

FILIPINO STAR

Volume XXXIX No. 12 December 2021

Montreal, QC

www.filipinostar.org

15th year of CNN Heroes in 2021



Top row: L to R: Dr. Ala Stanford ((Philadelphia, PA), David Flink ((New York), Hector Guadalupe((New York), Made Janur Yasa ((Ubud, Bali, Indonesia), Jenifer Colpas (Cartagena, Colombia), 2nd row: L to R: Michelle Neff Hernandez (Simi Valley, CA), Dr. Patricia Gordon ((Los Angeles, CA), Shirley Raines (Los Angeles, CA), Zannah Mustapha (Nigeria), and Lynda Doughty (Phippsburg, ME).

The top 10 CNN heroes were honored on December 12th during the 15th annual all-star tribute to the awardees. Anderson Cooper and Kelly Ripa hosted the show. Each CNN hero receives \$10,000 while the CNN Hero of the Year receives an additional \$100,000.

Dr. Ala Stanford, a pediatric surgeon, saw how the pandemic devastated communities of color in her hometown of Philadelphia. She responded by bringing them free testing and vaccinations through her group, the Black Doctors Covid-19 Consortium.

David Flink founded a mentoring program called Eye to Eye

which has been able to help students with learning disabilities. When he was young he was diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. With the support of his parents and the right school, Flink graduated high school and went to Brown University.

Hector Guadalupe after being released from prison in 2012 found a way to build his own career. And for the past five years, he's helped others follow his path. He established a nonprofit, A Second U Foundation which helps formerly incarcerated men and women get certified as personal trainers and find jobs in the fitness industry. To date, Guadalupe says nearly 200 people have graduated

from his program and not one has reoffended.

Made Janur Yasa is a restaurateur, a partner in the unique vegan restaurant Moksa in Ubud. In May 2020, as Bali was in the depths of the pandemic lull, Janur began a program called Plastic for Rice, a barter system that encouraged locals to trade in collected plastic for rice. When the program started, he says that he remembered how villagers used to barter in the early days, rice for sea salt, farm to sea. He said that this gave people spirit, making sure that people don't get used to receiving without working.

Through this plastic for rice

system, Janur provided a double solution: cleaning littered plastic in the environment; as well as providing much-needed sustenance to those in need, especially in rural areas.

Growing up in Barranquilla, Colombia, Jenifer Colpas was mostly shielded from the poverty outside her door.

It wasn't until after college, when she moved to India for a job in information technology, that she appreciated the vast social inequalities people endure.

"Something inside me (was) saying, 'You need to do something

See Page 4 2021 CNN Heroes

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays to All Our Readers



Education raises the bar but lowers the barriers to a rewarding career.

Serving the community since 1989



**7159, chemin de la Côte des Neiges
Montreal, QC H3R 2M2**

**Telephone: 514-485-7861 Fax: 514-485-3076
www.gilmorecollege.com**

**Winter 2022 session
Register by appointment
Call 514-485-7861**

PROGRAMS

- **PAB/PSW/Nursing Aide**
- **Daycare Assistant**
- **Office Administration**
 - **Executive Secretary**
 - **Medical Secretary**
 - **Legal Secretary**
- **Accounting Technician**



PAB Graduation, Batch 12, July 7, 2017 at Gilmore College International reception hall with Sonny Moroz (center, seated)



30th Anniversary Souvenir Photo, December 14, 2019 at Hotel Ruby Foo's, Decarie Blvd., Montreal



Monday evening French class level 1 (break time)

COURSES

- **LANGUAGES**
 - **English**
 - **Filipino**
 - **French**
 - **Spanish**
 - **Other languages on request**
- **Accounting & Bookkeeping**
- **Microsoft Office**
- **Keyboarding (Touch Typing)**
- **Computerized Accounting (Sage)**
- **Business French/English (Written)**

**Classes start January 10, 2022
Flexible schedules, income tax deductible
fees, personalized instruction by
professional, experienced teachers**



From the Publisher's desk

Holidays come and go but tradition remains in all families

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

December is the last month of the year, and traditionally has always been the time of family reunions, social gatherings of all friends, old and new. Over the past two years, we have been celebrating the holidays in a restricted environment, observing safety protocols, and making sure that everyone is safe and in good health. It takes a concerted effort to fight the virus that caused so much destruction in our life. Yet, we have seen that there remains a minority who believe that they ought to have the freedom to choose to be vaccinated or not, and they protest against the restrictions imposed for our own safety. As one can realize, human behaviour is too complex and we need to be respectful of their rights to express their opinions. It is difficult to persuade everyone, but if we can have a majority who are able to understand the importance of science and how we have overcome many other pandemics through the work of our health professionals, we must feel grateful and hopeful that in the end things will be all right.

As we may already know from our past experience, change is a constant factor that affects everyone of

us, young or old, rich or poor. During this holiday season, it is a good idea to find the time to focus on the wonderful meanings of our religious and cultural traditions. As it is both a joyful but stressful time of the year for there seems to be too much to do, we must pay attention to our personal limits and be organized in order to do first our priorities and leave the rest to do later. We need to avoid anything that makes us feel depressed or sad by talking to our friends and family whatever bothers us and admit to yourself if you need help. As the saying goes, no one is an island, and we are interdependent. Accepting what our human nature is all about and be willing to admit that no one is perfect, we learn to understand that life is a gift which we must be grateful for.

Now that we have another Christmas to enjoy, let us all sing "Joy to the world, for the Savior reigns" or other songs that brighten our spirits to enjoy the holidays. Let there be peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind. And let love fill all our hearts to take care of one another to make this world a better and wonderful place to live in.

Happy holidays to everyone!

For subscription request, please mail it to:
7159 ch. de la Cote des Neiges
Montreal, QC H3R 2M2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

1 year
12 issues \$28

2 years
24 issues \$50

Please issue cheque payable to: North American Filipino Star.



7159 ch. de la Cote des Neiges
 Montreal, Quebec H3R 2M2
 www.filipinostar.org

Tel.: 514-485-7861/ 514-506-8753
E-Mail: marketing@filipinostar.org
Published by: Filcan Publications, Inc..

Fely Rosales Carino
Community News

Joy Rosales
Administrative Asst.

Bert Abiera
Founder-Publisher, Filipino Star
Nov. 1982- Nov. 97

Zenaida F. Kharroubi
Chief Editor
Publisher, April 1998-present
North American Filipino Star

W.G. Quiambao
Tagalog Columnist
(in absentia)

Tony San Juan
Toronto News

Sam Kevin
Show Biz News & Layout Editor

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.

Meeting Community Leaders with B'nai Brith to discuss fighting hate



Councillor Sonny Moroz, Ramon Vicente (Filipino Family Services), School Commissioner Ellie Israel, Sharon Nelson (Jamaica Association), Marvin Rotrand (B'nai Brith National Director), Janna Minikovic (B'nai Brith Quebec Coordinator), Perry Balenra (Tamil Elders), Councillor Stephanie Valenzuela, Luzviminda Mazzone (Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec, Dec. 6, 2021)

Open letter sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Special Envoy Irwin Cotler

December 6, 2021 - Earlier today the attached letters were sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Special Envoy Irwin Cotler, according to Marvin Rotrand.

"I thank your organization for being one of the supporting groups. The letter has 112 signatories represented some 30 organizations and some 80 individuals.

The letter welcomes the promises made at the Malmo International Forum on October 13 by Canada in its pledge to combat antisemitism. The letter also endorses B'nai Brith Canada's four-point action plan to translate those promises into concrete action.

The community consultation and dialogue that led to this letter has created a real opportunity for communities to get to know each other better and to support each other when any group is targeted by hate. We are stronger together.

It is B'nai Brith's intention to enlarge the partnerships created in the last months and to convene additional meetings in the new year."

Excerpt of the letter follows:

December 2, 2021

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C. Member of Parliament for Papineau Prime Minister House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A5

Hon. Irwin Cotler, P.C. Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism 4770 Kent Street, Suite 205 Montréal (Québec) H3W 1H2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Special Envoy Cotler,

We write today to express our strong support for Canada's country pledge made at the October 13 Malmo International Forum to Combat Antisemitism.

We invite the Government and Special Envoy to ensure that there be legislation, funding, and action in the short-term to transform the welcome Malmo promises into concrete gains to push back Antisemitism.

We represent organizations and individuals in the Montreal area who have for the past two years worked together informally to denounce an upsurge of hate aimed at identifiable groups during the Covid pandemic. Our appeal to Montreal City Council led to motions to denounce anti-Asian racism and additional resources being allocated to aid our city's diverse Asian communities at their time of need.

We have also been active voices denouncing Islamophobia and anti-Black racism. We have taken note that Statistics Canada indicates that crime decreased nationally in 2020 while hate crimes reported to police exploded. The situation in 2021 seems

even worse.

Particularly targeted is the Jewish community and we stand in solidarity with Jews wherever they live in Canada.

The scenes of violence and vandalism against Jews and their institutions that we witnessed this past spring are unacceptable and need to be confronted. We agree with the Prime Minister's words that it is not only for the Jewish community to confront Antisemitism.

On November 16 over twenty organizations met here in Montreal to examine B'nai Brith's recent Open Letter to Special Envoy Cotler. We endorse that letter and make our own requests for follow up by the Government of Canada and the Special Envoy.

Specifically, we request :

1. That the Malmo promise to make the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism a permanent and funded position be formalized before the end of 2021.

2. We ask for a bill to be tabled as soon as possible to strengthen the Canada Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code to effectively combat online antisemitism and hate.

3. We urge the Government of Canada to convene a special forum with the Council of Ministers of Education to work with schools to develop effective methods to combat antisemitism and implement mandatory and consistent Holocaust and genocide courses of study while addressing the surge of antisemitic incidents on Canadian university campuses.

4. We applaud Canada's leadership in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). We invite Canada to consider applying to assume the IHRA Presidency at a future time. Most importantly, the Government and Special Envoy must promote the implementation of the IHRA working definition on Antisemitism at all three levels of government and across civil society as well. Adopting it without providing the resources to implement it, does not strengthen the battle against the haters.

5. Canadian international development assistance must not enable or facilitate antisemitism and incitement, especially in education. We invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ensure that funding of domestic and international Non-Governmental Organizations will be conditioned on their adherence to the IHRA definition.

We thank you for leadership at Malmo. The time is now to transform the hope our country pledge has generated to new gains that will allow for an effective response to Antisemitism.

Signed

Marvin Rotrand National Director League for Human Rights B'nai Brith Canada

From Page 1 2021 CNN Heroes

about it," Colpas said, which is why she changed her career path. She returned to Colombia, settled in Cartagena and volunteered with community organizations that helped people living in poverty.

"I felt very saddened to see that people were living without the most basic things," she said. "People don't have clean drinking water, indoor plumbing, electricity."

She wanted to do more to help bring these essentials to communities most in need.

In 2015, with the help of friends, Colpas co-founded Tierra Grata. Today, the non-profit provides access to clean water, solar-powered lights and electricity along with eco-toilets and showers for remote rural communities throughout Colombia.

"We didn't know anything at first, but we had all the determination," Colpas said.

Colpas, now 31, and her team of other young like-minded counterparts currently serve 35 communities and their services have helped improve the quality of life for more than 10,000 people.

