

Montreal welcomes 192 countries to COP15 biodiversity conference

(Montreal) The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity brings together nearly 20,000 delegates from more than 190 countries and member states to engage in important negotiations and dialogue around biodiversity conservation. This conference is being held from December 7-19, 2022 at the Palais de Congrès in Old Montreal.

The Canadian delegation at COP15 is led by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, and includes representatives from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and youth.

As world delegates from close to 200 different countries gather together to hammer out an agreement to protect our land and our animals, scientists say COP15 is humanity's last chance to save the planet. But how are they going to put together a new cohesive document that everyone can agree on?

Federal Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault says progress at an international meeting on saving the planet's biodiversity isn't proceeding as fast as he would like.

But Guilbeault, a veteran of almost two dozen such high-level environmental conferences, says he's pressing his colleagues from around the world to tell their negotiators to get down to business. He says one of Canada's main goals has already been achieved _ delegates have agreed that Indigenous people must be fully consulted on conservation moves and play a role in how those decisions are made.

Canada's negotiators at the COP15 conference say business groups and financial institutions have a



The Palais des congrès de Montréal is hosting the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) December 7 through 19, 2022. This is a major event that will help shape the planet's biodiversity and climate change policy for the future. Organizing a conference of this size requires the coordinated effort of numerous municipal and governmental authorities, and the rollout of a citywide logistical plan.

role to play in preserving the planet's biodiversity.

Basile van Havre, co-chair of one of the Montreal conference's working groups, says the private sector is looking for rules and certainty on the environmental effectiveness of its investments.

He says it's part of a larger push for performance standards that companies and investors can use to measure their activities against.

Negotiators hope to reach an agreement on how to protect 30 per cent of Earth's land and water, as well as a deal on how to pay for that conservation.

Van Havre says business groups have learned from climate

change discussions that they need a way to assess risks. He points to a possible example of a company funding beef production that creates deforestation, which might not be a sustainable long-term investment.

"They want measures of risk so that they can target their investment the right way," van Havre said. "Guess what? That helps us."

Although there is broad support for the overall goals at the conference, consensus remains elusive.

Negotiators say about 900 so-called "brackets" - points that haven't yet been agreed on - remain in the draft text to assess risks.

Protesters hit the streets in

downtown Montreal throughout the day Wednesday as the COP15 biodiversity conference officially got underway.

"They walked about six hours straight," Montreal police Const. Manuel Couture told Global News. "There was one mischief, one armed assault. But so far the protest went really great, smoothly and we didn't arrest anybody."

A group of some 60 demonstrators, donning all black and holding banners that read "Block COP15," marched and chanted outside the Palais des congrès. Those who took part described themselves

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The wonders of Christmas and the holidays

Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi

Anyone who has lived through isolations and restrictions during the highest wave of the pandemic must be feeling eager to go out and enjoy life again. There is no better time of the year than this month of December which is traditionally considered the period for family reunions, gift giving, entertaining friends and associates. Even though all these activities make us busier, we derive a lot of pleasure in decorating a Christmas tree, putting up lights on our windows or doors and yards. There is something magical about lights that can transform an ordinary place to a glowing colorful world of splendor and beauty. They can inspire feelings of happiness, awe, wonder, and even nostalgia. Just think about all the amazing light shows out there. They range from giant spectacles that take over entire parks and roads to more intimate displays set up in people's yards. No matter where you go or what you see, you're guaranteed to feel the magic of the season.

Besides the external delights of Christmas, the most important seems to be the opportunity to develop deeper bonding with family and friends. Christians celebrate Christmas as the day Jesus Christ, our Savior, was born while other religious groups who do not observe it have

other types of festivals which give them the same opportunity to celebrate family reunions and friendships. Not too long ago, we have learned that it is better to say happy holidays to others who do not observe Christmas but this change does not make the greeting any less cheerful. There are many cultural groups celebrating their own festivals according to their faiths.

As we celebrate our traditions, we also come to realize that it is the end of the year and there are things that require our attention. But it seems that the spirit of Christmas and the holidays is much stronger which provides us with a much-needed break from the drudgery of routines and other obligations. It is an excuse to change pace and celebrate with our family and friends. Christmas is not only the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, but also the spirit of giving and affection celebrated across faiths.

Recognizing the joys and wonders of the holidays is one of the best ways to feel grateful that we have survived the pandemic and able to cope with the challenges of living in inflationary times and changing economic conditions. Let us rejoice and keep our faith that the best times are yet to come. #

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IN THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



November 30, 2022

Zenaïda Kharroubi
Founder
Gilmore College
7159 Côte-des-Neiges
Montréal (Québec) H3R 2M2

BY EMAIL

Dear Mrs. Kharroubi,

It is with regret that I will be unable to attend this weekend's reunion of Gilmore College teachers and students. I will be out of the country but am certain the gathering will evoke poignant memories for those who will come to renew their ties with faculty and former classmates.

As Gilmore College approaches 33 years of serving the community, it is important to note your work to found the institution and to laud the unique role that Gilmore College has played in addressing the educational needs of a largely immigrant community.

Your vision has led to the creation of a truly important resource and for many is the only option for higher education.

I recall that at your 30th anniversary celebration held at Ruby Foss, I told those assembled that your programs were tailored to address the reality of your student body, recognizing that most of them face challenges balancing work, family and their passion to achieve their academic goals.

During the many years in which I served as a City Councillor I often visited Gilmore College which was then located in the district I represented on Queen Mary Road. I recall the move to the current location on Cote des Neiges where the College has offered services for more than a decade. It has been an honour for me to be associated with the College.

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2.

Now in my new capacity as National Director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, I appreciate that we have maintained our long-standing working relationship. Over the past year you have attended several of our functions to unite communities against hate and to foster dialogue and understanding.

Permit me to wish everyone the best this weekend and I trust the years ahead will bring success and growth to Gilmore College. Please continue to count me among your friends and supporters.

Yours truly,

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



Souvenir photo of Gilmore College International's pre-Christmas fellowship party, Saturday, December 3, 2022 held at the College's social hall. Seated L to R: Rose Padayao, Fely Rosales Carino, Juvy Vales Durocher, Zenaïda Kharroubi, Monica Regacho, Amy Manon-og, Hilda Veloso, Joy Rosales. Standing: Cristy Hunter, Abder Sahi, Khaled Sahi, Nathan Spolia, Terry Clement, Alvin D. Veloso, Monica Spolia, Gildo Manon-og, Elizabeth Bermudez, Eric Raposas, Remedios Monteagudo, Juliet Archebuche, Terry White, and Janeth Mahilum Haydock. Not in photo are Bert Abiera and Marilou Estrada as they left before the photo was taken by Robin Hunter.



Following directions from Cristy Hunter who took this photo that we should all make some happy gestures so everyone is waving or pointing. Front row shows Nathan Spolia seated on the left while Robin Hunter is standing on the left as it is his turn to be in the picture. Everyone else remains in the same position like in the other photo above.

The crowning years of an educational saga at PGCPs: A memoir of teaching in Manila, Montreal and the USA



Alvin Thomas Dahan Veloso

The 53 years of active life as an educator were doubtlessly a milestone legacy of service, dedication, studies and perseverance. An educational journey that began in the Philippines, Canada and the USA and ultimately culminating with a well-deserved retirement and a coveted American citizenship.

The trademark of quality as a former teacher of the Visiting International Faculty Program (Participate Learning) for 6 years, had resonated well with the Prince George's County Public Schools of

Maryland to confidently offer me an employment.

PGCPS, the acronym for Prince George's County Public Schools, is the second largest school board in Maryland with a mixed demography of Afro-Americans, Latinos and some Filipinos. It is one of the nation's largest school districts with 208 schools, 22,000 employees. As of Sept.30, 2022 there were 131,146 students in the system, 55.32% of whom are Afro-Americans; 36.46%, Hispanics; 0.20%, American Indians; .76% Asians and a few from other cultural communities.

Depending on the school location, students have the options to select from an array of world languages of French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Arabic or other languages that were available.

For 12 years, I taught Spanish, and took over a class of French and Italian when the instructors had left the system. I was also appointed chairman of the world languages department. The experience to teach world languages to an eager group of students was culturally challenging and enjoyable.

Two years of foreign language was mandatory for academic students to graduate high school and meet the entrance requirements to colleges and universities.



Despedida gathering for Alvin Veloso (4th from the left) with co-teachers and their families.

Previously, Spanish, French and Italian were taught at Potomac High School but has now been reduced only to Spanish. Its career-oriented curriculum is focused on Public Service, Hospitality, Information Technology, Tourism, Homeland Security, Military Science and Junior Reserve Officer.

Foreign language is a bridge to the world, a channel for tolerance, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Multilingual persons are in demand for well-paying jobs like the United Nations and international corporations who conduct business with trading partners in their own language.

The transition from Hampton, Virginia to Maryland was a great challenge given the cultural reality of the school population. The use of language laboratory, online tutorial and assignments became popular tools for pedagogy. A well-designed lesson plan empowering students to be partners of learning had helped energize students in the decision process and made discipline a mote issue.

Many Filipino teachers work at the county. Some are at Potomac High School teaching Science, Math, English and Special Education.

See Page 8 The crowning years



Anthony Housefather

MP - Mount Royal / Député - Mont-Royal

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From Page 1 Montreal hosts COP15

as anti-capitalists and ecologists.

A large police presence followed the protesters, with more officers waiting in buses near the perimeter of the convention centre, where a giant fence has been installed. The police officers stepped out of buses as the demonstration approached the building, where access is restricted.

The march eventually made its way to the nearby Cégep du Vieux Montréal and Université du Québec à Montréal, where some students are on strike during the conference. Peaceful protests continued throughout the day.

The United Nations conference on biodiversity is expected to draw many protests over the next two weeks. There are various security measures in place, including a heightened police presence and the closure of the Place d'Armes Metro

station adjacent to the venue for the duration of the event.

The first made itself known Tuesday when a small group of Indigenous protesters began drumming and singing during Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's opening speech, but they were escorted out of the room by security after a few minutes. #



Downtown protest against COP15

Elected officials call on federal government to protect biodiversity in Montreal

Brayden Jagger Haines Global News
Posted December 9, 2022

Montreal elected officials from various levels of government formed a common front Friday, calling on the

the airport, they have all the tools they need to act," Boulerice said.

Calls to protect the area became heated last June when environmentalists were outraged to



Montreal elected officials from various levels of government are calling on the Liberal government to better protect biodiversity on federal lands in Montreal.

Liberal government to better protect biodiversity on federally owned lands in the city.

NDP deputy leader Alexandre Boulerice led the green offensive, flanked by members of Quebec's national assembly and local borough mayors.

The group wants the federal government to protect the technoparc wetlands north of Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau airport.

On Wednesday the federal transport minister rejected a petition to protect lands saying in a statement, "the government of Canada cannot unilaterally intervene to transform lands under the management of the airport into a national urban park, in accordance with the terms of the lease."

