

Trudeau's resignation triggers race for Liberal Party leadership and elections

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with the press in front his home in Ottawa on Monday, January 6 to announce his decision of stepping down as the leader of the ruling Liberal Party, following months of pressure from partymates to resign amid increasingly poor public approval ratings.

"I intend to resign as party leader as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader through a robust, nationwide competitive process," Trudeau said. "This country deserves a real choice in the next election and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles I cannot be the best option in that election."

Trudeau confirmed that he would remain in office as both Liberal Party leader and Prime Minister until a replacement is selected as he intends to lead Canada during the early months of Donald Trump's presidency, including navigating tense trade negotiations and potential tariff threats



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks to reporters outside his home in Ottawa, Jan. 6, 2025 (CNN Photo)

from the United States. He also announced that Canada's Parliament would be suspended until March 24 to give his Liberal Party time to choose a new leader.

Trudeau's resignation comes before a federal parliamentary election that must happen by October 2025, but it can be held earlier if the House of Commons passes a motion of no-

confidence to dissolve the incumbent Liberal government. Trudeau asked the governor-general for the prorogation of Parliament until March 24th to allow the Liberal Party to elect a new leader. If the opposition parties succeed in passing a non-confidence motion, the elections will be held much earlier in the spring.

Trudeau's nine-year tenure as Canadian Prime Minister has become tenuous, with two-thirds of Canadians disapproving of his performance, amid frustration over the cost of living and record immigration levels. The Liberal Party now trails the opposition Conservative Party by more than 20 percentage points and voter support hit a record low by the end of 2024.

The party does not hold an outright majority in Parliament and has relied on the backing of the more left-leaning New Democratic Party through a supply-and-confidence agreement, which the NDP dropped in September.

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Marvin Rotrand receives King Charles III medal for outstanding services rendered

(Montreal, January 16, 2025) - On January 16 Marvin Rotrand, long time former City Councillor for Snowdon and current Director General of United Against Hate Canada, was awarded the King Charles Medal via zoom as he is out of the country. The nomination for the award was made by current Snowdon City Councillor Sonny Moroz and submitted by Mount Royal Member of Parliament Anthony Housefather and was vetted and approved by Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada.

A ceremony was held on ZOOM presided by Housefather and attended by leaders of the many community groups with which Rotrand worked during his tenure in office as a Montreal Councillor.

The King Charles III medal is to be awarded in the first anniversary year of the coronation of the new monarch, thus between May 6, 2024 and May 5, 2025. During the anniversary year,



Photo shows Marvin Rotrand, Director-General, United Against Hate Canada (on the right) with Mount Royal MP, Anthony Housefather.

30,000 medals will be awarded, of which 4000 will recognize members of the Canadian Armed Forces and 1000 will honour public service employees.

The eligibility criteria for the non-military or civil service awardees requires those receiving the medal to "have made a significant contribution to Canada or to a particular province, territory, region or community of Canada, or have made an outstanding achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada."

Marvin Rotrand has served the public for over forty years. He now occupies the position of Director General of United Against Hate Canada, a human rights anti-hate organization, a post he has held since February 2024. Previous to that he occupied the role of National Director of B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights from August 2021 to February 2024.

See Page 4 Marvin Rotrand

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Who will lead the Liberal Party into the next election?

OTTAWA (Jan. 17, 2025) - The federal Liberals are running their first leadership race in more than a decade and their shortest in the party's modern history to replace Justin Trudeau

The party will announce the new leader after the vote on March 9. Candidates must declare by Jan. 23 and pay a \$350,000 fee to enter the race. The Liberal Party of Canada released its leadership race rules late Thursday, just days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced he will be resigning as party leader once a successor is selected.

The fee is a significant jump from the \$75,000 fee in the previous leadership race.

"You want to set a high-entry fee so you discourage also-rans, so you discourage carpet baggers and you discourage special interest groups," CTV News political analyst Scott Reid said, who also worked with former prime minister Paul Martin.

"You want (candidates) to be people who can step up to the plate, communicate and connect with Canadians and demonstrate they can be the next prime minister."

Whoever wins the leadership will have just two weeks in their new job before the House of Commons is set to return on March 24. On Monday, in the wake of his resignation announcement, Trudeau asked Gov. Gen. Mary Simon to prorogue the current session of Parliament until late March – ending all parliamentary business.

The new leader could also quickly face a general election, as opposition parties have signalled they will move to bring down the Liberal government at the first opportunity.

Leading up to Thursday's rules announcement, many MPs expressed concerns around preventing foreign interference and finding ways to preserve the integrity of the race.

In an interim report by foreign interference inquiry Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue published last May, allegations of potential interference in a Liberal nomination race were detailed, during which busloads of international students were alleged to have voted in the contest in support of a particular candidate, at the direction of foreign officials.

The Liberal Party of Canada constitution does not appear to explicitly exclude international students or non-permanent residents from voting in such races.

But in the upcoming race, the Liberal party says it will be updating the requirements to become a registered Liberal as a way to protect "the integrity of our democratic process, while still engaging as many people as possible."

Liberal-Ontario MP Chandra Arya and former Liberal MP Frank Baylis declared they intend to step into the race, prior to the release of the leadership race rules.

Thursday's announcement did not specify whether sitting cabinet ministers have to vacate their portfolios to run for the top job.

Former Liberal national

campaign director Penny Collette says she does not believe a cabinet minister will have an "unfair advantage."

"It's a fast race, so I'm not sure what a cabinet minister, somebody holding a cabinet position, can do in a couple of weeks that would give them an unfair advantage," Collette said in an interview with CTV News. "It can also be a hindrance because they have to spend time as well on their cabinet duties. So it's a bit of a double-edged sword."

Liberal Party Leadership contenders:



Chandra Arya

MP for Nepean

Age: 61 Born: Karnataka, India

Arya is a backbench Liberal MP from suburban Ottawa who was first elected during the Trudeau wave in 2015. With a background in business and local advocacy, Arya says he will bring "prudence and pragmatism" to focus on economic growth and future prosperity. Arya vows to scrap Trudeau's carbon pricing system, which has been attacked as an inefficient tax, and immediately recognize a sovereign Palestine as part of a two-state solution with Israel.

Arya was the first current member of the Liberal caucus to declare intent to run, four days after Trudeau's announcement. Arya said he does not believe he needs to speak French to become prime minister.



Jaime Battiste

MP for Sydney—Victoria

Age: 46 Born: Eskasoni First Nation, Nova Scotia

Liberal MP Jaime Battiste is currently the parliamentary secretary to the minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. He was first elected as a Liberal in 2019 and is a graduate of Dalhousie's law school. In a post announcing his candidacy, Battiste acknowledged he will face a challenge raising the \$350,000 to compete in the race, but he said his candidacy could help pave the way for future Indigenous leadership. "Before there

was a Premier Wab Kinew, there had to be an Elijah Harper. Before there was a President Barack Obama, there had to be a Jesse Jackson," he said. "There must always be people willing to take the first steps — even if their journey is one meant to pave the way for future generations."



Frank Baylis

Former MP

Age: 62 Born: Quebec

A former Montreal Liberal MP and businessman, Baylis was the first to announce his candidacy. Baylis ran in 2015 under the Liberal banner but chose not to run again in 2019. He sold his company Baylis Medical Company Inc. to Boston Scientific Corporation in 2022 for \$1.75 billion.



Karina Gould

Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

Age: 37 Born: Ontario

Gould, who represents Burlington in the House of Commons, was first elected in 2015 when the Trudeau government first came to power. She has served in three cabinet portfolios before being named house leader; democratic institutions, international development and families, children and social development.



Mark Carney

Former Governor of Bank of Canada and England

Age: 59 Born: Northwest Territories

Carney is expected to declare his candidacy by Thursday, January 16,

in Edmonton, Alberta. Launching his campaign in Edmonton gives the 59-year-old a chance to put his Alberta roots on full display as Canadians get to know him.

An Edmonton Oilers fan, Carney grew up in the city's west end and worked as a newspaper boy, according to a 2012 profile of him that ran in the Edmonton Journal.

Alberta could shape up to be an intense battleground between Carney and Freeland, who also grew up in the province.

Under party rules, each of Canada's 343 federal ridings is worth 100 points in the leadership race.

The former Bank of Canada governor will seek to position himself as an outsider and put some distance between himself and the deeply unpopular government of outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In an interview on "The Daily Show" that racked up nearly 2 million views online, host Jon Stewart asked Carney if he's stuck holding the "carbon tax bag."

Carney replied that Canada needs to address climate change in a way that ensures "Canadians are not paying the price," but he did not commit either way.



Chrystia Freeland

Former Finance Minister & Deputy Prime Minister

Age: 56 Born: Peace River, Alberta

According to media reports, Freeland will officially announce her intention to run for the leadership of her party by 20 January, coinciding with the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump.

Freeland, who has Ukrainian heritage, unexpectedly resigned on 16 December, citing differences with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

A member of the Liberal Party, she was first elected to the House of Commons of Canada in a by-election in 2013. First appointed to the Cabinet following the 2015 federal election, she has served in various posts including as the minister of finance from 2020 until her resignation from the 29th Canadian Ministry in 2024.

After the 2015 federal election, Justin Trudeau formed his first government and she was named minister of international trade. Under her tenure, Canada negotiated the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union,

See Page 13 Liberal Party leadership



FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

New Year's resolutions - why they fail and how to make them work

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

New year, new life, new resolutions to make but sooner than we realize it, we forget them and just get back to the same routines. While it differs for everyone, a 2023 poll from Forbes Health found most people give up resolutions after less than four months. What are the common reasons people break their resolutions?

Psychologists say that people want to be better in the new year but they never focus on understanding what are the exact behaviors that are needed to be done to turn into habits, and what's the plan to follow their resolutions. Some people also aim for too many resolutions which are unrealistic and make them feel worst when they realize that they are unable to fulfill them.

Although most resolutions are abandoned when not properly thought out, some good advice are mentioned by experts to be able to keep our

resolutions and achieve better results. Author Justin Hale, an adviser and speaker at leadership and management consulting company Crucial Learning said that there are three steps to help you achieve your resolutions, namely:

1) Identify a cue: This is a trigger that gets your brain thinking about the behavior you're aiming for. Habit trackers or apps can be helpful, because they can send you reminders that cue your behavior.

2. Create a small, actionable routine: Do this by shrinking down the goal or behavior until you want to do it. Your environment is important here. Set it up to be the most conducive to your new routine.

3. Choose a reward: This is the payoff for completing the action. This could be something physical or emotional.

Other psychologists suggest using the SMART framework to

achieve goals. You can use this method for any type of goal — personal, professional, financial, and more. You can also use the SMART goal framework for short-term and long-term goals. SMART is an acronym that stands for:

1. Specific: Your goals should be limited to a single area. Instead of trying to "be a better person," try focusing on your listening skills or positive self-talk.

2. Measurable: The goal must align with explicit metrics, such as saving a specific amount of money or qualifying for a particular certification. This indicates when you've accomplished your mission.

3. Attainable: The goal needs to be realistic. Maybe you won't qualify for the Olympic basketball team, but you could improve your free throw percentage.

4. Relevant: Goals should move you in

the direction of your values, dreams, and ambitions.

5. Time-bound: Time-based goals create urgency and encourage efficient time management. There must be a due date for completion so you can pace your efforts.

Once you've checked all these boxes, you're left with a detailed goal-setting plan that keeps you focused and headed in the right direction.

Using the SMART goal framework helps direct your actions toward reaching your goals. Framing your plans this way highlights potential challenges, letting you chart a detailed course that accounts for obstacles.

Perhaps, what really matters in the end in spite of all broken resolutions is to continue making an effort to work towards realizing your dreams. It is the journey and not the destination that makes life more interesting.#

OPINION EDITORIAL

By Gus Mercado

Who and what is responsible for the runaway fires in California?

For the answer, we have to go back about 20 years. We have to recollect and analyze the things that happened or did not happen in that span of time that led to this heart-breaking catastrophe.