In 2005, Michele Neff Hernandez and her husband, Phillip, were enjoying the active life they built as a couple.

But everything changed on a late August evening when Phillip went for a bike ride and was hit by a car and killed.

"I didn't even know what to do with myself," Neff Hernandez said. "Every single thing about my life changed, from where I slept, to where I ate ... to who was I going to check in with if I had a flat tire."

While she had a great support system to help her during the difficult time, she said none of them knew how to handle her grief.

"They meant well but couldn't understand what I was going through." Neff Hernandez realized she wanted real-world stories of how other widows dealt with this new reality, so she started seeking out and learning from them.

"Every time I sat down with one of these people, I felt understood," she said. "I thought if I could bring these widows together, what a difference that would make."

That's how her non-profit, Soaring Spirits, was born. The organization connects widows and widowers, allowing them to heal in a community that understands the pain of losing a partner.

Camp Widow was the first program she created in 2008. The annual three-day events gather widows and widowers from around the world to attend workshops, meet one another and find connections.

From Camp Widow, the non-profit has grown to also include 70 regional chapters all over the US, as well as pen pals and programs specifically for the LGBTQ community.

Dr. Patricia Gordon - On a medical trip to West Africa nine years ago, Dr. Patricia Gordon had a wake-up call.

She had traveled with a group of medical oncologists to bring a new radiation device to a hospital in Dakar,

Senegal. While there, she saw how many women were needlessly being killed by a preventable, treatable disease: cervical cancer.

"There are 350,000 women dying a painful, undignified death globally. And it's almost 100% preventable," said Gordon, a radiation oncologist and the founder of the non-profit CureCervicalCancer.

After 27 years, Gordon left her private practice in 2014 to devote all her time to CureCervicalCancer. She takes no salary.

She and her group use the "See & Treat" model along with what they call a "Clinic in a Suitcase" to deliver screening, training and supplies to clinics around the world. The organization has since worked in 10 countries, including China, Haiti, Guatemala, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Vietnam.

In the last nine years, the non-profit has also established 106 sustainable clinics to screen and treat women in remote and underserved areas.

Shirley Raines who brings beauty and hope to the men and women living on Los Angeles' Skid Row, is the 2021 CNN Hero of the Year. As she received her award Sunday, Raines thanked her children including her late son, who inspired her work.

"This surely hasn't been easy. I stand before you a very broken woman," an emotional Raines said. "I am a mother without a son and there are a lot of people in the streets without a mother -- and I feel like it's a fair exchange."

Raines was presented with the CNN Hero of the Year award Sunday night by hosts Anderson Cooper and Kelly Ripa. Online voters selected her from among this year's Top 10 CNN Heroes finalists.

Raines and her non-profit Beauty 2 the Streetz have been a mainstay on Skid Row for the past six years, providing food, clothing, and hair and makeup services to thousands of people.

Every week, Raines and her team of volunteers set up shop and transform part of Skid Row -- home to one of the nation's largest concentrations of homeless people -- into an outdoor beauty salon.

Nigeria's Zannah Mustapha is the only African among CNN's 2021 Heroes. In his capacity as the proprietor of Future Prowess Islamic Foundation school, Mustapha has been providing free education to children orphaned by Boko Haram.

Zannah Mustapha is a humanitarian and a mediator per excellence. He played a critical role in the release of the 103 kidnapped Chibok school girls. As a philanthropist, he possesses the heart to help and contribute to the advancement of humanity proven by his Foundation's more than a decade continual support for children orphaned by the insurgency.

Zannah is driven by the need to provide education to the orphans because in the words of William Feather, "Books open your mind, broaden your mind, and strengthen you as nothing else can." He is giving them a legacy, by providing education -- an action anchored on the words of B.B. Kings, "The beautiful thing about learning is

nobody can take it away from you". This is a legacy he wishes to bequeath on these children with the plan to change their future and world positively.

The biggest threat to these animals is human impact."

CNN Hero Lynda Doughty nurses seals back to health and returns them to the ocean... and she's been doing it for more than 20 years.

Growing up in coastal Maine, Lynda Doughty spent a lot of time out on the ocean, where she regularly encountered seals, turtles and whales.

She developed a passion for the marine wildlife living along the coast and knew from an early age that she wanted to dedicate her life to protecting them.

"I just remember being so amazed (by them) and wondering what's happening in their life," Doughty said.

She also became aware that their livelihood was jeopardized by pollution, habitat destruction and other human-related activity.



Doughty's group provides care for critically ill and injured seals.

For harbor seals -- one of the most common marine mammals along the East Coast -- threats include entanglement in fishing gear and other marine debris, illegal feeding and harassment.

"I knew that I wanted to do something to help these animals," Doughty said.

She became a marine biologist and worked for several years with organizations that provided emergency response and rehabilitation for sick and injured marine mammals. But as nonprofits and state agencies lost funding or closed their doors, Doughty decided to step in and fill the gap.

Since 2011, her nonprofit, Marine Mammals of Maine, has provided response efforts, assistance and medical care for more than 3,000 marine animals.

When Covid-19 struck, Doughty said they couldn't afford to slow down -- the animals still needed their help.

"We were so nervous of what the pandemic might bring and how we would stay afloat as a nonprofit in uncertain times," Doughty said. "Our team stood strong and we were able to be deemed essential in order to keep our doors open to continue to help and care for animals."

In March 2020, just as the US began its response to the pandemic, the organization moved into a new, larger facility that allowed them to expand their long-term care capacity to eight seals at any given time.

When another New England-based marine animal rescue program they coordinated with temporarily suspended its long-term animal care

amid the pandemic, Doughty's work became more vital than ever.

"We couldn't bring any animals to them and there was a lack of rehabilitation spots for animals. So, we were really needed and there was more pressure for our center to stay open," Doughty said.

The group operates a 24-hour hotline, responding to calls about distressed or deceased marine mammals and sea turtles.

"We are the only organization that's permitted to respond to marine mammal strandings within 2,500 miles of coastline," Doughty said, adding that most animals they respond to are seals.

Rent an Apartment in the City of Côte Saint-Luc
7431 Kingsley Road, Côte St Luc, QC, H4W 1P1
www.cotesaintlucapartments.ca
Please contact Michael at 514-489-4949 or 514-927-6347

Bentley

Balmoral

Beresford

Indoor Activities

Quiet, European Neighborhood, Indoor & Outdoor Pools, Heated Dry Sauna, Indoor Parking Space, Laundry Rooms

The Bentley, Balmoral and Beresford apartment buildings are located in the great, clean & calm city of Cote-Saint-Luc. It is quiet, family-friendly and close to Downtown Montreal.

Liberals table COVID-19 aid bill with targeted supports to businesses, workers

By David Lao Global News
Posted November 24, 2021

The Liberals have tabled a long awaited aid bill aimed at giving targeted supports to businesses still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a press conference Wednesday, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland announced the introduction of Bill C-2.

According to a news release, the bill would extend previously announced programs as well as "deliver targeted support" to businesses and workers facing pandemic-related challenges.

Freeland previously released broad details of the plan to offer targeted supports to workers and businesses after the Liberals phased out several pandemic-era benefits like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) and the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) at the end of October.

On Wednesday however, Freeland unveiled further details on the bill.

"As our recovery has begun to take hold, we have moved past the darkest days of the pandemic to a new phase," said Freeland in a news release.

First, as was announced back in October, the Canada Recovery Hiring Program (CHRP) would be extended until May 7, 2022 and be available for employers with a more than 10 per cent loss in current revenue.



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland

Under the CHRP, three programs would be available to help with wage and rent support for Canadian businesses — the Tourism and Hospitality Recovery Program (THRP) and Hardest Hit Business Recovery Program (HHBRP) and the Local Lockdown Program (LLP).

The THRP and HHBRP had already gone into effect in late October as a replacement for the older, phased out COVID-19 support programs.

According to the press release, the new Local Lockdown Program would "provide businesses that face temporary new local lockdowns up to the maximum amount available through the wage and

rent subsidy programs."

The bill also proposes to extend the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit and the Canada Recover Sickness Benefit until May 7, 2022, and to increase the maximum duration of those benefits by another two weeks.

As was announced in October as well, the bill also looks to establish the Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit (CWLBB), which looks to give targeted support to workers impacted by a COVID-19-related public health lockdown.

The benefit would give up to \$300 a week in income support to eligible workers, would be able to receive it

retroactively from October 24, 2021 and would be available for use until May 7, 2022.

"With today's legislation, we are pivoting to what we hope will be the final stage of recovery. I hope Parliament will pass this legislation expeditiously so that Canadians can get the support they need and without undue delay," said Freeland.

The Liberals had estimated then that creating new, targeted benefits through May would cost around \$8 billion and that they would need parliamentary approval in the form of a bill in order to spend the money.

With files from the Canadian Press and Global News' Twinkle Ghosh

PRESS RELEASE

The Filipino Canadian Lawyers Network - le réseau des avocats philippino-canadiens (FCLN) has joined the Osgoode Society's Oral History Program to document orally the story of Filipino Canadian lawyers across Canada. For the first time in Canadian history Filipino Canadian lawyers will have their stories told and archived for the public to view.

Interviews of the Filipino Canadian lawyers will be conducted by law students or other lawyers starting in 2022. FCLN is compiling a list of its members to be interviewed, as well as the first Filipino Canadian lawyers and judges featured during its June 1, 2021, launch.

For more information please contact FCLN President, Alicia S. Natividad (asn@anatividad.ca), or FCLN Vice President, Rachel A. Sachs (rachel@sachslaw.ca).

MY OFFICE IS OPEN AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO SERVING YOU!

We are here to help guide you through the process of dealing with the many different federal departments, programs, and services.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

2020 has been an exceptionally trying year for everyone. We were confronted with a worldwide pandemic, the likes of which has not been seen in our lifetime. While no government is perfect, and in retrospect there are things we could have done differently, I am proud of the way our federal government has stepped up to support Canadians during the pandemic.

My job has been to support my constituents which included providing a constant stream of information; answering your questions; helping individuals and groups with their own files; and obtaining funding and grants. It also meant helping our Government construct and refine programs like the CERB, CEBA, CEWS, CECRA and their successors. It meant fighting for improvements, such as helping to lead the charge for national standards in our long-term care facilities.

Throughout the first 5 months of the pandemic, my staff and I worked 7 days a week to ensure that all phone calls and emails were responded to within 24 hours.

I published a daily update (now weekly) to provide important information to the thousands of constituents who provided us their email addresses. Those updates are also posted on my Facebook page. I encourage everyone who does not yet receive my updates to please email us at Anthony.housefather@parl.gc.ca.

We also had volunteers contact as many residents of the riding as possible, particularly seniors.

Throughout the year, we tried to help resolve the thousands of files that we received from the riding's businesses, non-profits and organizations. We also assisted them in applying for funding and grants. Simultaneously, Parliament was also functioning and I was also representing you in Parliament, on Committees, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and in the Liberal caucus.

In all the years that I have served as an elected official, this one has been the most challenging but also the most rewarding. I have never before been able to assist so many people directly in such a short time frame and, hopefully, make a positive difference in their lives.

