

# FILIPINO STAR

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## Concerns raised about Bill 96 actual impact on health care services of minorities in Quebec

Bill 96 language law passed by the Quebec National Assembly on May 24, 2022 was intended to consolidate the status of French as Quebec's common, official language. Since that time, many critics have voiced concerns on its actual implementation and its impact on the life of English speaking minorities. "The new Bill 96 directives for the Quebec healthcare system — 31 pages detailing exceptions for language restrictions that require healthcare providers to communicate with patients in French only — have prompted confusion and even panic among the public and staff alike." In an effort to dispel all the concerns about Bill 96, Quebec's Minister of the French language had a one to one interview on CBC news but his answers to the interviewer and explanations did not decrease the fears and anxieties among many people affected by the language law. Several Liberal MPs have questioned the real impact of the law on the



People take part in a protest outside Santa Cabrini Hospital in Montreal, Saturday, July 27, 2024, to denounce new Bill 96 language directives for hospitals and long-term care homes. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Graham Hughes

Anglophones and Allophones' access to efficient healthcare services  
The 31-page directive

published by Quebec's health department last month says health-care practitioners in the province may

provide services in languages other than French only in exceptional circumstances — if the patient can demonstrate that they cannot communicate in French or understand it properly, or if they can present paperwork showing they have a right to be served in English. Anna Gainey, MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, said in a statement published on X that she spoke to the Federal Minister of Health, Mark Holland, to "share the serious concerns constituents have expressed regarding the Directive. They are very worried because the Directive would interfere with effective communication between them and their caregivers." Anthony Housefather, the MP for Mount Royal, told CBC News he has reached out to both Holland and Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault, the federal minister responsible for official languages. Sameer Zuberi, MP for Pierrefonds-

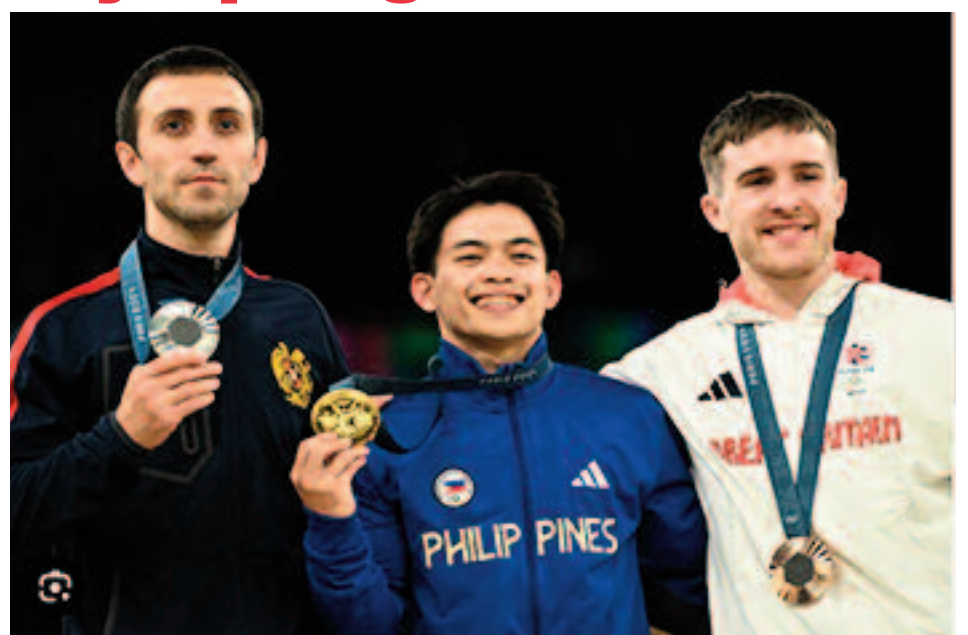
See Page 4 Bill 96 language law

## Canada's historic gold win in 4x100 m relay in Paris 2024 Olympics



Canada's men's 4 x 100m relay team, Andre De Grasse, Brendon Rodney Jerome Blake and Aaron Brown celebrate their gold medal finish during the Paris Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France, Friday, Aug. 9, 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Nathan Denette. (See news story about Canada's participation in the Paris 2024 Olympics on page 4)

## Yulo becomes first Filipino to win two Olympic gold medals



Silver medalist Artur Davtyan, left of Armenia; gold medalist Carlos Edriel Yulo, Philippines; bronze medalist Harry Hepworth, Great Britain, in the medal ceremony for men's artistic gymnastics individual vault finals, Bercy Arena. 2024 Summer Olympics, Sunday, August 4, 2024, Paris, France. Photo AP / CHARLIE RIEDEL (See news story on page 4 - Yulo becomes)





**Alvin Thomas D. Veloso**

As an annual tradition, the International Pageant and Entertainment Network (I.P.E.N.) gave awards to Filipino Canadian Leaders as “the Most Beautiful People in Canada” for their distinct services to their respective communities during the PhilCan Mosaic Festival at the Toronto Pavilion, held on July 14, 2024. I.P.E.N. was founded by Edgar Sulit of Toronto in 1990. In 1987 and subsequent years, both Edgar Sulit and Lito Lagasca co-produced the Bb. Pilipinas Canada Pageant.

During this year’s ceremony, Montreal, Quebec was represented by Michelle Vargas-Lao, a wonder woman, born to love, shine, and inspire. She is a visionary leader who exemplifies success, leadership skill, work ethic, resilience, courage and pride in her cultural roots, “Ako ay Pilipina.” She is the founder of the Filipino Canadian Artist Association of Quebec and owner of MVL Services Inc., though the service to help new migrants was temporarily muted during the pandemic. FCAAQ is a non-profit organization representing talented Filipino Canadian actors, singers, dancers, musicians and artists alike; helps aspiring actors participate in singing, dance competitions, gain first onstage appearances from coaching and mentorship

## Michelle Vargas-Lao receives IPEN’s Community Leadership Award

**Hilda Tan Veloso is co-author of this article**

programs.

Currently the FCAAQ is preparing for its annual 8th year nationwide-search for Filipino Canadian talent - the first and only talent competition dedicated to introducing Filipino-Canadian artists. They are also the organizers of the Canada Day Extravaganza every July 1st. The association raises funds to help Kapwa and Kababayans during trying times and natural disasters through Band Aid Montreal, a charity

College, Manila, in 1996.

She came to Montreal, Quebec, Canada in November 2001 and prepared herself academically by studying at Concordia University, John Molson School of Business, with a major in Marketing and graduated in March 2011. Her continuous search for knowledge finally culminated at LaSalle College, Montreal, for courses on Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultancy in October 2011. Canadian education has undoubtedly

she hosts social gatherings, event coordinator and planner for weddings and conferences. She is energized by the support of the executive board, her husband and children, who through thick and thin have always been supportive. She is a loving and caring mother who always finds time for the family through biking and cooking. Her social attendance at Filipino functions has enabled the community to know her as a singer, performer with gifted skills. She won a singing competition called “Global Pinoy Singing Idol in 2013” and represented Canada in Manila. She was the first runner-up in this competition. The Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) also honored her with the award of recognition “GAWAD NG PAGKILALA” for Community Leadership in Public Events, March 2024. She is a member of the board of the Darcy McGee Liberal Riding Association and a member of Lions Club International, Westward and was designated Secretary and Communications Attaché. With this new role, she hopes to help and service not just fellow Filipinos but reach out to other ethnic, cultural and diverse associations. #

*Alvin Thomas Dahan Veloso, M.*

*Ed. degree holder, past president of various community associations: President: FAMAS, 71-72, Federation (FFCAAQ) 1981-1984; Philippine Folk Art Society, 1992-2002; KDT-1998. Educator for 53 years: Canada, USA, Manila, Philippines; Retired in 2018. Veloso also received several recognitions in leadership, namely, TOFA (Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad from FILCAN Image in Washington, Twenty Outstanding Filipinos by IPEN in Ontario, and the latest is Community Leadership Award by FHSM (Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal) in March 2023, in its First Gawad ng Pagkilala and 6th anniversary celebration.)*



**Michelle Vargas-Lao (6th from the left) holding her plaque of recognition. Beside her is her husband, Anthony with Alvin and Hilda Veloso on his left. Chito Collantes (4th from the left) also holds a plaque of recognition. Others in the photo are Maharlikans in Toronto, ON. (photo taken on July 14, 2024)**

component of FCAAQ.

Michelle Vargas-Lao was born on December 12, 1974, in Manila, Philippines, the daughter of Lorena Tano Vargas. Her father had long passed away. She is the middle child of five siblings, studied elementary and high school at Jose Rizal University in Mandaluyong City; obtained BCOMM, Business Management degree from Concordia

broadened her perspective in dealing with the Filipino Canadian kababayans and cultural communities.

Michelle is unquestionably busy with professional, social and family commitments. She works full-time as a scheduler with Service Canada programs in Canada, administers the Filipino Canadian Association of Artists of Quebec as president and founder. Additionally,

## 5,704 teaching positions still to be filled: Quebec Education Minister

By The Canadian Press  
August 16, 2024 6:57 pm.

With just a few days to go before the start of the new school year, there are still 5,704 teaching positions to be filled in Quebec, announced Education Minister Bernard Drainville on Friday.

This is some 2,800 fewer than at the same time last year, about 33 per cent less, he said at a press conference in Montreal, as he updated the vacant positions in schools.

“What I’m announcing today is positive,” said Drainville. “There are no magic solutions to the shortage, but we work every day for our students, our parents and our staff.”

The education workforce shortage remains a major issue, however, as the network will have to accommodate up to 20,000 more students this year than last, according to Drainville.

Of the 5,704 teaching positions to be filled, 1,406 are regular



**Quebec Education Minister Bernard Drainville at press conference in Montreal on Aug. 16, 2024 - talking back-to-school and teacher shortages. (Credit: Andre Pelletier, CityNews Image)**

full-time positions and 4,298 are contract positions, of which 1,144 are full-time and 3,154 are part-time, he added.

“Our goal is to fill the vacant positions for all of them if possible” “It is certainly not normal to begin a new school year sitting in the classroom and not having a teacher because the process of hiring has not

been finalized,” Drainville said. “This is not normal and this is why we’ve decided to change this process, a process which in many ways was putting administrative constraints ahead of the wellbeing of our students.”

Quebec Education Minister Bernard Drainville at press conference in Montreal on Aug. 16, 2024 - talking

back-to-school and teacher shortages. For its part, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) pointed out that, despite the signing of new collective agreements with public sector workers, the education network is still grappling with numerous problems, including a shortage of staff “at all levels”

Westmount High Social science teacher Robert Green says the news is concerning despite the increase from last year. In recent days, unions have pointed out that, despite the signing of new collective agreements, the education network is still grappling with a staff shortage.

“What I didn’t hear from the minister at all this year or last year was any kind of real plan to kind of go to the root of this problem and address this crisis,” Green said.

### Sounding the alarms

Green, who has been teaching

See Page 5 Teacher shortage





FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Why do we have teacher shortage in our schools?

