

# Fil-Am Verzosa wins in Union, NJ Republican Primary for three-year council term in November elections

UNION, NJ—Filipino-American Paul Verzosa, long-time community leader here, won the Tuesday, June 2 Republican primary together with Charles Donnelly. Both winners qualified to be placed in the ballot in the November elections for two three-year term Union council seats that will be vacated this year.

Last April, the names of those two winning Republican candidates were removed from Union's primary ballot. Their losing opponent, Carol Segal, filed a complaint against them for a technicality.

Verzosa and Donnelly lost their slots on the ballot when the township clerk ruled that Union's Republican Committee Chairman Ralph Gaglione violated state election laws. Gaglione circulated two nominating petitions without the names or addresses of the candidates attached and later wrote in the names of Donnelly and Verzosa.

Segal, who sought the backing of the municipal GOP committee, lodged the complaint with the township clerk after the committee supported Verzosa and Donnelly. In an unprecedented hearing, the clerk ruled that Gaglione improperly collected signatures.

The decision left Segal as the only Republican candidate on the ballot. Despite the ruling, Verzosa and Donnelly garnered enough write-in votes to beat Segal Tuesday by about 50 votes.

Verzosa has been a resident of Union for 15 years and has been active in community events. Paul is Charter Member of the Rotary Club, and Past Presi-



Paul and Christine Verzosa, 4th and 5th from left, in recent photo with friends from the Filipino-American community in New Jersey and New York, including New York Consul General Cecilia B. Rebono and husband Bill, standing at center.

dent and Vice President of several groups, including: Union Toastmasters Club, Jaycees, Lions Club, member of the St. Michael's Church, and the Holy Name Society. He was the 2003 Over-All Chair of the New Jersey Fitness Walk, member of the Asian Heritage Council of NJ. Presently, he is the chair of the PAF-COM parade on June 28.

He holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Major in Accounting degrees. He studied Computer Programming and Real Estate.

Paul is married to Christine, a Registered Nurse at St. Michael's Medical Center and Trinitas Hospital. Their sons are Jann-Paolo and Justin. ■

# Honest HK OFW gets ticket home

PAGE 1 ◀

University, and was able to find his passenger by describing her to the people in the school.

Like his wife, "Eddie did not ask anything for returning the money," Padilla said.

Perez, 38, a mother of two teenagers, has been out of a job since 2007 when she filed sexual assault charges against her Hong Kong employer.

She had been rummaging in garbage cans to retrieve soft drink cans, cardboard boxes, and other recyclables so she could earn money for her needs and to pursue her case in court.

Hong Kong law prohibits foreigners who have sued their employers to take up employment until the case is resolved.

## Cookies for honesty

On April 29, Perez and a companion found HK\$350,000 in cash and checks.

While the princely sum could have afforded her relief, she instead called up the company whose name was in the documents to return the money.

For her good deed, she was given a can of cookies.

"Mildred's story reminds us all that even in the darkest of times, our ideals and principles should not falter. She could have chosen not to return the money and end all her sufferings in Hong Kong, but she chose not to," Escudero said in a statement.

Padilla said he, Nueva Vizcaya

Governor Luisa Cuaresma, and Bambang Mayor Benjamin Cuaresma decided to raise at least P100,000 to give to Perez.

## Congressional resolution

"It's not a reward. It's a cash award for Mildred. It's up to her if she wants to use it for the needs of her family. If we call it a reward, she might say that she was not asking for payment," Padilla told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* in a phone interview.

He said he was also working on getting the House of Representatives to approve his resolution commending Perez. The measure, filed on Monday, June 1 was read on first reading on the same day although the rules technically require that it be read. ■

# Japan apologizes for Bataan Death March

## Some Filipino vets say it's too late

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL  
AJPress

LOS ANGELES—FILIPINO World War II veteran Faustino "Peping" Baclig is working on his memoirs.

Everyday the 87-year-old jots down his experience in the war on yellow sheets of legal paper but when it comes to the Bataan Death March in which he survived, he can't bear to write anything down.

Thousands of Filipinos and American soldiers have not forgotten the deadly 65-mile Bataan Death March in April 1942.

For many survivors like Baclig, the traumatic experience has led to nightmares and deep hidden emotional scars.

Baclig said that march was difficult. "I remember the scorching tropical sun, no rest and no food. Many of us were already weakened by malaria and dysentery so it was not wonderful."

"The suffering was expected because it was war time," he added.

When Baclig and other Filipino WWII veterans heard that the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Ichiro Fujisaki, spoke at the 64th reunion of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor in San Antonio on Monday, June 1 and offered an apology to veterans and their families, many Filipino veterans felt like it was too late.

"It's too late for me and it's too late for them. That's 67 years ago," said Franco Arcebal, a Filipino WWII veteran, and vice-president of membership for the American Coalition of Filipino Veterans. "Although we accept the apology, it came too late. How come they apologize now? It's terrible... they should have done this about 25 years after the

war." During his speech, Fujisaki said that the Japanese people must look into the past to learn from the lessons of history.

"We extend a heartfelt apology [from] our country for having caused tremendous damage and suffering to many people, including prisoners of war, those who have undergone tragic experiences in the Bataan Peninsula, in Corregidor Island in the Philippines and other places," said Fujisaki. "Ladies and gentlemen, taking this opportunity, I would like to express my deepest condolences to all those who have lost their lives in the war, and after the war, and their family members."

