

Public sector workers reach agreement

Quebec introduces catch up plan for schools

After weeks of negotiations, Quebec's common front of public sector unions, known as the Front commun, reached an agreement in principle with the provincial government on both pay and working conditions at the end of December..

It said the next step is for its members to sign off on the agreement.

On salaries, the common front leaders have agreed to a 17.4 per cent increase over five years, with a six per cent increase for the first year — what it calls the largest salary bump since 1979 — retroactive to April 1, 2023.

The common front says the agreement also includes gains on working conditions, including the right to a fifth week of vacation after 15 years of seniority, phased retirement extended to seven years, an additional day off for expecting parents and higher contributions to health insurance plans from employers.

Psychologists working in the public health-care and education systems will receive a 10 per cent salary increase.

The common front will be



On salaries, the common front leaders have agreed to a 17.4 per cent increase over five years, with a six per cent increase for the first year. (Kwabena Oduro/CBC)

calling general assembly meetings from Jan. 15 to Feb. 19, when members from more than 300 affiliated unions will vote to accept or reject the agreement.

Barry Eidlin, a McGill

University labour expert who studies social movements, says the agreement in principle shows significant movement on behalf of the Quebec government.

Students who missed class

time because of teachers' strikes in Quebec will have access to additional tutoring, but the academic year will not be extended.

The Quebec government will spend \$300 million on the tutoring services and other measures to help students catch up after strikes kept some of them out of school for weeks.

The tutoring will be offered to students who need it but it will have to be completed outside of school hours, Bernard Drainville, Quebec's education minister, said at a news conference Tuesday where he presented the government's back-to-school plan.

Drainville said the government will hire teachers, including retired and student teachers, to do the tutoring.

It will be on a voluntary basis and some schools may also choose to offer students tutoring over March break, he said, but that too would be based on student need and would not be mandatory.

The government estimates

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Public sector workers

Vigil in Montreal Honors Ana Karen Vasquez-Flores to advocate urgent changes in immigration policies



Ana Karen Vasquez-Flores Vigil, Gare Jean-Talon, January 14, 2023, 13:30 pm (Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative)

(Montreal, by Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative) On Jan.14, 2023, a vigil was held at Gare Jean-Talon, near Metro Avenue du Parc. The event, organized by Solidarity Across Borders and Caring for Social Justice Collective, aimed to commemorate the loss of Ana Karen Vasquez-Flores, a

Mexican migrant who lost her life at the age of 33 while attempting to cross from Quebec to the United States on foot to reunite with her family. Ana Karen was five months pregnant when she met her demise in the Great Chazy River near Roxham Road and

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Vigil for Ana Karen

South Africa files landmark case of genocide against Israel at International Court of Justice



Colleagues of Palestine Red Crescent personnel who were killed after an attack on an ambulance attend their funeral in Deir al-Balah, Gaza, today (Jan. 11, 2024) Ashraf Amra / Anadolu via Getty Images

In a case that strikes at the heart of Israel's national identity, South Africa formally accused the country of committing genocide against Palestinians and pleaded Thursday (January11, 2024) with the United Nations' top court to order an immediate halt to Israeli military

operations in Gaza

Israel, which was founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust, has vehemently denied the allegations. As a sign of how seriously they regard the case, Israeli leaders have taken the

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Genocide case



FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

An overview of 2024 challenges

Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi

As it is the beginning of the year, it is customary to take some time to reflect not only about lessons we have learned from the past but also to determine what should be our goals for the future. We have chosen to discuss briefly some ideas regarding the challenges and opportunities of the new year.

Most experts believe that challenges also present opportunities but we must first understand how they impact our daily life.

Common challenges cited by various writers are: artificial intelligence, labour shortage, international conflicts, geopolitics, future of work that involves more skills and not degrees. Responding to these challenges implies the need for more up-to-date information on which sound decisions are made as well as adaptability or flexibility to re-invent oneself or a business that must navigate the changing needs of customers and the markets.

E-commerce is one of the most competitive industries, and in 2024, the competition will get tougher. Local businesses and small to mid-sized

companies will find it increasingly difficult to compete with giants like Kroger, Walmart, and Amazon as well as their nearly limitless digital presence and advertising investments.

According to economic reports, there are five biggest challenges facing small businesses such as: Inflation, access to credit, rising interest rates, supply chain disruptions, hiring and employee retention. Moreover, there are events that they have to face in order to be prepared for such as: rapid growth of technology, the changing of tastes, and the emergence of new markets.

On the other hand, big global businesses face other kinds of challenges, namely, managing globally distributed teams, language obstacles, currency exchange, inflation rate issues, cultural variations, nuances of foreign policies, geopolitics, cross-country relations and supply chain risks. The biggest challenge is sustainability which is one of the largest issues confronting international business today. Businesses are under great pressure to decrease their carbon footprint and embrace sustainable practices due to growing worries about

climate change and environmental deterioration.

What about ordinary people who are employed in different occupations? The challenges cited by human resource managers are: lack of communication skills, decrease in performance, lack of recognition, lack of transparency in leadership, lack of motivation or engagement, and managing conflicts. What personal strategies are recommended?

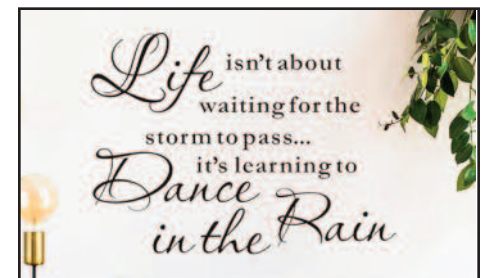
Some techniques or personal strategies suggested are: First, stay calm. It's important to remain calm during a conflict, especially if you feel strongly about certain issues or topics. This is particularly important when you're receiving unpleasant news, like a poor performance review or demotion. If you disagree with the news, be respectful while expressing your dissent. Talk politely without raising your voice, which can negatively impact your professional relationships.

Second idea to consider is to stay positive. A positive mind set can easily help you deal with rejection, criticism, and conflict. It's essential for you to have clear expectations and goals, be honest with yourself, and invest in your improvement and growth. Set achievable and realistic targets for yourself, don't expect to achieve in the first attempt, and always be willing to

admit your mistakes. Practise mindfulness and meditative techniques to improve your ability to focus and have better clarity of thought. Take the step necessary to keep your skills up-to-date. Also, set a healthy work routine that allows you to focus on your health and personal life.

These are just starting ideas in facing challenges in business as well as in one's personal life. Perhaps, you can find other more interesting ideas which are suitable for you and to make sure that you seize all the opportunities that may arise when reflecting on both the challenges and obstacles in your path to find ways of meeting them. It is a common expression that everyone, regardless of status in life, has a problem and that for every problem, there is a solution.

Wishing everyone a good year ahead. We hope you will find opportunities behind these challenges.#



AI skills in demand as companies develop 2024 hiring plans for Canada

(January 10, 2024) TORONTO - When Canadian companies turn to hiring this year, candidates will need to show skill in a key area: artificial intelligence.

Members of the country's tech community say finding staff who can develop AI-based products or use them to drive efficiencies is a priority as the global race to take advantage of AI deepens.

"Everyone is looking for people who understand how to use AI," said Jenny Yang, a senior advisor at the MaRS innovation hub in Toronto, who helps startups navigate the challenges of growing the business and commercializing their products.

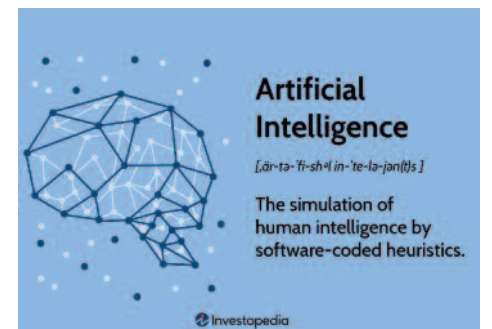
"Some are companies that want to use (AI chatbot) ChatGPT themselves directly ... and then there are companies who are trying to really hire data scientists, who want to build AI products."

Job postings show Porter Airlines recently sought an AI engineer in Toronto "to solve a wide range of complex problems" and pharmaceuticals giant Johnson & Johnson wanted a senior data scientist to "stay on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence."

Reviews platform Yelp was on the lookout for a senior machine learning engineer in Canada capable of "turning raw data into valuable signals," while beverage giant Keurig Dr Pepper Canada wanted an associate data scientist in Montreal with an "interest in artificial intelligence."

Many of the jobs focus on generative AI -- a type of machine learning capable of generating text, images and other content. This form of AI has exploded in popularity since the November 2022 release of ChatGPT, a

chatbot from San Francisco-based OpenAI that can rapidly turn simple prompts into text-like essays and



speeches.

ChatGPT's debut kick-started a race between tech titans, including Google and Microsoft, to innovate with AI and inspired other firms to consider how the tech could transform their businesses.

Now job listings show companies, including prominent firms like Qualcomm and J.D. Power along with startups, universities and law firms, have all been soliciting applications for interns, consultants, engineers, scientists and prompters with AI and machine learning skills.

But many believe AI's impact on hiring is still a long way from its peak. "I'd be surprised if (generative AI in job postings) doesn't keep growing and we don't see it in more and more job types," he said.

Alik Sokolov, co-founder and chief executive of Montreal-based AI company for investment management Responsibli, has found more companies have become interested in AI over the last year, changing some of the criteria businesses seek when hiring. (Abridged version of report by Canadian Press, January 10, 2024.)#

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

A Tribute to Caridad Beleda Bacosa (1948-2023)

Written By Butch Aracena, coordinated by Eliza Salonga

Caridad Bacosa, 75, of Vaudreuil-Dorion, Quebec passed away peacefully in her sleep on December 16, 2023, after complications of metastatic endometrial cancer. She was born on February 7, 1948 to Cipriano Abaquin Bacosa and Consolacion Rivera Abeleda in Kamuning, Quezon City, Philippines and predeceased by her parents-Cipriano and Consolacion, sister Erlinda and brother Danilo. She is survived by her sisters - Elecita, Fe, and her twin sister, Esperanza; nephews - Jose, Robert, Eric, and Edward; nieces Erlinda and Eliza; grandchildren - Krystel, Karlo, Karen, Kyle, Kaye, Louis Emery Ventura, Stephanie, Samantha, Soleil, EJ and Candice; great grandchildren - Jann Kristoffer and Cade.

She graduated from V. Mapa High School in 1964 and went to Centro Escolar University and graduated in 1968 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology. Her first job was at the Delgado Maternity Clinic in Quezon City.

Kickstarting a 40-year career in Medical Technology took her in 1972 to work at St Martin Krankenhaus in Gengenbach, Baden, Germany. Her last employment was at the Montreal

Children's Hospital until retirement.

She loved cooking and invited friends to her house for parties and travelled during summer to see the world and visited her friends and relatives.

In 2019, she was first diagnosed with stage 4 endometrial

and was put on palliative care. She preferred, however, to stay at home instead of the hospital, but on November 30, 2023, her pain became unbearable and was brought to the Palliative Care Unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Caridad died on December 16, 2023 in the presence of her family



Caridad Abeleda Bacosa posing with her beautiful family: L-R. Butch Aracena (nephew), Louis Emery Ventura (grandson), Caridad Bacosa, Erlinda Aracena (niece), Krystel Aracena (grandniece) and Eliza Salonga (niece).

cancer; battled chemotherapy and immunotherapy, meeting each challenge with courage and grace. On January 2, 2023, her doctors pronounced her situation "irreversible"

and friends. Father Nick Sengson, S.V.D., was also present for her confession and administered the last rite of Extreme Unction before she passed away. Caridad was a devout



Portrait of Caridad Abeleda Bacosa in her glorious days. She passed away on December 16, 2023.

