

FMA Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

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Viñas Arnis System



Grandmaster Nonong (Wilson Esparas Viñas)

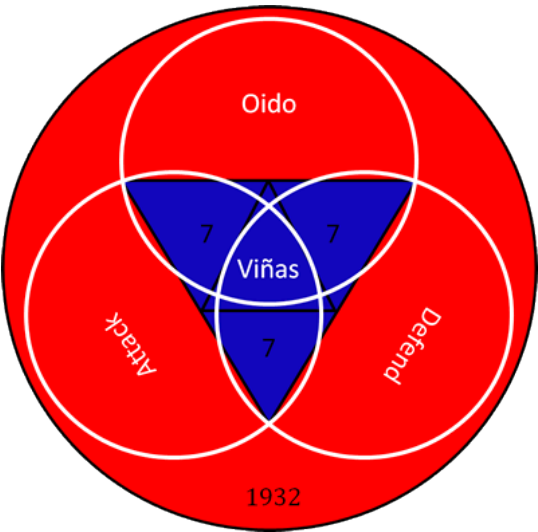
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One style of Arnis that always stands out when Arnis is talked about in Bacolod City is the Viñas Arnis System. The FM Informative was very fortunate to meet Grandmaster Wilson ‘Nonong’ Esparas Viñas. Nonong, which he likes to be called, is in his 70’s, however you could never tell it by the way he moves.

Viñas Arnis System is not an art just to learn this or that; the Viñas Arnis System is an art that one must be sure and have the desire and heart to be dedicated in gaining the proper concepts and principles of the art so to fully understand it.

As a Bonus, Mr. Russell Mackler has shared with the FMA Informative Nonong’s first seminar in the United States along with events leading up to it when Nonong and Mr. Mackler visited with Master Joe Tan, who learned from Grandmaster Nonong’s father, Grandmaster Jose ‘Joe’ Lamayo Viñas.

At this time, staying in Arizona with his student Guro Russell T. Mackler, working together to systematize all of Nonong family’s system and document all of the deeper unspoken knowledge.

So the FMA Informative can highly recommend that if Grandmaster Wilson ‘Nonong’ Esparas Viñas is doing a seminar near your location, attend for it is well worth seeing this practitioner and his moves and gaining the knowledge of one of the most recognized practitioners of the Filipino martial arts in Bacolod.

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Vinas Arnis System - Little Background



Jose ‘Joe’ Lamayo Viñas

One style of Arnis that always stands out when Arnis is talked about in Bacolod City is the Viñas Arnis System, which was founded by the late Great Grandmaster Jose ‘Joe’ Lamayo Viñas (1906 – 1991), in 1932, the same year that Doce Pares was established in Cebu City. This would make it perhaps the oldest established style/system of Arnis in Bacolod City in the modern era.

Although it has had various name changes in its 83-year history from the date it was formally founded, such as Gym of Arts of Self Defense (Lapu-Lapu Original), Lapu-Lapu Viñas Arnis Club, Lapu-Lapu Arnis Cultural Group, Lapu-Lapu Art of Self-Defense, Lapu-Lapu Gymnasium. Lapu-Lapu School of Arnis Aficionados Lapu-Lapu Sports Gym, School of Arnis Aficionados Lapu-Lapu Sports Gymnasium and Vinas Arnis Aficionados Association etc., it is now simply called the Vinas Arnis System.

In 1991, about a year after Great Grandmaster Viñas (85 years

of age) visited the United States he passed away due to prostate cancer. A power struggle then ensued as to who would be the successor to the founder within the Lapu Lapu Vinas Arnis Aficionado association, (Club). At one side were former students of the Great Grandmaster and on the other was his only son Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas.

The students of the Great Grandmaster soon left because they did not have faith in the son. They reasoned that they were doing Arnis years ahead of the son Wilson Viñas and they believed they were worthier successors. Wilson stood firm in his birth right as the bloodline successor of the founder and assumed the position of President/Chief Instructor, even if his father’s students left. He started to form his own group from scratch.