Boulerice disagrees with the government's assessment calling it a falsehood.

"It's been done before. It's not impossible. The federal government owns the land. They are responsible for

discover the airport mowed the land known as the monarch fields — a habitat that is essential to the survival of the at-risk butterfly species.

Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault says the federal government is working on solutions to protect the land.

Consultations to include the monarch butterfly on the federal government's endangered species list, Guilbeault said while speaking at COP15 summit in Montreal, will give extra powers to protect the habitat of butterflies, including land under the administration of Montreal airports.

Technoparc Oiseaux says while the action is needed, it will not come into effect in time to save the land that the species needs.

"We would argue the habitat is what matters. It's not sufficient to protect a single species or several — you must protect the habitat," Collins said.

Across the island of Montreal, 26 municipalities and boroughs

representing some 4 million constituents voted in favour of preserving the space.

"I think the minister has to understand that the consensus is overwhelming if not unanimous. The minister has to listen to what the greater community (wants)," Saint-Laurent Borough Mayor Alan DeSousa said.

The Montreal airport administration would not agree to an interview but told Global News any construction project carried out on the airport site is subject to an environmental impact assessment, in accordance with the legislation in effect.

MNA for Saint Laurent, Marwah Rizqy said with the ongoing COP15 the world is watching calling this "a test of credibility."

"If after COP15 they don't do anything about this land it's because they don't understand the situation. They don't understand why we were half a million walking for climate change," Rizqy said. #

Quebec passes law making oath to King optional for elected members

Constitutional scholars differ on whether the Quebec legislature can allow members to participate in legislative debates and votes without taking the oath

The Coalition Avenir Quebec government tabled a bill this week to make the oath optional after weeks of debate in the aftermath of the October election, as three members of the opposition Parti Quebecois refused to swear allegiance to King Charles and were barred from sitting.

The law adds to the Constitution Act of 1867 a section exempting Quebec from the application of the section that requires the oath.

PQ Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon welcomed the unanimous passing of the bill, which came with just a handful of members in the chamber ahead of Christmas break. When proceedings resume at the end of January, he and his two colleagues will be the first members in the history of the national assembly to sit after an

"This is a fine moment for Quebec democracy," St-Pierre Plamondon said, telling reporters he has been assured that even if the law is challenged in the courts, the PQ members won't be ejected.

Previously, Quebec members of the legislature had to swear two oaths — one to the people of Quebec and one to the Crown. Many sovereigntist politicians have found their way around that over the years, either by taking the oath privately or by adding a few words to make it more palatable.

Quebec Solidaire's 11-member caucus also initially refused to swear the oath last month but ultimately relented, taking the pledge in private after the Speaker ruled they couldn't sit without doing so.

Constitutional scholars are divided on whether the Quebec legislature has the power to allow members to participate in legislative debates and votes without taking the oath.

Some experts are of the opinion it can't be done unilaterally and would require the consent of some or all provinces and both houses of Parliament.

But others have argued Quebec could change the oath requirement through the power provinces possess to change their own constitutions. Quebec invoked that provision when it passed its new French language law, known as Bill 96, in May, amending the Constitution to declare that Quebecers form a nation and that French is the province's only official language.

Errol Mendes, a law professor at the University of Ottawa, believes all the attempts are unconstitutional.

"And stunningly it looks as if they may get away with it," Mendes said in an interview Friday, noting in the case of Bill 96 specifically, it seems no one has the political will to take it on.

But legal challenges are likely in the case of the Quebec language law and someone might decide to add the oath issue to that fight, he added.

"Quebec is basically acting ... as if it is a sovereign government and is claiming it can do whatever it wants regardless of what's in the Canadian Constitution," Mendes said.

Frederic Berard, a constitutional law professor at Université de Montreal, says he has no issue with Quebec trying this route, but for him, it remains unclear whether a court hearing a future challenge would agree the move is constitutional.

Berard wondered what could happen to laws passed by the legislature if the decision to let members sit without the oath is eventually struck down.

The bill was fast-tracked this week after all parties waived consultations in order to have it adopted quickly. Ahead of the vote Friday, Liberal member Monsef Derraji said his party would have preferred consultations to take place and hoped the government has solid legal foundation for the law in the event of a court challenge.

The Monarchist League of Canada said it was deeply disappointed with Friday's vote, saying the move showed a lack of respect for Canada and its institutions.

"As you can imagine, we're not happy, we're frustrated, we're sad and we're angry," said Karim Al-Dahdah, a Quebec spokesman for the organization. "We think that law of 1867, which the government decided to modify and which is in the Constitution, is not something that should be taken this lightly and modified this easily without any consultation."

The oath, Al-Dahdah said, is a symbol of something greater — the monarchy — which "is at the core of Canada's institutions." Al-Dahdah said personally, he would like to see a legal challenge, but wouldn't speculate on whether his organization would be behind one in the future. #

This report by The Canadian Press was first published Dec. 9, 2022.

B'nai Brith Canada CEO Warns of Foreign Interference at Queen's Park Rally

Dec. 13, 2022 TORONTO -- B'nai Brith Canada is advocating for the creation of a foreign-agents registry to combat external interference in our domestic affairs.

"The idea of such a registry is not novel," Michael Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer of B'nai Brith Canada, told a Queen's Park rally composed mostly of Chinese dissidents associated with the Falun Gong movement last week.

"In August of 2021, a Federal Government report on innovative means for Canadian authorities to defend against foreign interference acknowledged a registry as a tool that could aid in such efforts."

Yet, no registry exists in Canada, Mostyn said.

"Now, more than ever, there is a pressing need for a registry," Mostyn continued. "We are aware of subversive foreign elements operating with the goal of influencing Canadian policy or intimidating Canadians. A registry would limit the actions that could be taken by agents of other nations while in Canada and would provide a mechanism through which to monitor their actions and the consequent impact upon Canadians."

Mostyn told the crowd it is not only China that has been linked to "exerting clandestine influence extraterritorially." Last month, Canadian intelligence officials divulged their investigation of threats to Canada's national security and to Canadian residents by members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iran's security force. And in recent years, Russian actors have been accused of meddling in Canadian elections (and admitted to attempting to influence U.S. elections).

Mostyn said B'nai Brith looks forward to working in collaboration with many diverse community groups who support such a registry. Australia and the United States already use their own registries to combat foreign



Michael Mostyn (centre) joined at last week's Falun Gong rally by Pixing Zhang (left) of the Falun Dafa Association of Toronto, and former MP Wladyslaw Lizon

interference. "It is the belief of B'nai Brith that Canada is trailing other nations when it comes to deploying strategies to suppress unwelcome foreign influences that threaten our democracy," he said. "It is time for our political leaders to take the essential steps needed to ensure necessary measures to safeguard" Canada's stability.

There is a danger that is not only palpable but has the capacity to impact all Canadians," Mostyn added. "As a result, we must unite to ensure that the very fabric of our society is not compromised by the stains of foreign interference."

Recently, Mostyn recounted, Elizabeth May, a Member of Parliament and the co-leader of the Green Party of Canada, admitted that, on matters relating to Israel and the Palestinians, she takes her "marching orders" from the Chief Representative of the Palestinian General Delegation to Canada, Mona Abuamara.

"I am not aware," Mostyn said, "of any other circumstance where an elected Canadian official has admitted to taking instructions from a foreign entity."

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MICHAEL MOSTYN
CEO, B'nai Brith Canada



MARVIN ROTRAND
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Let's enhance the warm fraternal relations between the Filipino and Jewish peoples.

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ONTARIO Community News

By Tony A. San Juan
OCT-Retired

Six GTA Filipino-Canadians receive Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee pins

On the occasion marking the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne, several Canadians including six Filipino-Canadians in the Greater

Waves Newspaper and Fun Philippines Festival. The recipients were cited and commended "for contributions and dedication to the community of Eglinton-Lawrence, extraordinary



Filipino-Canadian honourees pose with Hon. MP Marco Mendicino. Front: L-R: Ella Miranda(on behalf of Agnes Miranda, Tony A. San Juan and Norma Carpio. Back: L-R: Tess Torralba, Melinda Manlapaz, Maria Guiao and Hon. Marco Mendicino.

Toronto Area(GTA), Ontario, were awarded the "Platinum Jubilee Pin of Queen Elizabeth II" in 2022. The Queen, before her death on September 8, 2022, is Canada's longest-reigning Sovereign and the first to celebrate a platinum jubilee. She was Queen of the United

leadership, altruism, and strong dedication to helping others in the community".

The Honourable Minister of Public Safety and Member of Parliament for Eglinton- Lawrence Marco Mendicino, who aptly presided over the ceremonies, presented the Platinum Jubilee Pins and the MP's Recognition Certificates to each of the honourees on November 20, 2022, at the Columbus Centre, Lawrence Avenue West, North York, Toronto, Ontario. He was ably assisted by his constituency staff.

In his address, Honorable M. Mendicino proudly expressed his congratulations and appreciation to the honourees and their families for "contributing so much" to helping the members of the community and for their extraordinary service in building a progressive community through their exemplary professional responsibilities, business activities, and volunteer work. MP M. Mendicino cited these "qualities of service as values and beliefs" for which Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II lovingly "desired and advocated for" in her lifetime.

The awardees were accompanied by their respective spouses, partners, relatives, and friends who were equally happy and delighted during the two-hour early afternoon recognition rites after which hors d'oeuvres and light refreshments were appetizingly served to the grateful honourees, guests, and attendees. #



Filipino Heritage Council of Canada Founder Tony A. San Juan receives the Q.E. Pin from Hon. Marco Mendicino

Kingdom and 14 other Commonwealth realms. Among the Filipino Canadian leaders and advocates who received the Platinum Jubilee Pins are Norma Carpio of Mabuhay Philippines-PIDC, Maria Guiao of Filipino Canadian Community House, Melinda Manlapaz of the Philippine Independence Day Council, Agnes Miranda of the Philippine Independence Day Council, Tony A. San Juan of the Filipino Heritage Council of Canada, and Teresa Torralba of the Filipinos Making

Filipino-Canadian trustee elected chair of the Separate School Board

Luz Del Rosario, one of the long-serving School Trustees in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) in Ontario, Canada is elected Chair of the Board. A Filipino -Canadian serving as Trustee for Wards 6 & 11 in

secondary schools, almost 81,000 students, and 11,000 teachers and employees. The board's jurisdiction extends throughout the municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton, Bolton, Caledon, Orangeville, and Dufferin County.



Luz Del Rosario, DPCDSB Chair & Trustee

Mississauga, L. Del Rosario assumed the position, after being chosen by the 11 members of the Catholic school board on November 22, 2022.

In addition to the election of the

Ms. L. Del Rosario is the first Filipino elected as Chair of the DPCDSB. She was also elected Vice-Chair in December 2020. As a school trustee, she serves as a system leader of publicly-funded education in their community of schools in the electoral district. L. Del Rosario has served in various leadership capacities during her twelve years on the Board of Trustees having been elected first in the 2006-2010 term, then in 2014-2018, and was reelected in 2018. Trustees in the Catholic school system "work collaboratively with their community to shape the vision that is reflective of the input of parents, students, and community members."