President-elect Donald Trump is a very wily politician and ruthless in his craftiness. He is a master of diverting attention from his own culpability. Even as the victims of the inferno are suffering and facing homelessness and bankruptcy, Trump ignores the people's pains and takes advantage of the situation to make false and unfair political points. He blames President Biden and Governor Newsom for the fires making silly claims about alleged failure to build water tunnels from Canada and not raking leaves in the forests. Certainly, there are precautionary things that the state and local officials could have done better, but disaster experts say the magnitude of the 6 major fires happening simultaneously is too huge to be ascribed to small oversights by local officials. The "inconvenient truth" as climate advocate former Vice President Al Gore called his book, is that fires are caused by prolonged drought and unseasonal hot winds which are all manifestations of climate change. Scientists from all over the world agree and offer incontrovertible evidence that global warming is caused by sustained massive fossil fuel emissions from cars and trucks and carbon exhausts from factories.

Clinton, Bush and Obama set the country on the right path with climate awareness programs, car efficiency regulations, active promotion of alternative fuel sources such as wind, sun and natural gas. So, what did Trump do in his first term? He disavowed climate change claiming it was a Chinese hoax and warning that wind turbines cause cancer, axed the climate reforms started by his



A home is engulfed in flames during the Eaton fire in the Altadena area of Los Angeles County, California, on Jan. 8. Photographer: Josh Edelson/AFP predecessors, and got the US out of the Tokyo international climate accord.

Non-partisan climate experts estimate that the four years of Trump set the country back by about 10 years. When Biden took over, he gained back many years of progress that were lost during the Trump era. Biden not only made record investments in climate protection programs, but also renewed US participation in global climate accords, and instituted mandates to switch to electric vehicles within 5-10 years. And now, the climate denier Trump is coming back with a vengeance. He promised day-one plans to kill Biden's EV mandate, eliminate the Office of Climate Change and dismantle the Environment Protection Agency.

So, who is responsible for the unseasonal fires on the west coast, tornadoes in central US and unusually high frequency of blizzards, hurricanes and floods on the east coast? Your guess is as good as mine.

(Reactions.to.this.piece.may.be.sent.to gusmercado@ verizon.net)

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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.

From Page 1 Justin Trudeau

The separatist Bloc Quebecois also dropped its support for the Liberals in October, with its leader saying it wanted to topple Trudeau's government. These moves, along with recent losses in by-elections in formerly Liberal strongholds, pushed party members to hold a closed-door caucus meeting in late October in Ottawa, where they urged Trudeau to resign.

Pressure on Trudeau grew further following the Dec. 16 shock resignation of one of his closest allies, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, after he tried to demote her. In her resignation letter, Freeland accused Trudeau of "costly political gimmicks" over plans to cancel sales tax and hand out \$250 checks for Christmas. Freeland said

Liberal Party in 2013, inheriting a political legacy from his father, Pierre Trudeau, who served as prime minister for almost 16 years.

However, Trudeau's legacy remains complex. His tenure will be remembered for progressive policies, including the legalization of cannabis, a national child care program that lowered fees to \$10 a day, and a welcoming immigration policy. But his struggle to manage the economic and political challenges of recent years has overshadowed many of his achievements.

During his press conference Monday, Trudeau said he has one regret going into the upcoming election: that he did not change the electoral system to ranked-choice voting, which he says would reduce political division. "People would have



Justin Trudeau greets supporters of the Liberal Party in Montreal during the 2015 elections when he won a majority. CNN photo

Canada needed to keep its "fiscal powder dry" ahead of a possible trade war amid Trump's threat to slap a 25% tariff on all goods from Canada.

Trudeau has since shuffled his Cabinet, but the likelihood of elections

been looking for things they have in common, instead of trying to polarize and divide Canadians against each other," he said of allowing Canadians the option to select a second or third choice on the ballot. But critics at the



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, fifth from left, and Governor General David Johnston, centre, pose for a group photo with the new Liberal cabinet at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press

being called sooner grew after NDP leader Jagmeet Singh issued a letter on Dec. 20 stating that his party "will vote to bring this government down" and put forward a motion of no-confidence. "Justin Trudeau has let you down, over and over," Singh wrote in a statement after Trudeau announced his resignation Monday. "It doesn't matter who leads the Liberals. They don't deserve another chance."

For many, Trudeau's resignation marks the end of an era in Canadian politics. He first rose to national prominence as leader of the

time said it was a move that would mainly benefit Liberal election fortune.

Later in the afternoon, the President of the Liberal Party of Canada Sachit Mehra said he plans to call a national board meeting this week. He expressed his gratitude to Trudeau's leadership "for making the most open and inclusive movement in Canadian politics" and "We look forward to his continued leadership until a new leader is chosen."

(With files from Time, CTV news)

From Page 1 Marvin Rotrand

In both these positions, he advocated to governments at all three levels for public policies that combat hate and intolerance in Canada, liaised with police departments to ensure follow up to complaints as to incidents targeting minorities and provided guidance to school boards and Ministries of Education to improve Holocaust education.

He has been a leading voice in fostering closer relations between Filipinos and Jews by working to educate the Canadian public to the Rescue In the Philippines, when President Manuel Quezon opened the doors of the country to shelter Jews fleeing the Holocaust, becoming one of only a handful of world leaders to try to rescue Jews during the dark time of the Holocaust.

More recently he cemented a partnership between United Against Hate Canada and the Filipino Heritage Society to highlight June as Filipino Heritage Month in Canada. Several dozen communities have in the past months adopted Council resolutions to formalize the heritage month in their territory including locally Cote Saint Luc and Pointe Claire.

Many years ago, he was the instigator of the Montreal Manila Friendship Agreement ratified in October 2005 and was the mover of the motion declaring June as Filipino Heritage Month in Montreal. After its adoption by Montreal Council, the Canadian Parliament emulated the gesture by adopting its own motion making the heritage month national. He also worked with the late Alberto Abiera and the Knights of Rizal to have City Council officially name the area surrounding the monument of Dr. Jose Rizal in Mackenzie King Park as Place Jose Rizal. He has been instrumental in working with the Filipino Israel Day Committee forming a joint Filipino - Jewish delegation to march in the annual Israel Day parade.

Marvin Rotrand is a native Montrealer and holds degrees from Sir George Williams and McGill Universities. Before assuming his work in human rights, he was a noted member of Montreal City Council. In fact, he holds the record for longevity in office, having first been elected in 1982 and serving until 2021 when he retired after 39 years.

Much of Rotrand's work was in public transportation. He was a Board member of the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) where he served from November 2001 until 2018, mostly in the capacity of Vice President.

In 2017 he won the Canadian Urban Transit Association's (CUTA) prize for distinguished service for public transport in Canada. Councillor Rotrand was the national chair of CUTA's Transit Board Members committee. He held many important positions at the STM. He chaired the Asset Management Committee that oversaw the STM's acquisition of 468 new metro cars, the investments in the state of good repair of Montreal's four-line metro network as well as the acquisition of hybrid buses. He also chaired the Customer Service Committee between 2003 and 2015 developing the STM's "Voice of the Customer" approach which included introducing public meetings to allow the clientele to comment on STM services.

The Customer Service

committee worked to renew the STM's bus shelters, launched the programs to offer real time passenger information and to assure mobile phone coverage in the metro.

During his time in office, Councillor Rotrand sat on the City's Public Security Commission, Finance Commission, President's Commission as well as being the Majority Leader at City Council between 2009 and 2013.

Rotrand stated that he is greatly honoured to receive King Charles III medal and that his family is proud to witness him being accorded such a prestigious award. His son was among the speakers who are representatives of several Filipino organizations and other ethnic communities. In their accolades, all speakers cited the fact that Marvin Rotrand is indeed an outstanding and inspirational leader.

Chelsea Craig, as the host of the zoom meeting, called the names of the speakers but they are too numerous to mention in this article.

At the end of the zoom meeting that lasted two hours, Mr. Housefather showed the medal in his hand which will be given to Mr. Rotrand on his return to Canada.

The King Charles III Coronation



medal is silver and nickel and 32 mm in diameter, bearing on the obverse, a crowned and robed effigy of Charles III, the King of Canada, facing right, circumscribed with the inscriptions "CHARLES III DEI GRATIA REX" and "CANADA".

On the reverse, there appears on the background a ring of frosted triangular shapes evoking the image of a string of pennants displayed for a celebration. These 13 shapes allude to Canada's provinces and territories. Over this background appears the Canadian Royal Cypher in the center, the date of the Coronation, 6.V.2023, on the left and the words "VIVAT REX" meaning Long Live The King, on the right.

The medal was designed by Cathy Bursey-Sabourin, Fraser Herald at the Canadian Heraldic Authority at the Chancellery of Honours, Rideau Hall. #

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News reports

By John Leo Lete
Local Journalism Initiative

Braving the Storm: Josephine Sarcilla's Journey of Resilience and Community Support

On a chilling winter day in late November 2024, Josephine Sarcilla's life took a dramatic turn.

While shoveling snow in the biting cold of -21°C, she suffered a life-threatening stroke that left her incapacitated in her driveway. For nearly an hour, she lay in the snow until Parampal Singh found her and called 911. His quick thinking and willingness to help saved her life. Josephine was rushed to the hospital, where an Emergency Vascular Thrombectomy (EVT) was performed to remove the brain clot that had caused her stroke. The skilled hands of neurologists, combined with timely medical intervention, gave her a fighting chance to recover. Yet, this incident marked the beginning of a challenging journey of recovery and transformation.

Government and Community Involvement



Josephine and Jojo Sarcilla bring light and inspiration to patients and staff at Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Alberta

In the months following her stroke, Josephine leaned heavily on her community and government medical funding. Her resilience and determination to remain engaged served as a beacon of hope for others facing similar challenges.

Josephine's work as a disability support worker also played a pivotal role in her recovery. It gave her a renewed sense of purpose and a platform to share her experiences, inspiring others to find strength in adversity. Her interactions with diverse individuals, including a memorable encounter with a Punjabi community member, highlighted the importance of empathy and cultural understanding in her professional and personal life.

Medical Emergency and Hospitalization

The medical ordeal Josephine endured underscores the importance of timely intervention and skilled healthcare. The neurologist's findings revealed the severity of her condition, and the EVT procedure was a lifesaving measure. Josephine also emphasized the role of the Good Samaritan who found her,

crediting his actions with setting the stage for her survival.

During her hospitalization, Josephine faced not only physical but also emotional and cognitive challenges. The isolation brought on by the hospitalization added another layer of difficulty. However, the unwavering support of healthcare workers and her family provided the strength she needed to push through.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Josephine's recovery process was marked by determination and a strong support network. She shared how the use of CCTV allowed her to piece together the events leading up to her stroke, helping her to better understand and accept what had happened. The rehabilitation journey was grueling, requiring her to rebuild her physical strength and adapt to new limitations. Yet, she remained optimistic, emphasizing the importance of

maintaining a positive attitude and relying on family and community support.

Through her story, Josephine highlights the crucial role that Good Samaritans, medical professionals, and community members play in recovery. Her journey is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the profound impact of kindness and support in overcoming life's most challenging moments.

Looking Ahead

Josephine's story is not just one of survival but also of thriving in the face of adversity. As she continues to navigate life post-stroke, her commitment to helping others and her advocacy for continuous learning and community involvement remain unwavering. Her journey serves as a powerful reminder that even in our darkest moments, the light of human compassion can guide us to brighter days. #

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Filipino Canadian Community of South Shore Strengthening Ties, Celebrating Heritage

The Filipino Canadian Community of South Shore (FCCSS) is a vibrant and welcoming organization dedicated to uniting Filipinos and fostering a sense of belonging in the South Shore area. Since its founding in 1984, FCCSS has become a cornerstone of the Filipino-Canadian community, offering a wide range of events and activities designed to celebrate heritage, provide support, and bring people together.