In spite of the claims of some former students of Great Grandmaster Viñas that his son, Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas, was not capable of heading and representing his fathers’ system, the fact remains: Wilson Viñas is the Great Grandmaster’s only son and as tradition would have it, it was him that the late founder left the puno “roots” of his art.

With the help of some loyal students of his father, foremost were Irving P. Elefante of Villadolid and Servante P. Largo Jr. of Bacolod, the younger Viñas started to formalize his father’s art into a more comprehensible system with progressive stages and explanations behind what he considered the basic movements of the system. Even with this being the case he still taught the system in a familiar tone as his father.

Meaning one movement was still represented as many movements. He presented his lessons in a more academically acceptable format.

He used terms from geometry, physics, physiology, etc. to explain the scientific basis of the art. No other instructor of the Viñas Arnis System had done this before. This evolutionary teaching methodology attracted not only high school and college students but also including professionals and businessmen, as well as American, British, Swiss, Chinese and other foreign nationals.

During the early days, the usual backgrounds of the founder’s students were in Karate and/or Judo, the predominant styles during the time. Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas time posed more challenges because of the diversity of the arts flooding the martial arts community. Headmaster Viñas students had backgrounds in many other styles other than Karate and Judo, to mention a few; Arnis, Aikido, Kickboxing, Pencak Silat, Wushu Sanshou, etc.

This atmosphere gave Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas the chance to test the puno his father gave him against the various forms of martial arts. Practitioners of these arts were amazed at the depth with which the Viñas Arnis System could relate to the mechanics of the other arts.

In 1998, Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas retired from active teaching. By this time he had already produced a head full of senior students.

In 2002, the senior students of Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas got together and decided to revive the Lapu Lapu Viñas Arnis Aficionados Assoc. (Club). Training

resumed in Mt. View, Bacolod City under the supervision of the founder’s son. At this point in time, there were a handful of senior students of Great Grand-master Viñas that were teaching his art, among them Grandmaster Dominador ‘Dom-ing’ Ferrer, who set up Kalantiaw Defense Society, the first school authorized by the founder. Wilson

‘Nonong’ E. Viñas commissioned James U Sy, Jr., to organize Lapu-Lapu Viñas Arnis Aficionados Assoc. (Club) into a progressive syllabus and standardized ranking system. Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas senior students, with his direct supervisions, facilitated the first real attempt at systematization.

The systematization under

Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas was the first such effort to initially organize the art into a more standardized system with a base connecting all branches in a systematic structure. Even with this being the case Wilson ‘Nonong’ E. Viñas only enabled the systemization of the basic parts of the system during this time.

Principles and Concepts of Viñas Arnis System

Blade vs Blade

1. Tapal defense to a horizontal strike 2. Sinket to the throat 3. Finish cut to the wrist or forearm



So one must remember that the Viñas Arnis System is based off the bolo, it is focused on edge awareness, although the baston, knife, and open hand movements are taught as well. The student on their journey of knowledge is taught the difference in using the bolo compared to the baston. The bolo of course with a blade is used to chop, cut and stab, where the baston being round with no blade, is used on the opponents bones and joints.

The foundation, stances uses natural foot work, balance is in the middle / centerline, always facing the opponent, does not strike or block sideways, it is like boxing in facing the opponent in offensive and defensive maneuvers’.

The free hand is used in conjunction with the weapon hand, meaning it is used for preparation, such as countering, checking, grabbing, and a number of combination of activities based off of whatever is taking place in the confrontation. Constantly used with the weapon hand whether positioned behind the weapon hand or pushing, pulling, checking or whatever it is needed for. It is a very active part of the system.

Power comes from the movements of the body, hips, legs, wrist, hands and inner Chi, with of course body alignment from the centerline. So it is a total combination of body alignment, and the mechanics of the body.

As one starts the Viñas Arnis System, first one must master the balance of the body which will bring the body mechanics in coordination with the centerline and when learning the offensive and defensive movements will attain the strength and speed needed for attack and counter attack.