She has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from the Philippines and also completed the Human Resource Management program at the University of Toronto and was given the Certified



Fil-Can School Trustee Luz Del Rosario with Administrators

Board chair and vice chair, trustees elected or acclaimed the chairs and vice chairs of various standing committees of the Board. Another Filipino- Canadian, former Mississauga high school principal Herman Viloria, was elected Vice-Chair of

Human Resource Professional (CHRP) designation in 1996. On September 29, 2020, Trustee L. Del Rosario spearheaded the approval of the Proclamation to celebrate the Quincentennial Jubilee of Christianity in



the DPCDSB Faith and Program Committee.

DPCDSB is one of the largest and fastest-growing school boards in Ontario with 151 elementary and

the Philippines in all schools at the DPCDSB in 2021. A community leader and long-time resident of Mississauga, she is a recipient of various civic, cultural, and community awards. #

PERSONALITY
OF THE MONTH
by Fely Rosales Cariño



Astrid Torrico

Let's give a big welcome to our Personality of the Month for December 2022, the young and talented Astrid Torrico. Born on May 4, 2004 to Sebastian Torrico and Lene Catedrilla from Bacolod, Iloilo, she has one sibling, Ingrid. She is studying at John Abbott College and lists numerous hobbies such as singing, playing the piano, composing songs, travelling, volleyball, rock climbing and snowboarding. The young lady is busy! Having visited the Philippines in 2014 at a very young age, she doesn't remember much about it. Though she is not a member of any Filipino association, she is in high demand to sing at various Filipino community events.

Astrid's singing career began at the tender age of three when most at this age are preoccupied with toddler games. She has then performed in Quebec and across Canada in major music festivals and concerts such as Talent Nation 2014, Fil-Can Idol 2014, Fais Moi Ta Tune (Quebec) 2015 as a grand finalist, the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal 2019, Taste of Manila, Vaughan Fiesta Extravaganza, Parliament Hill, and La Voix Junior (Quebec's The Voice Kids – French/Season 1) tour. And let's not forget, she emerged victorious in the Virtual World Championship of Performing Arts (VWCOPA 2020) at the age of ... wait for it ... 16! She was one of the talented performers to represent Canada. (Mabuhay, Filipino!). A resumé might describe her as a diamond in the rough, but she is certainly more!

She is relentless in polishing her skill by performing popular songs as well as writing new songs. I don't know about you, singing is hard enough, but writing songs? This is another level of talent! She is also generous in sharing her hard work in all social media that includes YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, Instagram and Facebook.

Her crystal voice and interesting beats suggest an interesting blend of pop-R&B-ballad. Can you believe that she has already released her first single, "All For You" in May 2020? At 15, no doubt she counts this as her happiest moment in life!

This young singer-songwriter describes it as a "modern anthem of young love that also transcends through different ages and generations."

Special mention are her past performances with famous artists: Arnel Pineda's tour, Marcelito Pomoy, David Pomeranz, Rachel Alejandro and Nino Alejandro.

She is currently based in Montreal, Quebec and plans to release another Album by 2023. Watch out world!

Asked about her role model in life, she dutifully credits her Mom who taught her "that hard times can be overcome and that losing battles can be won." She cites her Mom as an inspirational example in how to make wise choices especially in times of uncertainty. As her biggest supporter in everything, she adores and respects her Mom a lot. Clearly a good singer AND a good daughter!

When asked about her personal motto to live by, she has this to say: "If you can dream it, you can do it!" I'd say, Astrid, that you are a dream! Allow me to offer you a song that goes like this . . . I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High. I will sing to the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me. O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things. (Psalm 7:17, 13:6, 98:1).

I praise the Lord, Astrid, who gave you the gift of singing! Amen! #



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A GRATEFUL HEART IS A MAGNET FOR MIRACLES
- 5. WORK HARD**
GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO MUSTLE
- 6. STAY HUMBLE**
WORK HARD IN SILENCE, LET SUCCESS MAKE THE NOISE
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This Christmas, Share Stories of Our Life

The spirit is the life of the body seen from within; the body is the outward manifestation of the life of the spirit. (Carl Jung)



Pete Guidote

The above quotation from Jung has been a subject of personal interest for some time. I asked my wife, Teresita, once about what she thought this meant to her. She said, without batting an eyelash: it is one and the same thing. And she was right.

We all notice the outward manifestations of a physical body - that of ours and others: its shape, its gender, its overall comportment. It is our visible "self," the tangible, the public aspect of a personality; it is what we present to others to be seen by them; it is what has become an object for others to see. But this is a false self. How so? We are shaped by our own histories and circumstances, by our upbringing, by our acquired customs and value system, and, therefore, behave in certain ways. But these self-traits are unseen, and because they are invisible to the viewer, they invariably stand in the way of possibly bonding with the other, of becoming fully aware of our "oneness" with the other. Why is that? Because the real "you" in each of us has a life of its own: logical, resourceful, unique. But imperfect. Our individual imperfection, however, is to be embraced for that is the sum of our unique strengths and weaknesses which make each of us irreplaceable. Unique as all others are unique. Imperfect we may all be - but

imperfect in our own way.

In our endeavor (as gregarious creatures) to establish fruitful social contact, we have become of late aware of how much we are one and the same member of the Family of Man. However that may be, are we not prone to judge people by how they look? And don't we generally judge and are judged wrongly by what is simply being seen by a pair of eyes? Why are we inclined to act this way? Perhaps, we are unable at first glance to see the life of the spirit within the body. Where is the life of the spirit hidden in the body? Where does one look for the spirit? Look straight into each other's eyes. That is where one can glimpse that spirit. The initial way to overlook the imperfections.

Unfortunately, for the past two-and-a-half years, Covid-19 has stonewalled that physical presence and closeness of a body. Within that period, we heard from loved ones via emails and phone calls and through them we strove to establish rapport, camaraderie, give comfort. Needless to say, the emails and phone calls, though welcomed, were short, often laced with perhaps trivial bits of information. That was how we "met each other": in virtual, cold means of communication. Then, the contact was all over. We got a few minutes' glimpse of another's life - and then we were gone. Total absence of physical contact, of the possible bonding, perhaps even of the intimacy, that may arise when we are present within the narrow physical spaces shared with each other.

I truly believe each of us has a treasury of simply astonishing stories that we are reluctant to share for lack of communication (including listening) skill, for fear of being judged boring or plain misunderstood.

We have lived long, loved well, and knew what pain, suffering, and happiness mean. Our mutual stories are the connections we need to make sense of our lives. Without them we randomly pinball through time and space, never imagining what has gone before has helped to create who we are and what we may become. Even in our families we often miss the chance to hear the stories and understand who we are in relation to

them. We cannot, of course, know the stories of everyone we know. But for the sake of our children and grandchildren, I hope they get to hear and understand the family stories that have helped to make us all who we are. Stories are our way of recording our experience of the world, of ourselves, and of others. They let us know, in fact, why we are together. Stories, through language despite its limits, are a form of loving others. How so? Stories can xxxng who we are, or at least that we are.

Furthermore, these stories help diminish the obvious physical differences in each of us, and disclose instead our shared humanity. Through them, we feel the veiled embrace of those we love and know so well: our families and friends. Not only do the memories and the stories that we have and can share with others help remove and diminish the pain of tragic events in our lives, they also substantially help diminish any buried regrets. And there is much to be said for living without regrets. Tomorrow, remember, will be too late for regrets.

Maybe, we couldn't bear to know the anguished details of so many lives that would just overwhelm us. Our inspiring, uplifting, and gratifying life stories, though, need to be preserved and resurrected when the time is right for such resurrections. Cherish them. Write them, if you want. (Keep a journal.) And share them.

Today, we are experiencing a transitory post-pandemic lull which has resurrected, revived, the vibrant times and its jubilant spirit we thought we have lost. This ephemeral joy has re-surfaced from the dark days of Covid-19 and its variants to grant us a second chance. To do what now? We might be wise to recall the resolutions that gripped our hearts and wrote on vellum sheets stained with tears during those past pleasureless Covid months. We were bold then to resolve to be kind, rather than be right; to live as though everything alive that still surrounds us is a miracle; and, most importantly, to listen to what isn't being said. We were ready and willing then to lay out our life in service to those we love. We couldn't then, we can now. Why not take this opportunity to walk the road not taken: review those resolutions, stand by them, don't run away from them. Better still, make those the 2023 New Year's Eve resolutions - and be awaken the morning after in eternity's sunrise.

At the next social gathering or

family event, or at a chance encounter with friends perhaps, look straight at one another, and welcome them warmly to discover that spirit which is the life of the body standing before you. Could a greater miracle other than having survived Covid take place within us when we gaze straight into each other's eyes, when we come to a higher state of seeing beyond the obvious bodily image of the "other?" To then witness the dawning of an inward vision: I see you; see me now.

Why not linger longer together during this encounter?

"How are you? We haven't seen each other nor talked for some time!"

"Come, let us talk for a while, have coffee, and sit here."

"How are you doing? Have you been away travelling?"

"Until next time then. I wish you good health."

"God bless. Bye-bye for now."

Epilogue

There is a voice that doesn't use words: Listen. The Light enters you in the bandaged places.

(Rumi)

Dear Readers of the Filipino Star:

This is the last of the essays I promised myself to write for the year 2022. At the start of 2022, while we all were still in the grip of the Covid epidemic, I came to a decision to write my memoir, to be followed by monthly family letters only until the end of 2022. I finished the memoir first, then came the letters that, unwittingly, five of which, after major revisions and editing, metamorphosed as essays instead. These were the essays that have now been published from August 2022 in The Filipino Star.

I wrestled with the idea of continuing to write a few essays more for 2023, but my own reality is facing me point blank, mainly: although the demands of keeping up with the need to schedule early and late hours in front of the computer conceptualizing, writing, re-writing, and editing the essays were taxing, writing the essays did provide immense authentic satisfaction and diversion from the months of Covid-19. But it is time to pause and must now devote my efforts to keep maintaining my physical well-being.

Final words: we all must remain vigilant to stay Covid-free in 2023. And I give you all my thanks for taking time to read the five essays.

Mabuhay!

Pete

From Page 3 The crowning years

Educators are attracted to PGCPs because it offers good retirement benefits, competitive salary and the potential of being sponsored for H1B visas.

The school is in Oxon Hill, Maryland, stones throw from Washington, D.C., a city known for its annual Cherry Blossoms Festival and as home of the iconic White House, US Congress, Arlington Cemetery and the Smithsonian Museums, famous universities like Georgetown, Catholic University of America, George Washington and American University.

After 12 years of teaching, in Maryland, age was starting to take a toll. Although the zest to continue was



World Languages teachers in Spanish, Italian and French at Potomac High School

overpowering, the constant body ache, however, was giving signals to hang up. It was time to rest and end the 53 years of a beautiful, rewarding, and

memorable professional life.