Catholic with strong faith who, since 2000, had regularly frequented Notre Dames des Philippines Catholic Mission Church to seek strength, peace and comfort.

May she rest in peace. We will miss her. # (Courtesy Publication of Alvin D. Veloso & Hilda Tan Veloso.)

Security footage shows Regina drivers passing man waving for help before he died in the cold

After stumbling off a bus and falling to the ground, a man stayed in the same place for seven hours in Regina in sub-zero temperatures, to be found dead the next morning after

nearly everything that happened in the man's last seven hours.

Around 8 p.m. on Dec. 30, a bus stopped on Fourth Avenue. The video shows the door open and the

with the surveillance cameras. He said several vehicles passed by the man.

"He was up moving around, trying to flag people down as far as we can tell off of the video, but nobody stopped to even check on the

sitting out there for four hours, five hours or whatever and people drive by, I wish they will stop in and check on me, see if I've still got a pulse or not," he said.

Around 3:30 a.m. Sunday, a



Surveillance video from a local business shows a man stumbling out of a city bus, then sitting and lying on the ground for seven hours overnight while passersby didn't stop. He was found dead early the next morning.

dozens of passersby neither stopped nor called for help.

Regina police said that early on Dec. 31, a man was found dead on Fourth Avenue East. On Jan. 2, police reported the death was being considered non-criminal and that was all that would be released about it.

But there's more to the story. Surveillance video provided to 980 CJME from a nearby business shows

driver talking to someone. The door closes and the bus moves up a few feet, then the back door opens and a man with a bag stands at the exit for a moment, and then stumbles and falls out of the bus to the ground.

That spot right next to the road was about where the man stayed for several hours, sometimes sitting or lying down.

Jeff Holt owns the business

gentleman, right? Roll their window down, say, 'Hey, are you OK?' If not, phone 911 or whatever," said Holt.

"Poor guy. How many vehicles drove by? And they would have had to have seen this gentleman, but nobody cares to stop."

Holt said he and his staff spent a lot of hours watching the video and it really hit home.

"Why don't people care? If I'm



The spot on Fourth Avenue in Regina's Eastview neighbourhood where a man recently spent the last hours of his life while passersby didn't stop or call for help. (Lisa Schick/980 CJME)

cyclist pedalled past; they're the one who stopped to check on the man and called 911. Police said they didn't get any other calls about the man.

The coroners service said the man's cause of death hadn't been confirmed yet and it doesn't release preliminary information. #

Source: Saskatoon / 650 CKOM

Lisa Schick Jan 11, 2024 | 6:00 AM

From Page 1 Public sector

approximately 500,000 students will require tutoring help, Drainville said.

Drainville had previously suggested that the school year could be extended to make up for the days missed during the strike, but he said Tuesday that no ministerial exam would take place after June 24.

The exams will also be a bit different: for students in Grades 10 and 11. They will include only topics that are considered absolutely essential. They will be worth 20 per cent of a student's final grade, not 50 per cent.

The ministerial exams in Grades 5 and 6 will be worth 10 per cent, not 20 per cent. Students in Grades 10 and 11 who need to attend summer school because they failed a course will also be able to do so free of charge, Drainville said. Teachers will also have longer to prepare the next report cards for students. Normally

those would be handed out on March 15, but now teachers will have until

students in Quebec whose teachers are part of the Fédération autonome de

strike, shutting down about 800 schools.

The FAE ended its strike over the holidays when its delegates agreed to an agreement in principle with the government.

Meanwhile, the common front or Front commun — a coalition of Quebec public sector unions representing about 420,000 workers — went on strike for 11 days last year, bringing the number of students out of school in Quebec to about 1.2 million at the height of the strike action.

The union says the agreement includes a total compounded wage increase of 12.6 per cent over four years, new remote-work language, and protections related to contracting out. # (Abridged version of report)

Sources: Mathew Lapierre, January 9, 2024 and Joe Bongiorno, Jan. 7, 2024 CBC News.



Quebec students head back to class in Montreal on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, for the first time since teachers went on strike in November. (Christinne Muschi/The Canadian Press)

March 28.

Tuesday (January 9th) was the first day back in class for 368,000

l'enseignement (FAE). Those students had been out of school since Nov. 23 when the FAE launched an unlimited

From Page 1 Genocide case

rare step of engaging with the court to defend their international reputation. Israel often boycotts international tribunals or U.N. investigations, saying they are unfair and biased.

During opening statements at the International Court of Justice, South

reparations, and provide for the reconstruction of all it has destroyed in Gaza.

The filing argues that genocidal acts include killing Palestinians, causing serious mental and bodily harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions meant to "bring about their physical destruction as a group." And it

genocide is quite high.

Trudeau insisted Wednesday that those statements were "very, very clear," but said he was happy to repeat them.

"Canada has always supported the international rules-based order and the structures around international law, including and especially the International Court of Justice," he said.

"We have direct engagement in five different cases before the ICJ right now because we believe in the work it does. At the same time, our support for the ICJ and its processes does not mean that we accept the premise of the case brought forward by South Africa and we are watching carefully as all the steps unfold."

The U.S., U.K., France and Germany have all dismissed South Africa's allegations against Israel, Extracts of news reports by Mike Corder, AP News, Jan. 11, 2024 and Brennan MacDonald, CBC News, January 22, 2024.



South Africa's Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Ronald Lamola, center, and Palestinian assistant Minister of Multilateral Affairs Ammar Hijazi, third right, address the media outside the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024. The United Nations' top court opens hearings Thursday into South Africa's allegation that Israel's war with Hamas amounts to genocide against Palestinians, a claim that Israel strongly denies. (AP Photo/Patrick Post)

African lawyers said the latest Gaza war is part of decades of Israeli oppression of Palestinians.

South Africa asked the International Court of Justice to order Israel to immediately stop the war, alleging it has violated the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was drawn up in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust.

The convention defines genocide as killings "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

South Africa's 84-page filing says Israel's actions "are genocidal in character because they are intended to bring about the destruction of a substantial part" of the Palestinians in Gaza.

It asks the ICJ for a series of legally binding rulings declaring that Israel is breaching "its obligations under the Genocide Convention," and ordering Israel to cease hostilities, offer

says Israeli officials have expressed genocidal intent.

Many South Africans, including President Cyril Ramaphosa, compare Israel's policies regarding Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank with South Africa's past apartheid regime of racial segregation. Israel rejects such allegations

South Africa says more than 50 countries support its case, including all 22 members of the Arab League, while most of Israel's Western allies have either stayed neutral or rejected the case outright.

On Jan. 12, when asked about Canada's position at a news conference, Trudeau said Canada supports the court but that did not mean it supported the "premise" of South Africa's case.

In a statement published later that same day, Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly repeated the same statement but also said the case for genocide requires compelling legal evidence and that the bar to prove

From Page 1 Vigil for Anna Karen

Champlain, NY, on December 14, 2023.

Central to the vigil was the organizers' assertion of addressing what they deemed as "racist" immigration laws and "deadly border policies."

Speakers at the vigil delved into the consequences of colonialism and its pivotal role in contemporary migrations. They articulated the impact of neocolonialism and colonialism, highlighting the pursuit of security in the northern hemisphere through the exploitation of the global south, fostering conditions conducive to immigration.

"Je vais dire tout d'abord que les puissances coloniales aux nord ont construit et continuent de construire leur prospérité économique et leur sécurité [...] En exploitant et en harcelant les pays du sud globales créant les conditions politiques, militaires, économiques et socio-culturelles qui produisent l'immigration."

A representative from the Immigration Workers Center further emphasized, "We have an immigration regime that's increasingly about ensuring [that] those from certain places, those who have a certain value, will be welcomed, and everyone else will be forced into the shadows." The

speaker underscored the perilous nature of current immigration routes and advocated for the freedom of movement, enabling people to preserve their dignity without resorting to life-threatening journeys.

The speakers also drew parallels between the struggles faced by indigenous communities across North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Palestine. The message transcended local politics, with one speaker stating, "This isn't just about Trudeau; this is about a broader war on migrants we're seeing." They call for a world without borders or walls echoed in their solidarity from Palestine to Canada.

Chants such as "Say it loud, say it clear, refugees are welcome here" and "Stop the deportations, no borders, no nations" resonated throughout the presentations, emphasizing a collective call for change.

The vigil concluded with expressions of gratitude to those who searched for Ana Karen when she was reported missing. Attendees were encouraged to form a contingent and participate in a Palestinian solidarity protest later that afternoon. As a gesture of support, warm soup was offered to those present.

In a subsequent interview, Lynda Little, an attendee of the vigil and member of The Militant newspaper and The Communist League in Canada, voiced her perspective, "The government should recognize everyone that comes here, there should be no divisions, everybody should have status." She emphasized the necessity for systemic change in Canada's government, calling for equal rights for all immigrants. Opposing deportations, she advocated for a government that genuinely represents the majority. Little highlighted issues of division in the workforce, where temporary work permits and student permits are exploited for cheap labor. She stressed that real change goes beyond voting, citing historical revolutions like those in Cuba and Russia. Criticizing capitalism's competition and lack of human solidarity, Little affirmed her commitment to a socialist world that prioritizes the well-being of humanity over profit. #

Prime Minister Trudeau signs devolution agreement with Nunavut Premier for the largest land transfer

OTTAWA — Nunavut signed an agreement with the federal government Thursday, January 18, 2024, that transfers responsibility for land and natural resource management to the territory, marking the largest land transfer in Canadian history, as it is equivalent to 20% of Canada's total landmass with a population of 40,692 people as of Jan. 1, 2023 an increase of 1.7 per cent from 40,003 residents one year earlier.

Nunavut and its residents will now be able to make decisions about how public lands, freshwater, and non-renewable resources are used in the territory, and reap the benefits of responsible and sustainable resource development.

The "devolution" agreement



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok sign the Nunavut devolution agreement in Iqaluit on Jan. 18, 2024.
Dustin Patar/The Canadian Press



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, his son Hadrien, Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. president Aluki Kotierk enjoy a dogsled ride through Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park outside Iqaluit, Nunavut on Friday, Jan. 19, 2024. PHOTO BY DUSTIN PATAR /The Canadian Press

means the power to make final decisions for two million square kilometres of public lands, including onshore waters, and natural resources — as well as the royalties from the extraction of those resources — now belongs to the territorial government.

In a ceremony in Iqaluit that

featured the Inuktitut language, traditional singing, dancing and drumming, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau signed the agreement along with Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal, Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated president Aluki Kotierk.

The final devolution

agreement with Nunavut is the latest step in a process that officially began in 2008 with the Lands and Resources Devolution Negotiation Protocol. However, the transfer discussions have been ongoing since the creation of the territory in 1999 under the Nunavut Act. The federal government has been working on transferring responsibilities including health, education, social services, housing, airports and land and resource management to the territories since the 1960s.

Devolution of land and natural resource management took place in Yukon in 2003 and in the Northwest Territories in 2014.

"Today begins a new chapter in the history of Nunavut. A transformative chapter," Trudeau said, adding that this process is not just a "devolution" but an "evolution in our partnership as the federal government and the territory and also an evolution in the progress towards self-determination for Inuit living in Nunavut."

"I am here to celebrate devolution as recognition that Inuit have long been stewards of these

lands and that your voices matter and decision making is finally coming home," Vandal said.