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

The shortage of teachers is well-known. Many experts, academics, government decision and policy makers have held several conferences to explore solutions and ideas. However, the problem appears too complex as well as difficult which cannot be solved quickly. Entering the 2023-2024 school year, roughly 45% of U.S. public schools reported that they were understaffed, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, with Maryland schools saying they had shortages in 28 subjects, including English as a second language, health science, and special education. In Quebec, about 5,704 teaching positions are still to be filled according to the Minister of Education. Why do we have this shortage?

As experienced educators retire, there aren't enough new teachers to take their place. According to Reuters, one in five workers in the broader Canadian economy is now 55 or older with retirement rates

increasing 12.5% in 2020 and 31.8% in 2021. Observers say that there's a very high burnout rate, and many new teachers quit within the first five years. In an Ontario school district, they are continuing to hemorrhage staff with each passing month. In the past year, they had more secondary-school teacher resignations than retirements, with 50 and 48, respectively, which is unheard of.

According to a report by French-language media outlet the Journal de Montreal, from 2018 to 2023, the number of teachers quitting increased by 76 per cent, for a total of 4,880. "Our profession has been suffering for probably the last 20 years," said Steven Le Sueur, president of the union group the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT).

QPAT said staff retention is a problem in English and French schools, with Le Sueur claiming 25 per cent of teachers leave within the first five years of their career.

The current crisis has been decades in the making. Reasons for leaving are numerous: A decline in professional autonomy, unrealistic workloads given the high needs of students, health and safety concerns and an overall decline in the status of the profession.

As Canada continues to face a teacher shortage, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says the issue is a "global phenomenon" and more action must be taken if its goal of primary and secondary education for all is to be reached by 2030.

In trying to determine causes of the teacher shortage, UNESCO conducted research including an analysis of the attrition rate — the proportion of teachers who decide to leave the profession permanently — from 79 countries that included information from different regions and levels of development.

It found among primary school teachers, the attrition rate doubled to 9.06 per cent in 2022 from 4.62 per cent in 2015.

Through its analysis, the organization determined teaching is seen as a profession that is "too often unattractive" and, as a result, creates difficulty in recruiting young people to the job and sees a high rate of dropout early on in their career.

UNESCO notes in its report that some studies have shown early career teachers are more likely to leave the profession than their more experienced colleagues.

UNESCO said its findings pointed to three main factors: poor working conditions, high levels of stress and low pay.

It went on to note that a lack of supplies to added administrative responsibilities and even poor school leadership that can undermine teachers' morale are among the working conditions that can create strain. Meanwhile, teachers who experience "a lot" of stress at work are more than twice as likely to want to leave the profession, especially in the first five years.

Evidently, there are enough information released to the public about the causes of the teacher shortage. What then is the next step to find a solution to attract young people into the teaching profession?

Some of the solutions mentioned are: support teachers more to prevent teacher burn out, improve pay scale, set up an award system for best teachers of the year, offer scholarships for education programs, give more recognition of teaching as a profession and improve the leadership and management of schools by training principals to be more effective in supporting their teachers.

Even though there is no magic formula in solving complicated problems, there is always a way to solve them if there is a will by all parties concerned who truly believe that education is the key to creating the society that we all want.#

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Hotel Workers Across Quebec Strike for Fair Wages and Better Working Conditions



Queen Elizabeth Hotel employees picketing on the sidewalk, August 11, 2024 By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

Throughout July and August, employees from approximately 30 hotels across Quebec have been striking, in affiliation with the National Confederation of Syndicates (CSN). In Montreal, 600 workers from the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel have been at the forefront of this movement, demanding significant improvements in their working conditions, including a 36% wage increase over four years, 15% the first, and 7% for each following year. Their demands also include better insurance contributions,

improved vacation policies, the elimination of placement agencies, reduced workloads, and fair distribution of tips.

Employee Salaries and Demands François Houle, a janitor at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel and Vice-President of the Syndicate for Workers at Reine Elizabeth-CSN highlighted that the hotel has been increasing their profits these past years, but that despite this growth, employees have not seen corresponding compensation. On

See Page 8 Hotel workers

The opinions expressed by the writers and columnists do not necessarily reflect that of the management of the North American Filipino Star nor its editors.



From Page 1 Quebec Bill 96

Dollard, and Francis Scarpaleggia, MP for Lac St-Louis, Emmanuel Lambropoulos, MP for Saint Laurent said they're all concerned about the directive.

Eric Maldoff, a longtime advocate for anglophone rights and chair of the Coalition for Quality Health and Social Services, said it's encouraging to hear about Liberal MPs wading into the debate because "Feds can hold back money if Quebec is not providing services as it should,"

referring to how provincial health transfers are governed under the Canada Health Act.

As for the issues raised by the Montreal MPs, Roberge said it is all a misunderstanding. They're reading papers with a lot of confusion, so I think it's normal that they ask questions, that they want to be sure that nothing changed.

At a news conference on Thursday, federal Transport Minister Pablo Rodriguez, who is also Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's lieutenant in Quebec, was asked if he thinks the

through his leg in 8.89 seconds.

They finished in 37.50 seconds to beat South Africa (37.57) and Great Britain (37.61) to the line.

De Grasse now has seven career Olympic medals, which ties him with swimmer Penny Oleksiak as Canada's all-time most decorated Olympian.

This quartet is on the Olympic

federal government should intervene.

CBC News reached out to Boissonnault and Holland, as well as to Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, whose portfolio covers intergovernmental affairs.

On Friday morning, Holland's office issued a statement saying it expects provinces and territories not to make decisions that would impede Canadians' access to health care in their official language of choice.

The statement also said the Canada Health Act is written as such to recognize that health care is a

provincial and territorial jurisdiction, recognizing they are responsible for organizing and delivering health care services to best meet the needs of their residents.

It also said the federal government is committed to protecting minority language communities across the country, and recognizes the importance of pursuing ongoing collaboration with the province of Quebec.

Excerpts of news from CBC News and CTV News, August 9, 2024

From Page 1 Canada's historic win

Aaron Brown, Jerome Blake, Brendon Rodney, and Andre De Grasse have won gold in the men's 4x100m relay at Paris 2024.

After a bit of a messy first exchange between Brown and Blake, the next two exchanges were clean and De Grasse on the anchor blazed

podium for the second straight Games after winning silver at Tokyo 2020. De Grasse, Rodney and Brown had previously won bronze at Rio 2016.

This is not the first major international victory for Brown, Blake, Rodney, and De Grasse who won gold at the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon.

This is Canada's fifth Olympic medal

all-time in the men's 4x100m relay. The only other gold medal was won at Atlanta 1996, by a team that included Team Canada's Paris 2024 Chef de Mission Bruny Surin, the current head coach of the national team Glenroy Gilbert, 1996 Olympic 100m champion Donovan Bailey, as well as Robert Esmie and Carlton Chambers, who had run in the heats.#

## Yulo becomes first Filipino to win two Olympic gold medals

From Page 1

Filipino gymnast Carlos Yulo, who won two gold medals in the Paris Olympics, flew home to a hero's welcome parade, Wednesday, August 14, with a nationally televised tribute by the president and donors pledging more than \$1 million worth of cash and gifts, including a resort house and free lunch buffets for life.

The 24-year-old's wins in the men's floor exercise and vault were the largest victory ever by a Filipino athlete since the Philippines joined the Games a century ago. Two Filipino boxers, Nesthy Petecio and Aira Villegas, won

bronze medals in women's boxing in Paris.

The euphoria over Yulo's wins has provided a respite for a nation long ridden with poverty, deep divisions and conflicts. Arriving in Manila, Yulo and the other Filipino athletes who participated were welcomed by flag-waving admirers who reached out for handshakes and took selfies.

Wearing his gold medals, Yulo thanked all who supported the athletes. "I am beyond blessed and grateful," he told reporters.

President Ferdinand Marcos



The Olympic athletes enjoying the parade and the crowds greeting them

Jr. gave the athletes presidential citations and a million pesos (\$17,500) each. But Yulo got 20 million pesos (\$350,000) from Marcos.

The huge motorcade began at the Aliw Theater and made its way through the city, concluding at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.#

## Protest to Raise Awareness of Bangladeshi Hindus' Plight

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

On August 11, a crowd gathered in Dorchester Square, Montreal, to voice support and raise awareness about the ongoing struggles experienced by Hindus in Bangladesh. The protest highlighted human rights violations, including the burning and vandalizing of homes, temples, and properties, as well as the abduction and rape of women.

Among the attendees was Jay Mehta, a board member of the Coalition of Hindus of North America's (CoHNA) steering committee, who emphasized the urgent need for attention, "over the last week, we have been flooded with messages, SOS calls. Other community members have also received distress calls."

Mehta and other protesters stressed the importance of bringing these issues to the forefront of public discourse, particularly through media coverage, "we need media support to raise awareness about the issue. The average Canadian probably doesn't know much about the whole thing except for the political bits. A large part of violence against Bangladeshi Hindus is going unnoticed..."

The protest also addressed the broader issue of violence against Hindus, which Mehta pointed out is not limited to Bangladesh or recent events. "Hindus have faced violence since many centuries and even today, in places like Pakistan, Bangladesh and many others. We have Hindu temples getting attacked over here routinely, mainly in GTA [Greater Toronto Area] and Vancouver. Unfortunately, we don't see the media talking much about it." He argued that such acts are attacks on religion, creating an atmosphere of insecurity and fear among those wishing to practice their faith.

He further stated that "the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. In most cases we have seen, the law enforcement does not want to register it as a hate crime [...] we are raising awareness for the law enforcement agencies to recognize Hinduphobia and to treat [and register] the attacks on places of worship, preaching, or sacred spaces as a hate crime."

While acknowledging that some funds have been allocated to increase security in places of worship, Mehta noted that many, especially smaller temples, lack the resources necessary



Protesters raising awareness for Bangladeshi Hindus in Dorchester Square. August 11, 2024.

to protect their congregations.

Among the protesters was Poritush, who is currently in Canada under refugee status. He expressed deep concern for his family still in Bangladesh, stating, "I have family in Bangladesh. They are worried [...] We just came here as Hindu refugees in Canada. So I ask the Canadian Government to please save us, we don't want to go back. [...] Please save us minority Hindus in Canada."

Another protester, Dip, voiced his solidarity with Bangladeshi Hindus, declaring, "We stand for Bangladeshi Hindus and we raise our voice against this kind of ethnic cleansing."

The Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA) has set clear

objectives in response to these issues. They are urging elected officials to condemn the human rights violations against minority Hindus in Bangladesh and calling on Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mélanie Joly, and Global Affairs Canada to monitor the situation closely, ensuring that Bangladeshi authorities protect their Hindu citizens and hold perpetrators accountable. Additionally, CoHNA is advocating for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to utilize the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) to facilitate the resettlement of the most vulnerable Bangladeshi Hindus.#



# A new scholarship program designed for Filipino-Canadians is set to launch this September

The Filipino-Canadian National Scholarship Program (FCNSP) is a groundbreaking initiative, the first of its kind, designed to empower Filipino-Canadian students. It opens doors to a wide range of post-secondary studies, provides financial support, and encourages students to explore diverse career paths.