Words are inadequate to express thanks for all God's blessings to my parents for the gift of life, the

sibling for the moral support, to my own family for their love, support and understanding and sacrifices.

For academic, religious, and spiritual formation, the influence of some Jesuit priests could not be underestimated. The Spanish Dominicans and the Benedictines of Manila had indirectly shaped my future with the skills and education they had provided.

To the universities in Manila, schools in Canada and the USA, a grateful thank you for the trust and confidence in my educational credentials. To the Participate Learning, formerly VIF and to PGCPs and staff, thank you for the unique opportunity to be identified with the establishment, un grand merci à tout le monde. #



Mga panibagong pagdiriwang ng Pasko (Filipino-Canadians forging new holiday traditions)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Hanna Donato has just completed a course in Advanced Tagalog at Gilmore College International and she is willing to contribute articles in this language to further increase her ability to write in her native tongue. We appreciate her valuable contribution.)

Sa mahabang lakbay ng imigrasyon, kinailangan nating baguhin ang ilang bahagi ng ating identidad para iangkop sa bayang lilipatan. Para sa ating mga Pilipinong nangibang bayan, nakabilang na rito ang pagbabago ng mga nakasanayang tradisyong kagaya ng pagdiriwang ng Pasko. Ang paglipat sa Canada ay nagpakilala sa atin ng iba't ibang mga relihiyon na may kanya-kanyang tradisyon at okasyon sa buwan ng Disyembre. Sa unang taon nang pagdating ko sa Canada, bigla kong natutuhan na mayroon din palang ilan na hindi nagdiriwang ng Pasko dito sa bayang mismo ng *Winter Wonderland*. Sa ating bagong buhay dito, maaaring matanto natin ang pagbabago ng kahulugan ng Pasko at kung paano natin maipagdiriwang ang Pasko sa mga darating na taon, bilang mga Pilipino-Canadian.

Tinalakay ko ito na kasama ang aking dalawang malapit na mga kaibigan na sina Veronica Bertiz at si Rielle Ramos-Bordado. Si Veronica ay isang paralegal at co-founder ng "Centre Kapwa" sa Montreal, at si Rielle ay isang prodyuser ng pagtatanghal sa Toronto. Ikinuwento nila sa akin ang kanilang mga minimithing bagong tradisyon na maaari din nating pagkuhanan ng inspirasyon para sa ating sariling pagdiriwang ng Pasko.

"Sa Pilipinas, ang Pasko ay ang pagtitipon ng buong angkan para ipagdiwang ang lahat ng mga *milestones* ng lumipas na taon," sabi ni Veronica. Buhay na buhay pa rin ang kanyang mga alaala ng Pasko sa Pilipinas, kahit na mahigit na sa labing

limang taon ang nakalipas mula nang lumipat sila ng pamilya niya sa Montreal. "Noon, ang pagdiriwang ng Pasko ay para sa lahat ng antas ng ating mga relasyon. Mula sa pamilya, sa mga kapitbahay, sa paaralan, sa trabaho, hanggang sa buong barangay."

Sa isang banda, mas naaalala naman ni Rielle ang mga salu-salo ng kanyang mga iba't ibang kaibigan sa Pilipinas. "Ang buong buwan ng Disyembre ay puno ng mga Christmas party. Halos linggo-linggo, iba't ibang grupo ng tropa ang kasama ko. Naaalala ko yung sobrang trapik sa 'Pinas sa Pasko, dahil lahat ng tao ay may kailangang puntahan – kung hindi shopping, mamamasko sa kung saan man."

Kung gaano man kasaya ang Pasko sa Pilipinas, nararanasan natin ang matinding kalungkutan sa unang pagdating ng Pasko na malayo sa ating bayan. "Parang naging kahulugan ng Pasko ay ang pagbibigay lamang ng mga regalo. Para sa akin, nawala ang kahalagahan ng pagsasama ng pamilya at ng komunidad," alaala ni Veronica. Itong damdamin ng kawalan ng *Christmas spirit* ay napansin din ni Rielle. Ang dating sigla ng panahon na nararanasan sa pagsapit ng -ber months ay napalitan ng katahimikan noong lumipat siya sa Toronto apat na taon nang nakalipas. Ngunit itong kapanglawan na naramdaman nila ay nagbigay din ng pagkakataon para mapagtanto ang tunay na kahulugan ng Pasko sa Canada. "Sa Pilipinas, parang may batayan na kung paano ipagdiriwang ang Pasko, kasi para sa akin, lagi kong kailangang gawin kung ano man ang gusto nila. Pero dito sa Canada, nagkaroon ako ng pagkakataong piliin kung paano ko siya gustong ipagdiwang," sabi ni Rielle.

Sa kalaunan, natuklasan ng aking dalawang kaibigan ang mga

paraan ng pagdiriwang na ayon sa kanilang paniniwala. "Napansin ko na naging mas importante sa akin ang kalidad ng pagsasama," ayon kay Rielle. Kung ang bilang ng mga piyesta at *get-together* ang nakagisnan sa pagsapit ng Pasko sa Pilipinas, ang katibayan naman ng pagkakaibigan ang pinagtuunan niya ng pansin sa bagong bansa. "May pakiramdam na natatangi sa paglikha ng mga sariling tradisyon kasama ng mga bagong kaibigan na para sa amin lang. Dito, may oras na para magkasamang magpahinga at tunay na makilala ang isa't isa. Para sa akin, ibang iba ito sa Pilipinas na sobrang abala at nawawala ang pagkakataon para lumalim ang pagkakaibigan."

mabigyan ng *feeling of home* ang mga kapwa, at para maipakita ang ating kultura sa mga banyaga. Naging paraan namin ito para bumalik ang pagdiriwang ng Pasko kasama ng komunidad." Nakahanap siya ng kakaibang tradisyon na humihikayat sa lahat dumalo – isang kilusan na libre, kasama ang kapwa Pilipino at nang eenganyo nang paglikha ng kahit anong bagay.

Bagamat hinihiling pa rin namin na makasama ang aming buong pamilya tuwing Pasko, nakakataba ng pusong malaman na kahit saan man tayo naroroon, may mga kasapi tayo sa komunidad na patuloy naglilikha ng mga bagong tradisyon para magpatuloy mabuhay ang diwa ng Pasko. Para kay Veronica, naging



Paggawa ng Parol (Parol Making)

Gumawa rin ng paraan si Veronica upang magkaroon ng pagkakataon na magdiwang muli kasama ang komunidad: sa paggawa ng parol. Galing sa inisyatibo ng "Centre Kapwa," nagsimula ang paggawa ng parol kasama ang komunidad noong nakaraang taon sa bahay ng isang kapwa Pilipino na kalilipat lang sa Canada. "Nagbibigay pa rin ng ligaya ang paggawa ng parol dahil sa parang bumabalik sa pagkabata. Noong ikatlo ng Disyembre, nagtipon kami sa pamantasan ng Concordia, may mga bata, matanda, mga pamilyang mestizo, kahit hindi mga Pilipino. Naging paraan namin ito para

importante ang pagsasama ng komunidad at ang pagbabahagi ng sarili para sa kapakanan ng karamihan. Nais niyang magpatuloy ang tradisyon ng "Centre Kapwa" sa pagtitipon ng ating komunidad, at sana'y magkaroon din ng pagkakataon na lumakas ang ating mga relasyong kasama ang ibang mga komunidad. Para kay Rielle, naging importante ang paglalaan ng oras kasama ang mga kaibigan, at ang pagpapatibay ng ugnayan sa isa't isa. Sa paglikha natin ng mga bagong tradisyon ngayong Pasko, panatilihin natin ang diwa ng kapatiran, pagmamahalan, at pagaalaga sa ating mga pamilya, kaibigan at komunidad. #

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Father-Daughter Duo to Present Nominees in All Categories for the Upcoming 2023 Awards Ceremony



George and Mayan Lopez (NBC)

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) announced today that comedic father-daughter duo George and Mayan Lopez will present the nominees for the 80th Annual Golden Globe® Awards on Monday, Dec. 12. A look at the nominations announcement will air LIVE from 5:35-5:40 a.m. PT/ 8:35-8:40 a.m. ET on "TODAY" on NBC. Nominees will be highlighted across Golden Globes social media accounts as they are announced. The complete list of nominees will be available online at the Golden Globes website (GoldenGlobes.com) immediately following the announcement.

George and Mayan Lopez, creators and stars of the new NBC

comedy "Lopez vs Lopez," will present the five nominees for each of the 27 award categories at the Beverly Hilton.

Film categories for the 2023 Golden Globe Awards include: Best Motion Picture (Drama); Best Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy); Best Motion Picture (Animated); Best Motion Picture (Non-English Language); Best Performance By an Actress in a Motion Picture (Drama); Best Performance By an Actor in a Motion Picture (Drama); Best Performance By an Actress in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy); Best Performance By an Actor in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy); Best Performance By an Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture;

Best Performance By an Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture; Best Director; Best Screenplay; Best Original Score; and Best Original Song.

Television categories for the 2023 Golden Globe Awards include: Best Television Series (Drama); Best Television Series (Musical or Comedy); Best Television Limited Series, Anthology Series, or Motion Picture Made for Television; Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series (Drama); Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series (Drama); Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series (Musical or Comedy); Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series (Musical or Comedy); Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series, Anthology Series, or a Motion Picture Made for Television; and Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series, Anthology Series, or a Motion Picture Made for Television.

Four new television category awards were introduced earlier this year and will be awarded for the first time at the 2023 Golden Globe Awards ceremony, which will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023 airing LIVE coast-to-coast from 5-8 p.m. PT/8-11 p.m. ET on NBC and Peacock. The new categories include Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Musical- Comedy or Drama Television Series; Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical- Comedy

or Drama Television Series; Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television; and Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television. The four new awards will replace the former awards for Best Supporting Actor in a Series, Miniseries or Motion Picture Made for Television and Best Supporting Actress in a Series, Miniseries or Motion Picture Made for Television.

Previous presenters of the Golden Globe nominations include Alfre Woodard, America Ferrera, Angela Bassett, Anna Kendrick, Chloë Grace Moretz, Christian Slater, Dakota Fanning, Danai Gurira, Dennis Quaid, Don Cheadle, Garrett Hedlund, Jeremy Piven, Kate Beckinsale, Kristen Bell, Laura Dern, Leslie Mann, Paula Patton, Peter Krause, Sharon Stone, Snoop Dogg, Susan Kelechi Watson, Terry Crews, Tim Allen and more.

Presenters George Lopez and Mayan Lopez star in the heartwarming comedy about a working-class old-school Latino who moves in with his modern Gen Z daughter. "Lopez vs Lopez" airs Fridays at 8 p.m. on NBC, streaming the next day on Peacock. George serves as an Executive Producer and Mayan both writes and produces for the series.#

British baker offers his oven to folks who can't afford to make their Christmas cakes

The classic holiday treat needs several hours in the oven. Soaring energy bills makes that impossible for some Sheena Goodyear · CBC Radio · Posted: Dec 13, 2022

British baker Ed Hamilton-Trehwitt was heartbroken when one of his customers told him she couldn't afford to make Christmas cakes for her loved ones this year.

