

# The Voice of FilAmerica

While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the *Asian Journal* recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

## Hermy B. Almonte Board Member, San Leandro Unified School District, Area 1



ONE of the new entrants to the growing list of elected officials of Filipino heritage in the Northern California area is Hermy B. Almonte, who won his trustee seat in the San Leandro Unified School District, Area 1, in the recent Nov. 4, 2008 elections.

Born and raised in Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines, Hermy settled in the United States in 1998 with his wife, Maria Venus Herce Almonte, after a well-traveled career

where he worked in the container shipping industry, sailing on cargo ships that crossed the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.

In running for the trustee seat in Area 1 of the SLUSD, Almonte, who had key endorsements from the San Leandro Teachers Association, Centrall Labor Council of Alameda County, DEMOS Democratic Club and San Leandro School Board trustees Stephen Cassidy and Mike Katz, stressed on the need for more school safety, quality education for students in San Leandro schools, a strict residency verification process, and a more proactive school board that communicates well with teachers, students, district employees and members of the community.

Specifically, Hermy is advocating for the adoption of a parcel tax that will help preserve and enhance the arts, music and vocational education programs in the schools, the easing of overcrowding in the middle and high schools, raising teachers' salaries so that the district attracts and retains the best educators for its students, and resolving the contentious relationship between the Superintendent and teachers and staff, among others.

Additionally, Almonte is advising that the school board make parents their partners in keeping schools safe. By welcoming parents into the campuses, Hermy believes that their presence can deter gang recruitment, curb student fights and discourage misbehavior.

"I will see that our School Board values and encourages parent participation, respects teachers and staff, and will unite the community in support of our schools," said the Philippine Merchant Marine College graduate in his website and in campaign materials distributed prior to the elections.

Almonte, a property manager overseeing two properties with over 550 residents for the Bay Area's largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing, is an active parent in the city and school district of San Leandro.

Hermy is president of the English Learner Advisory Committee, E-scrip Coordinator for the United Parents of San Leandro High School, Advisor to the Leo Service Club of San Leandro High School, member of the Lions Club of San Leandro, and a parishioner of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church.

County-wise, Almonte is a member-at-large of the Alameda County Consumer Affairs Commission. (Information obtained from [www.almonteforschoolboard.com](http://www.almonteforschoolboard.com).)

# Speedy Manny

Pacquiao declares the key to beating De La Hoya is speed

by RENE VILLAROMAN  
AJPress

LOS ANGELES—With less than three weeks left before he embarks on the biggest fight in his career, Manny Pacquiao gave the media a glimpse of his state of preparedness during a press day at the at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood on Monday, November 17. Speaking in his usual restrained tone, he told reporters that the upcoming fight with Oscar de la Hoya will be the biggest fight of his life.

"This is the biggest fight in my life...in my boxing career, and it will be a big honor for me to win the fight for my country," he said. Pacquiao said that the heat in Southern California is helping him come down from his present weight of 151 pounds to a fighting weight of 147 pounds. "I like to train here, and I am 98 per cent ready for the fight. I am decided, and I am just maintaining my condition," Pacquiao said.

When a reporter asked if he was cognizant of the height advantage of Oscar De La Hoya, Pacquiao responded, "Well, I understand he is bigger than me. But I think that is not a problem; that his height is not a problem. We are focused on speed and lateral movement; we will apply some techniques for him."



Pacquiao sparring at the Wild Card Boxing Club Monday, Nov. 17

AJPress Photo by Rene Villaroman

Pacquiao said that speed will be the key in this fight. "I think that's my advantage," Pacquiao told the reporters.

Although Pacquiao was restrained in his assessment of the December 6th fight, Freddie Roach, is more upbeat in his assertion that Pacquiao would be the winner. "Manny is where he needs to be, and he is in great shape for this fight," Roach said. "We've had another hard week of sparring, and his weight is 151 pounds right now. We've got to trim a few ounces of his weight with less protein off his diet; his weight will come down naturally."

Roach said that Pacquiao is definitely ready. "Manny had

great sparring sessions with bigger and taller fighters to prepare him for De La Hoya, and that they have worked out great," Roach informed reporters. "Manny was handling the big guys with no problem. He is ready."

Pacquiao's head trainer claimed he knows De La Hoya because he had trained him. "The better man will win. I believe I have the better man," he said. "This is not a contest between me and De La Hoya's trainer. We are both doing our job getting our fighters ready," Roach asserted. And I am not really concerned what De La Hoya's trainer says, what he does with Oscar. I am worried about my guy."

He said he got Pacquiao to

the best shape of his life. "We're going to have a great fight. I believe that he will knock out Oscar. "This is the biggest fight of Manny. He is a legend and Oscar is one of the greatest fighters in the world. But he is not anymore because he is older, and if you look in the history of boxing, when Rocky Marciano knocked out Joe Louis, when Ali got knocked out by Holmes, and when Oscar beat Chaves, it's about timing," Roach reasoned. "That's what's going to happen in the ring, and I believe so."

"Oscar is not able to pull the trigger anymore," asserts Roach. He's just not the same Oscar anymore. He's stop pulling the trigger, like with Mayweather. He just stopped. Oscar's mind is not strong because it's really very hard to have a good, sharp mind if you are not active, Roach said.

Roach buttressed his reasoning by stating that Oscar has been inactive when compared to Pacquiao. "The biggest thing about this fight is that this is the fourth fight of Manny this year. Oscar has not fought four fights in one year," Roach reasoned. "You can't be sharp if you are a part-time fighter. Being inactive can hurt him," Roach said about De La Hoya. "He may be taller, but that is the only advantage he has." ■

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