The Nunavut agreement includes a three-year implementation period to allow time for passing legislation and the transfer of responsibilities. It also comes with \$15 million in transfer payments over five years for implementation and to work toward representative Inuit employment.

In November 1992, the Inuit overwhelmingly approved the Nunavut Final Land Claim Agreement and took a huge step towards realizing their dream of the new territory of Nunavut and their own government. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Northwest Territories Government Leader Nellie Cournoyea, and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut President Paul Quassa signed the deal in Iqaluit in May 1993. Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut was the organization that negotiated the Inuit land claim and has since been replaced by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories (1995-1999) were responsible for the overwhelming task of establishing two new territories. Some tasks included passing legislation to allow for the creation of the new territories and transferring responsibility for programs and services to the new Nunavut Government in time for April 1st, 1999, when a new Northwest Territories was created with new boundaries drawn in Canada's North. Two new territories, a new NWT and Nunavut (which means "our land" in Inuktitut), were created. This change marked the first significant change to the map of Canada since Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949. # Source: CTV NEWS, CBC, and other relevant reports.

Federal government announces two-year cap on student permits

With a stated goal of targeting institutional "bad actors" — and amid concern about the impact growing numbers of international students are having on the housing market — Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced Monday that the federal government will cap the number of student permits over the next two years.

The government says it will approve approximately 360,000 undergraduate study permits for 2024 — a 35 per cent reduction from 2023.

Each province and territory will be allotted a portion of the total, distributed according to population. The federal government says this will result in "much more significant decreases in provinces where the international student population has

seen the most unsustainable growth." In some provinces, Miller said, the total reduction in permits will be approximately 50 per cent.

Provinces and territories will be left to decide how permits are distributed among universities and colleges in their jurisdictions. The cap will be in place for two years; the number of permits to be issued in 2025 will be reassessed at the end of this year.

Miller said that by imposing the cap, the federal government is taking action against some small private colleges.

"It's unacceptable that some private institutions have taken advantage of international students by operating under-resourced campuses, lacking supports for students and



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Marc Miller holds a news conference on Monday in Montreal, where the Trudeau cabinet is holding a three-day retreat. (Christinne Muschi/The Canadian Press)

charging high tuition fees all the while significantly increasing their intake of international students," Miller said.

In an interview with the CBC's Power & Politics on Monday, Miller spoke of "degree-granting institutions

that are giving fake business degrees" to students who hope to stay in Canada. The minister said there could be "hundreds" of such schools

See Page 12 Student permits



ONTARIO Community News

By Tony A. San Juan
OCT-Retired

Angel Foundation for Learning and TCDSB Launch Filipino Education Student Bursary

The Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) jointly launched a new bursary award for Filipino education students in Toronto. In a special gathering at the Catholic Education Centre (CEC), AFL and TCDSB officially announced the "Proudly Pinoy Student Bursary Project." The Angel Foundation for Learning has offered the Student Bursary Award in support of Filipino youth in collaboration with the TCDSB Filipino Advisory Committee (FAC) and the Filipino community.

The Angel Foundation for Learning, incorporated on April 23, 1987, is a charitable organization that serves the needs of students in the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). The AFL-TCDSB-Filipino Community bursary is "part of an ongoing strategy to address 1) a strong need for culturally responsive and reflective pedagogy that affirms students in the Filipino community, 2) increasing educator representation for more than 30% of Filipino students comprising the board and 3) encouraging these students to pursue education as a career to ensure a broad base of educators of Filipino descent." The following are the details and guidelines:

Bursary Description. Two (2) bursaries of \$3,750 each shall be available to two graduating Filipino students who are registered students in the Toronto Catholic District School Board and require financial assistance to pursue post-secondary studies in education at a college or university and have made outstanding contributions to their school community. The bursary funds will be administered through the Angel Foundation for Learning and co-sponsored with the TCDSB Filipino Advisory Committee and the Filipino community to help defray the cost of post-secondary education.

A. Criteria. The selection of the successful candidate will be based on the following criteria: 1) self-identify as a Filipino student 2) a permanent resident or citizen of Canada 3) a demonstration of academic proficiency, and potential for post-secondary success 4) evidence of contribution to the school and the community 5) a description of financial need and/or personal challenges 6) confirmation/evidence of acceptance into a post-secondary institution in the field of education and 7) is not a dependent of an AFL employee.

B. Application Process. An

application must be completed with all of the following criteria for consideration of this bursary:



1) completed and signed the application form 2) a personal cover letter which outlines contributions to the school and community; states the nature of the financial need 3) reason why pursuing education as a career, include as much detail as appropriate; 4) two letters of recommendation from the following: the school principal or designate, employer, coach, department head, chaplain, support staff, teacher, community leader. The letter should outline contributions to the school and community as well as state the nature of the financial need; and 4) confirmation/evidence of acceptance into a post-secondary institution.

C. Selection Process.

1) The successful candidate will be approved by the Board of Directors of The Angel Foundation for Learning upon the recommendation of the Review Committee. 2) This Review Committee will include members of the a) TCDSB Department of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations, b) The Filipino Advisory Committee, Filipino Community Representative, and/or the Angel Foundation for Learning. 3) The successful candidate will be notified in early June 2024. 4) The cheque for the successful applicant will be written to the university, college, or program, which the student will be attending.

D. Funding Source: The Total Bursary/Award for three years is \$22,500, broken down to \$ 7,500 each year from 2024 to 2026. The proposed sources of funding are from 1) The Filipino Community (\$7,500) 2) AFL Donations and Restricted Fund Investments (\$7,500) and 3) TCDSB Match Up through Equity.

E. Contact Person and Deadline: Interested applicants should Email the completed application package to Emmy Szekeres Milne at emmy.szekeresmilne@tcdsb.org or

Mail to The Angel Foundation for Learning, CEC, 80 Sheppard Ave. East, Toronto, ON, M2N 6E8. Application deadline is Friday, April 21, 2024.

Polytechnic University of the Philippines Alumni celebration

Faithful to their Filipino Christian tradition, the members, directors, and officers of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Alumni Foundation of Canada (PUPAFC), held their Christmas Party and Induction Ceremony on December 16, 2023 at the MFFC Community Centre in Markham, Ontario. PUPAFC is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization composed of alumni, former students, and faculty members of the erstwhile Philippine College of Commerce (PCC), now known as the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Manila, Philippines.

The association's Board of

of the Filipino Heritage Council of Canada (FHCC).

In his inaugural address, PUPAFC head honcho Willie Reodica thanked the directors and officers for "their enviable support, cooperation, and hard work as well as for keeping their minds and hearts in faithfully pursuing the established mission and vision of PUPAFC including its desirable programs and projects." The induction officer, Tony San Juan, warmly congratulated the new set of directors and officers. He encouraged them to continue meeting purposefully the challenges as leaders and to expand their engagements with fellow alumni both in Canada and in the Philippines.

The five-hour lively program was ably hosted by Haggy Caluya and Irene Mejia. The opening prayer was led by Antonietta Muriel followed by a welcome address from Rey Villanueva. Alberto Rodil gave his special message. A beautiful vocal solo was performed by JHERFLOW. Special



The 2023-2025 PUPAFC Board of Directors and Officers.

Directors inducted are William "Willie" Reodica, President; Reynaldo H. Villanueva, Vice-President (Internal); Haggy Q. Caluya, Vice-President (External); Lea D. Ramsay, Secretary; Luisa G. Andra, Treasurer; Agnes C. Soriano, Auditor; Roy V. Devierte, Business Manager; Antonietta D. Muriel, PRO; Alberto Rodil, Virginia Santos, and Bernie S. Gonzales, Directors. The new Executive Directorate was sworn into office by Tony A. San Juan, Founding Chairman

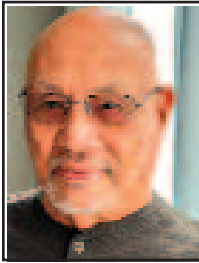
Dance numbers were delightfully demonstrated by I & I Powerdance. Likewise, this group led the non-stop line dancing and joyfully participated with almost all-lady performers. Lots of gifts and door prizes were also raffled and presented to all the lucky winners. Dr. Alberto Rodil and Willie Reodica chaired and co-chaired respectively the Event Steering Committee. They were solidly assisted by the various

See Page 7 Polytechnic University

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Literary Corner

Pedro Guidote



Three Memos for the New Year

1. Everything changes and ends
2. Things do not always go according to plan
3. Life is not always fair
4. Pain is part of life
5. People are not loving and loyal all the time

(The Five Things We Cannot Change)
David Richo

o0o

1. Don't ever waste your time worrying.
2. It's important to seize every day.
3. You must take the good with the bad.
4. Never fear your happiness.
5. Embrace the unknown.
6. Never take life for granted.
7. Be fearless.
8. Appreciate nature and your loved ones.

Mary Oliver, poet (1935 – 2019)

o0o

One of the most important characteristics of life and it's something we see in the universe is change. Nothing remains the same. There are things that are precious and things that are important to us that we hold on to. But what happens is that circumstances change, we change, and our environment changes.

And we need to be prepared to let go of some of those things because they were built for a previous time and for a previous experience.

There is sometimes a sense of loss in letting go of things, but there is a sense of release, of new opportunities, and of something different will take their place.

Malcom Doney (CBC Tapestry aired Nov. 26, 2023)

From Page 6 Polytechnic University

chairpersons, co-chairpersons, and members of the six committees on finance, tickets & reception, souvenir program & invitation, awards & raffle, hospitality & entertainment, and decoration.

All the more than 100 guests, family, and friends aptly considered the holiday event to be a successful and memorable milestone of sharing, giving, dancing, dining, camaraderie, fellowship, "kodakans," and greetings within the true spirit of Filipino-focused "pasasalamat, paskuhan, at pagsasamahan."

PIDC Elects a new Board of Directors

The torch has been passed! The Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC) chose its new set of Board of Directors and Executive Officers on January 7, 2024. The biennial election was held at Committee Room #4 of the Toronto City Hall, Queen Street, Toronto.

Immediately after the election, the newly elected Executive Officers and Board of Directors were officially proclaimed by the Comelec. The PIDC Committee on Election is composed of Chairman Tony A. San Juan, Retired Educator; and Members - Al Tupe, President of ABC Accountants; Fred Yuson, CGA, CMA; Len Salvador, AFCA President; and Steve Pagao, Practicing

Llanera, Secretary; Chyrell Samson Ronquillo, Assistant Secretary; Aurora Elefano, Treasurer; Jeff Mesina, Asst. Treasurer; Rommel Lumbao & Clyde Pacis, Business Managers; Melinda Manlapaz, Auditor; Danny Orbillo & Leonor Abad, Public Relations Officers; Ramon Estaris & B.K. Jimenez, Liaison Officers; Sonia Balinas, Joseph Guiyab, Malou

PIDC Comelec members.

In his acceptance speech, President Tom Tan expressed his gratitude and pledged to bring the organization "to the next level," citing that the new officers hope to meet the challenge and expectations of the membership and other stakeholders, as well as "to continue building the great work and programs of their



The PIDC Executive Directorate Members with Philippine Consul General Angelica C. Escalona (centre)

Lamang, Helen Lao, & Ofelia Santiago, Board Directors.

The 21-member executive directorate was inducted by Philippine Consul General Angelica C. Escalona in a simple ceremony hosted by the Philippine Consulate, Toronto on January 8, 2024. Those who witnessed the oath-taking were Deputy Consul General Kerwin Tate, Consul Mary

predecessors." Agnes P. Miranda, the Immediate Past President, proudly and heartily congratulated the new officers and profoundly thanked all the members of PIDC "for their splendid support, hard work, and cooperation during her term of office."

