

## COVID-19: Quebec lays out ground rules for summer festivals, other cultural happenings

By Annabelle Olivier Global News  
Posted May 19, 2021 6:52 pm

Summer in the city is looking up for Montreal after Quebec Premier François Legault announced Monday an end to the province's overnight curfew on May 28 and the gradual loosening of COVID-19 restrictions.

Among the many announcements was the reopening of stadiums and other entertainment venues across the province and the return of summer festivals.

"All I want to say is 'finally,'" said Culture Minister Nathalie Roy on Tuesday. "Finally we'll be able to reconnect with our artists who give us our summer joie de vivre."

Roy made the comments during a press conference alongside Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx, outlining some of the ground rules for the gradual reopening.

While spectators will be able to enjoy outdoor shows as early as this Friday, people shouldn't expect business as usual.

Only outdoor shows with pre-assigned seating will be allowed with a maximum capacity of 250 people.



A crowd at the Montreal Jazz Festival listening to a concert, Montreal, Que., June 28, 2012. Denis Beaumont/The Canadian Press

Masks will be mandatory with two-metre distancing between members of a different family bubble in red and orange zones. In yellow zones, the distance will be reduced to one metre.

Just a week later, on May 28, big theatres, amphitheatres and

stadiums will be allowed to put on shows with pre-assigned seating with a maximum capacity of 2,500. Masks will again be mandatory and spectators will be subdivided into sections or rooms of 250 people each.

Again, social distancing rules

will be in effect according to the province's colour-coded alert system.

Each section must be monitored by at least one employee to ensure public health guidelines are being followed. Each section must also be divided from the next by physical barriers and have independent entrances and exits.

Concession stands will be open in yellow and orange zones but there will be people walking around offering food and drinks in order to avoid lineups.

Festivals and other cultural events, with or without assigned seating, are scheduled to make a comeback on June 25.

Again, organizers and spectators alike will have to abide by several rules.

Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx said event promoters or organizers will have to submit a plan that must be approved by regional public health agencies.

Festivals will be limited to 2,500 spectators, with barriers between

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## Lionel Perez to run as CDN-NDG Borough Mayor

*Will run under the Ensemble Montréal Denis Coderre Party*

Montreal, May 26, 2021 – Lionel Perez, City Councillor for Darlington District announced today that he will run as Ensemble Montréal's Borough Mayor candidate in Cote des Neiges - Notre Dame de Grace (CDN-NDG) during the municipal elections this November.

Perez was interim leader of Ensemble Montreal for the last three years until the return of Denis Coderre this past April.

"I am humbled to announce that I have accepted the nomination to run as CDN-NDG Borough Mayor for Ensemble Montréal at the next municipal elections. Over the last 12 years I have faithfully represented the interests of the population of Darlington and now want to bring that same dedication and passion to the entire borough that I love" stated Perez.

Councillor Perez was first elected in 2009 and has been re-elected in 2013 and 2017. He is well

known to the Filipino community through his long-standing involvement and support of local Filipino organizations and events.

He served as a member of the Montreal Executive Committee during the 2013 - 2017 Council mandate and has been Leader of the Official Opposition at city hall since 2017.

Denis Coderre, the former Montreal Mayor and Ensemble Montreal candidate to become Mayor again said "I have worked closely with Lionel Perez and know that he will be a great Borough Mayor for CDN-NDG. He has the knowledge, experience, and drive to improve the lives of the population of this wonderful borough. He is a champion of diversity. Together we will reinforce the principle of living-together in CDN-NDG and Montréal as a whole."

"I believe that I bring an inclusive vision that our borough needs with a strong work-ethic and solution-oriented collaborative approach. My



Lionel Perez, Councillor - Darlington

experience as City Councillor and as a lawyer will allow me to get things done immediately in the best interests of the residents of CDN-NDG," said Perez.