I appreciate the incredible sacrifices everyone has made this year and for this holiday season let us hope for a joyous and HEALTHY 2021.



Anthony Housefather

Member of Parliament · Mount Royal

4770 Av Kent, #316, Montréal (QC) H3W 1H2

514.283.0171 · Anthony.Housefather@parl.gc.ca

www.anthonthousefather.libparl.ca



COVID-19 was 'expensive,' but Freeland says economy is improving in fiscal update

Ryan Tumilty (National Post)
Dec 14, 2021 •

OTTAWA — Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland offered few new economic measures in the Liberals' fiscal update Tuesday, portraying the Canadian economy instead as well on the way to a post-pandemic recovery.

Freeland delivered her speech in Parliament on Tuesday amid growing concerns about the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which appears to be spreading across the country. She said the government was budgeting \$1.7 billion to buy more rapid tests and ship them out across the country to provinces.

Freeland said that funding will buy 180 million tests and provinces should use the ones they have in storage now.

There is not a shortage of rapid tests today in Canada, and we have a lot more coming. I really urge Canadians, use rapid tests, use boosters, wear your masks."

Freeland herself used rapid tests on Tuesday after two of her staff



tested positive for COVID-19. She said she has since tested negative, but as a precaution gave the fiscal update virtually rather than appearing in person in Parliament.

The government has also put aside \$4.5 billion as a sort of contingency fund for Omicron related expenses, on top of money already set

aside for wage and rent help for hard-hit industries. They have also budgeted \$5 billion to help repair damage from the B.C. floods.

Freeland said the government's plan during the pandemic was to ensure the economy came back as strong as possible.

"Keeping the Canadian economy on life support as we went into COVID-19 hibernation was expensive. But we knew that keeping

Canadian families and businesses solvent would help our economy rebound," she said.

According to the fiscal update, the government ended the last fiscal year, which ended in March, with a \$327 billion deficit, down from the \$354 billion it was projecting. It also is forecasting to end the current fiscal year \$144.5 billion in the red, down roughly \$10 billion from the \$154.7 billion projected last year.

Freeland touted job figures and GDP growth, which have trended positively in the last few months. She said the government wanted to ensure that Canada moved swiftly past the damage done by the pandemic, unlike what happened after the 2008 recession.

"We have already more than recovered lost jobs, a healing which took eight months longer after the much milder 2008 recession. And we are on track to recover lost GDP five months more quickly than after the 2008 contraction," she said.

While the country has regained jobs and GDP growth,

See Page 22 Covid 19

Broaden your career prospects

Get an AEC in these exciting fields

- Early Childhood Education - JEE.0K
- Assisting People with Disabilities - JNC.0E
- Safe and secure classes - In-person and Online

Scholarships, Loans and Bursaries available
Flexible schedule to fit your lifestyle

For more information, call BCM at 514 733-3777

collegeBCM.ca
admission@collegebcm.ca

BCM COLLEGE

CAMPUS NOTRE-DAVE-DE-FOY

WE ARE LOOKING FOR HARD-WORKING PROFESSIONAL AND PASSIONATE CANDIDATES.

WE ARE HIRING

FULL-TIME POSITION, 40 HOURS/WEEK
days (7am - 3:30pm) or evenings (3:30pm - 12am)

General Work (Sanding)	Day \$17.50/h. Evening \$19.00/h
CNC Machine Operator	Day \$18.50/h. Evening \$20.00/h
Assembler	Day \$19.75/h. Evening \$21.25/h
Wood Painter	Day \$20.25/h. Evening \$21.75/h
Wood Stainer	Day \$22.50/h. Evening \$24.00/h

WE OFFER

- On-the-job training in your language
- Career development opportunities
- Group insurance plans available
- Various team and social activities
- Free employee parking available

APPLY TODAY
emplois@seatply.com

SEATPLY
wood chair components

Pandemic mystery: Scientists focus on COVID's animal origins

By LAURA UNGAR

December 10, 2021 AP NEWS

Nearly two years into the COVID-

human case to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, China, where live animals were sold.

"The lab leak idea is almost



FILE - Members of a World Health Organization team are seen through a window wearing protective gear during a field visit to the Hubei Animal Disease Control and Prevention Center for another day of field visit in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province, on Feb. 2, 2021. Nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the origin of the virus tormenting the world remains shrouded in mystery. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File

19 pandemic, the origin of the virus tormenting the world remains shrouded in mystery.

Most scientists believe it emerged in the wild and jumped from bats to humans, either directly or through another animal. Others theorize it escaped from a Chinese lab.

Now, with the global COVID-19 death toll surpassing 5.2 million on the second anniversary of the earliest human cases, a growing chorus of scientists is trying to keep the focus on what they regard as the more plausible "zoonotic," or animal-to-human, theory, in the hope that what's learned will help humankind fend off new viruses and variants.

"The lab-leak scenario gets a lot of attention, you know, on places like Twitter," but "there's no evidence that this virus was in a lab," said University of Utah scientist Stephen Goldstein, who with 20 others wrote an article in the journal *Cell* in August laying out evidence for animal origin.

Michael Worobey, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Arizona who contributed to the article, said he always thought zoonotic transmission was more likely than a lab leak but had signed a letter with other scientists last spring saying both theories were viable. Since then, he said, his own and others' research has made him even more confident about the animal hypothesis, which is "just way more supported by the data."

Last month, Worobey published a COVID-19 timeline linking the first known

CoV-2, meaning they were infected with a bat coronavirus that then evolved. Scientists have been looking for the exact bat coronavirus involved, and in September identified three viruses in bats in Laos more similar to SARS-CoV-2 than any known viruses.

Worobey suspects raccoon dogs were the intermediate host. The fox-like mammals are susceptible to coronaviruses and were being sold live at the Huanan market, he said.

"The gold-standard piece of evidence for an animal origin" would be an infected animal from there, Goldstein said. "But as far as we know, the market was cleared out."

Earlier this year, a joint report by the World Health Organization and China called the transmission of the virus from bats to humans through another animal the most likely scenario and a lab leak "extremely unlikely."

But that report also sowed doubt by pegging the first known COVID-19 case as an accountant who had no connection to the Huanan market and first showed symptoms on Dec. 8, 2019. Worobey said proponents of the lab-leak theory point to that case in claiming the virus escaped from a Wuhan Institute of Virology facility near where the man lived.

According to Worobey's research, however, the man said in an interview that his Dec. 8 illness was actually a dental problem, and his COVID-19 symptoms began on Dec. 16, a date confirmed in hospital records.

Worobey's analysis identifies an earlier case: a vendor in the Huanan market who came down with COVID-19 on Dec. 11.

ANIMAL THREATS

Experts worry the same sort of animal-to-human transmission of viruses could spark new pandemics — and worsen this one.

Since COVID-19 emerged, many types of animals have gotten infected, including pet cats, dogs and ferrets; zoo animals such as big cats, otters and non-human primates; farm-raised mink; and white-tailed deer.

Most got the virus from people, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which says that humans can spread it to animals during close contact but that the risk of animals transmitting it to people is low.

Another fear, however, is that animals could unleash new viral variants. Some wonder if the omicron variant began

this way.

"Around the world, we might have animals potentially incubating these variants even if we get (COVID-19) under control in humans," said David O'Connor, a virology expert at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "We're probably not going to do a big giraffe immunization program any time soon."

Worobey said he has been looking for genetic fingerprints that might indicate whether omicron was created when the virus jumped from humans to an animal, mutated, and then leaped back to people.

Experts say preventing zoonotic disease will require not only cracking down on illegal wildlife sales but making progress on big global problems that increase risky human-animal contact, such as habitat destruction and climate change.

Failing to fully investigate the animal origin of the virus, scientists said in the *Cell* paper, "would leave the world vulnerable to future pandemics arising from the same human activities that have repeatedly put us on a collision course with novel viruses."

'TOXIC' POLITICS

But further investigation is stymied by superpower politics. Lawrence Gostin of Georgetown University said there has been a "bare-knuckles fight" between China and the United States.

"The politics around the origins investigation has literally poisoned the well of global cooperation," said Gostin, director of the WHO Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law. "The politics have literally been toxic."

An AP investigation last year found that the Chinese government was strictly controlling all research into COVID-19's origins and promoting fringe theories that the virus could have come from outside the country.

"This is a country that's by instinct very closed, and it was never going to allow unfettered access by foreigners into its territory," Gostin said.

Still, Gostin said there's one positive development that has come out of the investigation.

WHO has formed an advisory group to look into the pandemic's origins. And Gostin said that while he doubts the panel will solve the mystery, "they will have a group of highly qualified scientists ready to be deployed in an instant in the next pandemic."

FOR RENT

Apartments for rent in Côte des Neiges

1,5-2,5-3,5-4,5,

renovated units including high speed (80mbps)unlimited internet service with private IP's.

Give us a call to show you your next needed living space, close to all town facilities.

514-995.6711

AXION

IMMOBILIÈRE INC.

CLEANERS NEEDED

**Office cleaning Monday to Friday
9am - 1pm \$21 /hour (located near
Cote de Liesse) Car required
Call Michael 514 624-3437 or email**

mmack@videotron.ca

PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH



Alberto 'Bert' Abiera

Alberto Abiera, aka Bert, is our December 2021 personality of the month. Bert is an only child. He completed his elementary and high school education in his hometown of Santa Barbara, Iloilo.

After high school and college was not in the cards, Bert entered the seminary to find out his next steps in life. There, students studied at night for academics and worked in the daytime. He worked at a printing shop where he learned everything there was to know about the art of printing, which eventually became his profession. Though he loved and enjoyed seminary life, he realized he would have to devote his life to a religious order and won't be able to support a family. He mentioned that he was 'one of those who were called but not chosen' and concluded that seminary life was not for him. He left the seminary to work in a printing shop where he honed his skills and learned the process of doing layout for newspapers. (As an aside, Bert owned and published the Filipino Star until he sold it to Zeny Kharroubi in April 1998, the current publisher and owner who added the two words, North American, to make it different from the previous name.)

At the same time, he continued as a student in the College of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Santo Tomas (one of the world's largest Catholic universities). However, before graduation, his future took a different turn. He was hired as a man-Friday by a Filipino politician in Guam. During one of those community social gatherings, he met the love of his life, commenting that "she seemed lonely and I was in love!" Bert married Perla Enate in Agana, Guam in July 1970. And as the saying goes, they lived happily ever after. A man of few words, he prefers to keep his marriage out of the limelight.

From Guam he went to mainland US and eventually found his way to Montreal. He settled in an apartment on Decarie Boulevard, an address which became famous because newly arrived immigrants gravitated to a place where help could be found. Bert welcomed seamen who came to Montreal on their holidays. He was frequently asked to stand as the elderly during weddings, godfather on baptisms, and was asked to intercede on immigration problems. At the time, people thought he could do it all – a Bert of all trades! And he didn't disappoint. Have you heard or attended one of the birthday parties which friends or organizations gave him, especially his 78th birthday celebration? In light of all these tributes, Bert enjoyed every party given in his honor.

Bert recollects his numerous contributions to the Filipino community. Two of them stand out: his participation in helping to acquire the FAMAS building and the installation of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal (Philippine National Hero) at Mackenzie-King Park on St. Kevin Avenue.