According to the Associated Press, about 73 surviving Bataan Death March veterans of the Army and former Army Air Corps were in attendance and welcomed the apology.

AP added that Fujisaki's six-minute speech received a standing ovation afterwards.

"Well, we finally got the apology that we wanted," said retired Tech Sgt. Joe Alexander of San Antonio, a two-time former commander of ADBC told the AP. Asked how he felt, Alexander said he felt chills go through his body. "Now we can rest at ease. We're satisfied."

Whether skeptical or accepting, many veterans are resigned to the fact that this will probably be the only apology they'll ever hear from the Japanese for the Bataan Death March.

"This is about as candid an apology as anybody's going to get," added Paul Ropp, a retired Air Force Reserve lieutenant colonel. ■

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# AALDEF releases 2008 exit poll results for NY Asian American vote

*Findings reveal Asian American vote for President, concerns about key issues and need for language assistance to vote*

by MOMAR G. VISAYA  
AJPress

NEW YORK—The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) released last week detailed findings from its multilingual exit poll of Asian-American voters in New York during the November 2008 presidential elections.

AALDEF, the 35-year-old national civil rights organization, polled 16,665 Asian-American voters in 39 cities and in eleven states on Election Day: New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Michigan, Illinois, Louisiana, Texas, Nevada, and Washington, DC.

In conjunction with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, AALDEF Staff Attorney Glenn Magpantay and Voting Rights Coordinator Bryan Lee presented findings from the 2008 exit poll with comparative information in the following areas: Vote for President and Congress; concerns about key issues, first-time voters, voting barriers, and profiles of the Asian-American vote by ethnicity, nativity, party enrollment, citizenship tenure, and English proficiency.

AALDEF surveyed a total of 8,771 Asian-American voters at 41 poll sites in neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx. The five largest ethnic groups surveyed in New York were Chinese (40 percent), Asian Indian (12 percent), Korean (12 percent), Bangladeshi (12 percent), and Indo-Caribbean (8 percent). Only 4 percent of the respondents surveyed are Filipinos. Eighty-one percent (81 percent) of voters were foreign-born naturalized US citizens, and 28 percent had no formal US education. Twenty-nine percent (29 percent) were first-time voters.

The majority of Asian-Americans voted for Democratic candidate Barack Obama for President. More than three-fourths (78 percent) of Asian-Americans in New York supported Democratic candidate Barack Obama

for President. Twenty-one percent (21 percent) voted for Republican candidate John McCain, and 1 percent voted for other candidates.

Filipino-American voters backed Obama at lower rates, with 60 percent of those polled voting for the Democratic candidate while South Asian-American voters gave Obama the most support, with 93 percent of those polled voting for him. Chinese American voters also supported the Democratic candidate at significant rates, with 70 percent voting for Obama and 29 percent voting for McCain. Among Korean American voters, 64 percent supported Obama and 35 percent supported McCain.

An overwhelming majority of Asian-Americans supported Democratic candidates for Congress. Over four out of five (86 percent) Asian-Americans voted for the Democratic candidates for Congress, while 13 percent supported the Republican candidates. In the congressional districts surveyed, all Democratic incumbents retained their seats.

The majority of Asian-Americans were registered Democrats. Two out of three (66 percent) Asian-American respondents in New York were registered Democrats. One in five (20 percent) were not enrolled in any political party and 11 percent were registered Republicans.

Forty-six percent (46 percent) of Filipino-American voters were registered as Democrats, one quarter (25 percent) as Republicans, and 23 percent were not enrolled in any party.

Economy/Jobs was the most important issue to Asian-Americans. The three most important factors influencing the New York Asian-American vote for President were: Economy/Jobs (66 percent), Health Care (41 percent), and Foreign Policy/War in Iraq (29 percent).

The top choice was generally the same among the different Asian ethnic communities. However, there were differences in the se-



AALDEF Staff Attorney Glenn Magpantay explains the exit poll results of New York at a press briefing in Manhattan.  
AJPress By Momar G Visaya

lection of other issues. Education was a top issue for Chinese American (27 percent) and Indo-Caribbean American (35 percent) voters. Civil Rights/Immigrant Rights was a top issue for Korean American (37 percent) and Bangladeshi American (33 percent) voters.

Aside from the data gathered during the exit poll, AALDEF was also able to record observations on voting problems encountered in various precincts.

Among the problems encountered were inadequate language assistance (severe shortage of interpreters, translated signs were not posted and materials missing); poorly trained and racist poll workers (who made racist remarks or disparaged translated materials); incomplete voter lists; denial of provisional ballots; improper identification checks and poll site confusion.

AALDEF's multilingual exit polls reveal vital information about Asian-American voting patterns that is often overlooked in mainstream voter surveys. AALDEF has conducted exit polls of Asian-American voters in every major election since 1988. In the 2004 Presidential Election, AALDEF surveyed 10,789 Asian-American voters in eight states. More than 100 community groups and organizations joined AALDEF to mobilize over 1,500 attorneys, law students, and volunteers to conduct the exit poll and to safeguard the voting rights of Asian-Americans. ■