PIDC is a quintessential not-for-profit, volunteer-run umbrella association of several Filipino-Canadian community organizations in Ontario, Canada. Its goal and mission is to pursue the promotion and propagation of Filipino culture, heritage and history as well as to enhance mutual relations and cooperation with other community-based entities in Canada. Amongst its popular programs are the annual Mabuhay Philippines Festival, Filipino Heritage Month Celebration, Salosalo Picnic at Earl Bales Park, Beauty Pageants, Sports Tournaments, Fundraising Events, and other community collaborative projects. Congratulations and Good luck! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)



Philippine Consul General Angelica C. Escalona with PIDC Officers, Directors and Guests, January 8, 2024.

Accountant.

Elected to run the organization for the 2024-2025 term are Tom Tan, President; Karen Pascual Binaday, Executive Vice President; Agnes P. Miranda, Ben Corpuz, and Jean Pardo Elamparo, Vice Presidents; Suzy SJ.

Grace Villamayor, Cultural Officers; Tey Samonte, the Consulate staff, and the

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PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH, JANUARY 2024

By Fely Rosales-Carino



Eden Grace Valenzuela

I am very pleased to present to you a young lady with great achievements. Her personality profile shows a sophisticated athlete who excels in everything she does. I am talking about Eden Grace Valenzuela, daughter of Nilo & Edith Valenzuela, members of the Seniors of West Island (SWIS). She was born on October 19, 1980 and resides in Île Bizard, Quebec. She is close to her siblings Edwin and Elbin and a special shout out goes to her sisters-in-law Samantha Hamer and Bernadette Mendoza!

Speaking of education, Grace finished high school at Pierrefonds

Comprehensive High School and earned a DEC in Natural Sciences at John Abbott College. For higher learning, she went to Concordia University with a Major in Chemistry.

One thing you'll admire about Grace is how hard-working she is. She found time to hold jobs at the same time she was studying! (What vitamin is she on, you wonder?) She was a lifeguard/swim instructor/diving coach while in CEGEP. She also worked at Mexx and American Eagle while in CEGEP and university. Her resumé is a showcase of a variety of jobs such as a Lab Analyst at Bureau Veritas (2008-2012), Purchasing Agent at

Bureau Veritas (2012-2022), and a Buyer at Excelitas Technologies (2022-present). I can only sense that, without a doubt, she is imbued with a wonderful work ethic. Grace, you must be a dream to work with!

While some common hobbies are knitting, reading novels or singing, it is amazing to find out that Grace has different kinds of hobbies that require phenomenal skills. She is an athlete competing in three sports: ballroom dancing, diving, and karate. This means three different and varied skills,

Grace has many other hobbies which include playing the piano, baking, cooking, watching sports like Formula 1, hockey, and diving ... as well as enjoying an occasional video game. And this is the profile of ONE person. Where does she find time for other stuff like shopping or Facebook? I'd like to know.

Well, wouldn't you want to know how Grace got inspired along the way? In dancing, she credits her Mom (Thanks Mom for playing a pivotal role at just the right time!) who put her in ballet and tap dancing at the age of eight and danced for many years. Then she took up ballroom dancing and continued dancing. In diving, she caught this interest from an outdoor community pool at the age of twelve. She was fascinated in "doing tricks in the air and landing in the water." And in karate, it was brother Edwin who got her interested in martial arts, starting in high school when she joined him in a few classes. And the rest is history.

Grace can also speak four languages: English, French, Tagalog, and Italian. Again, where does she find time to study or practice? I think she has more than twenty fours in a day! And there's more (are you not yet surprised?). Worth mentioning here are the special highlights in competition. In August 2023 in Fukuoka, Japan, she represented Canada in the World Aquatic Masters Championship in three events: Women's 1m springboard (won a World Silver Medal), 3m springboard (placed 7th out of 14), and 3m synchro with partner Nancy Bourget (placed 7th out of 20). After this amazing experience in Japan, the next venue of competition was in Ottawa for the Canadian Closed National Championships for Ballroom Dancing. Together with her dance instructor Simone Zat, they competed as Pro-Am (Professional Amateur) representing Arthur Murray West Island. They placed third in the American Rhythm, B Division, Canadian Scholarship. They placed first in the American Rhythm, B Division, Silver Level.

With Grace's background, wouldn't you be itching to know who are her role models? She looks up to a few and the first one she mentioned is her Dad because "he's a survivor and never gives up." She clearly credits him for this attribute. She also refers to her godmother, no longer with us, who encouraged her to have "dreams and happiness without judgment." She is grateful for her godmother's daughters, as she's feeling her presence through



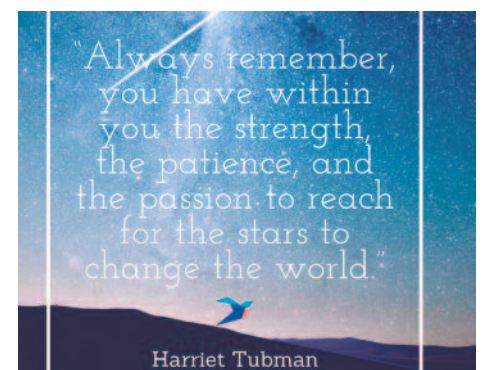
Eden Grace with her dance instructor, Simone Zat

them. And she also mentioned Sonia Jimenez (a very good friend) and Samantha Hamer (sister-in-law) who commend her potential and encourage her in her personal growth.

And you'll be happy to know that aside from being a high achiever, Grace has a happy disposition. She counts many things in life as her happiest moments. Stating the obvious would be her many competitions but what stood out was her first international competition in diving in Budapest Hungary in 2017. Being able to go back to karate during the pandemic was also a happy moment. For Grace, karate gives her peace and helps her put her best self forward. But what I find impressive is that she states, "I am also happiest when I can help someone with a nice gesture or help people by doing fundraisers." She also considers her happy moments when cooking and baking as she says she "loves to cook and bake for people."

Lastly, one of Grace's personal motto is, "Change is a scary thing, but yet a beautiful thing, because it will take you to places and experiences you will have never thought possible so get out of your comfort zone once in a while!" Well, it looks like getting out of her comfort zone is a habit. Another personal motto is to "seek gratitude as often as possible and live with passion ... it helps you see the positive and beautiful things in life..."

And I'd like to end this presentation by counting life's blessings. I thank the Lord for Eden Grace for blessing her with many talents and endowing her with determination and perseverance, plugging tirelessly to accomplish her goals. As the hymn goes, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your blessings, see what God has done." Let's applaud Him for a very blessed GRACE!





Sa Ating Sariling Wikang Pilipino (Tagalog)

Ni Zenaida F. Kharroubi

Bagong taon, bagong buhay

Maraming taon na ang nakalipas na hindi ko namamalan mula ng ako'y nangibang bansa ngunit sa aking pagmumunimuni. lagi kong na-aalala ang aking kabataan at mga dating kasabihan o buking bibig na aking kinagisnan. Nais kong isalaysay kung bakit pangkaraniwang naririnig ko noong nasa Pilipinas pa ako na pangaral ng aking mga magulang - bagong taon, bagong buhay. Na-aalala ko na ito'y sinasabi sa kaninumang may nais umunlad sa buhay, at pangaral ng mga matatanda na tayo'y laging may pag-asang magbago kung gusto nating umunlad sa buhay.

Sa aking palagay, ang pagdiriwang ng Pasko at Bagong Taon sa Pilipinas ay ibang-iba kaysa pagdiriwang ng isang Pilipino sa Canada. Unang-una, napakalamig sa buan ng Disyembre, lalong-lalo na sa buan ng Enero. Ang pagdating ng snow storm at pagkatapos dumarating din ang ulang yelo na tinatawag na freezing rain na nagbibigay sa atin ng hirap na lumabas ng bahay at mamasyal. Kahit sa pagmamaneho ay kailangang pag-ingatan at may panganib na madulas sa daan. Bukod sa panahon, ang pinakamalungkot na bahagi ng Pasko at Bagong Taon ay ang ating pangungulila sa ating mga kamag-anak. Tayo'y nakakaramdam ng kalungkutan dahil sa tagal ng panahon na hindi natin makausap ang ating mga kamag-anak at iba pang mga kaibigan. Marami na rin ang pumanaw at maraming hindi natin alam kung saang sulok ng mundo sila matatagpuan ngayon. Hangarin man

nating hanapin sila, hindi basta-basta ang magbiyahe pagkatapos ng Covid dahil parang nag-iba na ang mundo mula noong 2020 hanggang ngayon

Sa isang banda, nagpapasalamat pa rin ako sa awa ng Diyos dahil nakapagpatuloy pa rin ako sa pagsisikap na paunlarin ang isang paaralang itinayo ko mula pa noong Nobyembre 1989. Kahit ilan lang mga estudyante ang nag-aaral ng Pranse, Tagalog, at Ingles sa ngayon, nasisiyahan pa rin ako kapag sila ay nakapasa sa eksamen at nabigyan ko sila ng isang katunayan o "certificate of proficiency" na maari nilang gamitin sa pag-aapply ng kanilang "resident status" at "citizenship."

Nais kong ipahayag sa lahat ng mga dating estudyante na nag-aral ng Level 1 (beginner) ng Pranse na bumalik na mag-aral ulit sa Gilmore College International kahit anong edad nila at samantalain ang pagdating ng bagong taon upang magkaroon sila ng pagkakataong magpalit ng trabahong kaunti lang ang sueldo. Sa aking palagay, ang pag-aaral ng Pranse ay napakahalaga dahil sa mga bagong palakad ng gobyerno. Ayon sa balita, binibigyan lang ng anim na buan ang isang bagong imigrante upang mag-aral ng Pranse at sila'y mapipilitang magsalita ng Pranse kung sila'y may kailangan sa gobyerno.

Maraming mga oportunidad na makakita ng magandang trabaho kahit saang lugar kapag mahusay kayong sumulat at magsalita ng Pranse at Ingles. Bukod sa "oral interview," may "written exam" na mahirap ipasa kung hindi nag-aral ng

husto ng Pranse at Ingles.

May isa akong estudyante na katapos lang ng Level 3 sa Pranse. nguni't hind niya masabi kung kailan niya ipagpapatuloy na mag-aral ng Level 4. Nangako siyang babalik nguni't hindi ko pa alam kung kailan. Ang level 3 at 4 ang tinatawag na

malilimutan agad ang natutuhan kung hindi ipagpapatuloy hanggang matapos ang lahat na kailangang matutuhan.

Ito ang payo ko sa isang estudyanteng truck driver. Mahirap ang trabahong ito dahil lagi sa daan at natutulog lang palagi sa truck habang



"French 3 proficiency certificate" na tinatanggap ni Javier Hernandez Perez mula sa kanyang guro sa Gilmore College International, Gng. Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, 14 Enero 2024.

"Intermediate level," nguni't kailangan pa rin na matapos ang Level 5 at 6 (advanced levels) upang maintindihan ang lahat ng "tenses" sa Pranse na napakahirap na isalin sa Ingles kung hindi pag-aaralan ng husto. Bukod pa rito, ang Level 5 certificate ay karaniwang hinihingi ng gobyerno sa mga nag-aapply ng "citizenship" sa Canada. Hindi dapat ipagpaliban ng matagal ang pagpapatuloy na mag-aral ng Pranse kung gusto ninyong maging matatas sa pagsasalita at matutong magsulat sa wikang ito.