Below is Bert's recollection of the origin of the FAMAS center: It was conceived in 1975 during the term of Dominador Rosales along with his FAMAS Executive directors: Robert de Guzman, Jake Maguigad, Linda Baltazar, Bert Abiera, among others. Jake brought attention to the need of a Filipino Community Center in his editorial of the FAMAS community newspaper, the FAMAS Gazette. In 1978, a FAMAS building fund was created after the term of Mrs. Norma Villarosa, who then deposited 500\$. The excess funds at the end of subsequent FAMAS administrations were deposited for the building project. After Julie Parado's term, she deposited 11,000\$. The



building project was now in full speed. Then Bert became president. At this time, the Munting Binibining Pilipinas-Montreal was launched. The parents of the kids who participated also thought of the project and worked tirelessly. The staggering amount of 65,000\$ was raised which went directly to the building fund. Congratulations to President Bert and his Executive Board!

Now on to the next achievement. Bert thought of having a marker of Dr. Jose Rizal. The inspiration was taken up during the term of James de la Paz, who was able to obtain a nod from the city hall for such a marker. The proposed marker was unveiled at Montreal City Hall by the Philippine First Lady Ming Ramos. When then-President Fidel Ramos came to hear of the markers, he refused to honor our hero with just a marker. During his visit to Montreal in November 1997, he delivered a speech at Palais des Congres de Montreal where he promised a bronze bust of Dr. Jose Rizal, which now proudly stands at Mackenzie-King Park.

As someone who many see as a mainstay of Filipino activities, here is his advice to aspiring community leaders: Be curious of happenings and events, get involved, make suggestions, and be a good example. A man of no regrets (an achievement in itself!), he believes he

has done what he had to do in life and is grateful for whatever God has provided him.

Bert is happily enjoying his golden years, that of retirement, and feels lucky to have the necessities of life. At 87 years old, no one has prepared harder than him to reach this stage. According to him, he finds comfort in "doing the same routine, being healthy, and continue on knowing God is on his side and waiting for that day when he will be welcomed by the Lord on his side. What a glorious and divine outlook, I say!

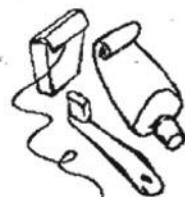
He lives by his personal motto of thanking God for his good health. In his words, "living in abundance or craving for things others are able to acquire is not my wish. Anything beyond needs is greed. I live happily day by day. I have no regrets in life. I obey the Ten Commandments. I am healthy. God has been kind to me. I hope He will be kinder to me in the coming years."

As everyone's Kuya Bert or Tito Bert, I wish this warm, engaging and endearing Personality of the Month to be on your Christmas list as he has not been naughty but nice! May we honor his service to the Filipinos by following his selfless example. Most important of all, may God say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Dental Clinic

Dr. Rosario Ambayec, D.D.S.
Chirurgien Dentiste / Dental Surgeon

Comprehensive Gentle Dental Care for The Whole Family



- Open Tuesday to Saturday.
- Days & Evenings.
- By appointment, Accept emergencies.
- Free parking for your convenience.

(514) 731-6479
3535 Côte Ste. Catherine, Suite 1, Montreal, Quebec H3T 1C7
(corner Côte des Neiges)

Joyeuses Fêtes!

Happy holidays!

À VOTRE SERVICE DANS / AT YOUR SERVICE IN
Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce



GRACIA KASOKI KATAHWA
Mairesse d'arrondissement / Borough mayor
514 868-3523
graciakasoki.katahwa@montreal.ca



MAGDA POPEANU
Conseillère de la Ville / City councillor
Côte-des-Neiges
514 872-2966
magda.popeanu@montreal.ca



DESPINA SOURIAS
Conseillère de la Ville / City councillor
Loyola
514 868-3521
despina.sourias@montreal.ca



PETER MCQUEEN
Conseiller de la Ville / City councillor
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
514 868-4281
peter.mcqueen@montreal.ca

Bureau d'arrondissement / Borough office
5160 boulevard Décarie, #610
Montréal (Québec) H3X 2H9

Montréal 

Omicron COVID-19 variant outlook for Canada has feds 'very concerned,' Trudeau says

By Rachel Gilmore Global News

Posted December 13, 2021 11:37 am

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the government is "very concerned" by the latest projections about the Omicron COVID-19 variant in Canada.

"We are, obviously, very concerned with the numbers Dr. Tam shared on Friday," Trudeau said, speaking to reporters Monday morning.

"But I think Canadians are also very aware that we have done many

making decisions that minimize their risks," Trudeau added.

"I think we've all learned an awful lot about how to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe, and I know Canadians are going to be thoughtful about everything we can do to keep the numbers down, because nobody wants to have another winter in which our hospitals and our front-line health workers are getting close to overwhelmed."

According to Tam's latest COVID-19 projections, Canada is currently seeing a Delta variant-driven resurgence of COVID-19 cases. However, if infections keep rising and Omicron takes hold, that variant could outpace Delta and drive infections up to 26,600 a day by mid-January.

"Although this forecast is concerning, we are reminded that models only show future possibilities – and that with fast and appropriate action, we can avoid a worst-case scenario trajectory as we have done in the past," Tam said, speaking on Friday.

"The speed of Omicron transmission and potential for strong

resurgence means we must approach the coming weeks with an abundance of caution and at the same time be prepared to act quickly to control spread at the first sign of rapidly accelerating cases."

Canada reported more than 4,600 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, bringing the total number of active cases over 32,000. Since the vaccination campaign began, over 80 per cent of reported cases have been among the unvaccinated, while just over eight per cent of cases were reported among the vaccinated.

Over 76 per cent of the Canadian population — including those not yet eligible — is fully vaccinated, and 80 per cent have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose. Over 86 per cent of those over the age of 12 are fully vaccinated, while just shy of 90 per cent of those over 12 have at least one dose.

— with files from Global News' Aaron D'Andrea



Those projections, made by chief public health officer Dr. Theresa Tam on Friday, suggest that Canada is on track to experience a COVID-19 resurgence — one that could worsen if the Omicron variant tightens its grip on the country.

things to keep ourselves safe and we just need to continue them." Above all, Trudeau highlighted the importance of "getting vaccinated."

"As we look at Christmas and the holidays coming, people need to be listening to public health advice and

What we know — and don't know — about the omicron variant

Early studies are beginning to paint a picture of omicron symptoms, vaccine effectiveness and the variant's spread around the world.

By Denise Chow

As cases of infection with the omicron variant of the coronavirus multiply around the world, scientists are racing to characterize the heavily mutated variant to understand how it spreads and gauge new risks during this wave of the pandemic.

Preliminary studies released this month have offered some clues about the effectiveness of vaccines against the omicron variant and whether it causes more severe illness, but much remains uncertain, and more research is needed.

Here's what's known so far about the omicron variant. Why is omicron a concern?

Variants like omicron are the biggest threat to any end to the pandemic — and scientists warn that they will continue to emerge as the virus spreads.

The omicron variant features more than 30 mutations to the virus' spike proteins, which cover the outside of the virus and are the main targets of vaccines and treatments like monoclonal antibodies.

It's possible that the mutations help the variant spread more easily and that they could enable it to evade protective antibodies generated by vaccines or through natural immunity

from previous infections. The World Health Organization said in an update Tuesday that the omicron variant is spreading faster than any previously detected strain of the coronavirus.

Does the omicron variant cause more severe illness or symptoms?

Evidence so far doesn't suggest that's the case, but it may be too early to tell.

The first major real-world analysis of the variant, released this month, looked at cases in South Africa, where it was first identified last month. The results suggest that it may cause less severe illness than the delta variant, which is still the dominant strain of the coronavirus in most countries. South African health officials found that on average, 29 percent fewer people were being admitted to the hospital than during the previous wave of delta infections.

Although the data are encouraging, experts have said it's too soon to know whether the omicron variant does, indeed, cause milder illness or whether other factors, including South Africa's younger population, play a role.

In the U.S., too, the first few dozen confirmed omicron cases have been mostly mild, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The CDC studied 43 people infected with the variant, one of whom was hospitalized for two days, and found that the most commonly

reported symptoms were cough, fatigue and congestion or a runny nose. More than three-quarters of the participants were fully vaccinated, and one-third of those people had also had booster shots, according to the CDC.

The CDC's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, called the report a "starting point," adding that the agency will continue to closely monitor the variant. Experts have also cautioned that even if the omicron variant does cause less severe illness, big spikes in infections could still overwhelm health care systems in hard-hit countries.

Is it more contagious?

Most early research suggests that the omicron variant is more contagious than earlier strains of the coronavirus were, but a definitive picture of its transmissibility isn't yet known.

Case numbers in hard-hit places, such as South Africa and the United Kingdom, are increasing exponentially, which suggests that the variant is highly transmissible, but research continues. Omicron was first identified in South Africa last month, and it took less than three weeks to become the dominant variant in the country. It is also set to overtake the delta variant and become dominant in the U.K., health officials there said. Are vaccines effective against omicron?

Experts have expressed concerns that the variant's mutations could allow it to dodge some protective antibodies generated by Covid vaccines.

Early lab studies indicate that

See Page 15 What we know

CAREGIVERS NEEDED

LIVE-IN/LIVE-OUT - FULL TIME/PART TIME

ELDERLY CARE, CHILDCARE,

HOUSEKEEPING, COOKING

TOP SALARIES CALL FOR INFORMATION

514-489-3072,

OVERSEAS PROCESSING - WORK PERMIT

TRANSFERS AND RENEWALS

INTER OCEAN AGENCY - 7005 KILDARE ROAD, #01B,

COTE ST. LUC, QC, H4W-1C1

njhecht@hotmail.com

May mga katanungan ka ba tungkol sa mga bakuna laban sa COVID-19?

Ang 211 linya ng telepono ay nag-aalok ng serbisyo sa Ingles, French at mahigit sa 200 iba pang mga wika upang matulungan kang mahanap ang impormasyon na kailangan mo o mga pagkukunan na makakatulong sa iyo.

Ang serbisyong ito ay libre at kumpidensyal.

Tumawag sa 211.



2021 CNN HEROES



Anderson Cooper and Kelly Ripa hosts of the 2021 CNN Heroes' 15th show held on December 12, 2021



Shirley Raines selected 2021 Hero of the Year shows great emotions in receiving the highest honor for her charitable work.

FROM DECEMBER 23 TO JANUARY 05 2022

KIM PHAT

Maligayang Pasko!

