artists

Hard and soft  
Working together  
Become complete

# PAWMA News

Uniting and empowering a diverse community of  
women and girls in the martial arts.

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## Seven Star Bali Trip

*Ellen Eades*

A group of eight women from Seven Star Women's Kung Fu in Seattle recently had an epic vacation in Bali. Thanks to Marti McCaleb, who organized a group buy-in on a vacation at Villa Pantai in Amed, Bali, at an auction benefitting the Seattle Men's and Women's Choruses, we spent an amazing week eating delicious food, diving and snorkeling, hiking to mountain temples, exploring and enjoying one another's excellent company.

Esther Howard and Sunniva Zaratkiewicz (black belts), Martha Arellano (brown belt), Visola Wurzer (blue belt), Narisa Spaulding, Rose McFadden, Ellen Eades, and Marti McCaleb (purple belts) were the lucky travelers.

We took a redeye flight from Seattle and woke up in Taiwan, then transferred to a flight to Denpasar, Bali, and from there a two-hour van ride brought us to Amed, a small fishing village on the east coast.



*On a redeye flight from Seattle to Taiwan. Photo: Marti McCaleb*



*We made it to Taiwan. Photo: Martha Arellano*



*Breakfast. Yum! Photo: Ellen Eades*

Our hosts treated us to delicious breakfasts every morning and then gave us a number of options for the day.

Several of us went snorkeling and diving, including at the famous USS Liberty wreck site. We climbed the over 2,500 steps at Pura Lempuyang Luhur, one of Bali's oldest and most famous Hindu temples.



*Pura Lempuyang Luhur. Photo: Ellen Eades*





*Pura Lempuyang Luhur. Photo by our Lempuyang guide*

Lempuyang is actually seven temples which are reached, one after another, by climbing a steep road up a mountain, accompanied by grey long-tailed macaques and other forest animals.



*Practicing our stances at the Tirta Gangga water palace. Photo: Martha Arellano*

We also visited the Tirta Gangga water palace, originally built for royalty in the 1940s but now open to the public.





*We tasted a lot of coffee and tea. Photo: Ellen Eades*

We visited a coffee plantation where we were able to taste both the famous Asian palm civet (“luwak” in Indonesian) coffee and herbal teas made from lemongrass, mangosteen, ginger, ginseng and other plants.



And we practiced punch attacks and takedowns - into the pool!

*Esther Howard (left) and Sunniva Zaratkiewicz (right) practicing poolside. Photo: Ellen Eades*



*Swimming into the beautiful Bali sunset. Photo: Ellen Eades*

We returned with sarongs, locally made silver and gold jewelry, a serious yen for Balinese garlic chips, and many happy memories.

*Ellen Eades trains in Seattle, Washington, with [Seven Star Women's Kung Fu](#) with Sigung Michelle McVadon and Sifu Allyson Riley.*

## Gifts in Unexpected Places

### An Interview with First Time Camper Lauren Hayden

*Nina Thompson and Lauren Hayden*

#### What were the best parts of PAWMA camp for you?

I made some lasting friendships that are really important to me and have helped me get through some hard times. It wasn't until I went to PAWMA that I realized how important other women are to me in my training.

During camp I got the most out of the morning meditation.

#### Highlight?

Meeting Kathy Long. My most memorable quote was, "Wait! It gets better!"

#### Skills you walked away with?

Last year I was healing from a broken hip. I broke it in June, so I couldn't really do much in the way of contact or high impact training for fear of rebreaking it. I focused on the internal arts, but even the T'ai Chi stances were challenging to me. However, they seemed to work the right muscle groups, so I think it sped up my recovery. PAWMA was exactly what I needed at the time. My recovery has been up and down as much mental as it was physical, but I'm looking forward to getting on the mats at the next PAWMA!

*Lauren Hayden trains at [Pacific Wave Jiu-jitsu](#) in Richmond, BC under PAWMA instructor Renshi Lori O'Connell.*



*Photo courtesy of Lauren Hayden.*



## Hello from Your Newsletter Editor!

Nadia Telsey introduced me to PAWMA by handing me a newsletter in 1999. Little did I know then how PAWMA would change my life.

My martial-arts training has largely been in male-dominated spaces. I'm the highest-ranked woman at almost every event I'm at. This is a hard place to be. I read recently that you can find truly successful women because we have flat heads from all the patronizing patting on our heads. I have felt this most painfully lately. Yet PAWMA has kept me going.

Through PAWMA, I have found mentors, models, and inspiration -- all incredible gifts to me and my training. I train in a hard style, which my teachers have taken to mean that they need to be hard on us. Training at my school is very traditional, with the shanai or bo implemented heavily as a painful teaching tool.

My training at PAWMA was starkly different from these methods. From Sifu Debbie Leung I learned that encouragement and storytelling was not only gentler, but more effective. I saw students in her class striving for perfection of the art instead of to avoid the thwap of the shanai.

From Sifu Patty O'linger I have learned to have fun and be joyous in my teaching. Sifu Patty invites joy and levity into her training at every opportunity. I was stunned to find she plays music during training! In her sparring classes I have seen her draw out the most timid students and transform them into confident fighters. Her talent, teaching techniques, and sense of joy have inspired me to bring all of myself to the dojo and bring joy into our training.

Sigung Sonya Richardson taught me how to acknowledge the deep ancestry of martial arts and use it to inspire my students.