Ang pag-aaral ay kailangang tutukan ng madalas, hindi maganda ang mag-aral nang pahinto-hinto dahil

nagmamaneho ang ka-partner niyang tsuper sa biyahe. Nasabi niyang hangad niyang mag-iba ng trabaho ngunit kailangan niyang maging mahusay magsalita ng Pranse. Kung hindi siya magpapatuloy na mag-aral agad hanggang matapos ang dapat niyang matutuhan, kailan kaya siya magkaroon ng mas magandang trabaho? Ang panahon ay hindi maaring bumalik kaya hindi dapat pang mag-antay ng matagal.

Sana'y maisipan ng lahat kong dating estudyanteng naka-abot lang ng levels 1 at 2, na bumalik na mag-aral ulit kung nais na magbagong buhay sa bagong taon. #



Ang mga estudyanteng nag-aral ng Pranse, Level 1-2, 1990-1992 sa Gilmore College International na dating Gilmore Business Institute sa 4246 Girouard Avenue, Nob.1989- Abril 1996. Mag-aral kaya sila ulit ng Pranse ngayong 2024?



Mga estudyanteng nag-aral ng Word Processing at Keyboarding sa Gilmore Business Institute, 1990-91. Ang nasa gitna ay isang international student na galing ng Ireland. Nasaan kaya sila ngayon?



Education is our passport to the future for tomorrow belongs only to the people who prepare for it today.
Malcolm X



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Recipes selected from various sources

Cooking with love provides food for the soul.

Some popular dishes from international cuisine



Pad Thai - Thailand

Pad Thai is stir-fry dish made with rice noodles, shrimp, chicken, or tofu, peanuts, a scrambled egg and bean sprouts. The ingredients are sautéed together in a wok and tossed in a delicious Pad Thai sauce. It's a common street food in Thailand and one of the most popular menu items at Thai restaurants around the country.

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces flat rice noodles
 - 3 Tablespoons oil
 - 3 cloves garlic , minced
 - 8 ounces uncooked shrimp, chicken, or extra-firm tofu , cut into small pieces
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup fresh bean sprouts
 - 1 red bell pepper , thinly sliced
 - 3 green onions , chopped
 - 1/2 cup dry roasted peanuts
 - 2 limes
 - 1/2 cup Fresh cilantro , chopped
- For the Pad Thai sauce:
- 3 Tablespoons fish sauce
 - 1 Tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
 - 5 Tablespoons light brown sugar
 - 2 Tablespoons rice vinegar , or Tamarind Paste*
 - 1 Tablespoon Sriracha hot sauce , or more, to taste
 - 2 Tablespoons creamy peanut butter* (optional)

Instructions

Cook noodles according to package instructions, just until tender. Rinse under cold water.

Make sauce by combining sauce ingredients in a bowl. Set aside.

Stir Fry:: Heat 1½ tablespoons of oil in a large saucepan or wok over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp, chicken or tofu, garlic and bell pepper. The shrimp will cook quickly, about 1-2 minutes on each side, or until pink. If using chicken, cook until just cooked through, about 3-4 minutes, flipping only once.

Push everything to the side of the pan. Add a little more oil and add the beaten eggs. Scramble the eggs,

breaking them into small pieces with a spatula as they cook.

Add noodles, sauce, bean sprouts and peanuts to the pan (reserving some peanuts for topping at the end). Toss everything to combine.

Garnish the top with green onions, extra peanuts, cilantro and lime wedges. Serve immediately!

Store leftovers in the fridge and enjoy within 2-3 days.

Notes

Make Ahead Instructions: Cut your protein, and chop veggies ahead of time. Stir sauce ingredients together and refrigerate until ready to use.

Tamarind Paste: Substitute 2 Tablespoons Tamarind paste in place of the vinegar, for a more authentic sauce. You can buy tamarind online, or at an international foods market.

Vegan or Vegetarian: Leave out the egg. Use tofu, and substitute the fish sauce for more soy sauce.

Peanut Butter: Add a big scoop of peanut butter to the sauce because it gives the whole dish an added creaminess and boost of flavor.



Paella - Spain

Paella (pai-ei-uh) is a classic Spanish rice dish made with rice, saffron, vegetables, chicken, and seafood cooked and served in one pan. Although paella originates from Valencia, it's recognized as the national food of Spain and there are several different varieties. The most common types of paella are chicken paella, seafood paella, or mixed paella (a combination of seafood, meats, and vegetables).

Ingredients

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 large onion finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves minced
- 2 medium tomatoes peeled and diced
- 1.5 teaspoons sweet paprika such as Pimentón de la Vera (dulce)
- 1 pinch saffron threads
- 2 large squid cleaned and sliced into ¼-inch rings (tentacles not used in this dish)

- 2 cups short grain rice such as Bomba or Calasparra
- 1 cup white wine
- 3 cups seafood stock
- 12 prawns or jumbo shrimp shells on if possible for extra flavor
- 12 mussels



Ingredients for Seafood Paella

Instructions

Bring the white wine and seafood stock to a simmer in a large saucepan over high heat. Add a pinch of saffron threads and keep gently simmering over low heat.

Put a large, shallow frying pan (such as a 10-inch cast iron skillet or 16-inch paella) over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. When hot, add the onion to the pan and sauté until translucent, stirring frequently.

Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes. Before it starts to brown, stir in the tomato, paprika, and a pinch of salt. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes are reduced and the oil is sizzling.

Gently add the squid to the pan and stir to coat in the tomato mixture. Sauté for about a minute to give some color to the squid.

Next, stir in the rice and cook for 1 minute, then spread the rice evenly across the pan. If it looks like a thin layer, don't worry; it will puff up as it absorbs the liquid.

Pour in the simmering wine mixture all at once, then reduce the heat to low, and cook, without stirring, for 10 minutes. Carefully lay the prawns/shrimp in a circle on top of the

rice and cook for a further 10 minutes, turning the shrimp over as they start to turn pink. If the rice starts to dry out before the shrimp is cooked, you can top it up with a bit more hot stock, half a cup at a time.

Meanwhile, steam the mussels. Place them in a half-inch of simmering water in a large skillet with a tight-fitting lid. They are cooked when the shells open; be sure to discard any that stay closed. Once the mussels are cooked, arrange them decoratively on the paella.

When the stock in the paella fully evaporates, you will hear a faint crackling from the bottom of the pan as the socarrat starts to form. If you don't hear anything, you can raise the heat to medium for a short burst.

Remove the paella from the heat and cover it with a tea towel for 3 minutes to let it rest. Uncover and serve from the pan with lemon wedges on the side.

Notes

The ideal paella rice is a short/medium grain round variety such as Bomba rice. If necessary, you can substitute Arborio. You can also order it in advance if you can!

A paella is a special shallow pan for making paella. If you don't have one, use your largest, flattest frying pan, such as a 10-inch cast iron skillet.

Substitute the seafood based on your preferences. Great options include clams, scallops, hearty white fish, and lobster.

Use homemade seafood stock when possible. While some traditional paellas are made using only water, this seafood paella will be extra special if you use good quality seafood stock. If I don't have time to make stock, I buy a good quality boxed stock.

If you can't find saffron or it is cost-prohibitive, you can use a pinch of turmeric for color or simply omit it.

From Page 5 Student permits operating in Canada and that the number has "exploded in the last couple years."

The government says it will approve approximately 360,000 undergraduate study permits for 2024 — a 35 per cent reduction from 2023.

Each province and territory will be allotted a portion of the total, distributed according to population. The federal government says this will result in "much more significant decreases in provinces where the international student population has seen the most unsustainable growth."

In some provinces, Miller said, the total reduction in permits will be approximately 50 per cent.

Provinces and territories will be left to decide how permits are distributed among universities and colleges in their jurisdictions. The cap will be in place for two years; the number of permits to be issued in 2025 will be reassessed at the end of this year.

Miller said that by imposing the cap, the federal government is taking action against some small private colleges.

"It's unacceptable that some private institutions have taken advantage of international students by operating under-resourced campuses, lacking supports for students and charging high tuition fees all the while significantly increasing their intake of international students," Miller said.

In an interview with the CBC's Power & Politics on Monday, Miller spoke of "degree-granting institutions that are giving fake business degrees" to students who hope to stay in Canada. The minister said there could be "hundreds" of such schools operating in Canada and that the number has "exploded in the last couple years."

Abridged version of news report by Aaron Wherry · CBC News · Posted: Jan 22, 2024 10:04 AM EST |

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Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Happy New Year to my dear Tidbits readers! You agree time flies? It seems like only yesterday we were amid the Christmas holiday. And we have been fortunate so far with little snow, but before we got spoiled, the anticipated snowfall came with a vengeance. But no worries. We, Montrealers, are used to it by now. Let's be thankful the weather hasn't reached -36 °C like in Calgary last week. And there are other things to be thankful for. Let's thank the Lord for blessing the Filipino community with many fun happenings.

Way back, sometime in November 2023, a bingo night was staged by the members of the Grand Lodge of Quebec at 2295 Rue St. Marc in downtown Montreal. Prizes ranged from cash to wines and other wrapped gifts. Pete Ison and Perla Castillo did a fantastic job of managing the evening. One of the lucky winners was Lolit Odulio who brought home a cash prize. Congratulations, Lolit!

On November 25, 2023, the spotlight was on a dear friend, much esteemed and beloved Bert Abiera, marking his 90th (!) birthday! This memorable milestone drew many of his celebrity friends in the Filipino community to one of the party rooms at 6767 Côte-des-Neiges to celebrate with him. You see, Bert is one of the precious Filipino community volunteers that never refuses when faced with different tasks or responsibilities. Not too many can be described as willing, dependable, always obliging, always on the ready, always prepared, like a good Boy Scout! That's Bert to you.

Before dinner, there was a Q&A when friends were encouraged to ask him questions. And he answered all of them. One of the questions was, "Why are you called the Filipino Godfather of Montreal?" So, he regaled us with stories about how seafarers on holiday stayed at his place. He also accommodated caregivers who arrived from the Philippines. And it wasn't long before he played matchmaker to his guests. When marriage occurred, he often served as a wedding sponsor. And when babies were born to these unions, he became a sponsor at baptisms also. You can be sure he always had a role at wedding anniversaries and at death anniversaries as well.

The evening abounded with speeches of Bert's accomplishments as a volunteer. For this, Filipino leaders honored him with their presence when he turned 90 years young. Folks, this

party went smoothly under the expert planning and handling of Svetlana Suarez, Elvie Maximo, and other Samahang Makabayan officers and members. Thanks for the lovely company and a happy and eventful party. Guests enjoyed the catered dinner from the popular Pinoy Pansitan owned by Cesar and Tess Manuel.

On December 8, 2023, the Seniors of the West Island (SWIS) held their Christmas celebration at the Olympia Reception Hall at 3855 St. Jean Blvd., DDO. It was a dinner dance that had all the trimmings of a grand event! Line dancing dominated the evening and every time DJ Dennis Mayuga put on a line dancing record, the dance floor filled up fast. It was entertaining to watch the dancers do their steps in unison. Guest Speaker DDO Mayor Alex Bottausci gave his inspiring message. There was a picture taking as usual; anytime he is at our events, guests like to have a picture with him. Thanks, Alex! Connie Fabro and Vangie Salvador were everywhere dutifully receiving guests. SWIS Chairman Lolita Odulio was very satisfied with the turn of events. Adviser Roger Ajero did a lot in the programming order. When I congratulated Lolita about the success of the party, she said, "It was a team effort."