WHILE STOCKS LAST

- Instant Honeyed Ginger** 339
- Instant Honeyed Ginger Drink** 339
- Gyoza aux Crevettes Congelée** 599
- SHRIMP GYOZA** 599
- Gyoza aux Crevettes** 599
- WAVY INDULÉE** 149
- Croustilles Assorties** 149
- AROY-D COCONUT MILK LAIT DE COCO** 199
- Tamarind Soap Bar** 59c
- Nata da Coco** 139
- Kaong** 139
- Spaghetti Sauce** 399
- Rice Sticks** 249
- SkyFlakes CRACKERS** 749
- Buenas Rice Sticks** 249
- Source de Protein** 259

SAINT-LAURENT & GOYER ONLY
僅限於ST-LAURENT - GOYER 分店

PAYMENT METHOD ACCEPTED
接受付款方式

VISA, Mastercard, UnionPay 银联, WeChat Pay, Alipay 支付宝, Interac



7159, ch. de la Côte des Neiges
Montreal, QC H3R 2M2
Telephone: 514-485-7861
Email: zbk@gilmorecollege.com
Website: www.gilmorecollege.com

PROGRAMS AND COURSES

- PAB/PSW/NURSING AID
- OFFICE SYSTEMS TECH
- ACCOUNTING & EXCEL
- LANGUAGES
 - English
 - French
 - Filipino
 - Spanish
- SEMINARS
- TRANSLATIONS
- ON SITE TRAINING

“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.” – Anthony J. D’Angelo



“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” – Benjamin Franklin



We celebrate Christmas like a family at Gilmore College International. Photo of students, alumni, teachers, former teachers, MMTV crew, and friends. December 3, 2016 (Photo by Al Abdon)

May all your holidays be bright and all your days be nice. Wishing you the best of everything - happiness, good health and good luck.



Dignity[®]
MEMORIAL

 **LIFE WELL CELEBRATED[®]** 

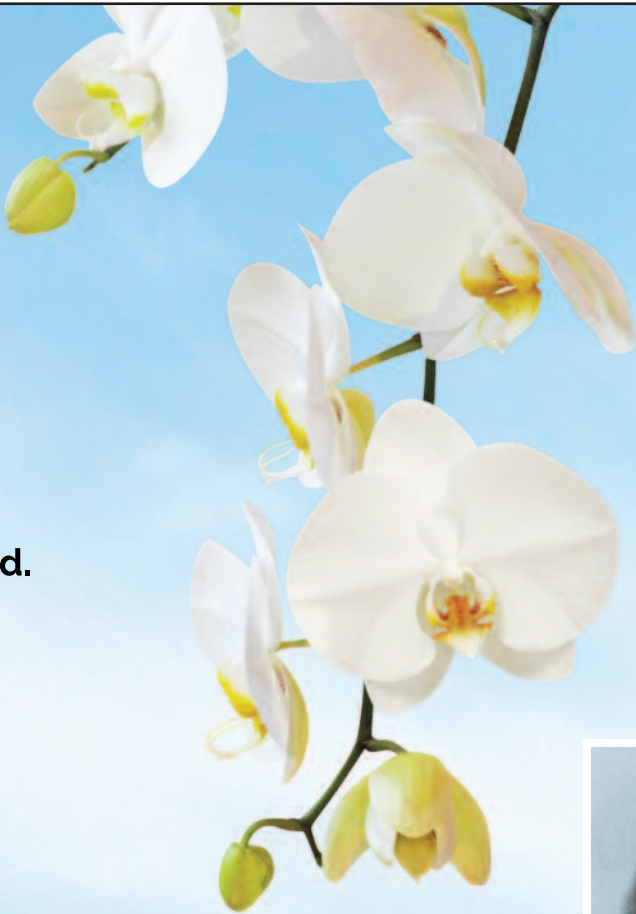
Spare your family the difficult decisions and expense involved in arranging a funeral.

Planning your funeral in advance ensures your wishes are respected and your family is protected.

Up to 10 year financing available in pre-arrangement
Reception facilities and free indoor parking
Chapel recording/webviewing for family overseas
Repatriation services



Centre funéraire Côte-des-Neiges
4525, ch. de la Côte-des-Neiges,
Montréal, QC H3V 1E7
www.dignitequebec.com



Sandra Wong
Funeral Planning Counselor
514.342.8000 ext: 2258



**Cooking
with love
provides
food for the
soul.**

Christmas dinner “Noche Buena”



Embutido (Filipino Meat Loaf)

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound ground pork
2 pieces raw egg
¼ cup flour
1 cup breadcrumbs or 3 pieces sliced bread cut into really small pieces
1 big carrot - diced (small)
1 big onion - diced (small)
1 medium green bell pepper - diced (small)
cup sweet pickle relish
3 tablespoons tomato sauce or ketchup
cup raisins
1-2 teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoons pepper

6 pieces Vienna sausage or 3 hotdogs
2 hard-boiled eggs - each cut into 4

INSTRUCTIONS:

Put all ingredients, except the last 2, in a large bowl.
Mix everything together using your hand to make sure that all is well incorporated. Set aside.
Cut 2 pieces of aluminum foil about 12 inches long each. Take half of the meat mixture and flatten it on of the foil, covering about a half. Don't forget to leave some space at the ends, about 2 inches each side.
Place the sausages and hard boiled eggs on the middle of the flattened meat.
Roll the foil so that the meat forms a cylinder or log, locking the sausage

and egg in the center. Twist the ends of the foil to lock.
Steam for 50-60 minutes.



Chicken Cordon Bleu

INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds chicken breast fillet
4 tablespoons fish sauce
1 teaspoon ground pepper
4 tablespoons lemon juice or calamansi juice
1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 big or 4-6 small slices cheese
4 big or 6-8 slices cooked ham
2 eggs - beaten
½ cup flour
½ cup breadcrumbs
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
oil - for deep frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

Combine fish sauce, ground pepper, lemon or calamansi juice and kosher salt in a small bowl.

Pound chicken breasts to ½ inch thickness. Marinade the chicken with the fish sauce mixture for at least an hour. Remove excess liquid by squeezing gently.

Place the flour, egg, and breadcrumbs in three separate deep plates. Add a teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of ground pepper to the breadcrumbs and mix well.

Place two plastic wrap on a flat surface and lay a chicken breast fillet on top of each wrapper. Top each half with ham and cheese. Roll up each breast fillet jelly-roll fashion by pushing the plastic wrap underneath from one side to the other like sushi. Try to make it as compact as possible.

Remove plastic and roll each in flour covering the chicken completely. Then dip each roll in egg and lastly dredge in breadcrumb mixture, completely covering the chicken and the ends filled. Cover each roll tightly with a plastic or foil wrap. Place the rolls in the fridge overnight.

In a deep pan or pot over medium heat, heat enough oil to deep fry the chicken. Deep fry the rolls until cooked.



Maja Blanca (Coconut Pudding)

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup water
½ cup cornstarch
1 cup coconut milk
¾ cup water
½ cup white sugar
¼ cup fresh sweet corn kernels
¼ cup sweetened flaked coconut

INSTRUCTIONS:

Butter an 8-inch baking dish or pie pan, and set aside. Mix 1/2 cup of water with the cornstarch in a bowl, and stir until smooth. Combine the coconut milk, 3/4 cup of water, and sugar in a saucepan over low heat, and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Bring the mixture to a boil, add the corn kernels, and then stir in the cornstarch mixture, stirring quickly to avoid lumps as it becomes very thick. Bring the mixture back to a boil, and simmer until fully thickened and smooth, stirring constantly, about 2 minutes. Pour the maja blanca into the prepared dish, and set aside to cool until firm, about 2 hours.

Place the coconut flakes in a dry skillet over medium heat, and stir to toast. Watch them carefully so they don't burn. Remove the toasted coconut flakes to a bowl. Let them cool and sprinkle over pudding.



Ube Leche Flan Cake

Ingredients

Flan layer:
cup ½ water
1 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
7 pieces egg yolks
1 piece whole egg
1 cup ½ evaporated milk 1 big can
1 cup condensed milk 1 can
Ube cake:
1 pack MAYA Decadence Yellow Cake Mix
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 cup + 1 tablespoon water
3 pieces eggs separated
cup ¼ ube powder
1 tablespoon ube flavoring

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°F/177°C. Prepare four 7x1-inch round pans.
In a small sauce pot, mix together water, sugar and cream of tartar. Heat up until it becomes light caramel in color. Pour these in two of the round pans. Set aside.
In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolks, whole egg, evaporated milk and condensed milk. Pour this over a sieve to remove the bubble. Divide among two of the pans with the caramel at the bottom. Bake in the preheated oven on a bain-marie for 30-35 minutes or until set. Set aside to cool. Put in the refrigerator to set for a few hours, better if overnight.

For the cake: grease and line two of the round pans, set aside. In a bowl, whisk together cake mix, vegetable oil, water, egg yolks, ube powder and ube flavoring until smooth. In another bowl, whisk egg whites until it forms stiff peaks, fold whipped eggwhites into ube cake batter. Pour into the prepared pans. Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes or until cooked. Place also in the refrigerator to cool and set.

To assemble cake: Loosen the flan using a very thin spatula. Place the cake on the pan with flan then tip this over a serving dish. Do the same for the other cake and flan. Place one layer on top of the other to make 4 layers of cake. Serve chilled.



Bibingka Recipe

2 cups rice flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 (400-ml) can coconut milk
2 tablespoons butter, melted
5 large eggs, beaten
Salted egg slices, to top
1 To prep banana leaves: rinse banana leaves under warm water and trim away thick edges. Cut leaves into about 10-inch diameter rounds (large enough to cover bottom and sides of baking pan). Heat leaves over stove flames for a few seconds or until just softened. Line pans with leaves.
2 In large bowl, combine rice flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Whisk together until well blended.
3 In another bowl, combine coconut milk, eggs, and butter and stir until properly mixed.
4 Divide mixture and pour into the prepared pie pans. Top with salted egg slices. Bake in a 350 F oven for about 20 to 25 minutes or until golden and toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Garnish with desired toppings.



Social Tidbits Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Guys and dolls, it is definitely winter! The raging presence of gusts and precipitation attest to it. The Covid delta hasn't left as hoped. Our wishes of returning to our pre-pandemic normal have been dashed. It has really been a season of discontent. On top of this is the arrival of the omicron variant, deemed more virulent and contagious than the delta variant, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). As of today, Quebec and Ontario have the highest cases daily. Thus, Quebec Premier Legault has announced new restrictions during the holidays. He allows 25 people (up from 10) for home gatherings.

Well, I have bad news and good news. Let's take care of the bad news first. There are two deaths to report. First, we have Nenita Licyayo, an active member of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM). Her interment was on December 9, 2021. Viewing and service was at 5 PM at the Cote-des-Neiges Funeral Center. The second is the passing of Ricardo Liganor, Trans Liganor's brother. Viewing and interment was on December 10, 2021.

And here is the good news: Victory for both Stephanie Valenzuela (Councillor for Darlington) and Sonny Moroz (Councillor for Snowdon). Congratulations to both! After their

rigorous campaign, now the hard work begins. Let's wish them all wisdom to implement their platforms.

Here's a hurrah to MP Housefather, a dear friend to the Filipinos. He was thrilled to have been asked by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to serve as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement. This is a heavy load of responsibility. To mention just a few, this ministry serves all federal departments as their central purchasing agent, property manager, treasurer, accountant, and pension administrator. Wishing him all wisdom on this new and exciting adventure.

In the cooking department, Estela Tablas, the (forever) President of the Pangasinan Association, has put her retirement to good use. She reports teaching her culinary skills to daughters-in-law Rozane, Geraldine, and Christine. She taught them how to make the Filipino kakanin like Brazo de Mercedes, empanada, bread, etc. The daughters-in-law now cooked so well that each have a catering business of their own. Another chef is Lolit Odulio who prepared scrumptious delicacies on her husband's recent birthday. They celebrated at the Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS) bingo chalet. And let's not forget Lita Bote of SWIS. Her recipes deliver extra

delicious meals. Please ask these culinary artists their secrets.