The Viñas Arnis System is a close quarter system of Bacoleno Arnis based on inhibiting the opponent’s ability and options to attack and use his strength by acquiring the angle of cancellation (panirada “to close”). This can be manifested in the acquisition of a superior tactical position by the feet, body and/or the arms/hands and at times, by disarming - the maneuvers the art is best known for. The system is primarily a single stick art with supplementary training in sinawali (double stick) and espada y

daga (sword and dagger). The highest level of the art is the advance Oido movements which is almost never discussed in detail, although the basic movements have been shared with a select few.

Training starts with the single short stick. Universally, Arnis systems and styles have 12 strikes but in Viñas Arnis System, the angles of attack have been simplified into 7 strikes. All other strikes emanates from these 7 strikes. With only 7 “generalized” basic strikes the student can cover more material in a shorter period of time.

Along the way, the student learns to use the 7 basic strikes and all their other variations regardless of the weapon they are holding. The 7 basic strikes can be transmitted to the long sword, the long stick, single and double knife, single and double baston de cadena (nunchaku), pocket sticks, brass knuckles, etc.

Stick vs Stick



1. Push a vertical strike to the side



2. Grab the wrist



3. Start a disarm



4. Finish the disarm

2 Up close

Stick vs Blade



- 1. Start
- 2. Tapal defense to a vertical strike
- 3. Sinket to the eyes
- 4. Finish hit to the hand or wrist



The empty handed phase makes use of close quarter tools such as trapping, elbows, knees, takedowns, etc. At the higher level, practitioners of Viñas Arnis System can integrate other elements from other styles for his own consumption so long as it is within the bounds of combat proven principles.

Empty Hand vs Stick



- 1. Slide past vertical strike
- 2. Push at bicep
- 3. Smack the eyes
- 4. Grab the neck and push head down
- 5. Finish with a knee to the face

Empty Hand vs Stick



- 1. Catching a horizontal strike
- 2. Following it while twisting
- 3. Finish with a disarm
- 4. After disarm move to grab behind neck
- 5. Grab neck and push arm up
- 6. Push head down
- 7. Finish with a knee to the face



3 Close up

Empty Hand vs Blade



- 1. Knife to the throat
- 2. Initial counter
- 3. Followed up with joint manipulation

Empty Hand vs Blade

- 1. T-block stopping an upward blade stab
- 2. Start of a forearm disarm



1 Close up

- 3. Disarm continuation with a potential punch to the groin
- 4. Followed up with an uppercut to the chin