This program is a collaboration between Kabangka and the Golden Balangay Foundation. Over the past six

In addition to financial support, the program will help youth expand their networks and meet industry professionals by connecting them with Golden Balangay members and GBA Laureate, as well as speakers, facilitators, and attendees of Kabangka events, including Pinoys on Parliament.

Details of the program and eligibility requirements will be shared on their website and social media channels soon. For now, to support



**L-R: Gerlino Dominic (Earl) Tamayo, Director of Outreach and External Relations; Venus Ramos, Chair of Kabangka Canada; Ronnie Dela Gana, Co-Founder of the Golden Balangay Awards and Head of Golden Balangay Foundation; and Rachelle Cruz, Director of Golden Balangay Foundation. Presentation and soft launch of Filipino-Canadian National Scholarship Program at the 2024 Pinoys on Parliament in Ottawa.**

years, both organizations promoted leadership and representation in the Filipino-Canadian community.

“This unique opportunity inspires hope and ignites a sense of possibility, showing students that they can aim higher than they ever thought possible,” Claire Dela Gana, Golden Balangay Awards Program Lead.

A 2014 study by York University’s Dr. Philip Kelly identified a “double anomaly” among Filipino youth: they are less likely to hold a degree than either their parents or their peers than other racialized groups. The FCNSP is a significant step towards addressing these concerns by offering sustainable, long-term support for youth education and career development.

“Many in our community are unfamiliar or unaware of the process of applying for scholarships because often our parents did not attend university in Canada and are not familiar with navigating this type of financial assistance. Some scholarships also do not seem tailored to us, or we feel we don’t qualify for them, leading us to settle for student loans which we have to pay back some time in the future,” shared Venus Ramos, Chair of Kabangka, reflecting on her personal experience.

the program and make a real difference in the lives of Filipino-Canadian youth by helping them overcome financial barriers and reach their full potential, please contact: [info@filcannationalscholarship.com](mailto:info@filcannationalscholarship.com) for sponsorship details.

About Golden Balangay Foundation: Golden Balangay Foundation (GBF) is a registered national not-for-profit organization established in 2020. GBF will continue to expand the mission and vision of the Golden Balangay Awards. With the best of the best in the Filipino-Canadian community at its helm, the Foundation will develop programs that will benefit the community in addition to the Golden Balangay Awards. The Foundation embodies the belief that through education, community engagement, and providing a platform for the thinkers and achievers where they gather and connect, it can uplift the community and the next generation of Filipino-Canadians.

About Kabangka: Kabangka is a registered not-for-profit, youth-led, and youth-centered leadership organization. The founding of Kabangka began with the establishment of Pinoys on Parliament

(POP) in 2018. POP emerged

## FILIPINO-CANADIAN NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

'24

launching soon!

GOLDEN BALANGAY FOUNDATION

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BETWEEN KABANGKA CANADA

AND

THE GOLDEN BALANGAY FOUNDATION

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Rachelle Cruz  
Director, GBF  
National  
Scholarship

Claire Dela Gana  
GBA Program Lead

Venus Ramos,  
Chair, Kabangka

Gerlino Dominic (Earl)  
Tamayo,  
Director of Outreach  
and External Relations

please contact [info@filcannationalscholarship.com](mailto:info@filcannationalscholarship.com) for sponsorship details

as the first and only nationwide conference for Filipino/a/x-Canadian youth. Since its inception, POP has welcomed over 1,000 delegates from all provinces and territories across Canada. With Pinoys on Parliament as its flagship program, along with other

initiatives, the organization aims to create a space for Filipino/a/x-Canadian youth to network, learn new skills, develop existing ones, build connections, inspire action, and empower young people as leaders in their communities.

### From Page 2 Teacher shortage

for nearly two decades believes more should be done across all sectors.

“Teachers in Quebec have been ringing the alarm bells about the growing number of students in our classrooms with special needs who become discipline issues when their needs are not met,” Green said.

Green added that a wide variety of problems have continued to rise as things have become more difficult for students to learn in a productive way.

Drainville said that hired teachers will make \$65,000 annually and after 13 years they will be eligible to make \$109,000. He hopes this increase will help alleviate the current stressors saying it will send a very positive signal for the next generation of teachers.

“The last collective agreement that we’ve just signed is a, if you put together all of the measures, it adds up

to an historic investment in education,” Drainville said.

Green added that he and colleagues have a hard time maintaining an adequate staff, with most of them teaching without any job security, saying he worries the cycle will continue from last year. Green said he is still perplexed after revealing that a teacher of 16 years was let go last year.

“Like how is that possible in the middle of a teaching shortage? And it just speaks to a system that doesn’t make sense and a system that is in no way adapted to the reality that Quebecers are faced with in terms of our education system.”

–This report by La Presse Canadienne was translated by CityNews/ With files from The Canadian Press#

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# The PBSSQ Celebrates its 40th Anniversary and Founder Natalie Pelausa's 97th Birthday

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

On July 27, the Philippine Benevolent Scholarship Society of Quebec (PBSSQ) celebrated two significant milestones: its 40th anniversary and the 97th birthday of its founder, Natalie Pelausa. The event, held at Mont-Royal City Hall, was an occasion that brought together the 2024 scholarship recipients, city councilors, donors, and Filipino performers, including the Panday Tinig Choral Ensemble, among many others. The PBSSQ, a long-established non-profit organization, has long been committed to promoting benevolence, academic excellence, and community engagement among youth and seniors.

## Support and Generosity

The PBSSQ scholarship program was made possible by its donors. Notable contributions this year include a \$1,000 donation for university scholars from Dolores Blandres, \$800 from Sandra Wong of Centre Funeraire Cote des Neiges for CEGEP scholars, \$500 from Dr. Ed O. Pelausa for high school scholars, and \$300 each from Carmen Caro and Elisa Lanuzo for elementary scholars.

## Messages of Congratulations from Leaders

The association received messages of congratulations and thanks from governing members. The federal office, on behalf of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, commended the organization for "supporting a vibrant community." Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante praised the PBSSQ for its promotion of cultural heritage and for fostering a sense of belonging among students, enabling them to pursue their dreams. Member of Parliament Anthony Housefather reflected on the honor that Natalie Pelausa has brought to the community over the past 40 years, recalling his own pleasure in serving as a scholarship judge. Gracia Kasoki Katahwa, Mayor of Notre-Dame-Côtes-des-Neiges Borough, expressed gratitude to the Filipino community's volunteers and donors for guiding youth towards academic excellence. Additionally, councilors Stéphanie Valenzuela (Darlington) and Sonny Moroz (Snowdon) recognized the board's leadership and congratulated the scholars on their achievements.

## Honoring Distinguished Community Members

Many awards of distinguishing character were also distributed to community members during the event.

**Leadership Award:** Julie Parado, a former president of the Filipino Bowling Club of Montreal and the Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS), received the Leadership Award for her extensive involvement in various community organizations, including People Helping People and the Philippine Folk



Souvenir photo of PBSSQ scholars, their donors and presenters



Dr. Edilberto Pelausa, son of Mrs. Natalie Pelausa, delivers his speech, pays homage to his Mom, recalls the lessons he learned from her which he wishes to pass on to the youth of today.

Arts Society of Quebec. Parado's contributions have earned her numerous accolades, such as the FAMAS Presidential Award and the Filipino Forum's Woman of the Year.

**Benevolence Award:** The Benevolence Award was presented to Iluminado Nanding Reoligio, President of the Legion Mary. Reoligio is renowned for his volunteer work, particularly in music, where he has served as a choir director, soloist, and guitarist for parishes in need. His efforts have had a profound impact on the Christian community.

**Community Service Awards:** Corazon de las Alas and Gerardo B. Baquiran: As founding members of the Filipino Canadian Community of the South Shore and long-time officers of the PBSSQ, de las Alas and Baquiran were recognized for their dedication to community service, particularly through their involvement with the Panday Tinig Choral Ensemble.

**Michael Davantes:** Davantes was honored for his contributions to the Filipino community through his medical and literary initiatives. His

radio and television show "Kasama ng Kalikasan." He is also the CEO of Canada's first environmental modeling agency and the anchor of "Pinoy Pa Rin," the longest-running Filipino-Canadian TV show.

## A Tribute to Natalie Pelausa

There were many speakers who shared their greetings to Natalie Pelausa, with her son, Dr. Edilberto O. Pelausa, offering personal insights into her life and values. He described his mother as a hardworking and resilient woman who excelled academically and professionally. After immigrating to Canada 60 years ago, Natalie pursued her dream of owning a home while balancing roles as a housewife, bank teller, and teacher, eventually earning a Master's degree in Education. Upon retirement, she dedicated herself to her church and community, leading the PBSSQ to prominence. Dr. Pelausa highlighted his mother's role in making the Filipino community in Montreal stand out, a contribution recognized with the Canadian Senate's 150th-anniversary medal.

At the end of his speech, Edilberto O. Pelausa shared five key pieces of advice his mother had taught him, reflecting on her wisdom: "Mama taught me excellent life lessons. Sometimes I listened to her, sometimes I did not. But I always came back to hear her wisdom. First, he emphasized the importance of self-belief. "One should always believe in themselves," he said. Second, he encouraged aiming high, stating, "Whatever career you choose may be very important to you and your family. It is your future." Third, he spoke about perseverance: "Never give up. You'll be challenged a lot, and sometimes it'll be very hard. Keep your goal in focus and keep moving forward." Fourth, he highlighted the value of parental guidance, saying, "Listen well to your parents. They contribute to your country and

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**Literary Corner**  
Pedro Guidote



**Words from the Past**

**Leisure nourishes the body, and the mind also is fed thereby; on the other hand, immoderate labor exhausts both.**

Ovid

**When we are too young our judgment is weak; when we are too old, ditto.**

Blaise Pascal

**Speech is a faculty given to man to conceal his thoughts.**

Charles de Talleyrand

**In my experience, the worst thing you can do to an important problem is discuss it.**

Simon Gray

**One ceases to be a child when one realizes that telling one's troubles does not make it any better.**

Cesar Pavese



**Michael Davantes receives the 2024 Community Service Award from the president of the PBSSQ, Mrs. Josefa Nicolas. Standing by is the gift donor, Evelyn Calusa.**



**L to R: CEGEP Scholar: Audrey Tougas, University Scholar: Ashley Kozlyk, CEGEP Scholar: Sophia Samaniego, and Elementary Scholar Jake Jesper Sampang-Valencia**

the world.” Finally, addressing the scholars directly, he offered this personal advice: “Always remember you are special. Make your life count. You can shine.”

Others at the event paid tribute to Natalie stating, “she may not be a strong person. But as Eddy has mentioned she is strong willed, and sometimes stubborn, as you probably have experienced. She has very solid relationships with people around her which gives her the strength to accomplish anything.” The attendees also thanked Natalie, for persevering and forming the PBSSQ, “Natalie is a woman of meaning and purpose. As a mother, teacher, and high achiever academically when she was a student, education was a high priority. So while PBSSQ started as a community funded federation, it was Natalie’s persistence that started the PBSSQ. It didn’t come without any resistance from some people. But she was strong-willed as we say, and she knew that there was a purpose in establishing the PBSSQ.”