Here's a little snapshot of the SWIS schedule: On December 15 there will be a potluck lunch, bingo and games. On Wednesday, December 22, a Bingo game will be held as usual. Bingo games resume on January 12, 2022. The jackpot is now \$220. Subsequent announcement will be undertaken by the SWIS Secretary Vangie Salvador.

Welcome news for Filipinos: D'Arcy McGee MNA David Birnbaum should be commended on his advice to sign a petition to safeguard the right of access to health and social services in English. He will be delivering the petition mid December. As of December 8, 2021 there were 576 signatures.

And here are the officers recently inducted at the Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS): President Romeo Remigio, Vice President (Internal) Myrlin Umipig Sia, Vice President (External) Dante Tabamo, Secretary Lea Baldellovar, Treasurer Lorenza Penullar, Public Relations Officer Francisco Bernabe Jr., Accountant Isabelita de la Piedra, Auditor Edwin Rosete, Director of Special Projects Michael Supan, Director of Youth and Sports Carmelita Cuisson, Director of Education, Social and Cultural Affairs Raquel Trinidad, Director of Outreach Services Alana Alano, and Director of Membership Glenda Lasaten. Congratulations to all officers!

Now it's time to bring our hearts back to our native land. There is excitement in the upcoming Philippine 2022 Election on May 9, 2022. Among the aspiring presidential candidates is Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos, aka BBM. The second child and only son of former President Marcos, he served as a Senator of the Philippines from 2010 to 2016. It seems

that everywhere in Canada and the US, there are mushrooming groups endorsing him. Here, the BBM Montreal group was initiated by BBM British Columbia group. The Montreal group, headed by Nida Quirapas, include Lovina Padirayon, Nonette Lunar, Luis Visperas, Cross Garcia, Edison Agustin, and Jose Marie Laud. They held a BBM caravan that started from Van Horne, through Cote-des-Neiges, Westbury, and then back to Mackenzie King Park. Around 30 to 32 cars participated. Members wore red shirts and held red balloons. It started with Nida Quirapas giving the Welcome address, followed by Heidie Desamito with a prayer message. Highlight of the event were the messages of two newly minted Councillors Sonny Moroz and Stephanie Valenzuela. The Montreal group is planning another BBM caravan. All Ilocanos are encouraged to invite friends to join.

A belated Happy Birthday to Cristy Hunter who had a dinner party held in the east. I bet all the guests were thrilled to be at this party. Also a shout out to another birthday celebrant Michelle Vargas Lao.

Here's an invitation from Greg Marie Marino (First Secretary and Consul, Embassy of the Philippines) to watch the Ageless passion 3, the life of the 21st Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban from 2005 to 2006. His story takes him from a shoe shine boy to becoming a visionary leader, a renaissance man, a gifted jurist, etc. Let's welcome this feel-good and inspirational story this Christmas for everyone to enjoy.

I wish you a Merry Christmas! Christ is the reason for the season. Wise men still seek Him. O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord. And may the Lord bless us all. Until the next issue!

From Page 10 What we know

it may be somewhat resistant to vaccines, although it probably doesn't evade them entirely. More research is needed, however, to understand what the preliminary findings mean in real-world settings.

Preliminary data also found that booster shots could play a key role in countering the drop in antibodies against the omicron variant. Pfizer announced last week that a third dose strongly protects against the new variant in laboratory tests — similar to levels of protection that the company's initial two-dose regimen offered against the original strain — although the findings must be confirmed in real-world settings.

The lab studies confirmed initial suspicions from vaccine makers that the variant could sidestep some protection from vaccines, but scientists have also emphasized that the immune system has other tools that could likely enable it to recognize and fight the virus, even if antibody levels wane.

While the variant may increase the chances of breakthrough



WHO Chief, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, warns against under-estimating the dangers of Omicron.

infections in those who have been vaccinated, there are no indications so far that vaccinated people infected with it experience more severe symptoms compared to other variants. Where is it spreading?

Cases have been confirmed in

more than 70 countries, according to the World Health Organization.

"The reality is that omicron is probably in most countries, even if it hasn't been detected yet," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

The first case in the U.S. was confirmed Dec. 1 in California. Omicron infections have since been detected in at least 35 states, and the variant now accounts for nearly 3 percent of newly reported infections in the country, according to the CDC. In some parts of the U.S., the figure is much higher: Walensky said Tuesday that the variant accounts for about 13 percent of new cases reported in New York and New Jersey.

Are kids at risk?

It's not yet known whether the variant poses a higher risk to infants and children compared to previous variants.

Scientists are closely monitoring regions of the world where the omicron variant is spreading widely, including South Africa and the U.K., to better understand its effect on children.

**Advertise in the
North American
Filipino Star
Call 514-485-7861 or
email:
filipinostar2@gmail.com**

GMA Network senior exec among Dubai-based magazine's Top 50 Global Inspirational Women to Look Out for in 2022

GMA Ventures, Inc. (GVI) President and Chief Operating Officer (COO) Regie C. Bautista was named one of the Top 50 Global Inspirational Women to Look Out for in 2022 by Titanium Magazine on its maiden issue. A 3-day event, which included a gala and the actual awarding ceremonies, was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on December 7-9.

Bautista joins a roster of highly-accomplished women from different fields of expertise and countries including Sri Lanka, India, USA, UAE, and Mexico. She came second on the top 50 list after Jawaher Bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Sheikha of the UAE.

"It is an honor to be included in the ranks of remarkable, powerful and progressive women who are transforming lives and communities with their hard work, dedication, and compassion. This recognition is a testament to the indispensable contribution of women around the world as we move to a more inclusive and global society. Truly, we are



Regie C. Bautista

standing on the shoulders of giants - both men and women, who have made this moment for women in our history possible," she said.

As GVI's President and COO, Bautista leads the team with the mandate to explore profit pools of the future and to diversify GMA Network into being one of the country's leading conglomerates.

At the same time, Bautista is GMA Network's Senior Vice President for Corporate Strategic Planning and Business Development and the concurrent Chief Risk Officer and Head of Program Support. She leads the Network's corporate strategic planning and business development, established and manages the company's enterprise-wide risk

management system and sustainability reporting, and enabled GMA to be the first media and broadcast company in the Philippines to sign with the United Nations (UN) Global Compact.

She also oversees the Network's Marketing Communications, Creative Services, Media and On-air Continuity, and Digital Media Divisions.

Bautista earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Ateneo De Manila University and is an alumna of the London Business School.

Titanium Magazine's Top 50 Global Inspirational Women to Look Out For in 2022 was organized by Prodigy Global Network. Headed by Love Charmaine Uychoco, Prodigy Global Network is a company that holds legacy and life-changing events, manages world class talents and speakers, organizes substantial, informative and educational workshops and trainings, and engages in social-awareness activities. It is also the official event organizer of the royal family in Dubai.

First Filipina Member of Parliament Rechie Valdez meets with GTA Filipinos

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT-Retired

In an apt afternoon gathering, the first Filipina elected as Member of Parliament to Canada's House of Commons Rechie Valdez, meets with the leaders and members of the Filipino Canadian community in the GTA-Greater Toronto Area on the eve of

and provided an opportunity for the newly-elected MP to meet and address the proud and excited Filipino kababayans about her historic win. R. Valdez' fellow Liberal parliamentarians, like Salma Zahid, MP for Scarborough Centre and Shaun Chen, MP for Scarborough North have also graced



Thanksgiving Day in Canada on October 10, 2021, at the Filipino Centre Toronto, Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario. The event was organized and hosted by the Filipino Centre Toronto led by Mary Ann S. San Juan and Efren De Villa, President & CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors, respectively.

The 3- hour occasion was held

the gathering. Both Salma Zahid and Shaun Chen gave their greetings, short messages and happily introduced Rechie Valdez. FCT Board Member Philip Beloso hosted the program while CEO Mary Ann S. San Juan thanked the guests and attendees in her closing remarks. Thence, a Pinoy favourite merienda treat by FCT was jointly shared.



In her sincere and emotional address, Rechie Valdez expressed her profound gratitude to the community for their warm support and best wishes. She said, "what a great honour, what a blessing, and what a responsibility" of being elected. The rookie MP reiterated her pledge to be working towards a "strong voice that matters" and considerably, "to advocate for front liners and for seniors" and represent my constituents in Mississauga Streetsville, Ontario and the Filipino community as well.

Among those present, and who have joined in posterity photo ops were: Nestor Arellano, Paul Arena, Joey Baking, Nestor Canton, Ted Dayno, Ronnie Dela Gana, Eva De Villa, Suzy Llanera, Richie Pardinias, Nenette Salcedo, Theresa Salcedo, Joy San Juan, Tony San Juan, Joy Sarmiento & her daughters, Monina

Lim-Serrano, Edgar Sulit, Fe Paca-Taduran, Dodong Tumalak, Carlos Unas, Lorenzo Villaruz, and the officers and directors like Wendy Arena, Philip Beloso, Frank Cruzet, and Precy Tumalak. Moreover, Edgar Sulit's IPEN-International

Professional Entertainment Network beauties who attended were Miss Earth Canada 2022, Miss Teenage Canada 2021, and Miss Ontario-Canada 2021.

Indeed it was definitely a pre-Thanksgiving Day meet-and-greet event, with the honouree, guests, and attendees profoundly thinking and thanking of the blessings that they have received, enjoyed, and shared gratuitously and generously while living and working in this bountiful and beautiful country. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT-Retired).

ALL PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY JOEY BAKING OF LM CONFIDENTIAL

Global Weather Disasters Cost \$101 Billion in 2021

Hurricane Ida and flooding in Europe topped the list of costliest disasters
By Thomas Frank, E&E News on December 15, 2021

For only the third time since 1970, insured losses from extreme weather events worldwide exceeded \$100 billion, according to a report yesterday by Swiss Re, the global reinsurance company.

Insured losses this year from storms, floods and other dangerous events are projected to reach \$101 billion, with the damage occurring overwhelmingly in the U.S., Swiss Re said.

The report is preliminary and does not include last weekend's tornadoes in Kentucky and surrounding states, which caused an estimated \$3 billion in damage.

The world's costliest weather-related disaster this year was Hurricane Ida, a Category 4 storm that cut a path of devastation from Louisiana to New York in late August and early September and caused an estimated \$30 billion to \$32



A car is seen under rubble after a building was destroyed by Hurricane Ida on August 30, 2021 in New Orleans, Louisiana.
Credit: Brandon Bell/Getty Images

billion in insured damages, according to Swiss Re.

The second-costliest event was the winter storm that knocked out power for millions of people in Texas in February and caused \$15 billion in insured losses, Swiss Re said.

Outside the U.S., the costliest weather event was the flooding in July that swamped Germany and Belgium and caused \$13 billion in insured damages. Weather events include storms and tornadoes, flooding, drought, heat waves, wildfire, and cold weather, but not earthquakes and tsunamis.

"It seems to have become the norm that at least one secondary peril event such as a severe flooding, winter storm or wildfire each year results in losses of more than \$10 billion," Martin Bertogg, head of catastrophic perils at Swiss Re, said in a statement.