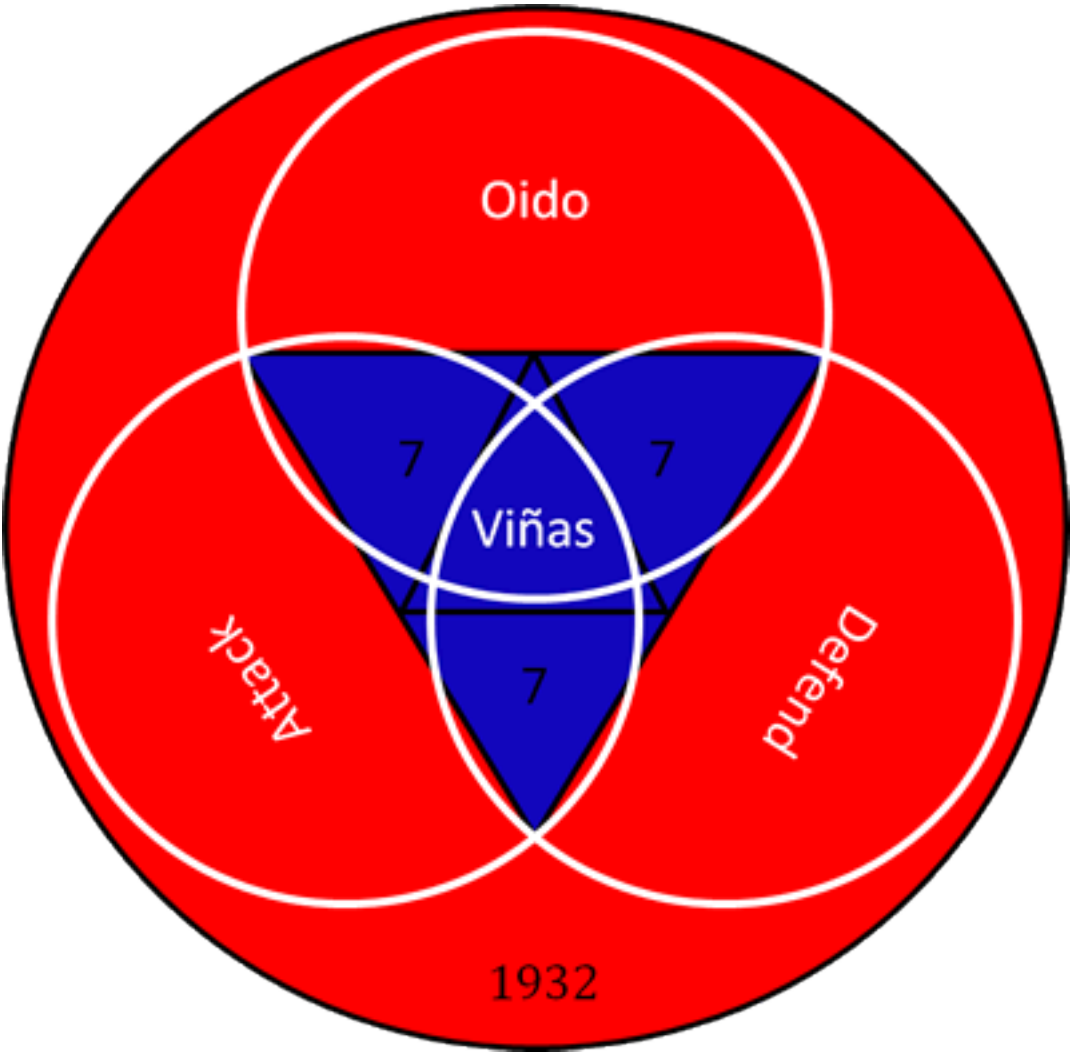
The benefit in knowing Viñas Arnis System is learning how to defend yourself or basically fight. The style is not for demonstrations or tournaments but actual fighting. Though Viñas Arnis System is a very traditional system, it adopts to today’s techniques and situations.

The highest level of the Viñas Arnis System is Oido which means “free Style”. Oido uses advance set of movements which is a combination of movements, principles, and concepts into pseudorandom transitions, defense, attacks, and counter attacks. So with the 7 defensive, 7 offensive and 7 Oido combinations integrated with the deeper knowledge and understanding the system can be utilized to its fullest.

The primary mindset in the art is simplicity. Combat is chaotic and unpredictable so a limited number of techniques with multiple applications and based on principles are focused on to shorten the “thinking” time during combat for more efficiency.

Final Thought

Viñas Arnis System is not an art just to learn this or that the Viñas Arnis System is an art that one must be sure and have the desire and heart to be dedicated in gaining the proper concepts, and principles of the art so to fully understand it. It will build health, strength and the correct attitude in a student. If learned and understood the student will build self-confidence, an understanding and pride in themselves.