"My priorities will be what I call the three "I" s – Investments, Inclusion

and Innovation. Over the last 4 years CDN-NDG has lost over \$50 million dollars in capital investments from reduced transfers from city-centre. We

See Page 4 Lionel Perez



**From the Publisher's desk**

**Two issues facing us today - mental health and environmental challenges**

**Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi**

As we continue living in a global pandemic world, we are most likely feeling the emotional strains of worrying what happens next, when will this be over, how will we pay all our bills, and will we ever recover from the tremendous losses in all aspects of our lives. Obviously, it is during this time that mental health becomes an issue and coping strategies are badly needed to help us survive. It is normal to feel vulnerable not only to the infection but also to the trauma of isolation, loneliness, and loss of freedom. We have become more aware of the inequalities in our society and how the marginalized, racialized communities suffer more from the devastating effects of the global pandemic than the privileged groups. Moreover, the pandemic has revealed the inadequacy of our health care systems, the lack of foresight in providing for all types of contingencies, and the environmental challenges that have become more critical, requiring immediate attention to avoid an environmental disaster.

Awareness of a problem is certainly the first step in finding a solution. As global leaders learned from the pandemic, there is a need to work together in combatting a common enemy - a virus that has caused the loss of several million lives and the climate change that has become more visible, primarily through the work of climate activists and the warnings from scientists

that there is no time to wait to fight climate change.

Recent reports have cited the environmental factors affecting mental health. Exposure to climate and weather-related natural disasters can result in mental health consequences such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. A significant proportion of people affected by those events develop chronic psychological dysfunction. Some people are at higher risks for mental health consequences from weather-related disasters. Among them are children, pregnant and postpartum women, people with pre-existing mental illnesses, people who are economically disadvantaged, those who are homeless and first responders to the disaster.

As everyone may realize, mental health is an important factor for our happiness. Psychologists recommend having hobbies, finding a balance between work and leisure, maintaining a social network with people we trust and love, be interested in a variety of subjects that help us widen our perspectives and develop insights into the meaning of life.

In order to live a full life, we must have resiliency, purpose and motivation to achieve our dreams. We must also familiarize ourselves with stories of heroism, survival and accomplishments thereby inspiring us to follow in the footsteps of benevolent leaders to serve our communities.

**On the occasion of celebrating Mothers' Day**

**MOMENTS**  
**Never alone**

By: Fr. Jerry M. Orbos SVD - @inquirerdotnetPhilippine Daily Inquirer / 05:05 AM May 09, 2021

The story is told about a teacher who asked his students: "How do you stir your coffee?" Some said with their left hand, and others said with their right hand, except for one student who answered: "With a teaspoon, Ma'am."

In today's gospel (John 15, 9-17), Jesus reminds us of something which we often forget or take for granted—His commandment that we love one another. All too often, we are so focused on ourselves and on our own personal agenda that we forget God, and His agenda for us to live a life filled with love.

Happy Mother's Day! A mother's love is irreplaceable and immeasurable. A mother's heart is a heart that is closest to God's heart. But like God, mothers are all too often hurt, forgotten, abandoned, or taken for granted. And yet, like God, mothers continue to love, and keep on loving anyhow, anyway, all the way. God bless our mothers. God bless all mothers!

Someone beautifully put it: God knew He cannot be actually present everywhere all the time, that's why He made mothers.

The presence or the absence of a mother's love can make the difference in a person's character, values, mindset, and behavior. As it were, it is the hands of mothers that help mold our world.

After Mama died, we often saw a white butterfly to remind us of her loving presence. When I had cancer, a white butterfly would welcome me and stay with me in the chapel, especially after I come home to the Mission House after my chemotherapy session. The other day, again, a white butterfly joined us in our walking Rosary. Yes, mothers will find a way to remind us that they are with us always and in all ways.

Today we also renew our love and gratitude for Mother Nature. The pandemic has prevented or slowed down

the inhabitants of this earth from abusing her. Yes, the skies are clearer, the air is cleaner. Hopefully, people of this earth become more mindful of the future generation, and become more respectful of Mother Nature.

Today we pray for our Motherland. Many of our people are suffering, confused, and often, just being taken for a ride. We pray for our leaders and so-called public servants to really sacrifice and serve our people especially this time. Now is not the time to make more money, or to make a name for publicity and popularity. Now is the time to make a difference in people's lives. Sana, Lord. Sana, all!

