BERT and Linda Pelayo and their Filipino Reporter were landslide winners over the weekend during a five-hour celebration of FR’s 40th anniversary at Astoria World Manor in New York City.

More than 300 pillars and members of the Filipino-American community, led by the charismatic New York Consul General Mario L. de Leon, Jr., smart community advocate and staunch Obama supporter Loida Nicolas Lewis and good family and community friend Msgr. Oscar Aquino, heaped praises upon praises on the FR owners for having been the successful conjugal power behind the Filipino Reporter since its beginning in 1972.

With three powerful voices as emcees, Nina Pineda of WABC Channel 7, Lito Pernia and Jocelyn Bernal-Ochoa, the speakers noted the constructive role that the Filipino Reporter has played in the life of the Filipino-American community during the past 40 years.

Citing Shakespeare’s famous line, “The past is but a prologue,” Msgr. Aquino prayed and hoped for many more years for FR.

In eight minutes, Loida N. Lewis summarized the histories of the world and of the Philippines from 1972-2012, and the stories that FR published about the significant events all those years.
In a brief conversation earlier that afternoon, I told Loida my earlier prediction that in the next Democratic National Convention, a Filipino would be one of the speakers, and that if Hillary Clinton runs, it would be her [Loida], a longtime friend and supporter of the Clintons, who should be that speaker. Jokingly, she said, “Yes.” We agreed that there should be no more neutral position for Fil-Ams when it comes to politics.

Consul General de Leon cited the journalistic achievements of the Filipino Reporter in the last four decades.

He greeted the Pelayos, FR’s columnists, news writers and staff for their contributions in making Filipino-Americans aware on Philippines and local community affairs.

Two Fil-Am Broadway artists, Adam Jacobs and Ali Ewoldt, wowed the guests with their singing talents, typical Broadway, as they belted songs from “The Lion King.”

(This early, the two invite you to their Valentine concert on Feb. 23, 2013 at the Town Hall in New York City.)

After the accolades, the Pelayos received a standing ovation.

To me, it was a sign of continuing respect and trust by the community to the Filipino Reporter and its avowed motto that it stands on through the years, of being fair, fearless, and factual.

In his usual note less talk, Bert Pelayo (I have yet to see Bert read from a prepared speech — d aig pa niya si President Obama) expressed his gratitude to those who came that afternoon and to all the friends and supporters of FR.
With his usual wit and humor, Bert extended an invitation to all for the next anniversary celebration of his newspaper.

Linda Pelayo, FR’s associate editor, together with her husband, presented “Most Outstanding Awards” (as one of the awardees, I thank you, Bert and Linda, as well as our readers) to certain members of our community for their “invaluable contribution to the betterment, cohesion and solidarity of the community at large.”

Dr. Carmelo Dichoso of Texas delivered a response on behalf of the awardees.

Like the other speakers, he thanked the Filipino Reporter for its journalistic work for 40 years.

He thanked Bert and Linda on behalf of all awardees.

What the speakers failed to mention, I will, below.

It is noteworthy how Bert has trained, over the years, his three children, Joy, Patrick and L.P., on the intricacies of the difficult newspapering business.

Logically, these three, who currently have their respective responsibilities in running the day-to-day affairs of FR, will be the ones to manage and to run FR in the not too distant future.

It is a smart and welcome decision.

We learned from the last elections that America’s demography has changed drastically.
The three major components of American society today are young people, minority groups and unmarried individuals.

The Pelayo children belong to two of those three demographic groups, except L.P., who is single and belongs to all three.

So, we are looking for an equally, if not brighter and longer “life” for the Filipino Reporter in the years to come.

Let’s continue our collective support for FR.

And to readers of this column, thank you, and keep reading.

We’re happy to meet longtime friends and readers last Saturday.

Blue or red, it is always heartwarming to meet friends and acquaintances.

I thank all of them.

I wish to cite the Talangbayan family of Pennsylvania who showed up in full force.

It was nice to see your family again, Dr. Francis Talangbayan and lovely wife Cristy, and pretty daughters April and Dr. Leizle Talangbayan.
Also, my good friends from New Jersey, ever young-looking Domingo “Jun” Hornilla, Jr., fellow awardees Judge Victor Sison, American Pinoy’s Gerry Austria and Asian Pacific Travel’s Buddy Deauna, male best dressed in red Francis D. Sison, Jersey City Assessor Ed Toloza, mother and son Lety and Ed Pena, ANCOP USA CFO Rollie Balanza, PIDCI Director Vivian Velasco.

Likewise, former Mayor and anti-Hipolito Robert “Bob” Rivas, Lavarro avid supporter Helen Castillo, newly-elected PAFCOM head Edwin Solano, my FB loyal friend Ludi Hughes, the inimitable DoN Rudy Lizardo who was in his “DoN Rudy” suspender, Dr. Connie Reyes, Atty. Aris and Dr. Alice Francisco, PIDCI's Fe Calolio, good-looking Ilongo Isagani Puertollano, “Gen.” Raul Estrellado, Philippine Fiesta King Nanding Mendez, Rayland Enterprises magnate Ray Rogan.

My young colleagues Edmund Silvestre and friend from France, Babes Harrington, Albert Ignacio, mestizo lensman Rene Ner, and L.P. Pelayo’s award-winning sportswriter colleague Ryan Songalia and author Carissa Villacorta.

If I missed other dear friends who were there, pardon me.

Oh, I can’t neglect a longtime colleague in the writing profession, Atty. Reuben Seguritan, a fellow UP’an.

Thank you all, again and again!

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