On December 15, 2023 was the Christmas party at 6767 Côte-des-Neiges given by the Federation of Filipino Canadian Association of Quebec (FFCAQ). Its President, Minda Mazzone, and her Board of Directors gave an invitation that you simply can't pass up - a free dinner and dance party! The party room was packed with supporters and friends. Loving couples in attendance were Nick & Minda, Robin & Kristy, Fred & Jovy and many others. Ed Tupas and his lovely wife were also present. And the food was good and abounding. That was a good turn-up, Minda. kudos to you and your group, who deserve our appreciation and love for the magnanimous gesture of free tickets. Saludo!

Another holiday event was on December 23, 2023 by the Council of Canadian Filipino Association of Quebec (CCFAQ). This started when flag bearers Sir Jolan Bueno, Sir Hadjal Gatoc, and Sir Ismael Calaunan appeared with the Filipino flag, the Canadian flag, and the Quebec flag. Then the rendering of the National Anthems was followed by the invocation by Alana Amana. Then Sir Dario Boco, CCFAQ President, stood up to welcome the crowd. After the

welcome, the D'Easy Line Dance Group led by Sir Cipriano Galang showed their graceful steps. A raffle was held and many prizes were awarded. After a while, the singing duo of Sir James de la Paz and Sir Julius Abad sang their signature song, "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." As expected, this performance garnered an enthusiastic response from the audience! After dinner, the D'Easy Dance Group performed once again; they are fun to watch. Closing remarks was given by the inimitable Sir James de la Paz. What a great night!

On December 30, the 127th Dr. Jose Rizal martyrdom and commemoration was held at Ruby Rouge restaurant on 1088 Clark St., Montreal. On this event, the Knights of Rizal (KOR) also held their Knighting Ceremony. Their General Program looked like this: Flag Bearers were Jolan Bueno, Sir Franciso Bernabe Jr., and Sir Stephane Morin. The national anthems Lupang Hinirang was sang by Sir Julius Abad and O Canada by Sir Edmour Valdez. Sir Gerry Danzil recited the Pledge of Allegiance and Sir Rey Balansi led the Invocation. The wreath laying in honor of Dr. Jose Rizal was performed by the following: Michell Setlakwe (MNA for Mount Royal-Outremont), Sir Sonny Moroz (Snowdon District Councilor), Stephanie Valenzuela (Darlington District Councilor), Sir Felix de Luna (Deputy Region Commander), Sir James de la Paz (LM, Region Chancellor), Sir Rey Balansi (Region Pursuivant), Sir Angelito Manuel (Region Exchequer), Sir Edmour Valdez (Region Auditor), Sir Alberto

Abiera (Region Architect), Sir Cipriano Galang (Deputy Region Exchequer), Sir Gerry Danzil (Area 1 Commander), Sir Julius Abad (Area 2 Commander), Sir Dante Tabamo (Area 1 Deputy Commander), Sir Rowel Pangilinan (Area 2 Commander), Sir William Pasion, followed by KOR officials.

Next on deck were the Kababihang Rizalista led by its President Lady Esphie Manaog and the ladies of the KOR. There were inspirational messages by Michell Setlakwe, Councilor Sonny Moroz and Councilor Stephanie Valenzuela. The Lighting Ceremony was the highlight of the evening. There were five recommended for Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), three for Distinguished Service Star (DSS), three for Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), four for Third Degree (KCR), eight for Second Degree (KOR), and five for First Degree (KR). Towards the end, Sir Bert Abiera delivered an inspirational message. The event ended with the closing remarks by Sir Felix de Luna. Master of Ceremonies duties was deftly handled by Sir James de la Paz. The event went well into the night. Another packed event for the KOR!

As we welcome 2024, let's ask the Lord for His guidance to face the coming year. Let's look to Psalm 25:4,5 as it says, "Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are my God my savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Give me strength, and let me live by those words. Amen."

Until next issue and God Bless!



ICI television celebrated its 10th anniversary in December 2023 and presented an award to Tennyrose Dayandante as the current producer of PINOY PA RIN with the assistance of Michael Davantes, Derwin Collantes, and two new members that joined them after Zenaida Kharroubi completed her contract with ICI under Filcan TV Productions, operating as Mabuhay Montreal TV. its name as a weekly show that started on Dec. 13, 2013 until Jan. 30, 2016 every Friday at 8:30 p.m.

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FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

How Nadine Lustre became a 'more evolved' version of herself



Nadine Lustre

You'll immediately know how different Nadine Lustre is from other popular actresses of her stature and caliber just by talking to her. When we had our quick one-on-one time with the lovely star at the recent launch of Bioten Philippines' Hydro X-Cell hydration line, we were surrounded by people just raring to get their selfies with her—and she was more than happy to oblige.

In the midst of all the noise and distraction, Nadine easily won us over just by listening to her weigh in on our questions—from the mundane to the sensitive—as if she were in the midst of a deeply thoughtful scene in one of her increasingly provocative cinematic oeuvre.

In our view, it's also this gimlet-eyed focus, emotional transparency and "no bs" approach to life that enable Nadine to convey a plethora of thoughts and emotions that helps bring out the exceptional actress she's always been.

In fact, even as far back as 2014's blockbuster film "Diary ng Pangenet"—when the most noticeable thing that much of Tinseltown could focus on was Nadine being in a love team—it was impossible to conceal the fact that she wasn't just another pretty face thrust into the industry's "love team" culture.

Outspoken style icon

These days, "President Nadine"—as some of her rabid fans on X affectionately call her—is as much an outspoken style icon as she is an accomplished performer. She's also the most awarded actress of her age group, with best actress trophies from Urian (for "Never Not Love You"), Famas ("Never Not Love You," "Ulan," "Greed") and the Metro Manila Film Festival ("Deleter"), so far.

But the journey to where she ended up and how she feels about herself right now hasn't been easy for the actress.

What advice would she have for fans who are just starting to come into their own, and accept their strengths and weaknesses? Based on her own experience, what tips would she give to help them become better versions of themselves?

"I'm often asked how I manage to always look cool and composed," stated Nadine. "I always say this to people... I'm unapologetic about who I am. I say what I want to say, and I do what I want to do. And that comes off like a big puzzle to some because, for someone in the midst of all this in show biz, we're so used to having people who are afraid to speak up—and I'm definitely not like that.

Identity crisis

"So yeah, it took a toll on my mental health, then I also had an



identity crisis. I really didn't know who I was. I can't say when or how [the shift in mindset] clicked, but I just had this realization that I was tired of

wearing this mask.

"I admit, it was scary at first... kasi you don't want to offend people. Who wants to be disliked, 'di ba? I think it's innate in us not to want to get bashed... takot tayo na may masabing masama ang ibang tao about us—that's normal.

"So when I decided to just be myself, scary s'ya (laughs)! You think, 'Ano'ng sasabihin ng mga tao?' But then, I was like, 'You know what, f*ck it! I only have one life, so I have to live it the way I want to live it. And if people don't like it, then maybe show biz isn't for me.'

"So far, it's worked out well for me (laughs)! And I'm really happy that I went through that. I'm grateful that I went through the confusion, that crisis, because I wouldn't know how this feels if I hadn't gone through that. But I don't think I would ever have that realization kung hindi ko s'ya pinagdaanan."

We had a fabulous time talking to—and laughing with—Nadine despite our limited moment with her. Such a delightful, no-holds-barred interviewee she turned out to be!

On a lighter note, we asked Nadine to share with us skin care tips for fans who are just starting to take better care of themselves.

"The simplest advice I could give is get lots of sleep and drink a lot of water, although those are two things na hindi ako masyadong consistent—but I'm trying!" she pointed out, laughing. "But proper skin care can

only do so much on the surface level, right? It's a little different when you take care of yourself on the inside. So do both [for much better results]." ■

Coldplay surprises Manila fans with Lola Amour's 'Raining in Manila' performance



Coldplay and Lola Amour onstage

British rock band Coldplay's "Music of the Spheres" Day 1 Philippine concert became one for the books when it surprised Filipino fans with a performance of "Raining in Manila" with OPM band Lola Amour.

On Friday night, Jan. 19, Coldplay brought the boys of Lola Amour onstage as they jammed over the OPM band's hit song. Coldplay vocalist Chris Martin began playing a few notes on the keyboard before stating, "Let's call the real people to do this. Lola Amour, let's play!"

Filipino vocalist Pio Dumayas hugged Martin and then serenaded the fans with

their cold, charming voices, and the entire arena went wild, cheering and singing along to "Raining in Manila."

The performance of the two groups became a trending topic online, and on their official social media accounts, Lola Amour called the experience "surreal." He thanked the English band for the "once in a lifetime experience."

Coldplay's two-day, sold-out 2024 PH concert is their second in the country since its first one seven years ago. During the first day of the concert, the award-winning band performed their international hits "Fix You," "The Scientist" and "Yellow," among others.

During their first-day performance, vocalist Martin thanked the Filipinos for showing up despite the bad traffic, noting that Manila tops the ranking of cities with the worst traffic in the world.

"Thank you to all of you for coming through the traffic. I think... We've seen some traffic, but I think you have the number one [worst traffic] in the world. So, thank you, thank you for making the effort to come through," he said.

The Philippine Arena

was jam-packed with fans as well as celebrities like Maine Mendoza with her husband Arjo Atayde, Heaven Peralejo with rumored boyfriend Marco Gallo, and even the country's President Bongbong Marcos Jr. with First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, who reportedly came by helicopter.

The second day of Coldplay's PH tour is happening tonight, Jan. 20, still at the Philippine Arena, Bulacan. ■

Kris Aquino gives health update, reveals she has signs of Lupus



Kris Aquino

Actress-host Kris Aquino welcomed 2024 with another health update.

In a three-part Instagram post, Kris has run down and documented her struggles while battling with active rare autoimmune disease called Churg Strauss / EGPA and Crest Syndrome. She also disclosed that her blood results are now forming symptoms of SLE, or systemic lupus erythematosus, the most common form of Lupus.

"I cried nontstop when I got my blood panel result. My Churg Strauss/EGPA is still being treated, but to add it to my Crest Syndrome is now in full ACTIVE mode. And I'm

already exhibiting many symptoms for another autoimmune connective tissue disease -- it's highly likely based on my ANA count, my high inflammatory numbers, my anemia, my now constant elevated blood pressure at night, and the consitist appearance of the 'butterfly rash' on my face that I'm at the initial stage of SLE or what's commonly known as Lupus," Kris wrote on her post.

According to Mayo Clinic, Lupus is a disease "that occurs when your body's immune system attacks your tissues and organs." ■

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15***Sarah Lahbati breaks silence on Richard Gutierrez breakup rumors****Sarah Lahbati**

Actress Sarah Lahbati has finally addressed rumors surrounding her marriage to actor Richard Gutierrez.

"We're okay," said Sarah during an exclusive interview for the digital edition of Cosmopolitan Philippines.

Sarah added: "I'm holding up pretty well. I'm happy. Again, I'm grateful. There's nothing more to say than I'm really feeling blessed. And it's a good time to just work on myself."

Sarah also said she is someone who prefers to take things in stride.

"I'm calm and aiming for a grand slam. Because you can be calm while you're aiming for your biggest goals. There's nothing like functioning at a calm level when things are being thrown at you and you're being

**Richard Gutierrez**

challenged and going through difficulties that you can't control. That's how you grow as a person and achieve greater things. That's when opportunities come flowing through your door," she said in the same interview

It was late last year when rumors floated that Sarah and Richard had separated. However, both celebrities remained silent about the controversy. Sarah only responded to the rumors this month.