Some days ago, in the middle of my Zoom Mass with the family of a deceased person, the internet connection got cut, and there I was alone facing a blank screen. What to do? Should I wait for them to come back? Should I stop? I went on, me and God, after all, He is the one we were praying to, and He never left. At the "Our Father," the participants came back! Yes, people come and go, but God remains. He is a God who stays with us, no matter what.

Anyone who goes through the night of COVID-19 knows what being alone is. Also what being alone with God is. May we experience God and come closer to Him as we experience sickness, trials, persecutions, and sufferings in this, our journey through the valley of tears and fears.

We ask our heavenly Mother to bless us, and continue to intercede for us. Together we pray: "Our Queen, our Mother, remember we are your very own, defend and protect us as your personal possession." Amen!

A moment with the Lord: Lord, thank You for your constant assurance that You never leave us, and we are never alone. Amen.

momentswithfrjerry@gmail.com

(Submitted by Tony San Juan)

**Minister Mendicino marks Citizenship Week**

Ottawa, May 17, 2021—The Honourable Marco E. L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, today issued the following statement to mark Citizenship Week:

"Today, Canadians celebrate the start of Citizenship Week, a time to express pride in our shared history, our diverse heritage, and our collective achievements. It is also an opportunity to highlight the tremendous contributions of immigrants to their communities and the Canadian economy.

"Canadian citizenship is both highly valued and sought after around the world. Without a doubt, one of our greatest achievements is the shared recognition that Canada is stronger and more prosperous because of its diversity.

"While we are by no means perfect, Canadians share a profound commitment to equality, inclusion, and respect for our differences – this includes our ethnicities, our gender identities and expressions, and our beliefs.

"As Canadian citizens, we all have a responsibility to help others in our communities, and that has never been more important than during the global

COVID-19 pandemic we've faced together this past year. We will forever be grateful to the front line workers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and all Canadians who have worked tirelessly to help Canada throughout the pandemic."

"The hopes, the commitment, and the energy that newcomers and new citizens bring to Canada are expressed in countless positive contributions, and that has never been truer than over the past year."

"As Canadians, we share a profound commitment to be there for one another. It is one of our defining attributes, and time and time again, newcomers and new citizens have embraced this spirit. I encourage all Canadians to take the time to find ways to be active in your communities, to do some volunteer work, and to help welcome new Canadians in your community.

"Throughout Citizenship Week, I encourage all Canadians to reflect on what it means to be Canadian, and the many rights, freedoms, and responsibilities we all share as citizens."#

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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.*

# Quebec takes 1st step toward normality by lifting curfew and opening outdoor dining on May 28

**Legault says restrictions will be lifted over the spring and summer, as long as people keep getting vaccinated**

Isaac Olson · CBC News · Posted: May 18, 2021 12:12 PM ET |

Quebec's premier says life will start returning to normal gradually, with the curfew lifting across the province on May 28 and masks no longer mandatory in most situations by the end of August.

"This is a big day. A big step," François Legault said with a smile on

Tuesday, not hiding his excitement as he announced his long-awaited plan to scale back public health restrictions.

Also allowed as of May 28:

- Eating on patios and decks outside of restaurants.
- Outdoor gatherings of up to eight people on private property.
- Travel between regions of Quebec.



Quebec Premier François Legault was all smiles when he announced the gradual lifting of measures this summer and congratulated residents for following the rules. (Jacques Boissinot/The Canadian Press)

• Up to 2,500 people in a large theatre or arena.

Just a few days later, on May 31, the vast majority of the province will be an "orange zone," which means indoor dining at restaurants will be allowed and gyms can reopen.

All kids will be sent back to school full time as well. As it stands in Quebec, third-year high school students and above have been alternating between days online learning and in-person classes.