I've learned kindness and compassion from Shifu/Sensei Koré Grate. She gently leads those students who are struggling and builds them up. She is humble, and inspiring, and it seems to me that her martial arts comes from a place of joy and love. Something I never experienced in my dojo prior to meeting her.

I have become a completely different kind of teacher, student, and human thanks to the richness of these teachers and the many other wonderful, inspiring, and generous people I've met at



*PAWMA newsletter editor, Nina Thompson, right, at Women's Open Sparring, Portland OR. Photo: Tracy Reith.*

PAWMA camps. I have sampled so many techniques, arts, and forms, and at the same time I have learned so much about how to be a better teacher and human being.

My intention with this newsletter is to bring more students to camp and to support these amazing teachers by inspiring our PAWMA members.

If you want to support our amazing teachers and the board who works diligently to make these camps happen, please share your PAWMA stories and your training stories, and share this newsletter with your community so that they learn about PAWMA too. I am looking forward to talking about the newsletter with you and to enjoying our next camp together!

Hope to see you in August,

**Nina Thompson**

*PAWMA Newsletter Editor*

*Nina Thompson trains in Portland Oregon, with the VA Dojo.*

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## Happy (First Time) Camper

MB Austin

### A Trunk Full of Baggage

As soon as I learned of PAWMA camp, I did some online research. Would I feel welcome? What about campers with different backgrounds and identities? Would it be a good space for all of us?

Everything I saw looked positive. And then the class listings and instructor bios lit my hair on fire. Did I really get to play with the big kids?! I packed for every contingency: Aikido gi, judo gi, MMA gloves, borrowed shin guards, running shoes, sweats. Raincoat, sunscreen, flashlight, bedding, PJs for bunking with strangers, snacks, first aid kit... Ready for camp or maybe the Zombie Apocalypse.

But was there room in Prius for my personal baggage? Sure, I write about a martial artist. But that doesn't make me one. Do those early years in judo? The



Photo courtesy of MB Austin.



one in Aikido? The karate or krav maga intros? What about those two years as an anti-violence volunteer with Guardian Angels/ Q-Safety Patrol? Or the boot camp fitness classes with MMA and kung fu coaches, that got me so hooked on striking that I bought my own BoB? Is it the dojo time that counts? The belt rank? I knew beginners were welcome at camp – but what about a perpetual beginner?

And then there was my secret mission. My first published novel included a self-defense camp and centers on women using their skills to keep others safe. What relevance would this fiction have to the real-life senseis/sifus/coaches and students? I didn't plan to market a work that wasn't even on the shelves yet; but should I cop to being at camp not just to learn but also to observe, get ideas, take notes?

## All the Things, Unpacked

From the moment I arrived, the palpable sense of joy was contagious. One opening speaker talked about how those who would threaten us want our fear, our anger. They do not want us to feel joy; so that must form the heart of our resistance. And a few days together, catching up with old friends or making new ones, insulated from the outside world and pouring support into one another, showed what that could feel like. (“Justice! Peace! Unity!”)

The joy of learning together came home with me, along with other gifts. Classes let me sample ideas and techniques that resonated with my personal interests (reasonable force, street applications, soft-hard blending) and reflect on what I needed to seek next in my ongoing training. And although the common icebreaker questions (What's your training in/ main style/ home dojo?) were uncomfortable for me, the conversations helped me clarify what I want in my training, and where I might find it after camp.

Partnering with students at different levels of training and from an eclectic range of styles was enlightening. Not everyone kiais, or takes falls, or executes throws, or uses striking, or does mat work. But everyone is diligent in their practice. And the differences I observed between beginners in any one discipline and the seasoned practitioners wasn't just skill level. It was the ability to put aside the frustration from being bad at something new and focus. The black belts' strong foundations of transferrable skills, self-knowledge/ respect, and persistence really showed in how game they were to try out anything new a peer or instructor offered. A great humility shone from that confidence, along with marvelous smiles.

Finally, it was a remarkable gift to briefly immerse myself in a world even cooler than I could make up. Fiction lets me invent people (like Maji Rios) who reflect what I see in the world today, and what I wish I could see. At camp, I found myself surrounded by Maji and her friends in the flesh. So many strong, funny, smart, caring and courageous campers with a variety of body types and sizes, ages, personalities, backgrounds, and intersectional identities. Within that diversity, I found a place for me. By the end of camp, I was determined to make that part of my life more real, in the dojo and beyond.

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## After the After-Party

A heady few months followed camp, full of book promotions and growing into this odd new role of author. In the quiet moments, I shared camp photos on Facebook, made connections there with other campers, and tracked down Seattle's Dan Zan Ryu jujitsu community.

In January I stepped onto the mat again, once more a white belt. Do I get frustrated with myself? Sure. But I'm training with the gifts from camp tucked into my belt, honoring the insight and experiences I bring while building the muscle memory needed for new techniques and new ways of doing familiar ones (Oh, the ukemi! That's how we roll...). My bags are lighter now; and the joy is palpable.

*MB Austin's first two thrillers, Strictly Need to Know and Running Off Radar are available now, and the third is underway. All feature Maji Rios, a multicultural, multilingual black belt who works in covert ops for the US Army. Clearly not autobiographical, they are inspired by real people. For more, visit [mbaustin.me](http://mbaustin.me).*

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## From the Editor:

Thank you to those who contributed, assisted, and took the time to write an article for this newsletter. If you are interested in writing an article for the upcoming newsletter, please email Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@pawma.org](mailto:newsletter@pawma.org).