The dense, booze-soaked fruitcakes are a holiday tradition, usually given as gifts. But they can take anywhere from four to six hours in the oven.

With energy bills soaring in the U.K., Hamilton-Trehwitt's customer told him she simply couldn't justify the cost. So he offered to let her use his bakery's oven.

"I could see that she was genuinely upset because it was her one way of showing her family that they were in her mind and in her heart over Christmas," Hamilton-Trehwitt told As It Happens host Nil Köksal.

"And it's a lovely thing to do, to make a Christmas present — to make something with your heart and with

true feeling."

Now Hamilton-Trehwitt is operating a communal oven throughout the holiday season at his Brickyard Bakery in Guisborough, England, free of cost. People whip up their cakes at home using their own recipes, then Hamilton-Trehwitt picks them up in a van and bakes them at his shop in batches.

"It kind of struck me that if one customer was getting upset about the energy costs of baking the Christmas cake, then there will be lots more out there," he said. "In the grand scheme of things, it's costing me so little and it makes a massive difference."

When he put out the offer on Facebook a three weeks ago, Hamilton-Trehwitt says he expected a handful of people would take him up on it. But already, he's baked several dozen.

Guisborough resident Harriet Morgan baked four cakes in the Brickyard Bakery oven. She told the Washington Post that without Hamilton-Trehwitt's help, she likely would have had to forgo her annual



Ed Hamilton-Trehwitt runs Brickyard Bakery, in Guisborough, England. (Submitted by Ed Hamilton-Trehwitt)

tradition of making Christmas cakes with her six-year-old grandson.

"As soon as I saw the initiative Ed was putting forward, I was filled with glee," she said.

Why can't people afford to bake?

For months now, the United Kingdom has been grappling with a cost-of-living crisis. And thanks to a perfect storm of geopolitical and market forces, people are especially feeling that burden when it comes to their energy bills.

More than three million low-income U.K. households cannot afford to heat their homes this winter, according to a survey by the Joseph

Rowntree Foundation (JRF). The U.K. anti-poverty organization is calling on the government to increase social support to keep up with rising inflation and costs.

Even with a government cap, the JRF says the average household energy bill has doubled from last winter, forcing people to make stark decisions about whether to buy groceries or heat their homes.

"It makes me very sad," Hamilton-Trehwitt said. "I could jump up and down and rant about it, and I could get very, very, very political and

See Page 15 British baker offers



Archie enjoys sitting on his father's shoulders Photo: Hello Newsletter



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex' family photo celebrating Archie's first birthday with Meghan's mother. Archie was born on May 6, 2019. He is now three years old. Rare photo included in Netflix documentary Credit: Hello Newsletter.

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Souvenir photo of French students in 2006 at 4950 Queen Mary Penthouse



French class 2019 Levels 1 and 2 Proficiency Certificates presentation
These students continued to complete level 3, but only 4 completed Level 4.



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PICTORIAL NEWS STORIES



Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet sued a Canadian woman for defamation in Canadian court on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022 after she accused him of sexual assault when he was archbishop of Quebec. Cardinal Marc Ouellet, head of the Vatican's bishops' office, is seeking \$100,000 in compensatory damages for "injury to his reputation, honor and dignity," according to a copy of the complaint provided by Ouellet's office. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini, File)The Associated Press



In Memoriam: Kirstie Alley, Everybody Knows Her Name, 1951-2022 The TV sitcom Cheers featured the iconic theme song, "Where Everybody Knows Your Name," and that also applies to the show's six-time Golden Globe-nominated star, Kirstie Alley, who passed away December 5 at age 71



President Joe Biden reacts after signing the Respect for Marriage Act, Dec. 13, 2022, on the South Lawn of the White House. Patrick Semansky/AP



Two goals from Julian Alvarez and one from Lionel Messi guided Argentina to a 3-0 win over Croatia in the first semi-final of the FIFA World Cup 2022 at the Lusail Stadium on Wednesday (IST)

Best wishes to you and your family for a safe and happy holiday season. May this joyous season be full of light, laughter, and happiness for everyone.

Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon!



Frank Baylis
Executive Chairman
Baylis Medical Technologies

Baylis
MED TECH

Canada expands pilot to help more skilled refugees build their careers in Canada, giving employers access to a new pool of talent

For immediate release

December 13, 2022—Ottawa—

Canada is an international leader in refugee resettlement and integration, having resettled more refugees than any other country in the world last year. As the world faces the worst global refugee crisis in recent history, more needs to be done. This is why Canada is pioneering the development of labour complementary pathways, in addition to traditional resettlement, for refugees and their families to find a safe and permanent solution.

On the occasion of the partners meeting in Ottawa, the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced today new funding for partner organizations to help expand Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) to more skilled refugees. Over the next few years, Canada is aiming to work with employers and communities across the country to expand the pilot and welcome 2,000 skilled refugees to fill specific labour shortages in high-demand sectors, such as health care, skilled trades and information technology.

Through the EMPP, partner organizations help skilled refugees overseas connect with employers who need to fill critical labour shortages in occupations like nurse aides and personal support workers, chefs and cooks, and skilled tradespeople. Once candidates receive a job offer, they can apply to immigrate to Canada through existing economic programs, using EMPP measures that remove barriers refugees may experience due to their displacement.

To make it easier for qualified candidates to apply, Canada is rolling out a new and more flexible process with its trusted partners. Partners—including Talent Beyond Boundaries, TalentLift and Jumpstart Refugee Talent—will be able to directly refer and support candidates. To help them with this new role, trusted partners will

receive mandatory training and go through quality assurance reviews.

In addition, Canada is providing \$6.2 million to support 6 projects by EMPP partner organizations. These projects will build the capacity of these organizations in key areas, including identifying qualified candidates overseas, and supporting candidates and employers throughout the interview, hiring, and immigration processes. Funding will also support the work of a partner organization that helps EMPP newcomers with affordable microloans.

As the inaugural chair of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility, Canada is helping build momentum to expand complementary labour pathways, both in Canada and around the world.

Quotes:

"Resettlement provides refugees with the opportunity to live in safety and rebuild their lives, but it shouldn't mean their career experience gets overlooked in the process. Through this groundbreaking program, our government is highlighting skilled refugees' professional achievements by allowing them to continue their career in Canada, while giving employers access to a pool of global talent. Several employers, such as Glen Haven Manor, have pioneered and championed this program from its inception, and I look forward to others across the country following their lead."

– The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

"Refugees have skills and talents that are desperately needed in the Canadian labour market—from personal care workers to skilled tradespeople to software engineers. As an authorized referral partner under the EMPP, Talent Beyond Boundaries will continue working hard with our government and other partners to get out of the cold and enjoy free hot beverages. And they offer free, or pay-what-you-can, cooking classes.

"We can feed ourselves with healthy, nutritious, cheap ingredients if we just have those little bit of skills," Hamilton-Trewhitt said. "And we're all about sharing those few skills with people."

But that wasn't always how Hamilton-Trewhitt operated. Before opening Brickyard Bakery, he worked for five-star restaurants and cooked for an elite clientele, including, he says, Queen Elizabeth II.

"It was all about chasing the accolades, and you know, food that was phenomenally expensive," he said.

Then he says at mid-life crisis, he re-evaluated his life and pursued a degree in sociology.

"I realized that, actually, everybody deserves a treat. It's not just

make it easier for skilled refugees to apply and faster for Canadian employers to hire, ultimately increasing the number of refugees relocating to Canada overall."

– Lara Dyer, Canada Director, Talent Beyond Boundaries

"Talented people in displacement need the same access to job and skilled visa opportunities as talent from any other background. This is about equity and supporting people to reach their potential, while creating enormous value for our teams and communities. Canada is taking important steps to build a more inclusive, skilled immigration system. Our next challenge is scaling this solution for hiring teams and displaced job seekers who have needed skills plus incredible perseverance, adaptability and ingenuity. To all hiring managers: these are folks you want on your team. Start hiring with us and meet them."

– Dana Wagner, Co-Founder and Managing Director, TalentLift

"The Canadian economy is experiencing chronic talent shortages across multiple sectors. Meanwhile, millions of refugees around the world are seeking durable solutions to secure better lives for their families. In partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Jumpstart is supporting employers across Canada in hiring and relocating people from displaced populations. Jumpstart is thrilled to be an EMPP trusted partner as that will help scale the program and relocate more refugees to Canada."

Bassel Ramli, Co-Founder and Global Programs Director, Jumpstart Refugee Talent

Quick facts:

• According to the Global Trends Report 2021 from the United Nations Refugee Agency, Canada resettled more refugees than any other country in the world that year, with over 20,400 refugees finding a permanent, safe home.

• To complement Canada's resettlement efforts, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched the EMPP as a small research project in 2018. Phase 1 proved that, with some targeted help, there are skilled refugees who can meet existing economic immigration program criteria and who potentially represent an untapped talent pool.

• Phase 2 is now underway. During this second phase of the pilot, IRCC is aiming to settle up to 500 refugees and their families. Lessons learned will help IRCC and its partner organizations further expand the EMPP to welcome even greater numbers of skilled refugees.

• This new phase of the EMPP makes it easier for refugees to apply for permanent residence. EMPP facilitation measures include waiving some fees, making it easier to prove their work experience, and letting them use loans to fund travel costs, settlement needs, start-up costs and fees that cannot be waived. In most cases, IRCC processes applications within 6 months.

• As of October 2022, Canada has already welcomed over 100 skilled refugees and their family members under the EMPP.

• Based on its success with the EMPP, Canada helped launch the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility in April 2022. As chair of the task force for 2 years, Canada is working closely with a wide range of global partners and stakeholders, as well as refugees with lived experience and expertise, to lay the foundation for implementing these innovative solutions worldwide.

• The 8 founding members of the task force include Canada, Australia, the United Nations Refugee Agency, the International Organization for Migration, the International Chamber of Commerce, Fragomen, Talent Beyond Boundaries and RefugePoint.

From Page 10 British baker offers

point the finger whose fault it is. But really, that's not my job."

Hamilton-Trewhitt isn't unscathed by the crisis. He says his bakery's energy bills are twice what they were last year. But his oven is running 24/7 anyway, so he says he might as well use it to help.

"I know I'm not going to change the world and I'm not going to make a big difference. But if I can just make a little difference, then yeah, of course we're going to," he said.

From feeding the wealthy, to feeding everyone

Brickyard Bakery is what's known as a community interest company, which means it uses its profits and assets to serve the social good.

The baker recently opened a warming lounge where people can get



Hamilton-Trewhitt is offering up his bakery's oven to community members to bake their Christmas cakes free of charge. (Submitted by Ed Hamilton-Trewhitt)

those few people with that pocketful of disposable income that they can spend on a flashy meal," he said.