City Councilor of Darlington, and the first Filipina Canadian to have been elected for the position, Stephanie Valenzuela, imparted her thanks to the PBSSQ and the Filipino community for paving the way for the generations of today. Valenzuela shared her wishes for the future of PBSSQ, “thank you to the four scholars that will be receiving recognition tonight. Thank you for giving your name. Thank you for applying. Because the truth of the matter is that the PBSSQ has done so much in the last 40 years, but not enough people know about it. And it’s up to us as a younger generation to continue the great work that they have done. # (Editor’s notes: Audrey Tougas is awarded the 2024 Top Scholar of the Year and recipient of the revolving trophy. See photo on page 11).

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# PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

By Fely Rosales-Cariño



**The International Excellence Awarding Ceremony of the world record award received by Neri Torrato Camina Jr. of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Standing from the left: UK Member of Parliament, Honorable Virendra Sharma, Associate of World Book of Records London; Neri Torrato Carmina, Jr., the awardee; Corina Sujdea, President of World Book of Records London; Santosh Shukla and the host of the event, the General Secretary of the World Book of Records, London, Dr. Tithi Bhalla. Neri Torrato Camina Jr is the only Filipino and Canadian citizen at the event held at the House of Commons UK British Parliament London, England, July 18, 2024.**

When I think of a candidate for this column, many friends try to help by nominating someone they think is a perfect fit. I have found such a person for this issue. I have the great pleasure to present to you our Personality of the Month, Mr. Neri Torrato Camina Junior. He was born in Tigbaun, Iloilo, Philippines to parents Mr. Neri Tano Camina and Mrs. Merle Torrato Camina on October 20, 1977. He is blessed with a sister, Ma. Nermie Camina Barcelona. Readers, here's the best part, he is our first featured Most Eligible Bachelor!

Let's find out more about him, shall we? Starting with his education, he finished high school in his hometown of Tigbaun. Then he went on to the West Visayas State University in Iloilo City where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Biological Science and also a Diploma in Teaching. Finally, in the University of Iloilo, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing

On to Montreal, he started a Business Course in Feng Ye College. And in John Abbott College, he completed a Professional Nursing Integration Program for internationally educated nurses. Additionally, it must be noted that he attended the Atlantic International University in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA for a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration.

And this Licensed Practical Nurse and Prepose Aux Beneficiares has earned distinctive awards! His

First and Second Awards: A world record award for achieving Maximum Online Healthcare Certificates from the World Book of Records London and International Book of Records India. His Third and Fourth Awards: A world record award for achieving 155 Online Healthcare Certificates in One Day, from the World Book of Records London and International Book of Records India. Being the first Ilonggo and first Filipino to receive more than one world record award made a great impact and gave him his happiest moment in life!

Has he gone back to our native land? He visited Baguio in 2010, Batangas in 2011, Manila in 2016, and Iloilo, Cebu in 2017. What impressed him most was the Simala Monastery in Cebu which he found mesmerizing and sacred. He wants to go back there again. Since becoming a Canadian citizen last 2021, he hasn't been back to the Philippines. When he does, we won't be surprised to find the Monastery in his future itinerary.

Neri enjoys many hobbies such as "internet surfing, watching movies, reading science books, praying and participating in holy mass." He lists his role models in life as his mother AND the Lord Jesus Christ. For the future he wants to be successful in both his career and love life, as well as to be wealthy and healthy. Well this covers everything! He also wants to travel the world and to be an inspiration to the future

generation. He hopes his world record awards will be a legacy to his fellow men.

As one who looks to Jesus Christ, when asked the personal moral values he lives by, he quotes Isaiah 60:22, "When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen." It is his ardent belief that when we face disappointments in achieving our goals and dreams in life, we ought not to be dismayed because the Lord will make it happen in due time. He encourages us to offer our "constant dedication, sacrifice, and prayers to God."

With his educational background, he truly believes in the transformational power of education to "uplift the status of a person" as well as a cherished gem that cannot be taken away from you. He underscores the fact that one can go back to school at any age and be educated especially in

the area of health care. He deeply values being "updated with the latest trends and gain more knowledge and cognition in life."

I would like to refer you to an article published in The London Press, a British magazine, at <https://londonpress.uk/category/awardees/> which states, "Montreal Resident Neri Torrato Camina Jr. Sets Record with 2,350 Online Healthcare Certificates." Furthermore, he could be searched in YouTube for his awards. Neri, you make us proud !!!

I wish to extend the deepest congratulations to Neri's sterling achievements. May the good Lord continue to bless his endeavors especially in his personal life. Join me in hoping for future wedding bells for Neri. Proverbs 18:22 says, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord." Amen to that!.#

From Page 2 Hotel workers

Sunday, July 28, Houle stated, "Les augmentations de revenus de l'hôtel, eux, ont augmenté environ de 67% selon Tourisme Montréal. Donc ça veut dire que l'argent rentre. Puis y'a jamais personne qui est venu nous voir pour dire "Vous savez, on sait que c'est difficile ces temps-là. Nous ça va plutôt bien, on va s'organiser pour que cette petite richesse-là soit un peu partagée entre tous." Mais non. C'est vraiment – on se fait couper nos heures de travail, on se fait demander de travailler davantage, plus fort, toujours. C'est jamais assez."

#### Insurance Coverage

Another key demand is improved insurance coverage. Houle mentioned that the hotel currently covers 60% of insurance fees, but with the rising cost of living, employees are pushing for the hotel to cover an additional 5%. "En ce moment, l'employeur se paye 60% des redevances des assurances. Nous, on veut qu'il l'augmente à 65%. On veut qu'ils aillent chercher un 5% de plus parce que les gens ont des difficultés à arriver, parce que le coût de la vie a augmenté énormément," said Houle.

#### Work Hours and Compensation

Houle also raised concerns about the proposed introduction of "speed shifts"; where employees would work in the morning, be off for several hours in the middle of the day, and then return for an evening shift. He argued that this schedule would be particularly difficult for workers who live outside the city due to the high cost of living in Montreal. Houle emphasized that if such shifts are implemented, the hotel must offer wages that reflect the true cost of living in the city. "Ils veulent revenir avec des 'speed shifts' par exemple. Donc, quelqu'un arrive travailler à 08h00 le matin, travaille jusqu'à 12h00. T'es 'off' pendant 4 heures, tu recommences à 16h00, et tu finis à 20h00. Ok, maintenant les gens d'aujourd'hui, parce que les loyers sont tellement chers, ils habitent plus loin. Ils habitent en banlieue, Laval,

Brossard, peu importe. Alors c'est inconcevable que quelqu'un puisse aller chez eux puis revenir au travail par la suite. Si l'employeur veut aller dans des endroits comme ça, il va falloir qu'il commence à payer le prix que ça coûte un vrai loyer à Montréal," Houle explained.

#### The Union's Hope for the Future

The strike at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel is not an isolated event. Workers at other Montreal hotels, such as DoubleTree and Hôtel Gouverneur, have also joined the movement. On August 1, 400 employees from these hotels held a 36-hour strike. Additionally, over 90% of workers across various hotels voted in favor of a 120-hour strike mandate, to be used strategically to pressure employers into negotiations. Union leaders have warned that these strikes could significantly disrupt hotel operations, forcing managers to handle tasks typically managed by frontline workers. The union hopes that the renewed strike threats will help unblock stalled contract negotiations and lead to fairer agreements for all workers involved.

#### Employers' Reactions

The Montreal Hotel Association has expressed a willingness to negotiate but highlighted the challenges posed by ongoing financial difficulties resulting from the pandemic, wildfires, and floods. They acknowledged the unions' concerns but emphasized the difficulties in meeting all demands given the current economic climate, citing large debts and labor shortages.#

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# Canada's largest railroads have come to a full stop



**A Canadian Pacific Kansas City train. The rail carrier's union workers are set to strike Thursday unless it reaches a new labor deal with CPKC. Courtesy of CPKC**

TORONTO -- Canada's two largest railroads have ground to a halt after an ongoing labor dispute couldn't be resolved before the overnight deadline Thursday, August 22nd.

Canadian National and CPKC have shut down all their trains in Canada and stopped shipments into the U.S. after failing to reach new agreements with the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference union. The impasse could bring significant economic harm to business and consumers in both countries, which rely on billions of dollars of goods running on trains each month.

The big questions are how long the shutdown will last and whether the government will intervene. CPKC and CN locked out nearly 10,000 engineers, conductors and dispatchers after the deadline passed. As a result, none of their trains are moving in Canada, but both railroads continue operating in the United States and Mexico.

Bargaining resumed Thursday, with picketing already underway. Both railroads have said they would end the lockout if the union agrees to binding arbitration. But in a Thursday post to X, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference President Paul Boucher accused CPKC and CN of "holding the Canadian economy hostage" in order to pressure the government to impose binding arbitration.

Both railroads are offering raises to what are already well-paying jobs that they say are consistent with other recent deals in the industry. The negotiations are primarily hung up on issues related to worker schedules and concerns about rules designed to prevent train crew fatigue.

CN had been negotiating with the Teamsters for nine months while CPKC had been trying to reach an agreement for a year, the unions said. While the full stop came to head Thursday, both railroads began shutting down shipping networks last week.

Billions of dollars of goods move between Canada and the U.S. via rail each month. The current impasse is halting all rail traffic from CPKC and CN in Canada as well as

shipments from these two railroads crossing into the U.S., although trains will continue operating within in the U.S. and Mexico.

The consequences will be felt by both businesses and consumers.

Chemical businesses and food distributors will be among the first to be affected. The railroads already stopped accepting new shipments of hazardous materials when they began gradually shutting down last week, in order to keep dangerous commodities from being stranded along the tracks. Perishable goods were also put on hold early.

But Greg Moffatt, executive vice president of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, said most chemical manufacturers have said they will be OK for about a week. It just depends on how many supplies they have on hand, how much room they have to store their products, and whether they can cut production.

The auto industry may see problems, too. If the lockouts last more than two weeks, people who want to buy a new vehicle in the U.S. and Canada could start to see spot shortages, industry analysts say.

That's because General Motors, Stellantis, Ford, Honda and Toyota either assemble whole vehicles in Canada or ship engines and other components across the border. About 80% of vehicles put together in Canada are shipped to the U.S., largely by rail. Michael Robinet, executive director at S&P Global Mobility, notes that most auto assembly plants operate on "just-in-time" inventories of parts — making it difficult to stockpile farther out.

Automakers could try to divert vehicles built overseas to U.S. ports, or ship parts over the border by truck, but capacity is limited, Robinet added.