Building a Community

The FCCSS aims to be a hub for social connection and cultural pride. With 300 Christmas party attendees, the organization creates opportunities for Filipinos to socialize, share experiences, and help each other navigate life in Canada. Newcomers and immigrants often find invaluable support through the group's initiatives.

organization's 40th anniversary, a milestone being celebrated with the annual Valentine's Ball. Scheduled to take place soon, the ball will feature a live band, a DJ, and plenty of opportunities to connect. The event serves as a fundraiser, helping to sustain FCCSS's many programs.

"The Valentine's Ball is one of our most anticipated events," said by community chairman. "It's not just a celebration but also a way to ensure our community remains active and vibrant for years to come."

Overcoming Challenges

Like many organizations, FCCSS has faced its share of challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted some of their events, and retirements have reduced their pool of volunteers. However, the group has shown resilience, continuing to adapt and engage its



A joyful holiday celebration filled with laughter, community spirit, and the magic of Christmas cheer

"We want to ensure that every Filipino feels at home here," said the community chairman. "Our events are not just for newcomers but for all Filipinos who want to connect and celebrate their culture."

Diverse Activities

FCCSS hosts a variety of activities to engage members of all ages. Job fairs, sports nights, and Filipino language classes are just a few examples of their offerings. Physical wellness is also a priority, with Zumba classes for both kids and adults adding a lively and energetic touch.

Their Christmas parties are particularly noteworthy, blending traditional holiday cheer with Filipino cultural showcases. These events highlight the talents of the community through performances and activities that bring the spirit of the Philippines to the South Shore.

Honoring 40 Years of Dedication

This year marks the

members despite these setbacks.

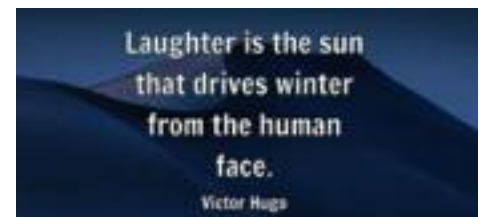
Staying Connected

The FCCSS also leverages social media to keep its members informed and engaged. Their facebook page serves as a platform for announcements, updates, and event promotions.

A Bright Future

With a legacy spanning four decades, FCCSS remains a beacon of unity and cultural pride for Filipinos on the South Shore. By embracing its history and adapting to new challenges, the organization continues to create a welcoming space for all.

For more information on FCCSS and its upcoming events, visit their facebook page or connect with a community member. #



Jubilee Montreal: A Welcoming Community Rooted in Hospitality and Social Justice

A Church with Humble Beginnings

Jubilee's origins trace back to Concordia University, where a group of young people began meeting to discuss relationships and faith. These informal conversations soon turned into Bible studies held in a living room. Over time, the group grew and began hosting regular Sunday gatherings, eventually identifying as a church.

Today, Jubilee maintains its roots in personal connection and accessibility, meeting in homes and public spaces across Montreal. This approach reflects the early church model described in the

Book of Acts, emphasizing fellowship, worship, and practical care in a family-like atmosphere.

Focus on Community and Social Justice

Jubilee is known for its commitment to social justice and caring for the marginalized. The church actively supports newcomers to Montreal, including international students, immigrants, and young professionals.

"We want to be a place where people feel welcomed and supported," a

See Page 7 Jubilee Montreal



ONTARIO FILIPINO- CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Tony A. San Juan, OCT

Notable Filipino Canadian Community Events: Looking Back in 2024

Goodbye 2024! Welcome 2025! As the year ends, it is customary for many kababayans to say "Paalam at Maligayang Pagdating ng Bagong Taon!" And as we close the year past, we take stock and look forward to the next 365 days in the Filipino Canadian Community. Thus, it's that time again that we recall and reminisce about the events in the community this past year it was busy here in Ontario, especially in the Greater Toronto Area.

Looking back in 2024, one thing we do as traditional observers expect and hope is to review and reflect upon the many happenings in the community. But one will always argue by asking: Is it necessary? The answer is yes, to me. This is one good way to say that as we move forward, we have to look back...count the ways, and see how things were and hope to be next time.

For many years, it has been a common observation that most community events are characterized by "repeats", a year-in, and year-out celebration of the traditional commemoration of festivals, pageants, founding anniversaries, and fundraisers. Many newcomers and immigrants, particularly young Filipinos, expect the old-timers and the veterans to offer fresh ideas and new challenges such as idea-generating fora, symposiums, webinars, and conferences. And, if there are discussions on many topics and issues, no definite recommendations or concrete proposals are made/ passed nor submitted to the entities or "usual suspects" concerned, for appropriate actions reviews and follow-ups.

Nothing new much to be said.. sabi nga ng iba...." same same", except some, just going through the traditional notion of holding it for a certain purpose, if not, with a business bias. Here's a quick review of several notable community-wide events in 2024.

February 12. "Philippine National Arts Month Celebration" Ani ng Sining-Bayang Malikhain: A Harvest of Artworks by Filipinos in Canada theme by the Philippine Consulate - Toronto and the Philippine Artists Group(PAG) at the Philippine

Consulate, Toronto.

April 7. "Outstanding Fil-Can Students in Ontario Awards" with Guest Speaker, OCAD President Ana Serrano, Filipino Centre Toronto, Scarborough, Toronto.

April 12-14. "Sine Institute Inaugural International Filipino Film Fest and Educational Workshops" by Sine Institute at HOTEL X, Toronto

May 11. "Filipino International Students Convention in Ontario", by the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto in partnership with UPAAToronto at Novotel Hotel Toronto, North York.

May 16. "New Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce Launching" by the Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce(PCCC) at the Philippine Consulate.

May 18-19. "18th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament" by the Filipino Centre Toronto at the PanAm Sports Centre, Scarborough.

May 25. Filipino Culture Celebration" by the National Filipino Heritage Canada(NFHC) at Scarborough Civic Centre.

June 1. "Salosalo Picnic and Heritage Month Opening" by PIDC at Earl Bales Park, North York.

June 8-9. "Pinoy Fiesta and Trade Show", by the Philippine Canadian Cultural Foundation (PCCF) at Albert Campbell Square, Scarborough

June 12. "126th Philippine Independence Day Celebration" by the Federation of Filipino Canadians-Ontario at Queen's Park, Toronto.

June 17, "Philippines and Canada Trade Forum: Bilateral Business Synergies" by PCCC at OTTFinancial Headquarters, North York.

June 22-23. "Toronto Fiesta Extravaganza" by Philippine Extravaganza, Arts, Culture and Heritage(PEACH), North York.

July 26-28. "Fun Philippines Toronto Food and Music Festival Street Festival" by Philippine Legacy and Cultural Alliance at the Harbourfront Centre, Toronto.

August 17-18, "Taste o Manila Festival For Everyone", by Society of Professional Artists, Recreation and Community at Bathurst and Wilson,

North York.

August 22-25. "Mabuhay Philippines Festival" by the Philippine Independence Day Council at Nathan Philipps Square, Toronto.

October 24. "Public Forum on Filipino Diaspora in Canada" by the Philippine Consulate and York University, Keele Campus, York University, North York.

October 26, "Third Filipino-Canadian Professionals Convention: Shaping the Future of Filipino Professionals in Canada" at Improve Canada, Vaughan, Ontario,

November 17. "Ten Outstanding Filipino- Canadian Students in Ontario Awards" (RCJOSA), by the Filipino Centre Toronto(FCT), Scarborough.

December 8. "International Forum on Migration: Empowering Overseas Filipinos Towards Sustainable Reintegration" by the Philippine Consulate and York University at Chelsea Hotel, Downtown, Toronto.

December 15. "Search for

2024-2025 Outstanding Filipino Canadian Seniors Starts" by the Filipino Centre Toronto, Scarborough.

Forging ahead, I'm looking forward to 2025 but with an ounce of trepidation and a bag of hope. There's a chance we'll have both Federal and Provincial elections next year, and the Filipino Canadian community, unfortunately, or unhappily is frequently described as without any established clout or political capital and always has the potential to become a political football of sorts when our other levels of government order the citizenry to head to the polls. We'll have to wait and see exactly what 2025 has in store. As always, it is an honour and privilege to spend some time sharing and writing about our community. I can tell you one thing I'm excited about for sure our very first action of 2025 is to write New Year's resolutions (if only to be broken.) Anyway, I hope to see everyone going to usher and kick off another audacious and amazing year together.#

Be part of the electoral process in selecting the next Liberal Party leader

Mount Royal MP Anthony Housefather is appealing to all Canadians to take part in the Liberal Party leadership race. To take part in the March 9th Liberal Party leadership race, you must be a registered member of the Liberal Party on or before January 27th. Membership is free and you can register on line with the following link:

https://liberal.ca/register/?campId=7015b000005Bg84AAC&utm_source=2025leadership.liberal.ca&utm_medium=casgrain&utm_campaign=2025leadership

The Liberal Party is the traditional voice for a tolerant and welcoming Canada and speaks for multiculturalism and minority rights.

The vote of every member can help choose the best person to lead the party in the federal election that will happen later this year.

Members can ensure that the next leadership candidate reflects the values of bilingualism and support for all minority communities across the country.

Consider taking the few minutes necessary to reinforce Canadian democracy and safeguard the values that has made this country such a model for others to emulate.

The party Executive alerts those wishing to register as Liberals of the following criteria:

Protecting the integrity of our democratic process, while still engaging as



**Anthony Housefather
MP, Mt. Royal**

many people as possible, is one of the Liberal Party of Canada's top priorities. The National Board also made the decision to update the requirements for becoming and maintaining status as a Registered Liberal.

To be a Registered Liberal, a person must:

- be at least fourteen (14) years of age;
- support the purposes of the party;
- be a Canadian citizen, have status under the Indian Act, or be a permanent resident of Canada.
- not be a member of any other federal political party in Canada; and
- while Registered as a Liberal, not have publicly declared an intention to be a candidate for election to the House of Commons other than as a candidate of the Party.

NOTE - YOU MUST REGISTER BY JANUARY 27 TO BE ABLE TO VOTE ON MARCH 9.

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From Page 5 Jubilee Montreal

church representative shared. "From helping with transportation to providing household items, we aim to meet practical needs and create a sense of belonging."

Jubilee's holiday programs embody this spirit of hospitality. Partnering with the "Friends for Dinner" initiative, the church helps connect

services stands out for its informality and inclusivity. The community eschews large, structured gatherings in favor of smaller, intimate settings where individuals can connect on a personal level.

"Our goal is to meet people where they are," a church representative explained. "Whether someone is exploring faith for the first



A festive gathering where food brings people together to share culture, laughter, and delicious memories

international students with local families for holiday meals. Their annual Christmas party and service—complete with carols, music, and a meaningful message—offer a warm and inclusive environment for those unfamiliar with traditional church settings.

Adapting to Challenges

Operating in Quebec comes with its unique challenges, including tightening immigration and language laws and a low percentage of evangelical Christians in the province. The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated matters, impacting attendance and volunteerism.

In response, Jubilee has embraced a flexible model, shifting from traditional venues to gatherings in homes and public spaces. This adaptability has allowed the church to continue fostering community despite external pressures.

A Unique Approach to Worship

Jubilee's approach to church

time or looking for a supportive community, we want them to feel they can bring their whole self to the table."

Looking Ahead

Jubilee is also unafraid to tackle pressing societal issues. Upcoming sermons will explore topics like immigration and money, reflecting the church's commitment to engaging with real-world challenges.

For newcomers seeking a church community, Jubilee's message is simple: come as you are. The church invites individuals from all backgrounds to join and discover who God has made them to be.

To learn more about Jubilee Montreal and its events, visit their website or attend one of their gatherings. Jubilee remains steadfast in its mission to be a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive community in the heart of Montreal. #

Chrystia Freeland, Karina Gould and Mark Carney launch their leadership bids

Three Liberal Party leadership candidates launched their respective bids during the weekend as previously expected.

After months of speculation about his future, former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney launched his campaign on Saturday, January 18th with a promise to build the fastest-growing economy in the G7 if he's elected while the two women contenders to the top job launched their campaigns on the same day, January 19th. Chrystia Freeland's campaign speech delivered at a Boys and Girls Club in Toronto was interrupted by hecklers but she showed she could handle an unpleasant event. She emphasized that she is a fighter and willing to defend the interests of the country.