"So I changed where I was, where I was coming from, and I opened the bakery and we made it

affordable food — but real food — for everybody. And I've never been happier. I've never been poorer, but I've definitely never been happier."

Interview with Ed Hamilton-Trewhitt produced by Katie Geleff.



Recipes selected from various sources

Cooking with love provides food for the soul.

Popular holiday recipes for family and guests



Turkey with Apple, Cranberry, Wild Rice Stuffing

INGREDIENTS

STUFFING

2 Tbsp.(30 mL) Vegetable oil
1 Onion, chopped
1/2 lb (225 g)
Regular ground veal
3 Tbsp. (45 mL) Pine nuts
Apple diced
1 cup (250 mL)
Fresh cranberries
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup (125 mL)
Long grain and wild rice cooked
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) Fresh oregano
13 1/2 lbs (6 kg)
Fresh young butterball turkey
1/4 cup (60 mL) Melted butter
Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325°F/160°C.
In a skillet, heat oil and cook onion 1 min.
Add veal and pine nuts and cook another 2 min.
Add apple and cranberries and

continue cooking until meat is done. Season to taste.
Stir in white and wild rice and oregano.
Stuff turkey with mixture.
Place turkey breast side up in roasting pan.
Brush all over with melted butter. Salt and pepper.
Roast uncovered for 4 to 4 1/2 hours or until meat thermometer reads 180°F/82°C.
Baste often with pan juices during cooking.
Source : Metro



Osso Buco by Anne Burrell

INGREDIENTS:

6 osso buco, tied equatorially with string
Kosher salt
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
2 celery ribs, coarsely chopped
1 fennel bulb, coarsely chopped
3 cloves garlic, smashed
Pinch crushed red pepper
3/4 cup tomato paste
2 cups dry white wine
3 bay leaves
1 fresh thyme bundle
Gremolata, recipe follows
GREMOLATA:
1 orange, zested
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley leaves

1 small clove garlic, minced
2 tablespoons freshly grated horseradish

INSTRUCTIONS:

Season the osso buco generously with salt.
Coat a wide, flat pan generously with olive oil. Bring the pan to a high heat and add the osso buco to the pan and brown them very well on all sides.
In a food processor puree the onion, celery, fennel, and garlic to a coarse paste. When the osso buco is well browned on all sides, remove from the pan and reserve. Ditch the excess oil from the pan and add a little new oil and bring to a high heat. Add the veggies to the pan with a pinch of crushed red pepper, season with salt, and brown them very well. Do not skimp on this step - it will take awhile, and that's ok. Add the tomato paste and cook until it starts to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the wine and reduce by half.
Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Return the osso buco to the pan. Add water so the liquid becomes even with top of the meat. Taste the liquid and season with salt if needed. Add in the bay leaves and thyme bundle. Bring the liquid to a boil, cover, and put the whole pan in the oven.
Cook the osso buco for 1 hour. Pull the pan out of the oven and check the liquid level and the seasoning. Add more liquid, if needed, return the pan to the oven, and cook for another hour.

Remove the lid and cook for 30 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, remove the osso buco, and hold on a serving platter. Skim the fat off the surface of the sauce, if needed. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning. Remove the string from the osso buco. Serve the osso buco with sauce spooned over. Garnish with Gremolata. Serve with a demitasse spoon to scoop out the marrow.
Gremolata:
Combine all ingredients in a small bowl.



Beef Wellington

INGREDIENTS:

2-3 pound beef tenderloin
salt and pepper
2 Tablespoons olive oil
Mushroom Duxelles
1 pound mushrooms (I used Bella)
1/4 cup onion chopped
3 cloves garlic
6-8 slices prosciutto
3 Tablespoons yellow mustard
1 sheet puff pastry (thawed if using frozen)
2 eggs beaten

INSTRUCTIONS:

Sear the Tenderloin
Generously salt and pepper your tenderloin. In a large skillet over medium high heat add the olive oil. Sear the tenderloin on each side for about 2-3 minutes until it gets a golden brown crust. Remove from the heat and set aside.
Prepare the Mushroom Duxelles
In a food processor, add the mushrooms, garlic, and onion. Pulse in the food processor until it becomes puree. Heat your skillet to medium-high and add the mixture. Sauté the mushrooms until you have the moisture left. Remove from heat and let cool.
Wrap the Tenderloin
Roll out some plastic wrap and lay the prosciutto so they are even and overlap. Spread the mushroom mixture on top leaving an inch boarder from the sides. Rub the mustard on the tenderloin and then roll the tenderloin up in the prosciutto and mushroom mixture folding up the sides around the tenderloin as you roll. Wrap the plastic wrap tightly around the beef and refrigerated for 30 minutes.
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roll the puff pastry sheet out on a lightly floured surface. Place the tenderloin in the center. Brush the egg mixture around the tenderloin on the sheet and roll the tenderloin tightly in the pastry. Brush the remaining egg mixture on the outside of the pastry and cut slits in the top.
Bake the Wellington
Bake until the pastry is golden and the beef registers to 120 degrees for medium rare. About 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

Reset your health with powerful food pairings

(NC) Start the new year right by making the most of your food choices. According to Sue Mah, a registered dietitian, you can easily maximize the nutrition and health benefits of delicious foods simply by pairing them in certain combinations.

Here are a few of her favourite foodie power couples:

Bean burger and orange juice. Tap into the alternative meat products trend with a burger made of beans, a fantastic source of soluble fibre that can help lower blood cholesterol and

control your blood sugar levels. To boost the iron absorption from beans and other plant-based foods, pair them with vitamin C. That's where Florida orange juice comes in. Just one cup of 100 per cent OJ contains more than the recommended daily intake for vitamin C and is the perfect pairing.

Bananas and yogurt. You've probably heard of prebiotics and probiotics. Prebiotics are found in certain foods like bananas, asparagus and onions. Probiotics are healthy bacteria that naturally live in our

digestive systems and are commonly found in foods like milk and yogurt. Prebiotics actually act as food for probiotics, so eating bananas and yogurt together is a winning combo for a healthy gut.

Spinach and nuts. Spinach is one of the best sources of lutein, a plant compound that is important for healthy eyes and vision. If you enjoy a spinach salad, toss in a handful of nuts like peanuts, almonds or walnuts. The healthy fats found in nuts increase our body's absorption of lutein. As a

bonus, team up this healthy combo with a glass of orange juice to boost iron absorption. Kale is another good alternative for the spinach.

Eggs and cheese. Eggs are one of the few foods that naturally contain vitamin D, which greatly improves our absorption of calcium, a bone-building nutrient found in foods like cheese. So go ahead and combine the two in a cheesy omelette or make scrambled eggs topped with grated cheese.



Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

I don't know about you but now that winter is here, I'm starting to like it, don't you? As the sun hits the snow, it glimmers and shines and I can't stop admiring it. It reminds me that Christmas is here. Sleigh bells, caroling, and gift giving are upon us. Have you already done your Christmas list? Have you been naughty or nice? Perhaps this Christmas season, you can offer the gift of time to your loved ones. 'Tis the season to give and forgive. Who can you give the gift of forgiveness to? Search your heart.

Let's take a moment to acknowledge the passing of dear friends. Warlie Basbacio lost her beloved Romy recently. She honored his memory with a lunch at Kum Mon Restaurant on 6565 Côte-des-Neiges. People still kept arriving til past 2 pm. I was seated next to Dick Dahiroc and Naty Floresca. Everytime someone appeared at the door, Dick would comment whether the one who just arrived was a 'junior senior' or a 'senior senior'. For those who don't know, the batch of the late Mr. Francisco, former President of the United Filipino Seniors (UPS) are the 'senior seniors' while we are the 'junior seniors.' While we were waiting for lunch, Warlie was busy receiving her guests. It was a good time to renew old friendships and reminisce on bygone days.

We also remember the passing of Trans Liganor, an excellent elementary teacher. She taught in Kateri School in Caughnawaga, Quebec. She was also an excellent bowler as attested by her championship trophies. Viewing was on November 27, 2022 and burial was at Dignity Memorial on 6565 Côte-des-Neiges Her brother, Ric, also passed away some months ago. Let's uphold the family in prayer and may they rest in peace.

While we anticipate our usual festivities, let's be vigilant that scammers are out too. According to TV news, many Filipinos are reminding others of this danger. I, myself, have experienced this in the past. They used

my name to solicit money without my knowledge and consent. Fortunately for me, they happened to call one of my friends, Tenne Rose Dayandante, who told them that she was certain of their deceit because she knows my voice. So please be careful.

Here is my good news section. Buddy Cabugao is well, not sick or dying. This was confirmed by Julie Parado and Angie Ojerio when they visited him and took him for lunch at Pansitan Restaurant on 5940 Victoria Avenue, Montreal. While having a leisurely lunch, Pansitan owner Cesar Manuel joined them for a chat.

The Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS) are still having their every Wednesday Bingo at Chalet Sunnybrook in Dollard des Ormeaux. Also having their bingo session on December 18, 2022 are the fun-loving members of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) headed by Chairman Al Abdon.

Calling all past members of the Candon City and Suburbs Association of Montreal. Some friends at a recent picnic at Mackenzie Park told me that this association was very active nineteen years ago. They said they wanted to revive it. So last November 25, 2022, they held their 20th Foundation Anniversary and Induction of Officers for 2022-2024 at the usual venue at 6767 Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal.

The program began with Sir James de la Paz introducing Councilor Sonny Moroz who inducted the following officers: Julius Abad (President), Joselito Oasan (Vice President), Genevieve Balino (Secretary), Josie Oasan (Treasurer), Tessie Dolormento (Asst. Treasurer), Rhoda Bangasan (Auditor), Fely Balles (Business Manager), Reuben Mendoza and Oliver Aspacio (PRO). Board of Directors are: Vito Galdones, Jacqueline Galdones, Jay Collado, Arnold Galicia, Fely Abaya, John David, Angie Borja, Nino Galdones, Robert Suni, Virginia Abaya, Jun Estepa, Lito Villalobos, Lorenzo Casem and Marilyn

Mendoza. The national anthems were played and Lito Villalobos led the opening prayer. Then Julius Abad gave his presidential address. He mentioned how glad he was that former members and officers were there. In attendance was Mr. Sonny Moroz (City Councilor, Snowdon District) who inducted the officers and then gave his inspirational speech. The crowd were really happy with what Sonny told them that if ever they find themselves in a bind, they could call him.

What came next was a crowd pleaser, the Ice Breakers performance. The music by Johnny Bee drew the enthusiastic line dancers. At the same time, raffle tickets were being sold. It was so nice of President Julius Abad to bring me a cup of "Pinapaitan", the regional Ilocanos' favorite 'sumsuman' with the warning, "Be careful of your gout". We had a hearty laugh. A big thank you should also go to Julius' wife, Luz, for being so busy that night to ensure that the tables were well provided with drinks. She was on her toes all evening!