And it's not just cargo. More than 30,000 commuters in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal were the first to feel the pain of the lockouts. They had to scramble Thursday morning to find ways to get to work because their commuter trains aren't operating while CPKC is shut down. *(Abridged version of news report by By ROB GILLIES Associated Press and JOSH FUNK Associated Press August 22, 2024, 2:34 PM)*

## A message from Al Abdon and Marvin Rotrand Twinning cities of Canada and the Philippines



**Marvin Rotrand  
Director General  
United Against Hate Canada**



**Alfonso L. Abdon  
Chairman  
Filipino Heritage Society of MTL**

Dear Friends,

On August 4 our two organizations convened a ZOOM call to strike a committee to highlight and celebrate the upcoming 20th anniversary of the Montreal Manila agreement which takes place next year.

The proposal was received with a great deal of enthusiasm with participants also suggesting that we broaden our work by urging other Canadian cities with large Filipino populations to emulate Montreal's example and twin or reach some sort of a friendship agreement with cities in the Philippines

Thus, in the past days we have reached out to Mayors and Councillors across Canada to make exactly that proposal. Happily, we are already receiving interest.

We are also contacting the Philippines Embassy in Ottawa seeking its aid to find partner municipalities in the Philippines who wish to adopt sister city or friendship agreements with Canadian communities.

There are a million persons of

Filipino origin and heritage now residing in Canada. We believe such agreements would be of enormous mutual benefit to cities and towns that agree to sign on.

The next step will be national – we will convene a cross-Canada ZOOM call on Thursday, August 29 at 7 P.M EDT / 4:00 P.M PDT and hope you can join us.

Invitees will include elected officials who wish to help, Embassy officers, community leaders, Filipinos and friends of the Philippines from every region of Canada.

Please block your calendar for this important call. NOTE - ZOOM LINK AND PASSCODE WILL BE SENT NEXT WEEK.

Feel free to share this email and help spread the word. We look forward to your joining us for what we hope will be a first step toward closer fraternal relations between the Philippines and Canada.

Yours truly,

**Marvin Rotrand & Alfonso L. Abdon**

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Souvenir photo of the 40th PBSSQ anniversary and 97th birthday of its founder, Natalie Pelasa: At left, North American Filipino Star Editor, Zenaida F. Kharroubi, with the recipient of the 2024 PBSSQ Top Scholar, Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative reporter for the only surviving Filipino-Canadian newspaper in Montreal. (Photo: Michael Davantes)



Presentation of the corrected Certificate of Community Service 2016 from PBSSQ L to R: Josefa Nicolas, President; Zenaida Kharroubi, Jeannette Perignon, and Michael Davantes. (Photo: Audrey Tougas)



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**Recipes selected from various sources**

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**Baked Eggs in Tomato Sauce with Kale**

**Ingredients**  
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 3 10-ounce packages frozen chopped kale, thawed, drained and squeezed dry (9 cups)  
 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided  
 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper, divided  
 1 25-ounce jar low-sodium marinara sauce or 3 cups canned low-sodium tomato sauce  
 8 large eggs  
**Directions:**  
 Step 1:  
 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.  
 Step 2:

Heat oil in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet or nonstick ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add kale, season with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper, and sauté for 2 minutes. Stir in marinara (or tomato) sauce and bring to a simmer.  
 Step 3:  
 Make 8 wells in the sauce with the back of a spoon and carefully crack an egg into each well. Season the eggs with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper.  
 Step 4:  
 Transfer the pan to the oven and bake until the egg whites are set and the yolks are still soft, about 20 minutes.



**Grilled Salmon with Tomatoes & Basil**

**Ingredients**  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided  
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 1 whole wild salmon fillet (also called a "side of salmon," about 1 1/2 pounds; see Tips)  
 1/3 cup plus 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil, divided  
 2 medium tomatoes, thinly sliced  
 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
**Directions:**  
 Step 1  
 Preheat grill to medium.  
 Step 2  
 Mash minced garlic and 3/4 teaspoon salt on a cutting board with the side of a chef's knife or a spoon until a paste forms. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in oil.  
 Step 3  
 Check the salmon for pin bones and remove if necessary (see Tips). Measure out a piece of heavy-duty foil (or use a double layer of regular foil) large enough for the salmon fillet. Coat the foil with cooking spray. Place the salmon skin-side down on the foil and spread the garlic mixture all over it. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup basil. Overlap tomato slices on top and sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper.  
 Step 4  
 Transfer the salmon on the foil to the grill. Grill until the fish flakes easily, 10 to 12 minutes. Use two large spatulas to slide the salmon from the foil to a serving platter. Serve the salmon sprinkled with the remaining 1/4 cup basil.  
**Tips:** Wild-caught salmon from the Pacific (Alaska and Washington) are more sustainably fished and have a larger, more stable population. For more information, visit Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, seafoodwatch.org.  
 Depending on how your side of salmon was prepared at the market,

small white pin bones may still be in the fillet. We suggest removing them before you cook the fish. To remove the bones, place your hand underneath the fillet to bend it up slightly, exposing the row of bones running down the length--they will poke out of the flesh and point at an angle toward the wider end of the fillet. Grasp each bone with a clean pair of tweezers or needle-nose pliers and gently pull it out in the direction of the wide end of the fillet.  
**Ingredientsl**



**Egg Drop Soup with Instant Noodles, Spinach & Scallions**

**Ingredients**  
 2 cups water  
 1/2 (3 ounce) package rice-noodle soup mix, such as Thai Kitchen Garlic & Vegetable  
 1 large egg  
 1 cup baby spinach  
 1 scallion, sliced  
**Directions**  
 Bring water to a boil in a small saucepan. Stir in half of the seasoning packet (discard the remainder or reserve for another use). Add noodles and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer.  
 Whisk egg in a small bowl. Slowly pour the egg into the simmering soup, stirring constantly. Fold in spinach until just wilted, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a bowl and sprinkle with scallion.#



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**Social Tidbits**

**Montreal Community News**

**Fely Rosales Cariño**

Hello my Social Tidbits readers and hello summer! We, Filipinos, like to have a good time and our agenda is filled with birthdays, campaigns, and out-of-town leisure trips. Some associations are planning get-togethers either at home or abroad. We can hardly keep up! Wherever these gatherings are taking place, we welcome them with vigorous enthusiasm. And oh, summer, please stay a little longer!

The Knights of Rizal (KOR), Eastern Canada Region observed the 163rd Birthday Anniversary of Dr. Jose Rizal. It was held at Mackenzie King Park, Cote St Catherine, Montreal on June 22, 2024. Master of Ceremonies was on the able hands of Sir Ed Valdez. The day began with the Invocation by Sir Dante Tabamo. Flag bearers were James Menzi (Philippine flag), Sir Francisco Bernabe (Canadian flag), and Sir Stephane Morin (Quebec flag). The national anthems were performed by Sir Julius Abad (Lupang Hinirang) and Sir Edmour Valdez (O Canada). The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Sir Hadjal Gattoc and the welcome address was given by Sir Rey L. Balansi. Prominent guest speaker Anthony Housefather graced the event and acknowledged Jose Rizal's heroism. Others who gave inspirational messages were Snowdon Councilor Sonny Moroz, Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) Chairman Al Abdon, and Sir Bert Abiera. Intermission numbers were provided by the wonderful soloist Sir Julius Abad and other performers. Sir Dario Boco gave the closing remarks after which the wreath laying in front of Dr. Jose Rizal bust took place.

The first birthday bash we attended was of Sir James de la Paz held on July 5, 2024 at Poulet Foo, 6020 Blvd Monk, Montreal. At this restaurant, it's not only the good food that is the main attraction. It boasts also of a karaoke bar, which is a Filipino delight. This evening, a professional lady singer entertained the intimate crowd. At other times, the 'boys' Sir Cipriano Galang, Sir Dario Boco, Sir Felix de Luna, Sir Gerry Danzil, Sir Ray Balansi and of course, the birthday boy burned the karaoke machine during the night. Among the friends who helped Sir James celebrate his special day were Ciony Nueva, Lady Ann Arce, Lady Marilyn de Luna, Lady Cherry Palmos, Nagem & Myrna Othman, Lady Esphie Manaog, Jonathan del Pilar, Pearl & Yinka Renner, Kelly Cortez, Flora Lim and yours truly. Among the relatives are Jeremie & Sophie de la Paz and Mark & Sherling Robles. Ever-present by his side is his beautiful and faithful wife, Rose. This is a nice, cozy restaurant owned by Catherine Nunez and husband Stanley Kurtzman. I recommend this place. You can call Catherine or Stanley at 514-576-1970. Happy Birthday Sir James! Please keep on singing! May God continue to

bless you with wisdom and strength in the coming years.

Did you know about the pilot project of the City of Montreal Borough of CDN-NDG, their Physical Fitness and Mental Wellness Program? This sports fest, dubbed Palaro sa Nayon 2024, was hosted by the United Pilipino Seniors Association of Quebec (UPSAQ) Executive Board headed by Sir Gerry Danzil, President. Indeed, it is the first by any organization. It was held July 6 at Van Horne Park, Montreal. This event was in collaboration with several nonprofit organizations of Montreal and Suburbs: Council of Canadian Filipino Association of Quebec (CCFAQ), Knights of Rizal (KOR) Eastern Canada Region, Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS), Chess Club and



**Gerardo B. Baquiran and Corazon de las Alas received PBSSQ 2024 Community Service Award**

Sports of Montreal, Table Tennis/Ping Pong of Montreal, Badminton Club of Montreal, Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM), Panday Tinig Ensemble of Montreal, Federation of Filipino Canadian Association of Quebec (FFCAQ), Filipino Canadian Arts and Cultural Organization, Filipino Nurses Association of Montreal (FNAM), and ICI TV, Pinoy Pa Rin with Tenne and Michael. Sir Gerry Danzil no doubt greatly appreciated this bold initiative and show of support from these groups. Listed activities were: chess, table tennis/Ping Pong, dama, dart, badminton, scrabble, volleyball, pabitin, pokpok palayok, needle threading, Chinese garter, sack race, tug of war, trip to Jerusalem. walkathon, punong braso, and eating galletas contest. Wow. If you missed this year's Palaro, try next year!

People started appearing at 9am but everything began in earnest



**Souvenir photo with old friends and associates - L to R: Zeny Kharroubi, N.A. Filipino Star Editor & Publisher, Founder & Director-General, Gilmore College; Amy Manon-og, PAB instructor; Fely Rosales-Cariño, columnist; Michael Davantes, former Mabuhay Montreal TV host (2013-2016), and currently host, Pinoy Pa Rin, ICI TV station (2016-present).**

after lunch. Line Dancing took center stage. While games occupied part of the grounds and the stage, karaoke was also in the mix of everything. (Isn't it always?). The program began with the Parade of Colors aka flag bearing with Sir Raymund Lastra, Sir Sheldon Cohen and Sir Stephane Morin carrying the Philippine,

Housefather (Mont Royal Riding), Mayor Gracia Kasoki Katahwa, Sir Sonny Moroz (City Councilor, Snowdon District), and Stephanie Valenzuela (City Councilor, Darlington District). Additionally, we also heard messages from Sir Dario Boco (CCFAQ President, Co-Chairman), and Sir James Dela Paz (Palaro sa Nayon Coordinator). Dance presentations were delivered by FHSM Golden Maiden Dance Group, D'Easy Dance of Montreal (line dancing), Almaleen Group (zumba), I Am Barley Kids, and Richel & Company (zumba). What a dizzying array of activities. It was so much fun!