Karina Gould launched her campaign in Burlington, Ontario stating that a leader must have the confidence of the party and the country which she believes she has. She is the youngest among all the leadership candidates.

Carney, 59, kicked off his campaign to take the reins of the governing party at the Edmonton-area hockey rink where he learned to skate as a boy while growing up on the Prairies.

"I'm doing this because Canada is the best country in the world, but it still could be even better," Carney said.

The Harvard-educated Carney said he has the economic bona fides needed to steer Canada through a

See Page 9 Leadership bids

Trudeau not running in next election, but focusing on doing his job

(Jan. 15, 2025) Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says he will not be running in the next election, and he hasn't "had much time to think about" what he'll do after he leaves politics.

"I am entirely focused on doing the job that Canadians elected me to do in an extraordinarily pivotal time right now," Trudeau said. "The U.S. inauguration and the weeks that follow are something that are of deep, deep importance to Canadians, and we are entirely focused on that as a team."

Trudeau made the comment during a press conference on

how the country should respond to Trump's tariff threats.

"I do want to say that (Saskatchewan Premier) Scott (Moe) and (Ontario Premier) Doug (Ford), and a number of the folks who've been around a while have been extraordinarily invaluable in these conversations, in this Team Canada approach," Trudeau said.

"There's always a lot of politics going on around this country, but to know when to step up in the Canadian national interest, and to know that that's what Canadians want to see, is really to the credit of everyone around



Prime Minister Trudeau was joined by premiers across Canada to finalize a nationwide strategy to confront tariffs by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump.

Wednesday, following his first in-person meeting with Canada's premiers in nearly two years.

He announced last week he was stepping down as Liberal leader and prime minister, after more than nine years in the country's top job, and nearly 13 at the helm of his party.

Trudeau's resignation came just weeks ahead of U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. The incoming commander-in-chief has threatened to implement punishing tariffs on all imports from Canada as soon as he's back in the Oval Office.

Wednesday's meeting between Trudeau and the premiers — plus Canada's ambassador to the U.S. and some federal cabinet ministers — was convened specifically to hash out

this table," he added.

Trudeau was first elected as the MP for Papineau in 2008. He's been leader of the Liberal party since 2013.

The race to replace him has not yet officially kicked off, but a handful of well-known Liberal faces and would-be contenders have started formally announcing whether they plan to run.

Those interested in throwing their hat in the ring must notify the party and make an initial payment toward the entry fee by Jan. 23, and the party's new leader will be announced on March 9.

With files from news written by By Spencer Van Dyk (CTV News)

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Angela Lacuesta
NEPMCC Journalist Intern

The Société de transport de Montréal's 2025 budget news highlights

The Société de transport de Montréal (STM) has released its \$1.8 billion budget for 2025 which includes an updated security of the services offered to the public. The budget focuses on expanding and maintaining services, improving security, catering to accessibility needs while also limiting spending and maintaining the quality of transportation services in Montreal. The STM aims to provide transportation users with a better environment and experience on the metro as the demand for public transportation increases.

The STM which was established in 1861 as a small transportation

In a press release, the chairman of the board of Directors, Mr. Eric Caldwell, cited the 2025–2034 capital expenditure program which prioritizes asset maintenance. He stated: "Of the C\$10.7 billion (US\$7.6 billion) in investments required, only C\$800 million (US\$568.3 million) is currently included in the Québec Infrastructure Plan (QIP). This is critical since implementation depends on investments being [included] under the QIP." He further stated that: "Asset maintenance remains the most pressing need detailed in the capital expenditure program. Keeping our existing infrastructure safe and in good working order should be considered a precondition for any further development of the public transit network."

In 2025, the main spending of the STM budget will go to improving safety by hiring staff responsible for added security as well as ensuring the public transit is maintained in clean condition. Moreover, accessibility considerations are to be implemented into more stations by the installation of elevators.

The Société de transport de Montréal hopes to begin projects that can improve the public transportation network such as the extension of the blue line, the upgrading of the metro system, creating more accessibility in

benefits, with the number increasing each year, the changes impact many citizens financially. Since the past few years, several updates have been added.

The first change states those

insurance plan, the person or their family accumulates basic financial assistance if a circumstance occurs such as disability, retirement, death etc. The plan consists of either a regular plan for basic needs or an additional plan for extra coverage



The Quebec Pension Plan aims to financially aid workers in the future or in unforeseen circumstances that require financial aid. (Getty Images/Stockphoto)

who received the disability pension are entitled to their full retirement plan at age 65 or over. Originally, only the disability pension was provided to those who have an impairment which prevents them from working, this also may apply for the family of the disabled. However, in 2025, the Quebec Pension Plan announced that if you are age 65 or over, with a disability pension, you are able to gain the full retirement pension.

The second change is that the pension pay has also increased this year by 2.6%. This means that those who have a plan with the QPP will be given more money at the end of each month. This provides them with extra income to deal with inflation by allowing them to still have purchasing power while the cost of living increases.

The final change is the maximum contribution allowed for employers' pension plans has increased from \$68,500 to \$71,300. This change enables extra money to go towards their future pension plan thus providing retired people with a higher pension pay once the plan is applied.

The Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) is a public insurance plan for those living in Quebec who are aged 18 or older with an income greater than \$3500. It is paid half by the employer and half by the employee. Through this

which increases your pension when applied. The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec alongside the Quebec Pension Plan and the government aim to financially protect those who are unable to gain an income due to certain situations. The group that manages the money aspect of the pension plan is the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec. This group both ensures that the plan is intact financially, but also provides a space where citizens are able to provide feedback to improve the system.

The importance of financially aiding those who are unable to work due to certain circumstances is the reason the Quebec Pension Plan was created. The recent changes and updates further attempt to reiterate this objective by giving citizens more financial aid in the future by making proactive decisions in the present. Providing the proper changes in the plan is mandatory as the lives of current workers or their families may be impacted. By being aware of the changes and the contributions, the citizens in the present can gain a better understanding of its importance in their future. The Retraite Québec website is available to help with any questions and issues or to calculate your approximate maximum Quebec Pension Plan benefits if applied in the present. #



Photo of a metro station by Ivanoh Demers/Radio-Canada

company has expanded into the modern-day public transit system with metro lines, stations and bus routes. With its committed team of employees and partners, the STM provides services that are safe, reliable, timely, customer focused and accessible. Through continuous changes and updates, the STM has provided an efficient service for 1.1 million daily commuters. Marie Claude, CEO of the STM, stated "I would like to commend all public transit stakeholders, who, in recent months, have worked tirelessly to address the funding challenges. Solutions involved a greater municipal contribution as well as the 2025 financial framework signed with the Quebec government and the increase in the motor vehicle registration levy by the CMM."

2025 Changes in the Quebec government pensions

On January 1, 2025, several adjustments were made for those who receive or contribute to the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP). The changes include: full retirement pay for those with the disability pension, an increase in pension pay and an increased maximum earnings that contribute towards the pension. The Quebec Pension Plan attempts to financially aid those who are

the metro and acquiring more electric busses. These projects will provide a well-organized and properly maintained transportation system for all. However, the STM also needs the support of everyone to create a better and safer environment by reporting any issues or suspicious activities through the STM phone number (1-888-786-1119) and using the online form. People travelling in the metro system or busses can also inform employees at the premises of any problem. Being attentive to the surroundings, complying with signs, keeping a clean environment and understanding what to do in case of an emergency will help the STM in achieving its goals of providing a safer and more efficient public transportation system. #

in retirement, are disabled, surviving partner(s), children of disabled persons and dependent children after the beneficiary's death. The updates allow for an increased payment towards citizens who depend on the Quebec Pension Plan currently or in the future.

Around four million or more of Quebec's population contribute or receive the Quebec Pension Plan

The Refugee Center's services to immigrants and newcomers

The Refugee Centre is a non-profit organization run by a group of students and professionals to encourage youth community engagement while aiding in the welcoming of immigrants and refugees into Montreal. The organization's mission statement is "to create long-lasting, self-sustainable, and creative solutions to refugee integration." Their main objective is to provide students, refugees and immigrants with the necessary information and resources to aid in many aspects of their lives both in the present and future. This organization is

important because refugees and immigrants may struggle to support themselves or have difficulties in receiving any help. With the services provided by The Refugee Centre, they gain the tools and knowledge to properly integrate into the new environment.

The Refugee Centre began operating and providing its services in December 2015 and has continued to develop and grow throughout the years. It provides services such as orientation, and academic assistance,

See Page 9 Refugee Centre

Remembering the saintly Jimmy Carter

When Jimmy Carter was still alive, I was asked who in my view was the best past president of the US. Without hesitation or fear of contradiction, I answered JIMMY CARTER.

Jimmy Carter who died last Sunday at age 100, epitomized a life of honor, dignity, humility and altruism fully lived. He was a small town boy, Navy man, farmer, loving husband and father, governor, president, peacemaker, and globally-renowned humanitarian.

His efforts to leave a better world did not end with his presidency. He went to troubled countries and brought peace, and provided support, comfort and hope to victims of poverty, genocide and famine. Throughout the world, he was an apostle preaching human equality and advocating for building homes for the homeless, a passion that he spent many decades pursuing until the very end. His saintly life is a beautiful example of love, leadership and sacrifice. It is a role model for all national and world leaders to emulate – a rare and elusive shining gem that we may never see again in our lifetime. His all-consuming sense of humanity was devoted to human equality and dignity, rooted as it was in a deep, abiding, generous and passionate Christian faith. Jimmy Carter now belongs to the ages.

Gus Mercado
Dallas, Texas
Email: gusmercado@verizon.net



From Page 8 The Refugee Centre legal aid, housing options and employment opportunities. It also functions as a learning centre and

needed to help in the promotion of their work. Several people are involved in the organization to ensure it lives up to its mission statement. It is ably managed by the following officers:



The Refugee Centre aims to provide safety and hope for refugees and immigrant newcomers arriving in Quebec. (Wilson Ring/AP Photo)

provides newcomers and refugees with health services and mental health support. These services provide refugees and immigrants with basic resources they need to integrate successfully into Canadian society.

The Refugee Centre also works with other groups to develop policies and raise or receive funds

Abdulla Daoud, Executive Director; Kinan Swaid, Director of Operations; Anissa Jeeroburkhan, Director of Community Health and many others who are involved in helping The Refugee Centre develop and gain the recognition it has achieved over the years.

Since the organization began

operating, it has received some recognition. In 2019, this non-profit organization was given the Pathways to Prosperity award by the Government of Canada. It has also become partners with several other organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Canadian Red Cross, Concordia University, and Caisse Populaire Dejardins. The organization was also able to expand and develop projects such as DEVBLOC, The Innovation Institute, the Point of Entry podcast, Allo Services, Hijrah Critica and Lana AI that have served more people in the community

To support the Refugee Centre. there are several ways to do so such as donating to the "Pay It Forward," joining the volunteer list, and partnering with The Refugee Centre. if you are an organization or company, join the mail list for updates and news as well as spread the word about the organization.

For more information regarding this organization you can contact them at 514-846-005 or through email at info@therefugeecentre.org or visit their office at 2107 Saint-Catherine St West #100.

From Page 7 Leadership bids period of uncertainty as the country stares down president-elect Donald Trump and the threat of punishing tariffs on all our goods.

Carney said Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is the "worst possible" choice to put on the other side of the negotiating table with Trump. "While I'm focused on building our economy — he's out chasing endorsements from Donald Trump and Elon Musk," he said of Poilievre.

"I'm not the usual suspect when it comes to politics but this is no time for politics as usual. It's not the time for lifelong politicians such as Pierre Poilievre," he said.

Carney said the economy hasn't performed to its full potential under Trudeau. Economic growth has been lacklustre and wages haven't kept pace with inflation on the prime minister's watch, he said.

"The prime minister and his team let their attention wander from the economy too often," Carney told the more than 125 supporters who gathered to see his launch. "I won't lose focus."