November 18, 2022 was an important event for Bert Abiera who celebrated his 88th birthday. It was organized by Svetlana Suarez, I could say that Bert wasn't disap-pointed with the well-wishers. We all enjoyed the food catered by Cesar & Tess Manuel. It was an impromptu program but Emcee Mark Simbulan handled it with his usual panache. Each table was represented by a speaker to say a tribute for celebrant Bert. Prayer was led by Jeannette Perignon. This was one successful party. It was a full house! Thanks, Mark for adding humor to your emceeing and thanks, Svetlana for organizing it. Asked Bert about his party, he said, "There was no FAMAS member who attended."

It was the first week of December but Zeny Kharroubi, owner of Gilmore College International and the North American Filipino Star, invited friends to celebrate with her an early Christmas party held on December 3, 2022. Couples who attended were Gildo & Amy Manon-og, Alvin & Hilda Veloso, Robin & Cristy Hunter et al. Those who arrived also were Bert Abiera, Monique Regacho, Remy Monteagudo with her daughter and son-in-law and friend, Joy Rosales, and

some former Gilmore students. Everybody noticed cute Terry White's beautiful stiletto high heels. Way to go Terry! The place had a Christmassy feeling with Christmas music softly playing in the background. Thank you, Zeny, for your hard work in sprucing up the place and making the turkey plus delicious adobo. Truly a master in multitasking! The crowd had fun eating all sorts of prepared foods. Many were appropriately dressed in Christmas motif. If there was a vote for best Christmas attire, it would go to Zeny. Better yet, the best Christmas spirit would go to her too!



Zeny Kharroubi with her friend, Monica Spolia, Editor, Bharat Times and co-member of Vigie Asiatique

In the spirit of Christmas, let me close with this:

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" (Luke 2:8-14)

Until next issue, God Bless!

PERSONAL AD

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FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Kim Chiu energized for the holiday season



Kim Chiu

The holiday season is one of Kim Chiu's most favorite times of the year because it's when she starts decorating her house, including her much awaited Christmas tree. Growing up not having a tree has made her want to go all out and personally put one up every year.

Her theme previously was white Christmas and decked her 12-foot tree with white ornaments because for her, the color white symbolized hope and she missed traveling to wherever there was snow.

This Christmas will be extra special because this will be the first time since the pandemic when we can all finally get together with minimal restrictions. "This holiday season is the time for get together, more reason to meet up and celebrate with friends and family, get together, exchange gifts and a lot of food!" says Kim. "Plus, I get to have my holiday vacation! Feeling excited and body must be ready for all the happenings!"

The holidays are also Kim's busiest time because of work commitments and projects she has to attend to. "I am doing series of projects now and that's what makes me busy these days plus I have just

started my bag business and I am very happy with the result. I can't wait for the restock and people want more of house of little bunny bags!" she adds. "I need to spark up my energy and be prepared for the coming holiday season! Feeling good! Feeling excited!"

To carry herself through all this, she makes it a point to drink Berocca to help spark her energy. Berocca boasts a unique combination of vitamins and essential minerals, like calcium, magnesium, and zinc, that work in synergy to improve your mental performance and physical energy throughout the day.

"Even if I lack sleep or have an early call time, I make sure I always have some Berocca," Kim shared enthusiastically. "I get all the vitamins and nutrients my body needs, and it tastes great too."

Like Kim, you can spark your energy to help you stay energized and focused throughout the holiday season.

You can buy Multivitamins and Minerals Berocca in leading drugstores nationwide and on Bayer Consumer's official Shoppee and Lazada stores. ■



Kim Chiu's yearly Christmas trees are quite famous on social media. Here we have her trees from 2019(left) and 2020 (right) respectively.

Dolly de Leon reacts to historic Golden Globes nomination



Dolly De Leon

Dolly de Leon made history as the first-ever Filipino actor to be nominated as Best Supporting Actress at the Golden Globes following her scene-stealing role Palme d'Or 2022 winner "Triangle of Sadness."

The Filipina actress will be facing tough competition in the likes of Angela Bassett, Kerry Condon, Jamie Lee Curtis, and Carey Mulligan — each of them award-winners in their own right.

"Triangle of Sadness" directed by Ruben Östlund follows a group of wealthy individuals who are stranded on an island, where hierarchies are flipped when everyone is thinking of survival.

De Leon plays Abigail, the toilet manager of the ship that crashed on the island, and the Cannes audiences immediately adored her deadpan delivery and distinction in Östlund's social commentary.

In a video De Leon offered her thanks to the

Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the organization behind the Golden Globes.

"Thank you for including me in that very short list of very, very talented supporting actresses, it is such an honor to be part of that prestigious list," De Leon said. "Hindi ako sanay sa nomination na ganito. Ang sarap. Sana mas marami pa sa atin ang makatanggap ng ganitong recognition because so many of us deserve it."

Filipino-American Darren Criss previously won a Golden Globe in 2019 for Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series after his heavily-lauded role in "American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace."

Other individuals with Philippine heritage that were nominated at the Golden Globes include H.E.R., Hailee Steinfeld, and Robert Lopez.

De Leon was recently honored together with Ke Huy Quan from "Everything

Everywhere All At Once" by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association for its Best Supporting Performance award, pipping Jessie Buckley from "Women Talking" and Brian Tyree Henry from "Causeway."

The Filipina actress was also nominated by the International Press Academy at

the 2023 Satellite Awards in the Best Supporting Actress category, again for "Triangle of Sadness."

The 80th Golden Globes will take place on January 10, 2023 while the 27th Satellite Awards will announce winners on February 11, 2023. ■

Singer Jovit Balddivino passes away at 29



Jovit Balddivino

Singer Jovit Balddivino has passed away after suffering a stroke on Dec 4th. He was 29.

Supporters of the late singer Jovit Balddivino have begun going to his wake in his home in Rosario, Batangas. The wake of the singer has been opened to the public.

being "Pilipinas Got Talent" Season One grand winner in 2010.

Some of the fans interviewed remembered how humble the late singer was, recalling how Jovit treated them like his siblings and not just as his fans or supporters.

It was in 2010 when Jovit rose



Singer Jovit Balddivino on the game show "Family Feud Philippines."

The late singer's father, Hilario Balddivino, described Jovit as their family's breadwinner who was able to put his siblings to school and build them a home. Indeed, he went a long way from being a siamai vendor to

to fame after he won the reality competition.

Jovit last appeared on television via the reality game show "Family Feud" a few days ago. ■

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15*

Anne Curtis takes daughter Dahlia to a theme park



Anne Curtis with daughter Dahlia

Kapamilya actress Anne Curtis took some time off of her busy schedule to spend some quality time with her daughter Dahlia.

As seen in her most recent Instagram update, Curtis took Dahlia to a theme park in Tagaytay City, where her daughter enjoyed riding the carousel and winning

some stuffed toys.

"Quick little getaway to celebrate love with my happy little lamb," Curtis captioned their photos.

Following her post, several celebrities commented on Dahlia's photos, with most of them gushing about how adorable Curtis' two-year-old daughter is. ■

Is Heart Evangelista moving to Paris?



Heart Evangelista

Is Heart Evangelista moving after buying an apartment in Paris, France?

According to Nelson Canlas' "24 Oras" report on Thursday, Heart said that the Philippines would always be her home and that the City of Love is merely her second home.

"I just really like to invest in properties. I'm always there so imbes na mag-hotel, at least meron

akong sariling lugar," she said.

The Kapuso Queen of Creative Collaborations added that she learned a lot while in Paris. This includes household chores such as grocery shopping, cooking, and washing clothes.

"Late bloomer?" she joked. "Kahit nahihirapan ka na maglaba, maganda naman yung background." ■

Bea Alonzo, Bela Padilla twinning in designer safety pin dress



Bea Alonzo and Bela Padilla wore the Versace Safety Pin Dress on separate occasions

It was back in September when Heart Evangelista donned a cutlery-embellished Moschino ensemble for Milan Fashion Week, reminding people that everyday

items can have a place in a fashion editorial.

Now, the safety pin takes centerstage with Bea Alonzo and Bela Padilla wearing a Versace



Safety Pin Dress in separate occasions.

There have been many iterations of the Safety Pin Dress by

the Italian fashion house in some of its previous collections.

This time, the two Filipina actresses had their turn by wearing such an eye-catching piece, with a little more colorful details.

The dress in question is a black sleeveless top and skirt with a side slit and that noticeable Versace hand-printed silk scarf that appears to be held together at the waist by large, colorful safety pins.

While Bela opted to wear golden, open-toed platform heels, Bea paired her ensemble with sparkly, pink pointy shoes.

They completed their looks with their wavy locks let loose and posing with one of their hands raised, just like in any fashion shoot.

Bela wore hers last October, while Bea posted on Instagram a photo of hers wearing the safety pin dress last week. ■

Manny Pacquiao eyes more exhibition matches amid rumors of ring comeback



“Ah, wala pa. Nag-enjoy lang ako dun sa last exhibition namin ni DK Yoo dahil at least lumalaban ako and proud ako dahil lumalaban ako para sa bayan,” replied Manny Pacquiao when probed on the possibility of making a boxing return and potential rematch with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Manny Pacquiao’s recent victory against South Korean martial artist and YouTuber DK Yoo fuels speculations of a ring comeback for the eight-division world champion.

Prior to the match, Manny told the online boxing and MMA news website FightHype about the possibility of him coming out of retirement to “test” boxing’s current top guns Terence Crawford and Errol Spence.

“I’m eager to fight with them to test them, to see if they’re really a champion,” remarked Manny hours before facing DK in an exhibition match at the Seoul Arena in South Korea last December 11, 2022.

Manny, though, was non-committal on the subject when he faced members of the press on Tuesday, December 13, at the Edsa Shangri-La Manila, in Ortigas, Mandaluyong City.

The champion boxer was chosen as honorary chairman of Japan’s NFT marketing company Systems Technologies Apps Robotics Trading Inc. (START) and ambassador of the START JPN community composed of key opinion leaders in the NFT industry.

NFT or non-tangible tokens are cryptographic assets — digital drawings, photographs, music, art, etc. — on a blockchain with unique identification codes and metadata.

The event, likewise, formalized Manny’s partnership with START Inc. and the Singapore-based NFT One.

Both companies are involved

primarily in the creation and marketing of NFTs.

“Ako, sa isip ko ngayon is more on exhibition [matches], puro exhibition lang yung inaano [iniisip] natin ngayon. Mga charity exhibition para makatulong tayo,” said Manny, downplaying the possibility of resuming his boxing career anytime soon.

PACQUIAO-MAYWEATHER II?

Aside from mentioning Terence and Errol, Manny also took a jab at rival Floyd Mayweather Jr. during the FightHype interview.

Manny said, “I don’t think he will do a rematch with me.”

He continued, “What I thought is that he’s scared to death to fight again and that’s my analysis and thought on the rematch with him.”

Manny and Floyd squared off on May 2, 2015, in Las Vegas, Nevada, in a fight billed Fight of the Century.

The match — won unanimously by Floyd — was a letdown in the eyes of many who felt that both boxers were past their prime when the fight happened.