The 'guys and dolls' from Candon City and Suburbs Association of Montreal (CCSAM) held a picnic at Mackenzie King Park on July 13, 2024. They enjoyed a beautiful sunny weather and feasted on fried tinapa, galonggong, pancit, goat's feet, lots of dessert and many more. Everyone brought their potlucks so there was an abundance of food and there was plenty to take home! It was a relaxing time for all. The highlight of the gathering was to celebrate the new slate of officers. The CCSAM Executive Board 2024-2026 are as follows: Joselito Oasan (President), Virginia Abaya (Vice-President), Fely Balles (Secretary), Josie Oasan (Treasurer), Tessie Dolormente (Asst. Treasurer), Rhoda Bang-asan (Auditor), Arnold Galicia (Business Manager), Ruben Mendoza and Oliver Aspacio (PRO).

And here are the CCSAM Board of Directors: Vito Galdones, Jacqueline Galdones, Jay Culiado, Jun Estepa, Lito Villalobos, Lorenzo Casem, Marilyn Mendoza, Nino Galdones, Robert Suni, Virginia Abaya, Fely Abaya, John David, and Angie Borja. Ex-Officio Sir Julius Abad has high hopes that the new members will continue his good work in fostering camaraderie and unity of its

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# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### Kaila Estrada reveals hiding acting pursuit from parents John Estrada, Janice de Belen



**Kaila Estrada**

Actress Kaila Estrada has been making waves in her acting career with her compelling roles in hit shows *Viral Scandal*, *Linlang*, and *Can't Buy Me Love*, which have showcased her prowess in acting. Being the daughter of two famous actors, John Estrada and Janice de Belen, many have their eyes on her and her ever-blooming career.

Despite the support she received from her parents, she didn't tell them about her intentions to join the entertainment industry at first. In her appearance on Luis Manzano's *Luis Listens*, the actress explained the reason behind her choice to initially keep her start in showbiz to herself.

"I didn't want them to have to lift a finger for me," said Kaila, adding that she didn't want them to think about how they could

help her and her career.

The actress further shared that when she began to shoot for her roles in TV shows, she realized how difficult it was to actually be a part of a production.

"It can be draining and exhausting and it's really no joke," said Kaila, adding how she

was in awe of her parents, who were able to handle shoots for TV shows and films alongside taking care of their children.

Kaila recently starred in the film *Un/Happy for You* together with former lovers Joshua Garcia and Julia Barretto.



**Kaila with her father John Estrada**

### Why Geneva Cruz decided to finish her studies at 48



**Geneva Cruz**

Singer Geneva Cruz took to social media to share her new journey as a college student.

In a Facebook post, the 48-year-old singer opened up and shared the reason why she decided to finish her degree.

"Having a ten-year-old daughter was the motivation. I needed to prioritize finishing a degree," Cruz said in her post.

As a mother, the singer revealed that she wants to be a "positive example" to her children in pursuing their studies.

"I strongly believe in setting a positive example for my children, which drives me to dedicate time to pursuing my educational goals. My favorite quote has always been, 'If there's a will, there's a way,' and it's true. You can always find time to prioritize and pursue what is important to you if you really want to," the singer said.

Another reason why Cruz was motivated to finish a degree was her desire to fulfill something for herself.

"I live to grow because there's no age or judgment in personal growth as long as you keep pushing forward to finish what you start. Go after your goals—there's no such thing as being too late," she explains.

Cruz is now enrolled in the Philippine Christian University, where she is taking up Business Administration. ■



## Heart Evangelista claps back at critics over her dog wearing diamond necklace



Heart Evangelista addresses issue on letting her pet dog Panda wear a Bulgari necklace worth PHP11 million. "I can do whatever I want."

Actress Heart Evangelista fired back at social media users who criticized her for making her dog Panda wear a Bulgari necklace.

Heart went on an Instagram live session where she explained why Panda is wearing the Bulgari Serpenti Viper necklace, estimated to be worth P11 million.

making it such ano... that I put diamonds on her," she added.

Heart also said that Panda is the best "person" to put diamonds on because robbers will have a hard time getting it.

"So, sometimes I do that also, I put diamonds on her and that's fine because hindi siya puwedeng makuha



"I own the necklace, you know. I can do whatever I want, then pull it out. Basically, Panda owns the necklace. So, hindi siya loan. So, she can do whatever she wants with it," she said.

"So, Panda is my most spoiled baby girl. So, I don't understand why people are

kasi mananakawan kayo ng daliri.

"These are aspins or rescued dogs, they deserve the world...So, we'd like to alleviate their look, and, why not? I mean, siya naman ang totoong taga-pagmana.

"Minana niya 'yon. So, she can do whatever she

wants. I don't understand what the deal is, like, 'di ba?" Some fans had commented about Miss Universe 2015 Pia Wurtzbach after Heart posted a photo of her dog wearing the diamond.

According to a report by columnist Salve Asis, Pia

also wore the same necklace when she was named as Bulgari's ambassador.

"OMG, LMAO! The only Queen P that I love! Iba ka talaga missy, sobrang witty mo girl!" an Instagram user commented.

"The Real Queen P," another user commented. ■

## Movie mogul 'Mother Lily' Monteverde passes away



Lily Monteverde

Veteran film producer Lily Monteverde, fondly known as Mother Lily, has passed away, her son coach Goldwin Monteverde confirmed Sunday.

In a text message to ABS-CBN News, Goldwin said that Mother Lily passed away early Sunday.

She would have celebrated her 86th birthday on August 19.

"Mother Lily was surrounded by her children and grandchildren in her final hours. She was blessed with the chance to say goodbye to her closest friends and associates who bid her farewell yesterday before she left for that trip back home to the Divine Father," the family said in a statement posted on Regal Entertainment's social media accounts.

"The family is at peace now that their mother has not only found rest but has joined their father Remy in that place called eternity - as they were together in life as they will remain together where there is no space or time," they added.

"The Monteverde family are requesting for your prayers and to cherish the memory of Mother Lily not only as a face of cinema but as a loving mother who she truly was ... and will always be forever."

Mother Lily was the matriarch of film production company Regal Entertainment, known for the films like "Scorpio Nights," "Shake, Rattle, & Roll," "Relasyon," "Mano Po," among others.

She also helped launch and nurture the careers of her "Regal Babies," such as Alma Moreno, Gabby Concepcion, William and Albert Martinez, Snooky Serna, Dina Bonnevie, Ruffa Gutierrez and the Diamond Star Maricel Soriano.

"Throughout her years she has not only been a mother to her children but also the 'Mother' to so many generations of Filipino filmmakers who have helped define what Philippine cinema is today," the family said.

"Even [in] her final years, Mother Lily has served as one of the cornerstones of the movie industry, providing opportunities to filmmakers -- both creative and technical -- to carve their names in our popular history," they added.

"Yet behind this veneer of accomplishment, Mother Lily was not merely a matriarch and the face of Regal Films but a true mother to artists and workers who had the chance to know her beyond the confines of work." ■



**Showbiz Gossip** *Continued from p.15*

## Marian Rivera, Dingdong Dantes flaunt GMA Gala outfits in IG Reels



**Marian Rivera (left) and Dingdong Dantes in their stunning outfits for the GMA Gala 2024**

The GMA Gala 2024 was a night of elegance and grandeur as several celebrities and personalities graced the event clad in gorgeous suits and intricate gowns. One of the many pairs who turned heads on the red carpet were actors Dingdong Dantes and Marian Rivera.

Apart from gracing the red carpet with stunning looks as Marian wore a gown by Nicole and Felicia Chang and Dingdong donned a classic suit by Stefano Ricci, the couple took things a step further as they starred in their own short film to showcase their attire.

Directed by Dux Dacudao, the short film *Rendezvous* showed a steamy encounter between the showbiz couple, with the entire video playing the story backward as orchestral music established a tone of intensity and mystery.

The video drew praise from fans as well as celebrities such as Heart Evangelista, Julie Anne San Jose, and many others as the power couple's undeniable chemistry was prominently displayed throughout the video. As of writing, the short film has reached 1.5 million views on Instagram. ■

## Ivana Alawi is 'modern-day Barbie,' still looking for her 'Ken'



**Ivana Alawi**

Actress and content creator Ivana Alawi will lead the Barbie campaign of Filipino jeweler LVNA by Drake Dustin as the "modern-day" Barbie.

"I think Ivana is perfect. Barbie's essence is you can become anything you want. She embodies it perfectly. As a dreamer, ang dami niya na-achieve. More than a celebrity, she is a vlogger, businesswoman, lahat," Drake Dustin Ibay founder of LVNA by Drake Dustin, said during the collection's launch at a hotel in Makati City.

Alawi aims to convey the essence of a modern-day Barbie as bold, inspiring, and ready to take on challenges.

"A modern-day Barbie is somewhat a leader, someone who is confident and is empowering," she explained.

"You don't have to be perfect.

You just have to be you," she added.

The collection will be the first of many under the Barbie franchise's collaboration with the Filipino jeweler in the next three years.

"It is very dainty, feminine, and playful. Other collections are heavy in diamonds. This one will have a lot of color," one of the brand's executives, Francesca Melon, said.

With a "Ken" already lined up to take the lead in one of the Barbie campaigns, Alawi admitted she is yet to find her "Ken" in real life.

While dating, the actress clarified she is still single.

"If you are not sure with the one, wala masama. Wala kayo commitment, there is nothing wrong going out to dinners and having nice conversations," Alawi said.

Alawi also said she is eyeing confident men who are preferably outside the world of showbiz. ■

## Shaira Diaz after college graduation: 'Made it!'



Shaira Diaz is over the moon at finally marching across that stage for her college graduation!

On Instagram, the Kapuso Morning Sunshine posted photos from the ceremony, her time onstage, and the awards she received. Shaira also posed with her fiancé EA Guzman, her family, and fellow "Unang Hirit" host Kaloy Tingcungco.

"MADE IT!!!" she wrote

on her caption.

"Thank you, @universityofperpetualhelp. Thank you, family & friends! Thank You, Lord!" she added. "Yahoo! Done and dusted, folks!"

Shaira pursued a degree in business administration major in marketing management from the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta in Las Pinas. ■



# FFCAQ Hosts the Cultural Fashion Show “Mindanao Tapestry II”

By Audrey Tougas  
Local Journalism Initiative

On August 16, the Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec (FFCAQ) hosted a cultural event at the Armon Plaza Hotel, featuring Filipino performers such as Arnold, Binibining Pilipinas International 2021; Daniel James, World’s Best Model Philippines; Elaine Moll, 3rd Runner-Up Miss Supranational 2012; Rina Maier; and



The finale of the show with all the models wearing the Muslim Princess suite with Renee Salud, Luzviminda Ogerio Mazzone, Jovy Narvas, Dolly Arjona, Cristy Hunter. Photo credit: Domz Ramos

PAMANA and showcasing the latest fashion creations by renowned Filipino designer Renee Salud. The “Mindanao Tapestry II” fashion show drew in hundreds of attendees and celebrated the diverse indigenous weaving techniques and traditions of Mindanao, a region in the southern Philippines.