In January, Sarah started fresh when she revealed she was moving into a new place.

Sarah posted photos on Instagram of her unfurnished and unrenovated home. It was captioned: "Switching up the mood for 2024." Then she mentioned scouting for an interior designer for her new home. ■

Kris Aquino plays matchmaker for Carla Abellana amid health issues**Carla Abellana**

Fans found Kris' comment funny, saying that Kris was a good matchmaker.

Kapuso star Carla Abellana got a big surprise when Queen of All Media Kris Aquino played matchmaker for her.

Carla received a special message from Kris when she commented on her latest social media post.

On Jan. 22, Kris shared a health update with her fans, which her followers liked.

One of those who commented was Carla. She wrote: "Prayers for you, Ms Kris."

Kris replied to Carla's comment: "If you're already in the process of getting annulled, we have a doctor friend based in OC who might be a

**Kris Aquino**

great match."

Carla didn't comment anymore.

Fans found Kris' comment funny, saying that Kris was a good matchmaker.

Kris is currently in the US to receive various treatments for autoimmune diseases.

Carla and Tom Rodriguez got engaged in October 2020, but their engagement was only made public in March 2021. They tied the knot at the Madre de Dios Chapel, Tagaytay Midlands in Talisay, Batangas, on Oct. 23, 2021.

Then Carla and Tom called it quits. In June 2022, Tom revealed he was already divorced from Carla. ■

Kim Chiu on being friends again with ex-partner who cheated: 'It involves time and acceptance'**Kim Chiu**

Kapamilya actress Kim Chiu shared her thoughts on being friends with an ex-partner.

During the media roundtable for their hit series "Linlang" held at the Dolphy Theater on Jan. 15, Kim said that being civil with someone you used to love takes time.

"Lahat naman ng sugat hindi naman siya agad-agad gumagaling. So lahat ng panloloko, hindi mo kaagad mapapatawad. So I think it involves time and acceptance," said Kim, in reference to the characters who cheated in the TV series.

(All wounds do not heal immediately. So you can't forgive all cheating immediately. So, it involves time and acceptance.)

Kim further explained that looking at those two perspectives is essential, especially when the couple shares a child.

"Dapat may consideration din na kasama sa time and acceptance para sa anak niyo kasi para hindi naman sila matrauma. I-

set aside na yung hate, kasi dadaan talaga sa ganyang proseso kasi hindi naman siya in one click mapapatawad mo at nag bati na kayo para sa anak niyo," Kim added.

(There should also be consideration included in the time and acceptance for your child so that they are not traumatized. Set aside the hate because it will really go through such a process because you can't forgive him in one click, and you will be okay in front of your child.)

Falling in love again

Aside from her thoughts on being civil with an ex-partner, Kim was put into a hot seat after being asked if she was ready to fall in love again.

"Oo naman. Hindi man sa ngayon muna pero hopefully in the next months to come. Ay hindi years pala," Kim said.

Last month, Kim officially announced that she parted ways with her longtime partner, Xian Lim, after being together for 11 years. Despite the breakup between the two, Kim still believes in love.

"Marami namang kayang magbigay ng love, sa work, sa family and friends and willing naman akong tumanggap. And basta kasali sa buhay yun, so i-embrace natin yun," Kim added.

(There are many who can give love to work, family, and friends, and I am willing to accept. And as long as it's part of life, let's embrace it.) ■

Daniel Padilla’s house, sports car for sale



Daniel Padilla has put up his sports car for sale.

Socialite-artist Heart EvanDaniel Padilla was again the subject of show biz headlines after putting up his orange Chevrolet Corvette Stingray and Quezon City home on sale, with the luxury sports car already sold to a Pampanga-based buyer.

The two-story family home of Daniel Padilla and his mother Karla Estrada in Quezon City has also been put up for sale with an asking price of P50 million.

A real estate account shared photos and videos of the property, described as an “elegant owner’s built house,” through its Instagram page on December 2023. The house for sale was promoted again through its Instagram Stories last Jan. 17.

Padilla, Estrada, and their family appeared to have celebrated Christmas and New Year in their Quezon City home, as seen in the photos shown by the



Daniel Padilla, his mom Karla Estrada and their family.

latter on Instagram.

Meanwhile, talent manager Ogie Diaz shared his two cents on the matter in his “Ogie Diaz Showbiz Update,” as seen on his YouTube channel.

“I’m sure iisipin ng mga tao, ‘San na sila titira? Naghihirap na ba ang pamilya ni Daniel Padilla kaya nagbebenta ng bahay?’ Alam niyo, ang importante ay may ibebenta,” Diaz said.

“Ang alam ko kasi, parang

ang gusto ni Karla ay ibenta na ‘yung bahay kasi gusto na niyang lumipat sa bandang south,” he added, noting that Estrada might also want a new environment or a bigger place for her extended family.

Both Padilla and Estrada have yet to comment, as of this writing. ■

Pinoys on Broadway Week: A continuing celebration of talent and representation



Jasmine Forsberg as Jane Seymour in SIX the Musical on Broadway.

This Broadway Week, let’s raise a glass (or a halo, as the case may be) to the rising stars of the Filipino-American community who are illuminating the biggest stage in the world with their talent and tenacity.

On the electrifying stage of SIX, two powerful Pinays are making their mark: Jasmine Forsberg and Sierra Fermin. Forsberg, a veteran of the SIX national tour, is currently bedazzling in the Broadway stage as the captivating Jane Seymour. Her journey began in family karaoke nights, microphone in hand, long

before the dazzling lights of Broadway beckoned.

Forsberg, a veteran of the SIX national tour, currently bedazzles the Broadway stage as the captivating Jane Seymour. Her journey began during family karaoke nights, microphone in hand, long before the dazzling lights of Broadway beckoned. Her unwavering support system, including two brothers who chose more traditional paths in medicine and IT, constantly fueled her artistic dreams. Now, belting out her vocals eight shows a week, Forsberg



Sierra Fermin

has learned the delicate art of caring for her instrument — her powerhouse voice, a testament to the dedication required to shine on Broadway.

Fermin, a Chicago native fresh out of college, embodies the “anything is possible” spirit. Joining the SIX company as an alternate, she juggles three tracks while eagerly awaiting her moment in the spotlight. And what a moment it was!

And let’s not forget the incredibly handsome and talented Marc dela Cruz, the standby for Broadway’s groundbreaking



Marc dela Cruz in ‘Hamilton’

Hamilton. Half-Japanese, half-Filipino, Dela Cruz credits his Seattle theater community for fostering his love for the stage. Now, he navigates the demanding life of a standby, mastering multiple tracks and preparing for the possibility of stepping into the spotlight at a moment’s notice.

Playbill recently chronicled his remarkable feat of switching roles mid-show during intermission, showcasing his talent and adaptability when he went from playing Hamilton to Lafayette. ■

Free Swimming Lessons Proposal to Lower Drowning Rates

By Audrey Tougas (Local Journalism Initiative)

On January 11th, David Cotis, a municipal councilor representing the Saint-Bruno District in Laval, proposed a plan to his colleagues from Action Laval. The proposal entails providing free swimming lessons to Laval residents, a community on an island surrounded by water and boasting approximately 38,000 private pools. La société de sauvetage du Québec, the Lifesaving Society of Quebec mentioned that Quebec recorded a total of 55 drowning cases in 2023, a 30% increase in drowning incidents compared to the previous year. The proposal arises following municipal administrations and organizations providing free swimming lessons, such as Montreal-Nord. For example, to address the risks of drowning and the pandemic-induced limitations on swimming education for children, Montréal-Nord has spearheaded a pilot project in three outdoor pools, offering free swimming lessons to children with various classes, including lap sessions and beginners' classes. Parents are frustrated due to pandemic-related constraints and long waiting lists, emphasizing the need for expanded swimming opportunities. Parents have noted that the initiative is crucial for teaching proper swimming techniques early in life and overcoming potential phobias.

Notably, adults' swimming classes have proven less popular than those for children. The pilot project is receiving a high demand, and other Quebec municipalities, like Victoriaville and Mirabel, are also providing free swimming lessons to children, aligning

with the broader goal of promoting water safety.

Additionally, there are concerns regarding the increased danger of drowning, particularly among children from recently arrived families in

Society of Canada's research underscores the higher likelihood of newcomers being unable to swim compared to native-born individuals, emphasizing the necessity for targeted water safety education. As



Swimming classes for young children PHOTO HUGO-SÉBASTIEN AUBERT, LA PRESSE

Canada. According to La Presse, around 50 coroner's reports highlight the elevated risk for these children, often socio-economically disadvantaged due to a lack of swimming skills and water safety awareness. Drowning cases underscore the ongoing need for initiatives like the Swim to Survive program or Nager pour survivre, implemented in Quebec schools since 2017, targeting students in grades 3 to 6. Despite these efforts, drownings persist among individuals with insufficient swimming abilities, affecting not only minors but also young adults and university students, especially newcomers. La Société de sauvetage du Canada or the Lifesaving

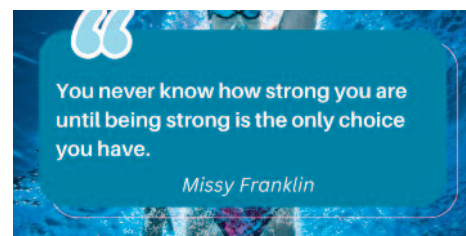
Quebec grapples with a surge in drownings, the Lifesaving Society calls on the government to expand access to swimming lessons, echoing the imperative for enhanced water safety initiatives among new Canadians.

A university medical student Lavallois, who also serves as a lifeguard, was recently interviewed to provide insights into the policy proposal by David Cotis to offer free swimming lessons.

Expressing a nuanced perspective, the student emphasized that while there is potential for widespread utilization of the service, there might be more impactful areas to allocate the funds. The medical

university student highlighted a pressing need for increased funding in the medical sector, particularly for essential resources and nursing staff. They underscored that directing the funds toward medical science and healthcare resources could address critical gaps in the current system. When questioned about their observations at the lifeguard center, the student revealed that most individuals participating in the swimming lessons were under the age of 10. Moreover, the lifeguard recounted a specific incident where they had to rescue a 27-year-old male from drowning during their two-year tenure at the center. Notably, the interviewee drew attention to the privatized nature of swimming lessons, pointing out that the associated costs were often subject to high rates.

Contrasting this perspective, Anthony, a university student and a friend of the lifeguard, expressed strong support for the proposal. He said that offering free swimming lessons is a commendable initiative, emphasizing the invaluable skill of swimming. Anthony agreed that widespread swimming education could contribute to reducing drowning incidents, subsequently alleviating the burden on emergency services and the healthcare system, ultimately saving lives. #



The ARTM Plans New Southwest Transit

By Audrey Tougas (Local Journalism Initiative)

In a joint announcement, the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM), the Quebec Transport Ministry, and the City of Montreal unveiled plans for a prospective expansion of the Montreal metro system, with a focus on extending towards the southwest of the island. This initiative is poised to impact an estimated 434,277 residents over an area of 85 square kilometers, constituting approximately 20% of the population on Montreal Island.