If Carney wins the race, he would become prime minister without having a seat in Parliament but this may not be an issue if an election is held sooner than the normal date in October 2025. # With files from various news sources



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



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Angela & Mikaela Lacuesta in French Level 5, giving Zenaida Kharroubi a Mothers' Day gift.



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PAB Batch 12, July 7, 2017 Photo shows Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, director-general presenting the certificate to one of the seven graduates, Lani Grace Abellera while Sonny Moroz representing MP Anthony Housefather, and Clarice McKay, PAB nursing instructor look on, ready to present a graduation rose to each student. The graduation ceremony was held at the headquarters of Gilmore College International at 7159, ch. de la Cote des Neiges, Montreal, QC.

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-B.B. King

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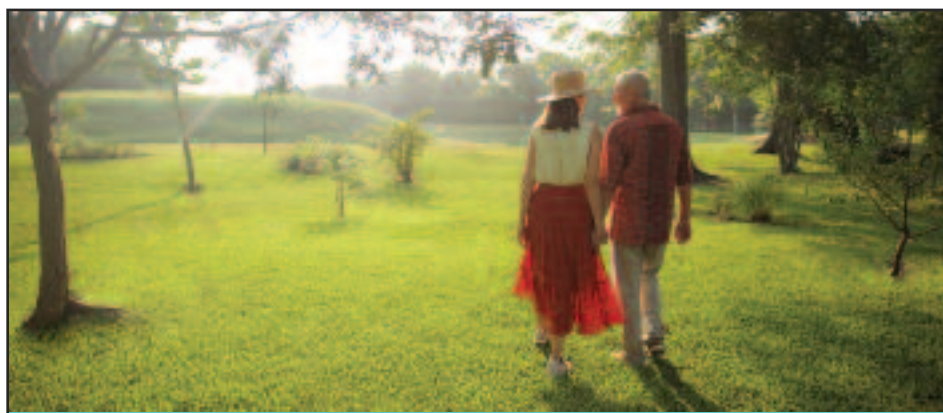
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Pork sisig

Ingredients

- 1 lb pig ears
 - 1 lb. pig snout
 - 1 lb pork belly
 - 2 pieces onions minced
 - 3 pieces bay leaves
 - 2 teaspoons salt
 - 4 thumbs ginger crushed
 - 1 quart water
- Sisig dressing:
- ½ cup Lady's Choice Mayonnaise
 - 2 tablespoons sukang iloko see note 1
 - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon sugar
 - ¼ cup liver spread see note 2
 - 2 limes see note 3
 - 1 tablespoon Knorr Liquid

Seasoning

Equipment

- 1 Grill you may use either gas or charcoal grill

Instructions

Combine pig ears, snout, pork belly, ginger, bay leaves, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 quart of water in a cooking pot. Boil for 1 hour. Remove from the pot and drain the water.

Heat-up your grill. Start grilling the pig parts for around 5 minutes per side. Remove from the grill afterwards and let it cool down.

Make the dressing by combining all the dressing ingredients. Mix well. Chop the grilled pig parts into small pieces. In a large mixing bowl, combine the chopped pork with onion and the dressing mixture. Toss until all the ingredients are well blended. Transfer to a serving plate. Serve with your favorite drink. Share and enjoy!

Notes

Note 1: Sukang iloko is a type of vinegar made from fermented sugar cane juice. This type of vinegar has a bold flavor that can be compared to wine vinegars. You may use the following as substitutes: cane vinegar, white vinegar, and distilled vinegar.

Note 2: Fresh chicken livers are

commonly used to make sisig. It had to be boiled and mashed to have a paste-like consistency. The use of liver spread or liver pate is more for convenience in case chicken livers are not available.

Note 3: Limes are great to use for sisig. However, calamansi (calamondin) is a better fit if available.



Lumpia (Pinoy spring rolls)

Ingredients

- 6 servings
- 1 (12 ounce) package lumpia wrappers
- 1 pound ground beef
- ½ pound ground pork
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- ⅓ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
- ⅓ cup finely chopped carrot
- 1 quart oil for frying

Directions

Thaw lumpia wrappers if frozen. Lay several wrappers on a clean, dry surface and cover with a damp towel to prevent wrappers from drying out. Mix beef, pork, onion, green pepper, and carrot together in a medium bowl. Place about 2 tablespoons of meat mixture along center of wrapper. Do not overstuff wrappers or they will burn before meat is cooked. Fold one edge of wrapper over filling. Fold outer edges in slightly, then roll into a closed cylinder. Wet finger with water and moisten outer edge to seal. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling, keeping finished lumpia covered to prevent drying. Heat oil in a 9-inch skillet on medium to medium-high heat until oil reaches 365 to 375 degrees F (170 to 175

degrees C). Fry 3 to 4 lumpia at a time, turning in oil until nicely browned, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Cut each lumpia into thirds for parties, and serve with banana ketchup, if you like or hot chili mixture with vinegar.



Okoy (Shrimp fritters)

Ingredients

- 1 medium green papaya, peeled, seeded and shredded
 - 1 egg, beaten
 - 1 cup cornstarch
 - ½ cup flour
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 teaspoon fish sauce
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - ½ teaspoon pepper
 - ½ small kalabasa, peeled, seeded and julienned
 - 3 shallots, peeled and sliced thinly
 - ½ cup green onions, chopped
 - canola oil
 - ½ pound small shrimps, tendrils trimmed
- Spiced Vinegar Dip
- 1 cup vinegar
 - 2 to 3 Thai chili peppers, minced
 - ½ small red onion, peeled and diced
 - 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
 - salt and pepper to taste

US Customary

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Instructions

In a bowl, combine shredded papaya and about 1 tablespoon salt. Let sit for about 10 minutes and using hands, squeeze to dispel juices. Rinse under cold running water and squeeze to remove excess liquid.

In a large bowl, combine egg, cornstarch, flour, water, fish sauce, salt, and pepper. Whisk together until well-blended and smooth.

Add papaya, kalabasa, shallots and green onion to batter and stir to combine.

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat about 2-inch of oil until hot. On a large spoon, place about 2 to 3 tablespoons of the mixture and press 1 to 2 shrimps on top.

Gently slide mixture into the hot oil and cook for about 3 to 4 minutes on each side or until golden brown and crisp. Cook in batches as necessary. Remove from heat and drain on a wire rack set over a baking sheet. Serve hot with spiced vinegar dip.

For the Spiced Vinegar Dip

In a bowl, combine vinegar, chili peppers, onions, and garlic. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Notes

For crispy results, make sure the oil is hot and enough to submerge patties during frying. Cook patties in batches and do not overcrowd the pan.

To keep from falling apart, fry the fritters undisturbed for about 2 to 3 minutes until browned on the bottom, and then turn with the spatula to continue to cook until browned and crispy.

Ingredients



Arroz Caldo (Chicken porridge)

- 1 lb. chicken cut into serving pieces
- ½ cup glutinous rice
- ½ cup Jasmine rice
- 6 to 8 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons kasubha dried safflower (optional)
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- 4 thumbs ginger julienne
- 1 large onion chopped
- 3 cloves garlic crushed
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- Fish sauce patis and ground black pepper to taste

Toppings

- ¼ cup chopped scallions
- 2 boiled eggs sliced into half lengthwise
- 6 cloves garlic crushed and toasted
- 1 small lemon or 4 pieces calamansi, sliced

Instructions

Heat oil in a cooking pot. Saute garlic, onion, and ginger. When the onion starts to turn soft and translucent, put the chicken into the pot. Cook until it turns light brown. Add glutinous and Jasmine rice. Saute for 1 minute.

Pour 6 cups of chicken broth. Let boil. Cover the pot. Continue to cook in medium heat for 35 to 40 minutes. Make sure to stir the mixture every few minutes to prevent the rice from sticking on the pot. Add more broth if necessary.

Add kasubha, patis, and ground black pepper. Stir. Continue to cook until it reaches your desired consistency. Transfer to a serving bowl. Top with egg, scallions, garlic, and lemon wedges.

Serve hot. Share and enjoy!

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Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Hello, my favourite social tidbits readers. Let me be the first to greet you a Happy New Year 2025. Any New Year's Resolutions? How about eating healthier and spending frugally? How about dancing more (attend Filipino associations' parties) and reading more (read this column regularly)? You will make someone very happy. And if you have any tips on how to stick to these resolutions, please share them.

SWIS

The Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS) gathered on December 7, 2024 at the Olympia Reception Hall at 3885 St. Jean Boulevard, DDO. Chairwoman Lolita Odulio, Roger Ajero (founder and first president), Connie Fabro (past president) and dedicated members were elated at the great turnout. In spite of the challenging weather that night, this event was so far the most attended ever; close to three hundred came! Guests came in their best Christmas attires. The crowd just loved dancing the cha cha, rock and roll, and line dancing. There were also two notable entertainers. One is the Panday Tinig Ensemble led by conductor Paul Imperial and pianist Editha Fedalizo; they presented Tagalog songs. The other was John Rene, the Elvis look-alike who came in full Elvis regalia, complete with white suit and a guitar. Thank you, guest performers. Recognized for their presence were past presidents of the Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS), Cesar Manuel, Corazon Aberin, and Claro Bermudez. Acknowledged also was Ronald Salvador, the new president of the Filipino Golden Agers (FILGA) and

Lydia Fielding, past president of the Christian Diocese of Quebec.

Gilmore's 35th Foundation Year and Christmas Party

Reaching an important milestone in the history of a business enterprise was modestly celebrated in conjunction with the traditional Christmas fellowship party on Dec.8 at 7159 Cote des Neiges in Montreal. It was indeed a sweet reunion as former graduates of Gilmore College International, former MMTV crew Derwin Collantes and Michael Davantes also participated. The table was laden with lots of potluck; the turkey baked by tireless Zeny was the center of attraction. Zeny Kharroubi is the publisher and chief editor of the North American Filipino Star, the only Filipino Canadian newspaper in Montreal. Furthermore, she is the first Filipino-Canadian founder, director-general and teacher of Gilmore College International (a private college which offers nursing aide (PSW/PAB), English, French and Filipino languages as well as tutoring young and adult students in many subjects which require remediation. In my opinion, she is undoubtedly a renaissance woman of this generation. Zeny, you are a gem hiding in plain sight; thank you! You are held in high esteem by many of us, especially by yours truly. So with lots of dancing, good food, and good friends like Cristy & Robin Hunter, Cristy's parents (fresh from the Philippines) and many others, who could ask for a better party?

FFCAQ

Another memorable Christmas

party was given by the Federation of Filipino Canadian Association of Quebec (FFCAQ) on December 15, 2024 at the Zamboangeña Bella Cucina in Décarie Square. FFCAQ President Minda Mazzone and her Executive Board carefully coordinated this evening with plenty of Christmas songs and energetic dancing. The restaurant became a dance floor! Ivan Costales gave his heartfelt vocal solos. Seen welcoming the guests were Cristy Hunter, Fred & Jovy Narvas and other FFCAQ officers. Former FFCAQ President Ed Tupas & wife Tess appeared to be enjoying the music, along with Remy Monteagudo and others. President Minda & husband Nico, doting grandparents, brought along their grandchildren. Their daughter Caterina and husband Paolo (with their graceful dance moves) also graced the event. Food was aplenty and yummy, as expected of a Filipino restaurant. Earlier, at 1-4 pm, was a Christmas children's party at the same venue. It was noisy, festive, and fun; children went home happy with their gifts.

PBSSQ

The Philippine Benevolent and Scholarship Society of Quebec (PBSSQ) celebrated Christmas on December 20, 2024 at 6767 Cotes-Des-Neiges. Founder and first president Natalie Pelausa was well but stayed home. PBSSQ President Josefa Nicolas (aka Epang) and Dr. Hermie Pelausa were beyond delighted that most officers and members were present. Due to their efforts, PBSSQ events continue to thrive. Donned with Santa Claus hats, they still had energy to dance to the music. One person that the organization remembers well is Mely de Guzman who generously donated \$2000 for every PBSSQ anniversary. Today, generous donors with the same spirit such as Dolly Belandres and Julita Parado opened their purses and recently donated a thousand dollars each to the Scholarship Fund. Thank you to Mely, Dolly, and Julie. We appreciate your benevolent gesture! Looking forward to more Melys, Dollys, and Julies in our midst.