Grandmaster Nonong (Wilson Esparas Viñas) First US Seminar

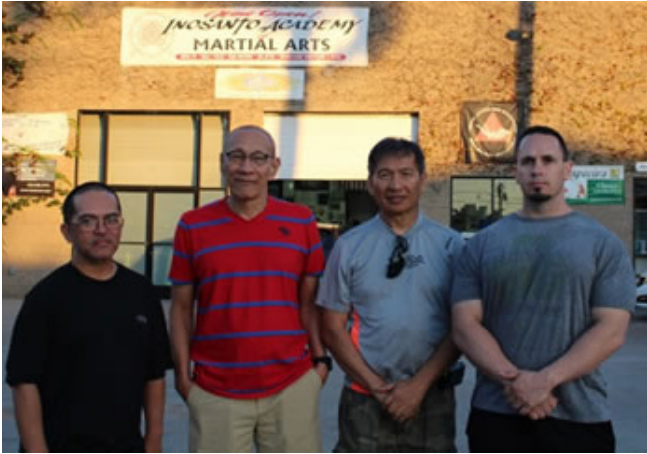
It has been a long wait, but Grandmaster Nonong (Wilson Esparas Viñas) was able to travel to California and continue in his father’s footsteps (Grandmaster Joe Lamayo Viñas) with propagating his family’s system. The first and last time the Viñas system was shown in the US by his father was when he came to the US in 1990 under the support of Dr. Frank Scalercio Jr. At this time Dr. Frank Scalercio Jr. was intending to start the propagation of the Viñas system under the club name, “Lapu Lapu Vinas Arnis Aficionados”, in the US. Due to Grandmaster Joe passing in 1991 this realization never took place as it was intended. Now in 2015 Grandmaster Nonong under the support of Guro Russell T Mackler was able to reintroduce his families’ art to other Filipino martial arts enthusiasts in California, Arizona, and Florida. Over the past couple of years Grandmaster Nonong and Russell have been working together to systematize his family’s system and document all of the deeper unspoken knowledge.



Guro Russell T Mackler, Grandmaster Nonong, Master Tan at Venice Beach

“Inosanto Academy”

On Saturday July 18, 2015 Master Tan first



Guro Victor Gendrano Jr, Grandmaster Nonong, Master Tan, Russell T Mackler at the Inosanto Academy. **Note:** out of respect for the Inosanto Academy this picture was taken from the street.



Guro Russell T Mackler and Grandmaster Nonong (Wilson Esparas Viñas) at Grandmaster Joe Viñas’s gave Bacolod City, Negros Occidental Philippines. - January 2014.

The trip to California started with the thought that Grandmaster Nonong and Russell would travel to visit Master Joe Tan in LA who is a good family friend of the Viñas and Mackler families. Master Tan graciously put together an agenda for us to visit with his close friends and family. Master Tan learned from Grandmaster Nonong’s father Grandmaster Joe.

On arriving Friday July 17, 2015 Master Tan and his wife took us to lunch at University Studios City Walk, and in the evening we attempted to visit “Mark Parra’s House of Champions Academy of Martial Arts”, but unfortunately we missed Shihan Mark Parra.



Visit the house of Champions

brought us by the “Inosanto Academy of Martial Arts” and introduced us to Guro Victor Gendrano Jr. It was a pleasure meeting Guro Victor and hearing his passion around the

Filipino martial arts. We believe he would be an excellent individual to meet if interested in the Filipino martial arts. Thank you Guro Victor! Again another misfortune was missing Guro Dan Inosanto.

“Magda Institute”

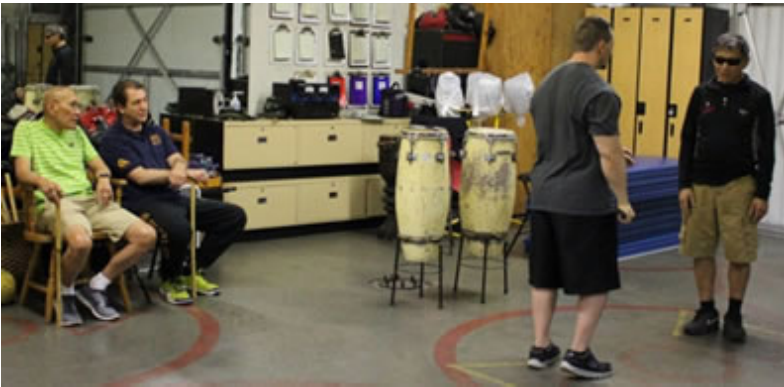
In the afternoon Master Tan took us to the “Magda Institute” where we were privileged to interact with them. The atmosphere was positively intoxicating. Here we were able to share some of our passion around the Viñas system. We have much respect for Sifu Cass Magda and his professionalism. It was a real pleasure being able to come and visit the “Magada Institute” and all of the individuals we interacted with, thank you all.