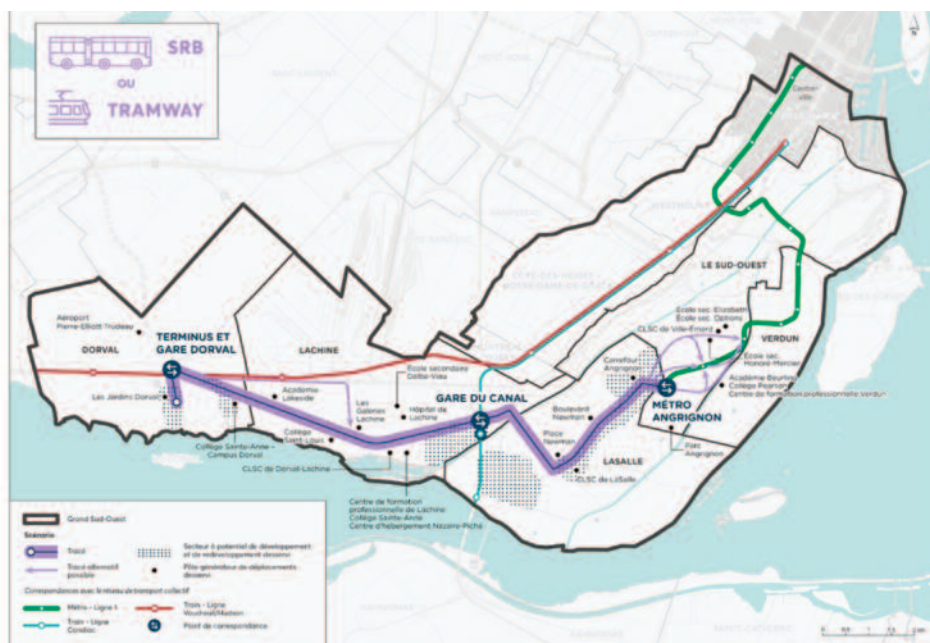
To engage the public and gather insights on the proposed transport project, a series of public consultations are scheduled at various locations as follows:

- Verdun: Tuesday, January 16, from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Marcel-Giroux Center

- LaSalle: Thursday, January 18, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Bibliothèque L'Octogone

- Dorval: Monday, January 22, from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Sarto-Desnoyers Community Center

- Lachine: Wednesday, January 24, from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Borough Hall of Lachine



ARTM tramway line study

The targeted expansion encompasses six boroughs—Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lachine, LaSalle, Le Sud-Ouest, Verdun, Ville-Marie—and three linked cities: Dorval, Montreal West, and Westmount. Residents and stakeholders interested in providing feedback on the project can access an

online form available on the ARTM website until February 11th. The form covers diverse aspects such as mobility improvement, environmental integration, and preservation. Technical details, including theoretical station numbers, metro arrival frequencies, route durations, distances, and population and job

statistics for specific areas, are presented. Respondents are encouraged to express their agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty regarding the outlined claims or arguments, accompanied by the option to provide more detailed comments. Project Director Patrick Charpentier further elucidates these details in a video on the website.

The overarching objectives of the project include establishing a robust connection between the southwest and the city center, ensuring seamless integration into the environmental framework to support ecological transitions, and optimizing benefits while adhering to financial responsibility. According to 2016 ARTM data, the targeted area houses approximately 460,000 jobs, with about 64% situated in the city center.

A budget allocation of \$19.4 million has been earmarked in the 2021-2031 Programme Québécois des infrastructures (PQI) for the completion of the opportunity file. This budget encompasses the establishment of the project office and the comprehensive execution of all required studies in preparation for the opportunity. #

Harvard Interim president wants to create task forces to combat Anti-semitism and Islamophobia on campus

Following the October 7 attacks, Jewish and Palestinian college students nationwide began reporting an alarming rise in anti-semitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab hate on campuses.



Alan Garber, Harvard University Interim President (posted on X)

"Reports of antisemitic and Islamophobic acts on our campus have grown, and the sense of belonging among these groups has been undermined," Alan Garber, Harvard's interim president, said in a letter to the school community. "We need to understand why and how that is happening — and what more we might do to prevent it."

The separate task forces follow the resignation of Harvard president Claudine Gay, who faced a backlash over her congressional testimony on antisemitism as well as plagiarism accusations.

Some Jewish students filed a lawsuit against Harvard this month, accusing the school of becoming "a bastion of rampant anti-Jewish hatred and harassment." Arab and Muslim students around the country have also said they feel they're being punished for their political views on the war.

The Oct. 7 Hamas attacks killed 1,200 people in Israel, mainly

civilians, and abducted around 250 others. Roughly 130 hostages are believed by Israel to remain in Hamas captivity. The war Israel declared in response has killed nearly 25,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, caused widespread destruction and uprooted over 80 per cent of the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes.

The fallout has roiled campuses across the U.S. and reignited a debate over free speech. College leaders have struggled to define the line where political speech crosses into harassment and discrimination, with both Jewish and Arab students raising concerns that their schools are doing too little to protect them.

The issue took center stage in December when the presidents of Harvard, University of Pennsylvania and MIT testified at a congressional hearing on campus antisemitism. A Republican lawmaker asserted that support for "intifada" equates to calling for the genocide of Jews, and then asked if such rhetoric violates campus policies. The presidents offered lawyerly answers, declining to say unequivocally that it was prohibited speech.

Their answers prompted weeks of backlash from donors and alumni, ultimately leading to the resignation of Liz Magill at Penn and Claudine Gay at Harvard.

Garber said the goals of the task forces are to explore why Harvard is seeing a rise in antisemitism and anti-Arab bias and propose recommendations to counteract it.

Instead, Trump became the first Republican to sweep competitive votes in both Iowa - where he won by a record-setting margin eight days ago - and New Hampshire since 1976, when the two states cemented their status as the first nominating contests. While the final margin was still unclear, the result will likely bolster some Republicans' calls for Haley to drop out so the party can coalesce behind Trump. Her campaign vowed in a memo earlier on Tuesday to push forward until "Super Tuesday" on March 5, when Republicans in 15 states and one territory vote.

The next competitive contest is scheduled for Feb. 24 in South Carolina, where Haley was born and served two terms as governor. Despite her ties, however, Trump has racked up endorsements from most of the state's Republican figures, and opinion polls show him with a wide lead.

Tuesday's vote was the first one-on-one matchup between Trump and Haley, after Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, once seen as Trump's most formidable challenger, dropped out on Sunday and endorsed Trump. Though DeSantis had only marginal support in New Hampshire, his voters were far likelier to switch allegiance to Trump,

"Strengthening our ties to one another will take considerable effort and engagement across the University,"

at Harvard Kennedy School.

Harvard seeks to move past firestorm brought on by school



Harvard University campus in Boston, Massachusetts

Garber wrote. "I have asked each task force to undertake broad outreach, and I encourage you to share your perspectives and your experiences with equal measures of care and candor. We have before us an opportunity to meet challenges with far-reaching implications."

The antisemitism task force will be co-chaired by Derek Penslar, the William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Raffaella Sadun, the Charles E. Wilson Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. The task force on anti-Arab bias and Islamophobia will be co-chaired by Wafaie Fawzi, the Richard Saltonstall Professor of Population Sciences and Asim Ijaz Khwaja, Sumitomo-FASID Professor of International Finance and Development

President Claudine Gay's resignation Harvard president Claudine Gay resigns amid plagiarism claims, backlash from antisemitism testimony

Gay had created a committee to advise university leaders on antisemitism during her short tenure, but her testimony prompted one Harvard Divinity School rabbi to resign from that effort. Rabbi David Wolpe said in an email Friday that he'll reach out to those involved with the antisemitism task force, hoping it "will be able to create and implement policies and that will change the campus climate." #

Source: News excerpts, January 19, 2024 - CTV, CBC, AP, f

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MANCHESTER, New Hampshire, Jan 23 (Reuters) - Donald Trump cruised to victory in New Hampshire's Republican presidential contest on Tuesday, marching closer to a November rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden even as his only remaining rival, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, vowed to soldier on.

"This race is far from over," she told supporters at a post-election party in Concord, challenging Trump to debate her. "I'm a fighter. And I'm scrappy. And now we're the last one standing next to Donald Trump."

At his own party in Nashua, Trump opened his speech by mocking Haley, calling her an "imposter" and saying, "She's doing, like, a speech like she won. She didn't win. She lost ... She had a very bad night." His remarks followed a series of angry posts on his Truth Social app, denouncing her as "DELUSIONAL."

With 57% of the expected vote tallied, according to Edison Research, Trump held a comfortable 54.4% to 43.6% lead.

Haley had hoped the Northeastern state's sizable cadre of independent voters would carry her to an upset win that might loosen Trump's iron grip on the Republican Party.

Trump cruises in New Hampshire primary election, Haley vows to fight on



rather than to Haley, according to polls.

Meanwhile, Edison projected Biden would win the New Hampshire Democratic primary, brushing aside his challenger, U.S. Representative Dean Phillips.

Despite Trump's win on Tuesday, exit polls hinted at his potential vulnerabilities in a general election campaign. He faces 91 criminal charges for a range of offenses, including his efforts to overturn his 2020 defeat and his retention of classified documents after

leaving the White House in 2021. He has denied any wrongdoing and claimed to be a victim of political persecution.

About 42% of voters who participated in the Republican primary said he would not be fit to serve if convicted in court, according to exit polling by Edison.

(Abridged version of report by By Nathan Layne, Gram Slattery and James Oliphant, January 24, 2024 REUTERS

THE NORTH AMERICAN FILIPINO STAR

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

January 2024 Pictorial News



Joseph Glenn Herbert (born June 2, 1971) known professionally as Jo Koy, is an American stand-up comedian and actor whose mother is a Filipino. He was a frequent panelist on E!'s late night show Chelsea. He has since had a total of six comedy specials released by Comedy Central and Netflix. In 2024, Koy hosted the 81st Golden Globe Awards to mixed reviews. But Whoopi Goldberg wants the people criticizing comedian Jo Koy to understand that hosting award shows can be "brutal."



Danish King Frederik X and wife Queen Mary of Denmark on the balcony of Christiansborg Palace. On Saturday, January 13, 2024, HM King Frederik X began his reign as Denmark's monarch and head of state. He succeeds his mother, Margrethe II, after her surprise abdication announcement on New Year's Eve. Following Danish traditions male heirs are named either Christian or Frederik. This Frederick will be the 10th to sit on the Danish throne. Samir Hussein / Getty



Dr. Kwane Stewart — a veterinarian whose nonprofit, Project Street Vet, provides medical care to the pets of people experiencing homelessness — is the 2023 CNN Hero of the Year (on the left) with Genesis Rendon, a registered veterinary nurse who Stewart calls his "right-hand," had worked in the veterinary field for nearly two decades and was doing her own street outreach when she teamed up with him in 2016. You can donate to Stewart's Project Street Vet CNN Heroes' nonprofit organizations on CNNHeroes.com.



Former President Trump stands with his wife Melania, their son Barron and father-in-law Viktor Knavs as the coffin carrying the remains of Amalija Knavs, the former first lady's mother, is carried into the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea for her funeral, in Palm Beach, Florida, on Thursday, January 12, 2024. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)



To stronger ties: President Ferdinand Marcos Jr toasts Indonesian President Joko Widodo at a state luncheon held at Malacañang, Manila, on January 10, 2024. Photo: PPA Pool



"It has to be one culture, one nation, with all its diversity. That's Quebec," says Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet. "Is it?" asks Toulia Drimonis. "Quebec has never been one monolithic culture." PHOTO BY RYAN REMIORZ / The Canadian Press (opinion ed., Montreal Gazette, January 19, 2024).