CCFAQ

Before Christmas Eve, a jovial celebration was held at 6767 Côte-des-Neiges by the Council of Canadian Filipino Association of Quebec (CCFAQ) led by President Sir Dario Boco who gave the Opening Remarks. The Invocation was by Secretary Alona Amano. As guests began arriving, the barkadas proceeded to the round table near the main food table. The secret draw? A favorite 'pulutan'— that's goat meat, folks. Just kidding; it was pork meat. For those who don't know, one could say 'pulutan' is the Pinoy version

of bar snacks. Among those who enjoyed the round table were Sir James de la Paz, Sir Felix de Luna, Sir Gerry Danzil, Sir Rey Balansi and others. The party was dotted with performers who kindly entertained us with their vocal solos: Sir Julius Abad, Sir Boy Galang, and Sir Hadjal Gattoc. Closing remarks was given by Sir James de la Paz, CCFAQ Founder and Administrator.

JOSE RIZAL'S MARTYRDOM

To finish off the year 2024 was the 128th Commemoration of Dr. Jose Rizal's Martyrdom held at St. Kevin's Church Social Hall on 5600 Côte-des-Neiges. It was hosted by the Knights of Rizal (KOR), Eastern Canada Region, Montreal. The program started with the entrance of the flag bearers: Sir Benjamin Balaus (Philippines), Sir Alain John Charboneau (Canada), and Sir Emmanuel Cea (Quebec). Next was the playing of the national anthems, Philippine and Canadian. A notable moment was the narration of Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios" (My Last Farewell) by Sir Dario Boco. To honor Rizal, wreaths were presented and placed near his picture. Sir Rey Balansi (KGR, Regional Commander for Eastern Canada Region) gave the Welcome Address. A short message was given by Honourable Michelle Setlakwe, MNA for Mont Royal-Outremont. The evening was enjoyed with lots of dancing; thanks to the vibrant music of John the DJ. Closing remarks was given by Sir Gerry Danzil. The event was ably emceed by Sir James de la Paz. Last but not least is a quote from Dr. Jose Rizal, "It is a useless life that is not consecrated to a great ideal. It is like a stone wasted on the field without becoming a part of any edifice." It would serve us well to remember his words.

Let me end with a verse for this new year found in Lamentations 3:22,23 which says, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is His faithfulness." May you reflect on the compassion and faithfulness of God as you start each day this year.

Until next issue. God bless.

From Page 2 Liberal Party leadership earning her a promotion to minister of foreign affairs in 2017. She became deputy prime minister following the 2019 election, where she also became minister of intergovernmental affairs. In 2020, she was appointed as finance minister, becoming the first woman to hold the post. She presented her first federal budget in 2021, which introduced a national child care program, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, she was part of the federal response to the Canada convoy protest, which led to the first ever invocation of the Emergencies Act. She played a critical role in the Canadian response to the Russo-Ukrainian War, including the implementation of sanctions on Russia and sending aid to Ukraine after the invasion in 2022. On December 16, 2024, the day she was scheduled to deliver her Fall Economic Statement before the 44th Canadian Parliament, she resigned from Trudeau's cabinet following policy

clashes between her and Trudeau. Her resignation led to a cabinet shuffle, calls for a vote of no confidence from opposition parties, and Trudeau's eventual resignation as prime minister and party leader the following month.

Freeland is considered a leading candidate for the leadership of the Liberal Party.#

With files from Wikipedia, CTV News.

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FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Why Richard Gutierrez embraces the action-star life



Richard Gutierrez

Following the success of "The Iron Heart" in 2022, actor Richard Gutierrez, now considered The Ultimate Action Star, is ready to take on a new challenge as Jose Bonifacio in the upcoming ABS-CBN series "Incognito."

Those who were able to catch the show's premiere on Netflix January 17, attested to Richard showing his love and passion for full-action projects, describing his performance in "Incognito" as something akin to the Pinoy version of James Bond or Tom Cruise's Ethan Hunt.

During an intimate interview at the Old Swiss Inn on January 10, Richard explained how this passion stemmed from him developing appreciation for martial arts.

"Aside from learning the skills, it's a very humbling experience when you're learning martial arts kasi you

can never be a master. You're only a student. You're always learning about yourself, learning from coaches and teammates," Richard said.

(Aside from learning the skills, it's a very humbling experience when you're learning martial arts because you can never be a master. You're only a student. You're always learning about yourself, learning from coaches and teammates)

The actor also added that it was a dream for him to be part of the Navy Seal while living in the US.

"Iniisip ko na yung maging sundalo after high school. Obviously, hindi ako pinayagan ng nanay ko kaya umuwi ako ng Pilipinas. Nagsimula yun kasi may mga kaibigan ako na naging sundalo sa States and parang naging dream ko siya actually to be part of the Navy Seal," Richard added.

(I was thinking about

becoming a soldier after high school. Obviously, my mother didn't allow for it so I went back to the Philippines. It's all because I had friends who became soldiers in the States and it seems like he became my dream actually to be part of the Navy Seal)

Preparations for Incognito

What started from a simple fascination watching military-centric films, Richard said that he started taking an interest in private military contractors while still working on "Iron Heart."

"Yung concept nung 'Incognito' na may private military contractor, actually binanggit ko 'yan kay Direk Lester during 'Iron Heart,' kasi it's something that I've been researching about, actually binasa ko 'yung books about that, nag research rin ako about Blackwater Ridge, the first group na nakilala tungkol sa private military contractors," Richard said.



(The concept of 'Incognito' as involving a private military contractor, I actually mentioned that directly to Lester during 'Iron Heart,' because it's something that I've been researching about, actually I read books about that, and I also researched about Blackwater Ridge, the first group about private military contractors)

Diving into the world of private military contractors, the actor mentioned how working on the series allowed him to learn about military tactics and movements.

"Dito sa 'Incognito,' mas more on tactical, so more on movements. Hindi maiwasan na matatalsikan ka sa mukha, mga pasa, galos pero normal na. Ako ang dami ko palaging pasa o galos sa fight scenes pero part kasi iyon," Richard added.

(Here in Incognito, it's more on tactical, so more on movements. You'll inevitably get splashed on the face, bruises, scars, but that's normal. I always have a lot of bruises or scratches in fight scenes, but that's part of it)

Richard highlighted as well how production made sure the series is up to par with international standards relating action films.

"Napakaganda nung project kasi for us kahit nakakapagod, rewarding naman. Kasi parang pelikula na yung quality and yung na yung standard ngayon, sa mga Asian countries so tina-try namin pantayan yun," Richard said.

(The project was great because even though it was tiring for us, it was rewarding. Because the quality is like a movie and that's the standard now, even in other Asian countries. So we're trying to match that)

Richard on doing Rom-com films

Before taking on action projects, Richard was known for doing popular romantic dramas.

During the interview, he was asked if he is still open to starring again in such.

He answered, "Actually si Raymond (his brother) ayan ang gusto, for me to simplify daw, bumalik na raw ako sa rom-com, mas madali sa pelikula. Well marami naman akong ginawa na rom-com pero we'll see, maybe I could do something siguro na masaya or magaan."

(Actually, that's what Raymond (his brother) wants, for me to simplify. He said, I should go back to rom-coms, it's easier to do. Well I've done a lot of rom-coms but we'll see, maybe I could do something that's fun or light)

Lovi Poe witnesses devastation from LA wildfires



Lovi Poe

Lovi Poe lamented the situation in Los Angeles, California, amid the ongoing wildfires, as she witnessed it firsthand while staying in her United States home.

The actress showed a video in which the smoke from the wildfires as well as the helicopters flying back and forth can be seen, through her Instagram page on Monday, Jan. 13.

“The fires have hit LA hard,

support and show up for one another “It’s a reminder that even in the hardest times, we’re never alone. Even in the darkest times, the city will rebuild and shine again, stronger than before,” she said.

Poe shared a separate video in which the smoke from the wildfires was seen from the road she was driving on.

Aside from Poe, Filipino



View of the wildfires from Lovi Poe’s home.

and it’s tough seeing so much loss. I’ve been watching the sky and hearing helicopters flying back and forth,” she said in the caption. “In times of devastation, like the one we’re witnessing, it’s hard to find the right words.”

Despite the disaster, Poe underscored how members of the community are coming together to

celebrity Iñigo Pascual, who is based in Los Angeles, also earlier witnessed the wildfire in his area, disclosing that his family had evacuated their home.

Many Hollywood celebrities have been affected by the disaster as well, with some including Paris Hilton, Mandy Moore, Anthony Hopkins and Billy Crystal losing their homes. ■

Heart Evangelista recalls fainting spell at Fashion Week due to pressure



Heart Evangelista

Heart Evangelista recalled a time she fainted at a Fashion Week event, noting that it had something to do with putting too much pressure on herself at work just to earn money for things she wanted to spend.

Evangelista looked back at the incident on the January 18 episode of her reality show “Heart World,” saying she’s the type of person who works extremely hard to earn money for her purchases. She was joined in the show by her husband, Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero, as they discussed the fashion maven’s promises to herself.

“Lahat ng mayroon ako, lahat ng suot ko, pinagtrabahuhan ko, as in talagang pinagpuyatan ko. Talagang pinilit ko ‘yan para mabili mga meron ako. But now as I get older, I really feel tired. Iba na talaga ‘yung dating sa ‘kin, kahit [sa] Fashion Week,” she said.

“Hinimatay na ‘ko sa Fashion Week kasi alam ko na nagsa-suffer na ‘yong health ko just to get the bag, just to get the jacket,” Evangelista further shared without disclosing what particular Fashion Week event the incident took place.

(Everything I have and everything I wear was a fruit of my labor. I lost a lot of sleep for them. I pushed myself to work hard to buy what I had. But now as I get older, I really feel tired. It feels different now, even in Fashion Week. I remember fainting during Fashion Week because my health suffered just to get the bag and jacket.)

With this in mind, Evangelista said she would make it a point to “really review” her personal expenses, and wouldn’t use her job to “justify” her purchases.

“These ridiculous things na ginagamit ko naman sa trabaho ko but I will not use that anymore to justify. I will really review talaga,” she said.

“Ang pronomise ko sa sarili ko kapag nag-turn ako ng 40, I will be very mindful about what I’ll put out.”

The actress-fashion maven also explained that her purchases were bought using her own money while pointing out to Escudero that there are certain claims that the latter was the one buying her luxury items.

“Meaning to say, my hard-earned money... Hindi naman sa ‘di ako gagastos. I know how it feels na magtrabaho, kumayod talaga dahil gusto ko nito. I’m lucky [and] privileged ako na ‘di naman ako naging breadwinner in a sense sa pamilya ko,” she said.

(Meaning to say, my hard-earned money. It doesn’t mean that I won’t spend. I know how it feels to work very hard because you want to buy something. I’m lucky and privileged that I am not the breadwinner of my family.)

Chiming in, Escudero explained that while he and Evangelista have a prenup, he is not the one who pays for the latter’s purchases.

“Kahit na may prenup kami, sa dulo, pareho pa rin ‘yun. Kasi kung meron siya [at] wala ako, e ‘di siya ang magpupuno nu’n. Kung wala siya at meron ako, e ‘di ako rin naman magpupuno nu’n,” he said.

“Wag niyo na akong idamay sa kalokohan niya,” Escudero added in jest.

(Even though we have a prenup, it’s still the same. Whatever she has and I don’t, I will fill in those gaps. Whatever she lacks and I have, I will fill them up as well. Don’t involve me in her personal matters.)