Sifu Cass Magda Introductions



Grandmaster Nonong demonstrating a basic knife disarm with Russell



Master Tan demonstrating another basic knife disarm with Russell



From L - R: Master Tan, Eleanor Academia, Sifu Cass Magda, Grandmaster Nonong, Guro Russell at the Magda Institute

Group image after presentation at the Magda Institute



“Master Tan Barbeque”

In the evening Master Tan had coordinated a barbeque with his close friends and family. We were celebrating a late birthday for him. Happy belated birthday Master Tan. It was an amazing experience being able to interact with all of Master Tan’s close friends and enthusiasts around the Filipino martial arts.

Master Tan’s belated birthday party



Names of some of the individuals from left to right: Randy (Bogle, Modified Tapado Integrated Systems); Sig - Paul Akaw; Guro Russell T Mackler (Viñas Arnis, Tapado); Guro Ronnie Buenafe (Manaois System International); Gabriel Ron and Duke Ron; Cherry Cervantes; Guro Chris Stacy (Manaois System international, Modified Tapado Integrated Systems); Grandmaster & Inheritor Nonong (Wilson E. Viñas) (Viñas Arnis & Lapu Lapu Viñas Arnis Aficionados Assoc. Club); Sir Pat Tagudar (Kabaroan Kalirongon); Sir Manny Z. Mabunga (Kabaroan Kalirongon); Guro Victor Gendrano Jr. (Inosanto Academy, Filipino Martial Heritage); Grand Master Conrad Manaois (Manaois System International, “Ninoy” Cinco Teros, Kali Jukune Do); Guro Jonathan Balani (Balani Method, LAMECO); Maria Ciara; Master Joe Tan (Lapu Lapu Viñas Arnis, Tapado, Modified Tapado, Modified Tapado Integrated Systems); Sir Manny Angeles (Lucaylucay/Lafuente JDK Kali); Mike Makabenta (Balintawk); Grandmaster Nene Gaabucayan (Teovel Balintawak Gold Chapter); Suzy Parker; Daniel Parker (LAMECO, Balani Method); Guro Hospecio “Bud” Balani (LAMECO S.O.G., Balani Method).

Note: Please excuse any information or people missed, thank you.

“Viñas Arnis Seminar”

On Sunday July 19th, 2015 Master Tan had coordinated with the “Warrior Arts of the Philippines Alliance”, and with Guro Dino Flores and Guro Bud Balani to have a seminar by Grandmaster Nonong on Viñas Arnis. The event took place in Glendale California at the Aranda/Ricket Memorial gym. Grandmaster Nonong presented many different parts of the Viñas Arnis system including blade, stick, knife, and open hand movements and techniques. Master Tan also presented content including stick and knife. Russell helped and explained on an individual bases after Grandmaster Nonong and Master Tan introduced new topics. We would like to thank and show appreciation to Master Tan, Guro Dino, Guro Bud, and the Aranda family. We would also like to show our respect to the late Bill Aranda. He was a great man and he will be missed. After the event we all went to lunch and then Master Tan drove us back to the airport.



Grandmaster Nonong going over basic Viñas defense



Master Tan demonstrating basic knife disarms



Grandmaster Nonong reviewing the difference between bladed movements and stick movements



Russell helping understand basic disarms



Grandmaster Nonong working with Russell to demonstrate basic disarms



Grandmaster Nonong helping understand an open hand technique



Viñas Arnis System Seminar Group Picture; July 19, 2015; Glendale CA.

We are very grateful for Master Tan’s friendship, time, and professionalism. We sincerely appreciate everything you did for us while visiting you, thank you, your wife, and your son.

School Submission

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



Event Submission

Submit your event whether - Seminar, Workshop, Training Camp, tournament, or Gathering - **Click Here**



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Article Submission

Finished manuscripts should be accompanied by color or black and white photographs. Though we take care of materials, we can not be responsible for manuscripts/photographs and accept no liability for same. Every photograph or graphic must be accompanied by a caption Carefully key photos to caption information with a letter or number.

We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff - to submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue **Click Here**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.