It also didn’t help that Manny and Floyd’s boxing styles are total opposites, with the latter leaning more on defense while the former relies on speed and offense to wear opponents down.

Manny has repeatedly called for a rematch, eager to get back at the undefeated American boxer.

Floyd remains adamant though, opting instead to engage in

exhibition matches with celebrities and social media stars for a quick buck after retiring in 2017.



A rematch between the two may not sound appealing to a majority of boxing fans today who prefer to watch young, up-and-coming fighters.

Still, a Manny Pacquiao versus Floyd Mayweather repeat clash would elicit interest from viewers wanting to see the two legends go at it for the last time.

But are there any talks at the moment that would enable the fight to happen?

“Ah, wala pa,” smiled Manny, before reverting the topic back to his recently concluded fight.

“Nag-enjoy lang ako dun sa last exhibition namin ni DK Yoo dahil at least lumalaban ako and proud ako

dahil lumalaban ako para sa bayan.”

Manny’s exhibition fight against DK was for charity.

The Filipino boxing legend donated the money he earned in the match to help build homes for the less fortunate in the Philippines.

“Ongoing kasi ang construction ng pabahay natin... mahigit isang daan din ang mabibigyan natin,” he said pertaining to his housing initiative.

Proceeds from the fight also went to the country of Ukraine to assist the people affected by the war following Russia’s invasion in early 2022.

BIG NFT SUPPORTER

Manny has been a longtime supporter of blockchain technology, particularly NFTs, for quite some time now.

The “Pambansang Kamao” has released special edition NFTs in the past including one created in memory of his dog and tokens to mark his matches, like with Yordenis Ugas in April 2021 and just recently, DK Yoo.

“Cryptocurrencies are the future,” said Manny.

“Sa ayaw at gusto natin, dun talaga tayo pupunta especially ang bilis ng improvement ng technology natin ngayon so kailangan ma-upgrade din tayong mga Pilipino at matuto dito sa NFT.”

For NFT One CEO Yuhua Shi, selecting Manny as the ambassador makes perfect sense considering the boxer’s global reach through his countless fans.

“He has a good influence on different countries. I also think that Mr. Pacquiao is a nice person, so he delivers peace and love,” said Yuhua.

He continued, “The core value is important for NFT as well.

“I support people making money on NFT, but I also support, more importantly, [if] they can deliver good values to the next generation and to the next new one.

“I see Mr. Pacquiao will play a very important role to influence more people.”given me. It has changed my life.”

Also at the media gathering, Sam was asked the persistent question on whether he already has plans to settle down with 2018 Miss Universe Catriona Gray, his girlfriend of over two years.

“A lot of my fiends are married now and have kids. John Prats (his best friend) has three kids. I also want to have my own children. I’m excited to be a dad. I don’t want to answer for Cat, but I already told her about this. If ever, I want to have one boy and one girl,” he shared with reporters.

However, there’s one thing that Sam said he really wishes for before pushing through with any wedding plans. “Show biz is not a stable business. I am the man of the house, and so I want to feel that stability in terms of let’s say 10 to 5 years down the road. I want to be able to support my family,” he declared. ■

Prisoner Swap for Griner Was Biden's Second, But White House Says They Must Remain Rare

Brian Bennett, Dec. 8, 2022 (Time)

Since the start of his presidency, Joe Biden has been wary of prisoner swaps. Whenever the prospect of negotiating the exchange of those held in the US for Americans held overseas was



Brittney Griner

broached, members of his administration would exhibit reluctance, according to a person involved in such discussions. For some of the families of Americans detained abroad, it was a frustrating obstacle.

Then came a breakthrough last February, just as Russia was about to launch a tank blitz toward Ukraine's capital, Kyiv. Russian officials signaled through intermediaries that they were willing to talk about the release of former U.S. Marine Trevor Reed, who had been arrested in a Moscow hotel in 2018, held on espionage charges, and then fallen seriously ill in Russian detention. Reed's failing health made getting to a deal even more urgent. Russian officials agreed in April to allow Reed to return home in exchange for the Biden Administration's release of Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot and convicted drug smuggler.

The exchange for Reed created a new opening in Biden's approach to hostage negotiations. It marked the beginning of the administration's acknowledgement that swapping prisoners for Americans wrongfully held in autocratic countries was another tool that could be used in securing their release. While critics of such exchanges say they incentivize the kidnapping of Americans, others involved in such delicate diplomatic efforts argue the evidence on that is thin and that such headline policies ignore the plight of Americans currently held.

In July, the Biden administration put another offer on the table with Moscow: release of the convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout in exchange for the return of basketball star Brittney Griner and former Marine Paul Whelan. Griner, a basketball star, was arrested at a Moscow airport in February for having cannabis oil in her luggage. She was sentenced to nine years imprisonment after pleading guilty to drug charges, and was recently transferred to a Russian penal colony. Whelan was arrested in a Moscow hotel in December 2018 during a trip to Russia for a friend's wedding. After what he has called a "sham trial," he was convicted of espionage in June 2020 and sentenced to 16 years in prison.

For months, Russia rejected the exchange offer. Then, a few weeks ago, a counteroffer arrived. Russia was willing to do a swap for Bout, but only for Griner's release.

Amid the news of Griner's

release on Thursday, the Biden White House stressed that foreign governments should not assume that swaps will be a common part of negotiations to secure the release of Americans detained overseas.

"Given how extremely rare this is, any inference that somehow this has become the norm would be mistaken—I don't think governments around the world would be wise to draw that inference," said a senior administration official on Thursday. "But in the rare case, when there is an imperative to bring Americans home, which is a real priority for the President, sometimes there are no alternatives left," the official said.

Biden's use of prisoner swaps does not mark a shift in US policy from the previous administration. In December 2019, the Trump administration secured the release of Princeton graduate student Xiyue Wang, who Iranians had charged with espionage and imprisoned for three years, by releasing an Iranian stem-cell scientist Masoud Soleimani, who had been arrested in 2018 for trying to export research materials without a license. The next year, Iran released American Michael White, a U.S. Navy veteran, in exchange for the release of Majid Taheri, also known as Matteo Taerri, an Iranian-American doctor who had been charged with violating U.S. sanctions. Near the end of his presidency, Donald Trump also approved of the Afghanistan government releasing 5,000 Taliban prisoners as part of his 2020 deal to set a timeline for the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Paul Whelan's family was told on Wednesday that the US was close to securing Griner's release, but that Paul would be left behind. The communication was a courtesy the Biden administration didn't extend to the Whelans before Russia announced the release of Reed in April. Paul Whelan's twin brother David Whelan said on Thursday in a statement to ABC News that the fact that Paul wasn't part of the latest deal is "a public disappointment for us" as well as "a catastrophe for Paul." David Whelan also said, "The Biden Administration made the right decision to bring Ms. Griner home, and to make the deal that was possible, rather than waiting for one that wasn't going to happen."

After Griner's release on Thursday, Paul Whelan spoke to CNN on the phone from the Russian penal colony where he is being held. "I am greatly disappointed that more has not been done to secure my release, especially as the four-year anniversary of my arrest is coming up," Whelan said, "I was arrested for a crime that never occurred." Whelan told CNN that in recent weeks he was "led to believe that things were moving in the right direction, and that the governments were negotiating and that something would happen fairly soon."

White House officials acknowledged that disappointment. "Through every step of the process, we have sought to bring Paul Whelan home and that will not change—that will continue to be our commitment," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Thursday. "Regrettably, due

to the nature of the totally illegitimate charges they levied against Paul, the Russians are treating this situation differently." The senior administration official said that any jubilation felt on



Paul Whelan

Thursday about the release of Griner is "very much tempered" by the awareness of the "unacceptable" circumstances of Whelan's imprisonment in Russia.

In July, Biden announced new steps to improve how the U.S. handles and prevents Americans from being held overseas. In an executive order, Biden announced more tools to sanction mid-level bureaucrats involved in wrongful detention of Americans overseas, and to do more to warn American travelers about what countries pose a danger of detaining Americans for use as negotiating pawns. Biden also directed federal agencies to increase the amount of intelligence information they share with families about what the U.S. knows about the health and location of their loved ones and what steps the U.S. is taking to secure their release. Biden's executive orders were designed to build on the 2020 Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act, named after Levinson who disappeared in Iran in 2007.

The State Department has

begun flagging countries that show a pattern of wrongful detentions with a "D" in its public travel warnings. That indicator joins the current designation of "K" for countries where Americans are at higher risk of kidnapping.

"Something every American should take from this situation is that no American is safe in places under Russian jurisdiction or influence," said Senator Jim Risch of Idaho, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "It must be clear that Paul Whelan should have been part of this deal; he is a Marine who fought for our country, and he is a hero."

Along with U.S. government officials, former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and experienced negotiators at the Richardson Center for Global Engagement have been working closely with Griner's family toward her release, which included many trips to Moscow and the region, as well as meetings with officials at the Russian embassy in Washington, according to a person familiar with the talks. Those talks included conversations to release Paul Whelan, as well as three other Americans including Grady Kurpasi, a retired Marine and Iraq War veteran, who was last seen in April fighting alongside Ukrainians in a volunteer force in southern Ukraine. "Often, the price we pay for bringing our fellow Americans home to their families is unseemly, but it is the right thing to do," said Richardson in a statement. "We remain very concerned for Paul Whelan and committed to continue to work on his safe return, as we have been for the last four years," Richardson said.

Mickey Bergman, the vice president and executive director of the Richardson Center, was involved in the talks over Griner's release and said he doesn't see the trade a sign of a major shift in the Biden Administration's willingness to do more swaps. It is "case by case," Bergman says. "It's not the first nor last trade."#

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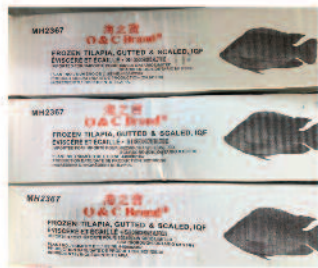


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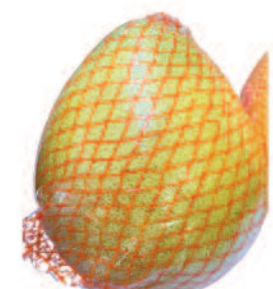
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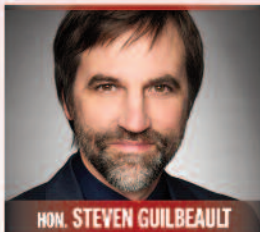
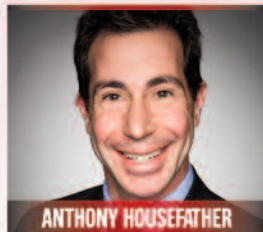
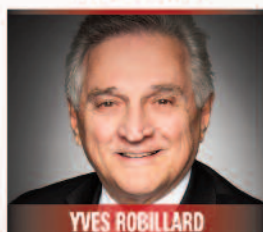


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