**The Show’s Sequence**

The fashion show opened with Tennun, a textile of various patterns and vivid colors traditionally crafted by the people of Basilan. This was followed by Pis Siyabit from Tawi-Tawi, featuring cloths with intricate geometric designs. The third segment of the show featured T’Nalak from Davao. Unlike the colorful patterns typical of Mindanao, T’Nalak is distinct in its usual color palette of black, white, and red. The collection then shifted to the Inaul fabrics of the Maguindanao people, presenting large, flowing skirts and other culturally symbolic garments. The show concluded with a series of pieces in gold, with the models adorned in crowns.

**Celebrity Models**

In addition to being showcased by Montreal-based models, the clothing was modeled by celebrity titleholders who flew in from the Philippines. Among them were Katrina Liegado, 2nd runner-up of Miss Universe Philippines 2022; Hannah

Jasmine Maierhofer. The event’s hair and makeup were provided by Filipino businesses, including House of Bella and Glam by Vi.

**Honoring Cultural Heritage**

“Mindanao Tapestry II” was a fashion show that highlighted indigenous fabrics and traditions from the Philippines. A film showcasing the inspiration for Renee Salud’s creations noted, “Mindanao is a testament to the resilience and creativity of the people that come together”


BARMM, particularly Basilan in Mindanao, is a vibrant mosaic of culture and tradition as well as a home to various indigenous groups. BARMM boasts a large tapestry of customs, languages, and artistic expressions.”

The fashion show echoed a similar event held during the 2016 Miss Universe competition in the Philippines, where Mindanao’s rich cultural tapestry was brought to the global stage: It was the first time a fashion show of that magnitude featured the exquisite artistry of the “Mindanao tapestry.”

Through this event, the FFCAQ managed to highlight Renee Salud’s latest collection, which underscored the cultural richness and diversity of Mindanao’s weaving traditions.#



The Montreal models who were coached by Michael Davantes, Pinoy Pa Rin host. Photo credit: Domz Ramos














Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec (FFCAQ)

## Mindanao Tapestry II

by Renee Salud

### Community Models

 <b>Lilia</b>	 <b>Rhealyn</b>	 <b>Aireen</b>
 <b>Maye and Lerrie</b>	 <b>Jarreth</b>	 <b>Marissa</b>
 <b>Chona</b>	 <b>Alma</b>	 <b>Lavina</b>
 <b>Keana</b>	 <b>Mika</b>	

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**You can have anything you want in life if you dress for it.**  
—Edith Head

*Fashion is the armor to survive the reality of everyday life.*  
— BILL CUNNINGHAM —



From Page 13 Social Tidbits

members.

On July 14, 2024, FAMAS was lucky enough to hold an event – the Pista Sa Nasyon at Mackenzie King Park, Montreal. I said lucky because it didn't rain. In fact, the sun shone at it's best. Most of the folk dances were held on stage as the ground was just too hot for dancers to last a few minutes. Yet everyone enjoyed the pista! The celebration began with a mass presided by Father Rommel Cruz. Next was the Entrance of Colors and Parade around the quadrangle. Then heard were the national anthems by the Panday Tinig Choral Ensemble. This was followed by the Opening of the Pista sa Nasyon address by FAMAS president Nida Quirapas. Welcome remarks were also made by the Hermanos and Hermanas Mayores: Ms. Jovita Deladia & Mr. Nestor Deladia, Ms. Almaleen Castillo & Mr. Andre Mabilisan, and Ms. Alma Ydeo Tablada & Mr. Anthony Simeone. Most interesting highlight was the Search for Mutya ng Pista sa Nasyon 2024, on the spot, proclaimed and crowned as winner! Then inspirational messages were given by our beloved leaders MP Anthony Housefather, Sir Sonny Moroz, and Stephanie Valenzuela. Also, EMSB Commissioner Ellie Israel gave her inspiring message.

Pinoy traditional games ensued as well as the cultural shows. What a pleasant surprise to learn that there are many beautiful folk dances we have yet to discover such as the BIBAK Siwsiwit dance and the Ati-atihan dance. Other performances from the I Am Barley Kids, Akrho Kids, BMD, and Children Heritage also shone as well as the TRIO performance by Kristianne Joy Mesina, Rochie Banag, and Divino Arjona Nabor. Musical Entertainers were Adiva Ross Estinozo, Mark Alvin Simbulan, Liezl Grace Malinis, Cherry Agbuya, Renzie Ivan Costales, Danielle Ivy L. Mabanta, Kayden Rye Ardena, Jimmy Limbaga, Lionel Pasion, Noreen de Asis (cello), Jelyn Pasamonte, Jonathan Pantaleon, Jon Bonyad, Quennie Panares, and Galicia Dagaila who accompanied herself with a guitar.

Attendance for the Pista Sa Nasyon is still the best. More than the usual number of tents were put up. Most of the people stayed in their tents, unwilling to dare the hot glare of the sun on them. Friends Nellie Nicolas and Margarita Marcelo stayed with me in the tent. Margie kept on supplying us with food until we couldn't take anymore. It's a good idea to stay nearby her on picnics and you shall not be hungry at all. Thanks Margie!

Here are the FAMAS Executive Board 2023-2025: Nida Quirapas (President), Dante Tabamo (VP Internal), Raffy Lacaden (VP External), Leah Baldelovar (Secretary), Corazon Remegio (Treasurer), Elisa Florentino (Auditor), Lorenza Penullar (Accountant), and Francisco Bernabe Jr. (Public Relations Officer). The following Directors are Raquel Trinidad (Education, Social and Cultural Affairs), Glenda Lasaten (Membership), Mercy Sia (Sports and Youth Development), Jose Mari Laud (Outreach Services), Carmelita Cuizon (Special Project), and Romeo Remegio (Ex-officio). If you want to see the handsome and beautiful faces of these members, please take a peek at the Pista Sa Nasyon pamphlet. It is a photo well taken!

On July 27, 2027 at Schofield

Hall in the Town of Mount Royal, we witnessed a spectacular double celebration – the 40th Anniversary Awards Gala of the Philippine Benevolent and Scholarships Society of Quebec (PBSSQ) and the Happy 97th Birthday of Mrs. Natalie Olarte Pelausa, PBSSQ Founder! And her granddaughter- Cynthia Puray Pacheo - emcee extraordinaire, was in her element with her masterful pacing of the evening's activities. She lovingly called attention to her Lola's noble qualities, calling her 'an inspiration, supporter, and friend' to many. She beams with pride as she proudly calls her Lola a 'guapa' in her red dress (as seen on a slide). Mrs. P,' as she is affectionately called, was not in attendance but Cynthia affirms that we are present in her heart. A young Mrs. P, also the cover girl of the PBSSQ souvenir program, gives you a hint of the vibrant founder, first president, and best friend anybody could ever have. Cynthia then called on PBSSQ President Josefa Nicolas to offer the welcome address to start the festivities. The PBSSQ Executive Council were then presented: Josefa Nicolas (President), Nancy Karidis (Vice President, Scholarship), Jeannette Perignon (Vice President, Benevolence), Corazon Abdon (Treasurer), Marietta Morillo (Assistant Treasurer), Elisa Lanuzo and Evelyn Calusa (Coordinators for Benevolence), David Lam and Svetlana Suarez (Coordinators for Scholarship), Monica Regacho (Coordinator for Membership), Angie Ogerio and Carmen Caro (Coordinators for Board of Trustees), Petronilo Valenzuela (ex-Officio), Natalie O. Pelausa (Founder), and Ermelinda Pelausa, MD (Assistant to the Founder).



**Leadership Award presented to Julita Parado by Jeannette Perignon and Josefa Nicolas during the 40th anniversary celebration and 97th birthday of Natalie Pelausa on July 27, 2024 at the TMR Town Hall, Mount Royal, QC.**

At this juncture, let's throw a "job well done" chorus to Dr. Ernie for skillfully coordinating the two events, the birthday celebration and the awards ceremony. Let's also compliment PBSSQ President Nicolas' overall help together with the Executive Board in the preparation of the activities of the evening.

Family in attendance were Dr. Ed Pelausa and Amy (from Williamsburg, Virginia), Mellie, Veron, Gilberto & Berlita with their daughter Claire from Toronto. Her Montreal family was represented by Connie, Perla, Sefico, Rudy, Rocky, and Cynthia's husband Leo, and of course only daughter Dr. Ernie Pelausa. The tribute to Mrs. P began with a 'Happy Birthday to Mama Taling,' as her family calls her. Next was the presentation of her

photo montage prepared by a dear family friend Derek Neal and his wife Elenita Belgica. Then Dr. Ed, the favorite firstborn son (he's the only son!), gave a tribute on behalf of the family. A tribute on behalf of the PBSSQ and the community was delivered by Ms. Aurora Osdon, herself a former PBSSQ President and Mrs. P's right hand woman for many years. A musical tribute was also rendered by the fantastic Panday Tinig Ensemble who performed Love Story, Mrs. P's special song for her and her beloved husband, Dr. Jess, and also a signature song on her birthdays. The Panday Tinig didn't disappoint. They sang with precision and their beautifully blended voices thrilled the audience. Thanks to Edith Fedalizo (pianist), Paul Imperial (conductor), and all the choir members.

Angie Ogerio gave a special acknowledgment to the 2024 Board of Trustees: Corazon Aberin, Letlet Cuizon, Nida Quirapas, Glenda Lasaten, Julita Parado, Rose Pabalinas, Sylvia Bulacan, Kit Espinosa, and Nora Oroc. The Honorable Life Members are Carmen Caro, Fely Rosales-Carino, Mellie de Guzman and Natalie O. Pelausa.

Before the handing of the award scholarships, let's meet the judges; Elenita Belgica (past PBSSQ President), Sonny Moroz (Snowdon City Councilor, newly dubbed as the James Bond of Montreal; he happened to hold a 007 ticket!), Stephanie Valenzuela (Darlington City Councilor) and Michael Davantes (Polymath/Renaissance Man). Special mention goes to Zenaïda Kharroubi who received a 2016 PBSSQ Award for Community Service but a mistake was made in the original certificate. PBSSQ

recognized as a very dear friend to the PBSSQ. Returning guest artist Jillian Sudayan, a PBSSQ Top Scholar and CEGEP Scholarship awardee in 2011, sang a beautiful and heart warming Ave Maria, In Memoriam. Everyone was quiet as they listened intensely. What an excellent performance. On the screen were names of departed loved ones. PBSSQ also honoured four special patriarchs: Dr. Jesus Pelausa, MD, Michael Pivarnick, Heracleo Caro, and Jose Espinosa.