Nos souhaits les plus sincères pour le temps des Fêtes

Our most sincere wishes for the holiday season



Dominique Anglade
Députée de Saint-Henri-Sainte-Anne
Cheffe de l'opposition officielle, porte-parole responsable de la Charte des régions et en matière de santé et de services sociaux
3269, rue Saint-Jacques
Montréal (Québec) H4C 1G8
Téléphone : 514 933-8796
Télécopieur : 514 933-4986
Dominique.Anglade.SHAS@assnat.qc.ca



Pierre Arcand
Député de Mont-Royal-Outremont
Président du caucus de l'opposition officielle, porte-parole en matière d'énergie et de ressources naturelles
5151, rue de la Savane
Bureau 201
Montréal (Québec) H4P 1V1
Téléphone : 514 341-1151
Télécopieur : 514 341-4777
Pierre.Arcand.MROU@assnat.qc.ca



David Birnbaum
Député de D'Arcy-McGee
Porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en matière de relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, de relations intergouvernementales canadiennes et de santé mentale
5800, boulevard Cavendish
Bureau 403
Côte-Saint-Luc (Québec) H4W 2T5
Téléphone : 514 488-7028
Télécopieur : 514 488-1713
David.Birnbaum.DMG@assnat.qc.ca



Gregory Kelley
Député de Jacques-Cartier
Porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en matière d'affaires autochtones
Place Scotia
620, boulevard Saint-Jean
Bureau 206
Pointe-Claire (Québec) H9R 3K2
Téléphone : 514 697-7663
Télécopieur : 514 697-6499
Gregory.Kelley.JACA@assnat.qc.ca



Marwah Rizqy
Députée de Saint-Laurent
Porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en matière d'éducation et responsable de la région de la Capitale-Nationale
5255, boulevard Henri-Bourassa Ouest
3e étage, Bureau 312
Saint-Laurent (Québec) H4R 2M6
Téléphone : 514 747-4050
Télécopieur : 514 747-5605
Marwah.Rizqy.STLO@assnat.qc.ca



FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Catriona Gray, Andrea Brillantes, Margielyn Didal among top TikTok PH creators of 2021



Catriona Gray, Andrea Brillantes and Margielyn Didal

Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray was named one of the top stars on TikTok Philippines in 2021, earning recognition alongside fellow local creators Andrea Brillantes and Margielyn Didal.

The video-sharing platform announced its top content creators both in the Philippines and abroad in its “Year on TikTok 2021” release today, Dec. 7.

Gray was one of the personalities named TikTok Philippines’ Breakthrough Stars, alongside dancer Niana Guerrero and beatboxing couple AD BEAT. The beauty queen’s TikTok channel, which has more than 3 million followers,

features her travel videos and makeup transformations.

Didal, meanwhile, made it to the platform’s top “Powered by Joy” channels, which features accounts that “brought so much joy” in 2021. Through her TikTok page, the athlete opened up on her journey to the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, as well as showed some skateboarding tricks.

Didal shares the “Powered by Joy” list with art-making channel @krisydays and “Squid Game” star HoYeon Jung’s lookalike @janioooooooooo.

The platform also recognized its top dancing videos including Brillantes’ dance cover of “Pajama

Party,” Guerrero’s cover of “Booty Wurk” and actors Vin Abrenica and Sophie Albert’s dance video of the song “September.”

Aside from creators, TikTok Philippines also revealed the top trends and communities on the platform this year, including vaccine-information videos from “#HealthTok,” the gaming community TikTokGGPH and the musician community TikTokMusicPH.

TikTok Philippines earlier gave recognition to several creators through TikTok Awards 2021 last July. P-pop group SB19 received the Top Celebrity Award from the platform this year. ■

How stars celebrate 2021 holiday season amid COVID-19

How do you plan to celebrate the Christmas holidays to make it more meaningful despite the pandemic?

Marian Rivera

“We can’t have Christmas without celebrating the birth of our Creator. We typically go to Church and hear Mass together with my family. But because of the pandemic, we’re staying at home again this year and hear Mass virtually. But everything else will be just the same. I will be the one cooking!”



Sanya Lopez

“I had already bought decors and started decorating my Christmas tree before going into a locked-in taping for an upcoming show. My tree has blue accents, which is new to me. It’s my first time to have my own Christmas tree—we didn’t have any growing up. So this is special to me.

“I will come out of the taping bubble on Dec. 22, so by then I will be able to do my shopping. Given the chance, I would love to go to our province (Laguna) to visit my family, especially my lola.” ■

Fil-Am pop star Olivia Rodrigo is TIME's 2021 Entertainer of the Year



Fil-American pop star Olivia Rodrigo was hailed as TIME's Entertainer of the Year for 2021.

According to the magazine, Rodrigo was chosen for her nostalgic choices in the lyrics of her songs, giving a big impact to her listeners.

"Rodrigo has a gift for picking the best of the past — whether a well-worn shirt, the faded feedback of a guitar, or the intensity of first love — and finding just the right way to situate it in the present," the article read.

"Her songs have hit with audiences of all ages, in large part because she renders adolescence so viscerally: she's resentful, seething, crushed, itching to just grow up already," it added.

Rodrigo said it feels surreal to have this kind of accolade.

"I've gotten to do some crazy things this year but this

one feels particularly surreal. thank u [TIME] !!! entertainer of the year !!!!!!" she said in an Instagram post.

Rodrigo tackled sorrow and her childhood in her debut album "SOUR," mostly written with Daniel Nigro under record label Geffen.



The highly anticipated album caught the attention of new supporters with its "angst-filled" and "heartbreak" tracks. This is evident in her first three singles "drivers license," "deja vu," and "good 4 u" which were relatable to many fans, who dedicated them to their exes. ■

Having a famous last name a double-edged sword for newbie Jolo Estrada



Despite the political rivalry of their elders, Jolo Estrada said there was no awkwardness between him and Joaquin Domagoso on the set of a recent TV project.

"There were no issues. Sa parents ko, OK naman. That's part of the industry—you work with different people. And I'm willing to work with anyone," the aspiring actor said in a recent Zoom group interview to promote "Ethan's Return," this

afternoon's episode of GMA 7's weekly anthology, "Regal Studio Presents."

Jolo's grandfather is former president Joseph Estrada, who was unseated by Joaquin's father, Isko Moreno, as Mayor of Manila in the 2019 elections. This newbie is the son of Jinggoy Estrada.

"At first, he wasn't aware that I'm [Erap's] grandson. During a break from taping, I told him that I know his father who's a very nice guy. He was like, 'How do you know my dad?' Then, a coactor said Erap's my grandfather. That was when he realized that our families have a history," he related.

Working together But whatever happened between their elders clearly hasn't rubbed off on Jolo and Joaquin. "JD (Joaquin's nickname) is easy to work with. Sobrang bait," Jolo said.

"Ethan's Return," which airs this afternoon, will be Jolo's TV

debut. In the drama-fantasy episode, Jolo plays Clark, a man whose dreams get shattered, after the mysterious return of his fiancée Grace's (Thea Tolentino) childhood sweetheart Ethan, who had died in an accident 10 years ago.

"I've always wanted to act, but didn't have the opportunity. But one day, my manager, Leo Domingo, told me that there was an opening. It may be my last chance, because I'm not getting any younger," said the 26-year-old newcomer, who took workshops to help him in his foray into acting.

"What I've learned from the workshops is that you have to find experience and reach into your heart to find something you can draw upon," he said. "When I get my script, I lock myself up in the bathroom and act out the scene."

No pressure But he's starting to get the hang of it, slowly but surely. "I've had some

guest appearances in the past, but this is the first proper series I did where I would actually get to see myself act. I'm nervous," he said.

Does he feel pressure from the fact that he's part of a famous show biz and political clan? "There's no pressure from the family. They just tell me to do my best. But I pressure myself to be good," said Jolo, who also dreams of becoming a host.

It helps that his uncle, Jake Ejercito, is also on the same boat. "He's still new to acting but he has had more experience than me. We get to talk about work and he gives me tips," he said.

Their famous last name can be a double-edged sword. "It's a blessing because we come from a family who's known in show biz. The downside is that people watch your every move and the expectations are high," he said. ■

Showbiz Gossip

Heart Evangelista launches own beauty and wellness brands



Heart Evangelista

Heart Evangelista has finally achieved one of her biggest dreams: her own beauty brand.

On Wednesday, November 24, 2021, Heart and her sister Camille Ongpauco officially launched their very own beauty and wellness company called Pure Living Wellness International.

According to the company website, their business aims to offer "products that promote beauty and wellness and a rewarding business platform that empowers modern-day entrepreneurs."

In an Instagram post, Heart expressed how excited she is about her latest business venture.

The multi-hyphenated GMA-7 actress wrote, "Finally, my own beauty brand, @luxelle_pureliving."

"My sister and I wanted to come up with a company to give everyone a chance to experience attainable luxury living."

"It's been a long time coming and I'm glad we're finally sharing this with all of you."

"Show us some love by checking out our beauty and wellness offerings @pure_living @vitasense_pureliving @ultima_pureliving"

Currently, Heart and Camille have three brands under the company.

The Ongpauco siblings have launched VitaSense, a brand that offers vitamin-infused kitchen and shower water filters ranging from PHP500 to PHP3,500.

K-drama actor Ji Chang Wook has been tapped as the brand's ambassador.

Heart is particularly excited about the beauty brand called Luxelle, which brings a "luxurious spa experience at home," as described in the brand's Instagram account.

Some of the products in this skin-care line include The Gold Elixir Serum (PHP1,200), Luxuriously Mild Cleanser (PHP800), Skin Protecting



Cleanser (PHP500), Skin Restoring Serum (PHP600), Neck and Décolleté Cream (PHP750), Skin Nourishing Shield Cream (PHP550), and Luminous Face Cream (PHP1,200).

Luxelle also has a range of affordable beauty gadgets, including the Prep n' Fix Pore Care 3-step Blackheads Remover (PHP4,000) and the Nano Ionic Facial Steamer (PHP3,000).

Heart and Camille are also launching a brand called Ultima, which has aroma diffusers and a variety of scented oils.

Celebrities congratulated Heart and Camille on their successful launch.

Among them were Carla Abellana, Camille Prats, Arianne Bautista, Cat Arambulo, Gwen Zamora, and Michelle Dee. ■

Julie Anne's advice to fans who want a career in show biz



Julie Anne San Jose worked long and hard to get to where she is now. When we asked the 27-year-old singer-actress what advice she would give to followers who want to follow in her footsteps as a performer, she said she would encourage them to pursue their dreams.

"I went through so many difficulties as a performer," she recalled. "But you'll never get whatever it is that you deeply want in life if you don't work hard for it. Success doesn't just come to you—you have to seek it out and make it happen! There are no shortcuts to success."

"Dapat tanggapin mo na hindi s'ya madaling (You have to accept that it's not an easy) journey. But my experience has also made me realize na walang (nothing is) impossible if you really want to make your dreams come true. Just be patient and smart ... and stay grounded."