The fashion personality previously spoke about embracing her chinita features during a makeup launch in November 2024, saying it took some time before she eventually accepted her looks. ■

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15*

Marian Rivera, Dingdong Dantes renew vows for 10th wedding anniversary



Celebrity couple Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes (center) together with their children, Zia (left) and Sixto (right)

Celebrity couple Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes have recently celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary by renewing their vows at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao, the same church where they first got married.

Wearing a simple yet elegant white dress from Hacchic Couture's Hacchic Blush Collection, Marian walked down the aisle once more while surrounded by close friends and family. She and Dingdong were joined by their children, Zia and Ziggy.

"Walking down the aisle with our kids today, celebrating 10 beautiful years together. Love, God, and family forever," said Marian in her Instagram post's caption.

Speaking on the occasion on social media as well, Dingdong shared how the past decade had been a meaningful journey and thanked those who had been a part of it.

The couple tied the knot on Dec. 30, 2014. ■

Angel Locsin breaks social media hiatus after recovering X account



Angel Locsin

Angel Locsin informed her followers that she got her hacked X account back, marking her first social media activity amid her hiatus since 2022.

Locsin shared the good news via her X page on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

"Hello everyone. Long time no chat," she began. "I just wanna say I have recovered my X account (totoo na to, pramis)."

"Thank you sa mga tumulong and X for helping. I miss you all and ingat lagi," she added.

Fans of Locsin were earlier alarmed after the actress made several suspicious replies to billionaire Elon Musk's tweets. Some of the tweets from the actress' account included links and promotion for supposed crypto giveaways.

A statement released on Locsin's verified Facebook page then informed the public that her X page had been hacked.

The tweets made by the hacker on the actress' page have apparently been taken down. ■

Rufa Mae turns herself in at NBI; claims innocence



Comedy actress Rufa Mae Quinto broke her silence in relation to her involvement with the company Dermacare.

In a recent interview, Quinto maintained her innocence, emphasizing that she, too, was allegedly a victim of the company.

"I'm also a victim here, so we will face everything. Also, it's not good because my reputation is being ruined here. That's why now, I will face this to clear my name," said Quinto.

When asked if she would file countercharges, Quinto responded with her signature humor: "We will think about it. If I still have a mind."

"Let's finish this first. One at a time. Because I just arrived from the US. So, one by one, step by step," she added.

The actress also clarified her limited involvement with Dermacare, claiming she was not paid and had her endorsement contract canceled.

"They also canceled me as an endorser. I haven't met or known them. In fact, I also wasn't paid. All the checks bounced," the comedy actress revealed.

Quinto then turned into a serious tone, urging authorities and the public to direct their attention to the company's real operators.

"Who they should look for is the owner. I hope you highlight who is the real suspect here. Just because you're an artist, it doesn't mean you're always in the news," she stated.

Quinto voluntarily surrendered on Wednesday, Jan. 8, to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), after an arrest warrant was issued against her by the Pasay court.

The charges against Quinto reportedly stem from her involvement with Dermacare, a company also linked to legal issues faced by actress-entrepreneur Neri Naig. ■

Why Ivana Alawi doesn't need any gifts



Ivana Alawi

Filipino music icon Ogie Alcasilvana Alawi's journey from online content creator to a household name in the Philippines continues to draw attention from her millions of followers.

With 18.5 million subscribers on YouTube, the actress and entrepreneur ranks as the platform's fourth most-subscribed channel in the country. Her influence extends beyond social media, prompting conversations about her success and financial achievements.

Alawi first shared in a 2023 vlog that she earned a staggering P1 million daily from her YouTube channel, though she clarified that her primary goal was never to make money. She also addressed questions about her earnings, stating that she pays taxes but avoids discussing the specifics to prevent accusations of bragging.

"I pay taxes. I just don't want to disclose it because some might say, 'Oh, she's bragging.' No, but since you keep asking and asking, there you go," she said in the vernacular.

In addition to her YouTube

success, Alawi has ventured into live selling, where her results have been equally remarkable. During a viral live-streaming session, she revealed earning over P10 million in just a few hours. In a recent interview at the TikTok Summit, she noted that she has been active in live selling for nearly two years, despite occasional challenges such as running out of stock.

"We could have earned more, possibly in the eight digits, but we ran out of inventory," she said in one interview.

Alawi's followers often celebrate her transparency and resourcefulness. She has disclosed that her TikTok earnings support her family, while income from acting and YouTube is reinvested in properties. Her ability to manage multiple revenue streams has solidified her status as one of the country's most prominent influencers.

In 2025, people still wonder how much Ivana earns. But some fans say she doesn't need gifts because she's financially independent. ■

Gordon Ramsay wowed by Judy Ann Santos, Abi Marquez's cooking skills



(From left) Gordon Ramsay, Judy Ann Santos, and Abi Marquez.

It was a dream come true for Judy Ann Santos and content creator Abi Marquez as they had the chance to show off their cooking skills to award-winning chef Gordon Ramsay.

Ramsay is currently in the Philippines to visit his eponymous

upscale restaurant at a hotel in Pasay City, interact with fellow chefs and food connoisseurs, host a cooking demonstration, and oversee plans to open more restaurants in the country, among other engagements.

One of the highlights of the

celebrity chef's visit was the cooking demonstration at a hotel ballroom on Monday, January 20, which included Santos, content creator Ninong Ry, and two other individuals.

During the demo, Santos, Ry, and the other participants were

asked to prepare a halo-halo where they brought their respective ingredients. The award-winning actress' interpretation of the classic dessert includes black sesame, nata de coco, fermented coconut juice, coconut milk, and cheese.

Photos of Santos at the demo were posted on the social media platforms of Official Juday PH on the same day.

"Chef Judy Ann as one of the celebrity guests for Gordon Ramsay in Manila. It was Chef Juday's honor to prepare her version of halo-halo for Gordon Ramsay to taste and know of,"

The actress also interacted with Ramsay while preparing her dish and posed for photos with the latter, as seen in separate posts.

"In action for Gordon Ramsay in Manila – our lovely Chef Judy Ann. Preparing and conversing about a dish with Gordon Ramsay is a dream come true moment," one of the posts read. ■

Open letter to Bob Rae from Marvin Rotrand, Director-General, United Against Hate Canada

January 3, 2025

Bob Rae
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York
466 Lexington Avenue, 20th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ambassador Rae,

Canada is home to one of the largest Haitian diasporas in the world numbering more than 180,000 persons, of whom some 150,000 live in greater Montreal. The two countries have historic ties. Yet in its moment of urgent need, Canada, like much of the world, has turned a blind eye to Haiti.

Last month, United Against Hate Canada issued an open letter, attached, expressing our horror at the news that 180 people were brutally massacred on December 9 in the Wharf Jérémie section of Cité Soleil, one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince. We were appalled at the paucity of an international response.

It was perhaps one of the most shocking incidents in the past two years that has led to some 5000 persons being killed in Haiti, nearly a million displaced and the collapse of virtually all Haitian state institutions. Armed criminal gangs control the capital and much of the country. Law enforcement is practically non-existent.

Over the holidays there was an effort by what remains of the national government to reopen the General Hospital, the largest in Port-au-Prince. The gangs responded by attacking the hospital. Two journalists and a police officer were murdered. Yet again there has been little response from the international community.

Haiti history includes many sad moments including coups, dictatorships, and natural disasters but the country has never before seen a crisis of the current proportions. There had been hopes that the Kenyan led Multinational Secure Support that arrived in early 2024 could make a difference, but it is clearly outgunned by the gangs and in its current format not the answer.

Our organization and the Black Coalition of Quebec have jointly asked stakeholders to speak out and give hope to the people of Haiti to tell them that they have friends everywhere who want their ongoing nightmare to end. We issued a series of demands and we ask that you advocate for those at the United Nations General Assembly.



An immediate and urgent need which we ask you to prioritize is the following:

- Support the demand of Haiti's Transitional Presidential Council that the current Multinational Security Support mission, being led by Kenya, be transformed into an official U.N. peacekeeping mission.

In October Leslie Voltaire, the current president of the Transitional Presidential Council, wrote a letter to Secretary-General António Guterres asking that the current Multinational Security Support mission, being led by Kenya, be transformed into an official U.N. peacekeeping mission, citing the urgency of Haiti's situation.

We ask that Canada support the demand and that you advocate in favour of this, the only solution able in the short term, to restore a modicum of law and order to Haiti.

The Dominican Republic is showing no compassion in the face of the crisis in Haiti. It is systematically rounding up and deporting Haitians who are fleeing across the border ignoring its obligations under international law. Accordingly, we ask that you call on the General Assembly to:

- Support the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees' call to stop deporting migrants and asylum seekers to Haiti amid the surge of gang violence.

- Demand that the Dominican Republic immediately cease its mass deportation of Haitian refugees.

Without champions willing to speak for it, Haiti is effectively abandoned and its future bleak.

On behalf of our colleagues in the Black Coalition of Quebec and on our behalf, I thank you for anything you can do to prod the United Nations to help Haiti.

Yours truly,

Marvin Rotrand
Director General
United Against Hate Canada

marvinrottrand2@hotmail.com

c.c. Melanie Joly, Weibert Arthus, Max Stanley Bazin

Trudeau welcomes news of Gaza ceasefire deal, hopes for a 2-state solution

January 15, 2025 - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau welcomed the news of a ceasefire deal reached between Israel and Hamas on Wednesday and said that the focus should now shift toward ensuring a two-state solution.

"Canada stands ready to do whatever it can to ensure the success of this agreement," Trudeau told reporters during an unrelated news conference with Canada's premiers.

includes the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and release of hostages taken by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Phase 1 of the deal, which will span 42 days, will include the release of 33 Israeli hostages, including all women, children and men over 50.

Negotiations on implementing the second phase will begin by the 16th day of Phase 1 and it is expected to



Palestinians react to news on a ceasefire deal with Israel in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, on Jan. 15, 2025. (Ramadan Abed/Reuters)

"This ceasefire gives us hope. Hope that we can now focus our attention on a true, lasting political solution to this conflict — a two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians living side-by-side in safety, security and dignity," he said.

The agreement comes more than 15 months into a war that has killed more than 46,000 Palestinians after a Hamas-led attack on southern Israel killed more than 1,200 people and left about 250 others taken hostage.

Canada has long called for a ceasefire, the return of hostages and an urgent flow of humanitarian aid. The country joined Australia and New Zealand in July to demand a ceasefire, saying the countries were "unequivocal in our condemnation of Hamas" but that civilians in Gaza "cannot be made to pay the price."

Last year, Canada also voted in favour of a non-binding United Nations resolution calling for a humanitarian pause — representing a shift away from its long-standing practice of voting with Israel on major resolutions at the UN.

The agreement follows months of on-off negotiations conducted by Egyptian and Qatari mediators, with the backing of the United States.

The deal will go into effect on Sunday, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said in a Wednesday news conference in Doha, where negotiations were taking place.

The complex accord outlines a six-week initial ceasefire phase and

include the release of all remaining hostages, a permanent ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

The third phase is expected to address the return of all remaining bodies and the start of Gaza's reconstruction, supervised by Egypt, Qatar and the United Nations.

Mediators gave Israel and Hamas a final draft of an agreement on Monday, an official briefed on the negotiations told Reuters, after a midnight "breakthrough" in talks attended by envoys of both outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden and president-elect Donald Trump.

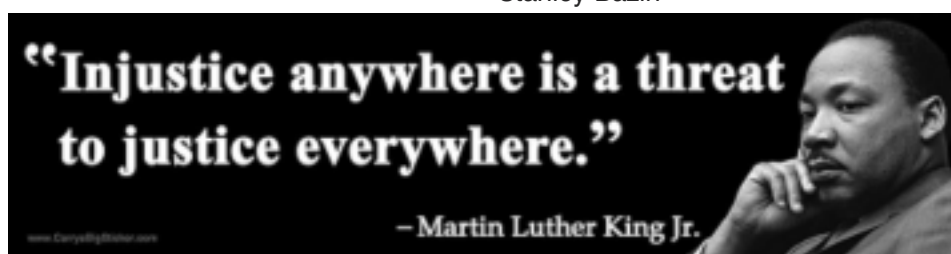
Biden confirmed the ceasefire deal Wednesday, adding that all American hostages will be released in the first phase of the ceasefire.