Next was the presentation of the 2024 PBSSQ Scholarship Awards, the most awaited part of the awarding ceremony. The awardees were: Jake Jasper Sampang Valencia (High School Scholar), Sophia Samaniego (CEGEP Scholar), Audrey Tougas (CEGEP Scholar), and Ashley Kozlyk (University Scholar). The final award of the evening, the 2024 Top Scholar of the Year, drum roll please . . . went to Audrey Tougas. She will hold the Revolving Trophy for one year until she passes it on to next year's Top Scholar. She received the Revolving Trophy from David Lam, last year's top scholar. She also received a Top Scholar of the Year Certificate and a gift. Congratulations, Audrey! Congratulations to all 2024 PBSSQ awardees!

Mrs. Cora Abdon gave the final acknowledgments of the evening as she congratulated the Benevolence Awardees, Community Service Awardees, Leadership Awardee, and the Scholars. She also appreciated the PBSSQ families, friends, and supporters. And of course, she specially acknowledged the real woman of the hour, Natalie Olarte Pelausa, PBSSQ Founder, Mrs. P, the one we love. Cora also gave a special shout-out to Cynthia Puray Pacheo, (Emcee), Pancitan and Jennifer Camposano (Caterer), Dennis Mayuga (Deejay), and Derek Neal (Photographer).

August 3, 2024 was another red-letter day for the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM). To celebrate President Manuel Quezon Day, FHSM Chairman Al Abdon led a trip to Saranac Lake, New York. During the Opening Ceremony at Harrietstown Town Hall, guests and dignitaries were welcomed at 11am. There was also a Street Fair featuring Filipino food. The crowd enjoyed musical performances, especially a remarkable presentation by the Panday Tinig Ensemble. The Golden Maidens (FHSM dancers) are proving themselves to be performers! It was a delight to see their bright and colorful costumes, sweet smiles, and graceful moves. It is no wonder the growing invitations they garner from other organizations. Let's give our utmost appreciation to the following dancers: Jeannette Perignon (the very charming choreographer), Dolly Belandres, Rebecca Aguilar, Elma Bulatao, Valent Lloyd Hughes, Evangeline Ruanca, Filomena Favia, and Nancy Karidis. Dolly Belandres stated that it was a great opportunity to be invited by the Saranac Lake Heritage Society to perform in honor of the late Philippine President Quezon. Furthermore, this whole event could not have been possible without the undeniable genius of FHSM Chairman Al Abdon. He always has something up his sleeves to promote the Filipino culture in the community and have lots of fun at the same time. Impressive, Al!

Until the next issue. God Bless!



## Celebrating Diversity and Inclusivity: Montreal's Pride Parade 2024

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

On August 11, Montreal's Dorchester Square became a celebratory hub as hundreds gathered to support and participate in the annual Pride Parade. At 1 p.m., the parade commenced, featuring a diverse array of floats, dancers, and performers, all making their way along Bonaventure Street. Among the participants were several notable associations and performers, who shared their stories and experiences.

### ClubBo: Line Dancing and Inclusivity

Alan Gaudet, the president of ClubBo, a country line dance club, has been attending and performing at the Pride Parade for years. "We've been in

a supportive network." "C'est sûr que notre domaine est vraiment niché, donc on a souvent des obstacles dès que ce n'est pas commun... mais sinon, on est beaucoup de gens : c'est toutes des amis, de la famille, des gens qui nous supportent dans notre entreprise, qui sont là avec nous pour aider les gens, donc on est vraiment heureux d'être ici aujourd'hui," said Perreault. His message to others aspiring to start similar organizations? "C'est vraiment de persévérer, puis de croire en ses rêves, puis d'être fier de qui on est."

### Fierté Agricole: Raising Visibility for LGBTQ+ Farmers

Joé Desjardins, president of Fierté Agricole, highlighted the importance of visibility for LGBTQ+



**Banana Prosthetics in Dorchester Square for Pride celebrations. August 11, 2024.**

celebrated her 20th year with the group. "Je travaille avec des bénévoles qui vont rencontrer les jeunes pour répondre à toutes leurs questions sur leur parcours de vie, depuis le moment où ils ont pris conscience en fait de leur orientation sexuelle ou de leur identité de genre," Houzeau explained. Over its three decades, GRIS Montreal has reached approximately 30,000 young people, working to dismantle misconceptions and foster acceptance. However, Houzeau acknowledged that recent years have brought new challenges, particularly a backlash against the rights of sexual and gender minorities. "Depuis peut-être 2 ans et demi, il y a eu un backlash, un retour en fait vis-à-

vis des droits des minorités sexuelles et de genre, et ça c'est très inquiétant en fait parce qu'on voit aussi que ça ne se limite pas d'ailleurs même à ces minorités-là," she said. Despite this, the organization continues to expand its reach, even bringing its message to remote areas like Saguenay, Gaspésie, and Nunavut.

As the parade wound its way through Montreal's streets, the stories of individuals like Gaudet, Perreault, Desjardins, and Houzeau highlighted both the ongoing struggle for acceptance and the powerful sense of community that Pride fosters. #



**Marie Houzeau, General Director of Gris Montreal in Dorchester Square for Pride celebrations. August 11, 2024.**

existence for 30 years with a mix of people: gay, straight, everybody's welcome," Gaudet shared. Despite challenges like securing event spaces, the club has continued to thrive. "For 14 years, we actually had our own locale, and we ran it. But it was very expensive, so we had to find and go back to the rental way," he explained.

ClubBo, a nonprofit run entirely by volunteers, has grown over the years, sometimes finding itself with as many as 80 participants at a time. "We offer the first three courses free so that people can give it a try. Some stay, a lot don't, but that's okay. It's all about trying," Gaudet said.

Beyond their regular activities, ClubBo also performs at various events, from office parties to weddings. Gaudet also shared his dedication to the club: "It's always been a big part of my life. It's like my family now.

### Banana Prosthetics: Supporting Gender Affirmation

Tomy Perreault, owner of Banana Prosthetics, attended the parade to celebrate and support the trans community. "On est une petite entreprise locale qui fabrique des produits d'affirmation de genre, plus spécifiquement pour les personnes trans," Perreault explained. What started as a personal project four years ago has grown into a resource for those navigating their gender transitions.

Despite operating in a niche market, Banana Prosthetics has found

individuals in rural areas and beyond. "C'est un organisme pour les personnes LGBTQ+ qui sont en agriculture rurales, pour des jardiniers amateurs, pour des gens qui travaillent dans le milieu agricole aussi, des gens qui vivent en campagne ou des gens de la ville qui veulent aller en campagne," Desjardins explained. The group works to raise awareness that LGBTQ+ individuals thrive not just in urban centers like Montreal but across the entire province.

For Desjardins, the parade is a chance to connect with those who may feel isolated in rural Quebec. "C'est super important parce que, dans le fond, tu sais, c'est une bonne visibilité, il y a plein de gens qui viennent à Montréal qui sont en campagne [...] puis ils nous découvrent, puis ils sont comme « wow je ne suis pas le seul, tu es agriculteur! », he said. The organization also fosters connections between urban and rural communities, encouraging a deeper appreciation of agricultural roots and offering more localized partnership opportunities. "C'est bien les grands centres, mais des fois c'est à 3, 4, 5, 6 heures de route. Donc, c'est le fun aussi d'avoir quelque chose d'un peu plus proche d'ici," Desjardins noted.

### GRIS Montreal: Demystifying Sexual Diversity in Schools

Marie Houzeau, General Director of GRIS Montreal, an organization dedicated to educating youth about sexual diversity,

## Four civilians prepare for the riskiest SpaceX mission to date



**THE POLARIS DAWN CREW STANDS IN FRONT OF THEIR SPACEX CAPSULE. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ANNA MENON, SCOTT 'KIDD' POTEET, JARED ISAACMAN AND SARAH GILLIS. (SPACEX)**

Next Monday, if all goes to plan, a four-person crew will blast off from Cape Canaveral, Fla., aboard a SpaceX rocket, on their way to making history.

Funded by billionaire Jared Isaacman, the five-day mission has several scientific goals, but the biggest and undoubtedly riskiest one is the first commercial spacewalk.

"Whatever risk associated with it, it's worth it," said Isaacman during a press conference on Monday.

It's the first in-flight test of SpaceX's sleek new extravehicular (EVA) spacesuit, based off its intravehicular one.

But this spacewalk will be quite different from those with which we're most familiar. The SpaceX Crew Dragon

capsule doesn't have an airlock, so the entire spacecraft will be depressurized, with all four crew members testing the new suits.

The crew consists of Isaacman, CEO of Shift4, a payment processing company based out of Pennsylvania; Scott "Kidd" Poteet, a former air force colonel; Sarah Gillis, a SpaceX engineer and astronaut trainer; and Anna Menon, another SpaceX engineer who also serves in mission control.

The launch is scheduled for no earlier than Aug. 26 at 3:30 a.m. ET.

It will be Isaacman and Gillis who will conduct the spacewalk 700 kilometres above Earth three days into the mission. (Abridged version of news report by Nicole Mortillaro · CBC News · Posted: Aug 21, 2024 1:58)



# THE NORTH AMERICAN FILIPINO STAR

## August 2024 Pictorial News



### IN MEMORIAM

#### Salvador Cabugao (1940-2024)

"Buddy" Cabugao was a well-known community leader who passed away 22 July 2024 and a memorial mass held at St. Kevin Church, Tuesday, July 31, 2024.



### REMEMBERING PHIL DONAHUE

Phillip John Donahue was an American media personality, writer, film producer, and the creator and host of The Phil Donahue Show that premiered in 1967. The television program, later known simply as Donahue, was the first popular talk show to feature a format that included audience participation. The prolific talk show host is credited with revolutionizing daytime television. As Oprah herself once wrote: "If there had been no Phil Donahue show, there would be no Oprah Winfrey show." Donahue was born on Dec. 21, 1935, Cleveland, Ohio and died on Sunday August 18, 2024 at age 88 in Manhattan, New York, U.S.A.



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's first day in Colombia saw the pair head to the National Centre for the Arts where they celebrated Colombian culture and met folkloric performers accompanied by Bogota's Vice President Francia Márquez. Their 4-day visit is about supporting initiatives that protect children from online harm. They arrived in Bogoto on Thursday, Aug. 22. Nathalia Angarita/Reuters



New banknotes featuring the image of King Charles entered circulation on 5 June 2024. Low-serial numbered notes on new issues are of huge interest to collectors. They will be sold during the summer at auctioneers Spink & Son. The money raised will be donated to charity.



Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi holds a large diamond discovered in Botswana at his office in Gaborone, 2,492-carat diamond - the second largest in the world - discovered in Botswana, says the Canadian mining company that found the stone. The diamond was discovered in the Karowe Diamond Mine in northeastern Botswana using X-ray technology [Bhuiyan/AFP] Published On 22 Aug 2024 [AlJazeera]



Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her running mate Tim Walz broadcast from her rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 20 [Kevin Lamarque/Reuters]