"Don't forget where your roots are, kasi sila ang foundation mo ... sila ang bumuo sa 'yo (because these are your foundation ... these forged you). And don't take the people who support and love you for granted. Always create new things, and be open to possibilities." ■

Anne Curtis-Smith, Erwan Huessaff, daughter Dahlia explore Paris for the first time



Celebrity parents Anne Curtis-Smith and Erwan Huessaff are currently enjoying quality family time with their daughter Dahlia Amélie in Paris.

Anne Curtis-Smith and Erwan Huessaff are currently in Paris, France, with their daughter Dahlia Amélie.

It appears they are here for the holiday season with Erwan's relatives.

Erwan documented their transit from Manila to Paris on video and shared it with his Instagram followers on Friday, November 19, 2021.

He wrote in his caption, "BRB. Also, jet lag is so much



Dahlia toddling around the Trocadéro Carousel near the city's famous landmarks, the Eiffel Tower and the Palais de Chaillot.

Based on their recent Instagram posts, Erwan and Anne arrived in France with Dahlia in tow sometime in mid-November 2021.

fun with a baby. You should try it."

This is Dahlia's first trip to the City of Love. ■

College GILMORE International

NURSING AIDE (PAB/PSW)

STEP UP WITH THE PROFESSIONAL!

ENROL NOW IN A CERTIFICATE OF COLLEGIAL STUDIES IN NURSING AIDE (PAB/PSW)

PROGRAM TAUGHT BY PROFESSIONAL NURSES
CALL 514-485-7861

Manitoba Teen wins first nationwide PIDC-MPF songwriting competition

BY: TONY A. SAN JUAN, OCT-Retired

Competing against the best Filipino- Canadian songwriters and singers across Canada, Isaac Yehoshica Estioco of Winnipeg, Manitoba was adjudged the Grand Finals winner of the "First Annual Songwriting Competition" organized and presented by the Philippines Independence Day Council in celebration of the "2021 Mabuhay Philippines Festival" on November 28, 2021, at the Xinlix Auditorium, Markham, Ontario, Canada. The nationwide competition, a part of the 2-day MPF events, was conducted to meet PIDC's artistic development program by encouraging Canadian residents to showcase their songwriting skills and singing talents.



Grand final winner Isaac H. Estioco of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

the contests, who were awarded medallions and plaques of appreciation, were Conrad Belisario & Marisa Gozun of Toronto, Ontario, Ryan-Jay Castillo of British Columbia, Danilo Estioco of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Matthew Fasullo of Toronto, Ontario,

Popular Fil-Can singer Josie De Leon performed the opening act and Masbate native Danny Orbillo rendered the finale song "This is the Moment".

Beautifully hosted by Bea Rose Santiago, Miss Philippines

and Emma Villanueva.

"Mabuhay Philippines Festival-MPF", a popular yearly event held in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ontario, is the flagship project of the 32-year old Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC). MPF is founded and chaired by Ms. Norma Carpio with Ms. Agnes P. Miranda as vice-chairman. PIDC, headed by President Ramon Estaris, is a non-profit, volunteer-run umbrella organization established to foster unity and harmony and help promote Filipino heritage and culture in Canada. Dr. Moonshik Kim, Universal Peace Federation-Canada Chairman graced the event and presented Norma Carpio



Madette Mendoza, Niagara Falls, Ontario (1st Runner up)

I. Y. Estioco, who has traveled from the City of Winnipeg, garnered the prestigious title for having composed and interpreted his own song titled "Would You Listen?". He received a C\$3000 cash prize, trophy & certificate donated by Ms. Agnes P. Miranda, WFG -World Financial Group Senior Executive Vice Chairman. The other 2 grand finalists are Madette Mendoza of Niagara Falls, Ontario who was declared the First Runner-up, while Whitby's own Kayleigh Angela Cerezo won the Second Runner-up title. K. Cerezo was awarded also the "Best Song Interpreter". Madette and Kayleigh received C\$1000 and C\$500 cash and plaques awards, respectively.

The 7 other grand finalists of



The PIDC-MPF 2021 Songwriting Contest Grand Finalists

John Eidref Gabriel of Brampton, Ontario, Jose Rodolfo Lopez of Edmonton, Alberta, and Norman Taniegra of Toronto, Ontario. Grammy and Tony awardee Jhett Tolentino proposed for PIDC to "come out with an album incorporating the music of the 10 Grand Finalists" and offered Madette Mendoza a special part in his upcoming special film production. Interesting to note was the "father-and-son showdown" of "tatay", Danilo Estioco, and "anak", Isaac Estioco in the competition. Four musical artists, Emil Zarris, Bayani Yagas, April Joyce Bulangcao, and JR Teodoro, likewise, participated by interpreting the song compositions of other contestants.

International 2013, and Danny Orbillo, WFG Senior Manager, the 2-hour part virtual, part in-person concert was memorable indeed. The Celebrity Judges, icons in the world of music, theatre, and fashion, were Lani Misalucha, Albert Malignat, Gino Padilla, JayR, Renee Salud, Vehnee Saturno, and Jhett Tolentino. The Preliminary Judges included Jai Sabas Aracama, Madonna Decena, Nick Ramiro Pacis, and JP Sunga. The contestants were evaluated and selected based on 3 main criteria: Lyrics-40%, Musical Content-20%, and Overall Impact-40%. Scoresheets were tabulated by AFCA members Eva Bolivar, Lalaine Legazpi, Estee Ortiz,



Kayleigh Angela Cerezo, Whitby, Ontario (2nd Runner up)

with a "Certificate of Recognition".

In grateful acknowledgment, Ms. Norma Carpio and Ms. Agnes Miranda jointly thanked all the event partners & sponsors, such as TD Canada, WFG, Imperial World, Canadian Heritage, The Filipino Channel-TFC, and the Universal Peace Federation-Canada as well as the players and participants like the members of the organizing & production teams, the officers of the "PIDC Family", the WFG staff, the Xinlix studio personnel and the enthusiastic attendees who made the event a remarkable success.

(Photos courtesy of JOEY BAKING OF LM CONFIDENTIAL NEWSPAPER)

From Page 6

Covid 19

inflation has also soared in recent months, rising in October higher than it has been in nearly two decades. Freeland said the government is monitoring the impact, but believes inflation to be primarily a global phenomenon.

"We know inflation is a global phenomenon driven by the

unprecedented challenge of re-opening the world's economy," she said. "Turning the world economy back on is a good deal more complicated than turning it off."

Conservative leader Erin O'Toole was quick to condemn the Liberals' update as doing nothing for the inflation Canadians are seeing at grocery stores.

"Instead of delivering a plan to

combat the cost of living crisis and secure our country's recovery, the Liberal government is making life more expensive for Canadians," he said. "Canadians cannot afford for life to get even more expensive – yet that's exactly what the Liberals' ideological agenda is doing."

Freeland defended her party's economic record pointing out the jobs lost in the pandemic have returned and

said even with rising prices, Canadians are better off if they are working.

Upper Duplex Bedroom available for a single lady, share duplex with 3 other ladies, immediate occupancy, heated, \$300 monthly, CDN area Call 514-485-7861

6430 Victoria**Montreal, Quebec H3W 2S6****MARCHÉ DUC THANH 514-733-7816****Specials from December 22, 2021 to January 2, 2022****Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

Aroy D coconut milk
1L \$4.49-ea



Buenas rice stick
454gr \$2.99-ea



Bulacan pancit canton
454gr \$3.49-ea



Carnation evaporated milk
\$1.29-ea



Diwa coconut gel
\$1.99-ea



Diwa coconut strings
\$3.49-ea



Marca Pina fish sauce
1L \$2.49-ea



Marca Pina soya sauce
1L \$2.49-ea



Marinated milk fish
\$6.99-ea



Premium longanisa
\$2.49-ea



Beef surloin
\$7.27-lb



Pork shoulder
\$2.05-lb



Pork spare rib
\$2.05-lb



Onion 2lb
\$0.59-bag



Red apple
\$0.99-lb



Shanghai bokchoy
\$0.99-lb



Spam luncheon meat
\$3.99-can



Thai shrimp head on
size 30-40 \$9.99-box



Thai shrimp head less
size 61-70 \$7.99-box



UFC spaghetti sauce 1kg
\$3.99-ea

Canada

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADAVOS DÉPUTÉS FÉDÉRAUX LIBÉRAUX
VOUS SOUHAITENTUN JOYEUX NOËL
ET UNE BONNE
ANNÉE 2022!

YOUR FEDERAL LIBERAL MPs WISH YOU

A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR 2022!

TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU

MP / Député
PapineauJustin.Trudeau.c1c@parl.gc.ca
(514) 277-6020

ANJU DHILLON

MP / Députée
Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle
Anju.Dhillon@parl.gc.ca
(514) 639-4497

EMMANUEL DUBOURG

MP / Député
BourassaEmmanuel.Dubourg@parl.gc.ca
(514) 323-1212

FAYÇAL EL-KHOURY

MP / Député
Laval–Les Îles
Faycal.El-Khoury@parl.gc.ca
(450) 689-4594

HON. MARC GARNEAU

MP / Député
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–
Westmount
Marc.Garneau@parl.gc.ca
(514) 283-2013

HON. STEVEN GUILBEAULT

MP / Député
Laurier–Sainte-Marie
Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca
514-522-1339

ANTHONY HOUSEFATHER

MP / Député
Mont-Royal / Mount Royal
Anthony.Housefather@parl.gc.ca
(514) 283-0171

ANGELO IACONO

MP / Député
Alfred-Pellan
Angelo.Iacono@parl.gc.ca
(450) 661-4117

HON. MÉLANIE JOLY

MP / Députée
Ahuntsic-Cartierville
Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca
(514) 383-3709

ANNIE KOUTRAKIS

MP / Députée
Vimy
Annie.Koutrakis@parl.gc.ca
(450) 973-5660

EMMANUELLA LAMBROPOULOS

MP / Députée
Saint-Laurent
Emmanuella.Lambropoulos@parl.gc.ca
(514) 335-6655

HON. DAVID LAMETTI

MP / Député
LaSalle–Émard–Verdun
David.Lametti@parl.gc.ca
(514) 363-0954

PATRICIA LATTANZIO

MP / Députée
Saint-Léonard–Saint-Michel
Patricia.Lattanzio@parl.gc.ca
(514) 256-4548

SORAYA MARTINEZ FERRADA

MP / Députée
Hochelaga
Soraya.MartinezFerrada@parl.gc.ca
(514) 283-2655

ALEXANDRA MENDÈS

MP / Députée
Brossard–Saint-Lambert
Alexandra.Mendes@parl.gc.ca
(450) 466-6872

HON. MARC MILLER

MP / Député
Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–
Île-des-Soeurs
Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca
(514) 496-4885

YVES ROBILLARD

MP / Député
Marc-Aurèle-Fortin
Yves.Robillard@parl.gc.ca
(450) 622-2992

HON. PABLO RODRIGUEZ

MP / Député
Honoré-Mercier
Pablo.Rodriguez@parl.gc.ca
(514) 353-5044

FRANCIS SCARPALEGGIA

MP / Député
Lac-Saint-Louis
Francis.Scarpaleggia@parl.gc.ca
(514) 695-6661

SAMEER ZUBERI

MP / Député
Pierrefonds–Dollard
Sameer.Zuberi@parl.gc.ca
(514) 624-5725