"Fighting in Gaza will stop, and soon the hostages return home to their families," he said.

Israel has said roughly 100 hostages are still being held in Gaza, but it is unclear how many are alive.

The Health Ministry in Gaza has said Israel's attacks have killed more than 46,000 Palestinians, making it the deadliest war in decades of conflict between the two. Israel's campaign has also pushed most of Gaza's 2.3 million people from their homes and left most of the coastal enclave, including its health-care infrastructure, in ruins.

With files from CBC News, published January 15, 2025



Several Canadian provinces to send their firemen to help fight the wildfires in California

Canada is sending firefighters and other resources to California to assist in the fight against five major wildfires that have ravaged Los Angeles, levelling thousands of structures, killing at least six people and putting nearly 180,000 under evacuation orders.

Minister of Emergency Preparedness Harjit Sajjan said Thursday that he had

inauguration. He has said he will use "economic force" to annex Canada, and Ottawa is mulling retaliatory tariffs if he moves forward with his threat of a 25-per-cent tax on all products from Canada.

Canada and the U.S. have a decades-long history of sharing resources to combat wildfires. This partnership was strengthened

had received a request from its U.S. counterpart for two CL-415 Skimmer Airtankers with flight crew to operate in Southern California. The agency said it is fulfilling the request but could not provide a delivery timeline.

On Thursday, Justin Trudeau posted to X a video of a Canadian waterbomber responding to the fires, writing, "Neighbours helping neighbours." The plane is one of two from Quebec's forest fire protection agency, SOPFEU, which sends the pair to the U.S. each fall as part of an annual contract, extended this year because of the emergency.

B.C. Forests Minister Ravi Parmar said Cal Fire, California's fire response service, reached out to his province directly on Thursday requesting senior-level expertise from the BC Wildfire Service. Premier David Eby said province "will always stand with our American neighbours when they are in need."

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said her province is preparing to deploy an incident command team as well as other resources, including water bombers and night-vision helicopters.

"Good neighbours are always there for each other in times of need, and we will assist our American friends in any way they need during this crisis," she wrote in a post to X.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford said his province intends to send two waterbombers along with a contingent of 165 urban firefighters that could be ramped up to 300. On Tuesday, he appeared on Fox News to dismiss Mr. Trump's threats to make Canada the "51st state" as "ridiculous," and to advocate against his tariff plans.

"This is an example of what I have been saying, you know, our closest friend, our closest ally, needs help and we're going to make sure we're going to be there for supporting them," Doug Ford told reporters at Queen's Park on Thursday.

"And I know other premiers are going to do the exact same thing. But this is what you do. When you see what's happening on television, it's a tragedy, what's happening in California. The poor front line firefighters, they're exhausted and they need some relief."

Trudeau, who was in Washington on

Thursday to attend the funeral of former president Jimmy Carter, told reporters that he had been in contact with California Governor Gavin Newsom and other U.S. officials to offer needed resources.

"Unfortunately, Canada has developed a significant amount of expertise in wildfires that are encroaching on suburban and urban areas," he said. "This is something that we're all going to have to deal with more in the world over the coming decades with the impacts of climate change, and we are certainly there to help our American friends."

The Prime Minister added that he had productive meetings with a number of U.S. business leaders regarding tariffs, and again dismissed Trump's threat of annexing Canada.

"Canadians define themselves in a whole bunch of different ways, but one of the ways we all use as shorthand is we're Canadian because we're not American, and that is not going to change."

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) has offered to help fight ongoing wildfires in California by sending 10 firefighters, 3,000 lengths of 100-foot hose and a Birdog aircraft.

"In Saskatchewan, we know firsthand how devastating a fire can be, and offering our experienced members and equipment is exactly what being a good neighbour is all about," said Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Minister Tim McLeod in a news release issued Tuesday.

The SPSA is a Crown corporation under the Treasury Board that's responsible for emergency management in Saskatchewan.

Before the province's offer, the SPSA had been in talks with the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) to understand what specific items were needed in order to effectively complement support coming from other provinces.

Ontario, Alberta and Quebec have already sent firefighters, bombers and equipment.

With files from Globe and Mail article written by Jeffrey Grey in Toronto published January 15, 2025

and MSN article written by Nykole King published January 13, 2025



A firefighter monitors the spread of flames near Los Angeles, California, on January 13, 2025.

connected with U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Deanne Criswell to offer Canada's support.

"Team Canada, with Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, is ready to deploy 250 firefighters, aircraft equipment and other resources as early as tonight," Mr. Sajjan said in a statement, adding that the Canadian Forces are standing by to move personnel and equipment.

"Canada stands ready to support our American neighbours during this challenging time."

Ottawa and several premiers are using their united show of support and pledge of resources to highlight the strength of U.S.-Canada relations, which are under growing strain ahead of president-elect Donald Trump's

with a memorandum of understanding signed in 2023.

Los Angeles firefighters grapple with an aging water system not equipped for extreme wildfires

The blaze began Tuesday with the Palisades fire in the Santa Monica Mountains and spread rapidly across the Los Angeles area, fuelled by a powerful windstorm. That fire, and the Eaton fire near Pasadena, had together scorched around 135 square kilometres by Thursday afternoon. The fires are entirely uncontained and are considered the most destructive fires in Los Angeles history.

The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, which co-ordinates firefighting resources in Canada and internationally, said it

Latest news on the Liberal Party leadership race, two more enter their bids

OTTAWA — (January 23, 2025) Liberal leadership candidates Mark Carney, Chrystia Freeland and Chandra Arya have submitted their paperwork to the party and have officially entered the race.

They submitted the required 300 signatures from registered Liberals and a \$50,000 deposit ahead of Thursday's 5 p.m. ET deadline.

Government House leader Karina Gould's campaign team said she plans to get her papers and deposit in by the deadline. Former Liberal MP Frank Baylis did not respond to inquiries.

Liberal MP Jaime Battiste also has indicated he plans to run for the leadership but it's not clear how far he is in the process.

Carney spent Wednesday in Ottawa, where he was spotted on Parliament Hill in the morning and later on the Rideau Canal skating with Liberal MP Adam van Koevorden.

The Canadian Press asked Carney for an update on his policy platform regarding consumer carbon pricing.

Carney secured the endorsement of Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault on

Tuesday. Guilbeault indicated he was open to replacing consumer carbon pricing with another policy to fight climate change.

"When you look at something like carbon pricing... first and foremost it's making this economy more competitive, more sustainable jobs. It's helping us do our bit on climate change. It's also making sure that Canadians come out ahead right now, and then in the future," Carney told The Canadian Press.

"What you're going to see from my campaign, my group, working with people like Steven (Guilbeault) and many others across this country, across the party, is a solution that works for everyone, addresses all those aspects. That's cost of living, that's jobs, that's competitiveness, and that's building the strongest economy in the G7."

Officials working on the various campaigns are now focusing their attention on the Jan. 27 deadline for registering people with the party to allow them to vote for the new Liberal leader, who also becomes the next prime minister.

Candidates have been signing up new members to support their campaigns, but some



Ruby Dhalla

campaigns don't know whether those supporters are also registered to vote.

Two more candidates declared their intention to enter the race Wednesday: former Brampton MP Ruby Dhalla and Michael Clark, a self-described Christian community organizer and businessman who is campaigning to "make the party pro-life."

On Wednesday, federal Housing Minister Nate Erskine-Smith said he'll participate in the race as a supporter but hasn't decided yet who he'll endorse.

"I'm going to get involved one way or the other at some point. I was looking forward to the ideas that different candidates were putting forward," Erskine-Smith said at his first announcement since joining cabinet last month.

"I've been encouraged by the number of serious people who have stepped up."

Erskine-Smith said he valued Freeland as a colleague, adding Carney has done "a lot of good in his life" and Gould approaches politics with a generational perspective that he shares. He also had words of praise for Baylis.

"Frank Baylis was a friend. I sat on committee with him. No one talks about him when different candidates get mentioned but this is a guy who built a billion-dollar company, who has financed award-winning films that addressed the exploitation of migrant workers," Erskine-Smith said. #

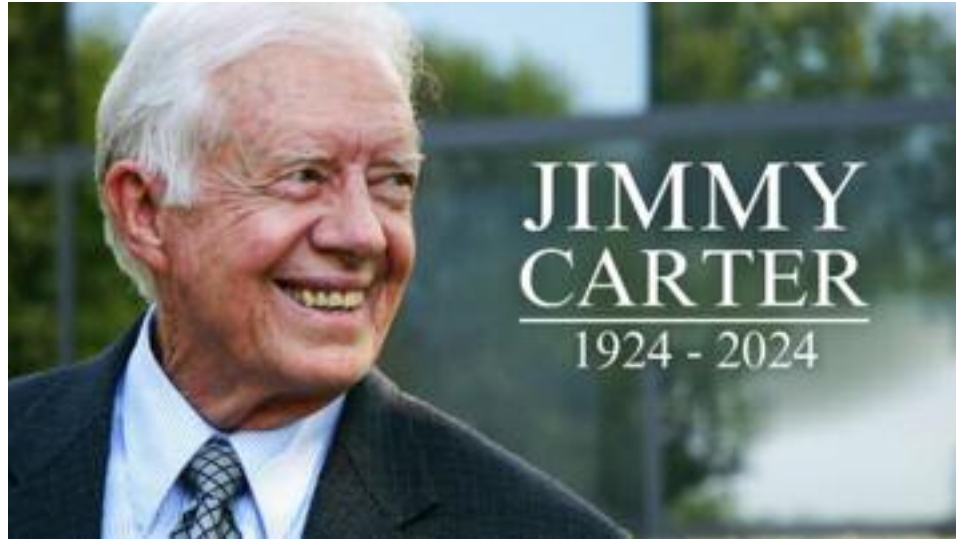
Excerpts from files of the Canadian Press latest news published January 23, 2025.

THE NORTH AMERICAN
FILIPINO STAR
 Montreal, Quebec, Canada

January 2025 Pictorial News Stories



Ali Wong poses with the award for best performance in stand-up comedy on television for "Ali Wong: Single Lady" during the 82nd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)



Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States, was a devoted supporter of the national park that bears his name. He was born on October 1, 1924, Plains, Georgia, United States and died on December 29, 2024 in his hometown.



Donald Trump addresses Davos summit Photograph: (Reuters, Wion Web Team) - US President Donald Trump on Thursday (Jan 23) addressed the Davos summit, marking his first major speech to global business and political leaders since his return to power. "This has been a truly historic week in the United States. Three days ago, I took the oath of office, and we began the golden age of America," Trump said.



Premier Doug Ford is planning to call a provincial election next Wednesday which will send Ontarians to the polls on February 27th, a senior Conservative source confirmed to CBC news.



A still from the documentary shows Julian Brave Noisecat's father, Ed Archie NoiseCat, a key figure in the film. (James Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie)

Williams Lake First Nation Chief Willie Sellars cried — for the first time in a while — tears of joy on Thursday morning when this year's Oscar nominees were announced. "I shouted tears of joy, and then I cried tears of joy," he told CBC's Daybreak Kamloops host Shelley Joyce.

Sellars and his community were featured in Sugarcane, which details the legacy of residential schools in Canada, and in particular, that of the St. Joseph's Mission near Williams Lake, B.C. The film has been nominated the 2025 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

"The history and legacy of residential schools in this country have had a significant impact on all of our communities through the direct trauma, through the intergenerational trauma," Sellars said. "But the most disturbing thing about that conversation is most Canadians and most people in the world don't know that story ... people are going to be talking about it now. Hopefully, it will empower the survivors to tell their story."



Photo shows Tomiko Itooka when she celebrated her 116th birthday on 23 May 2024. She was recognised as the world's oldest person by Guinness World Records. She died aged 116 in a nursing home in the city of Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, on Saturday, January 5, 2025 according to officials.



President Donald Trump holds an executive order announcing the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on January 20, 2025. - Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images