See Page 12 Quebec

Press Release

**MOTION TO REAFFIRM AND ENHANCE THE EXPRESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN MONTREAL AND MANILA**

Whereas the City of Manila and the City of Montreal can trace a relationship stemming from Manila motion 64 dated August 31, 2004, and Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Borough motion CA 05 170320 adopted September 5, 2005, this ratified by Montreal Executive Committee motion CE05 2003 of October 5, 2005;

Whereas on June 5, 2017 Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Borough Council adopted motion CA17 170185 noting that the City of Manila had adopted motion 44 on February 16, 2017, reaffirming its friendship with the City of Montreal and urging the two cities to sign

agreements for collaboration in various fields of municipal endeavour;

Whereas Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Borough Council motion CA17 170185 specifically urged the Executive Committee to reaffirm Montreal's desire to develop an amical and mutually beneficial relationship with the City of Manila;

Whereas Montreal's Executive Committee has yet to act on the Borough Council's desire to reinvigorate and enhance the friendship between Montreal and Manila;

Whereas some 38,000 Quebecers trace their origin or heritage to the Philippines, the majority of whom live in the metropolitan Montreal area with nearly 17,000 residing in the Borough of Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce;

Whereas in recognition of the contributions of the Filipino population to the wellbeing of the Borough of Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Borough Council adopted on February 12, 2018 resolution CA 18 17027 declaring every June as Filipino Heritage Month in the Borough's territory, a motion that was one of the factors cited in the adoption of motion M-155 in the House of Commons declaring every June as Filipino Heritage Month in Canada;

Whereas Rodolfo Robles, Philippines Ambassador to Canada, has urged the Borough of Côte-des-Neiges –Notre-Dame-de-Grâce to relaunch its efforts to reinvigorate and enhance the friendship between the City of Montreal and the City of Manila;

It is moved by Marvin Rotrand, City Councillor, district of Snowdon  
Seconded by Lionel Perez,

City Councillor, district of Darlington

That the Borough Council reaffirm its desire as expressed in motion CA17 170185 requesting the Executive Committee to further develop an amical and mutually beneficial relationship with the City of Manila;

That the Borough Council mandate the Clerk to advise Rodolfo Robles, Philippines Ambassador to Canada, of the adoption of this motion and request that the Embassy alert City of Manila Mayor Isko Moreno and Manila City Council of its support for reinvigorating and enhancing the friendship between the cities;

That a copy of this motion be provided to Me. Yves Saindon, the City Clerk, so that it may be tabled at the June 14, 2021 meeting of City Council.



**Marvin Rotrand**  
City Councillor - Snowdon  
marvin.rotrand@montreal.ca



**Councillors' Office:**  
**5160 Decarie #610**  
**Telephone: 514 872 4863**

Wishing the community all the best for June, Filipino Heritage Month in Canada.



**Lionel Perez**  
City Councilor - Darlington  
lionel.perez@montreal.ca

We are working to reinvigorate the friendship between Montreal and Manila. We ask for your support for our motion at Borough Council for June 7.

From Page 1 Quebec lays ground

subsections of 250 people. However, Proulx specified that one festival can have different venues if they're 500 metres apart.

That would allow something like the Montreal International Jazz Festival to hold two outdoor concerts on different streets, each with 2,500 capacity.

Proulx said ticket sales for such events should be done online in order to better control attendance and to serve as a registry in case of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Officials said the rules are subject to the epidemiological situation and could change if the situation

From Page 1 Lionel Perez

simply did not get our fair share, and this decreased the quality of life for our families. Reduced road repairs and less park improvements and municipal installations. It's simply unacceptable."

As CDN-NDG is the home of many diverse communities, including a large Filipino community, Perez demands that diversity and inclusion be at the forefront of the next election.

"As Montréal's most populous and diverse borough we need to be proactive in ensuring the voices of our many communities are heard and that we confront inequalities. I am proud of my record on this front and will continue to be a champion for all. Lastly, we need to innovate and find ways to make things more productive and efficient. As someone who knows the municipal system in great details, I will bring concrete ways to make things better."

Perez has already gained a major endorsement. Perez's candidacy for Borough Mayor is endorsed by Snowdon City Councillor Marvin Rotrand. The two worked with the

## Minister Ahmed Hussen's one-on-one interview with the North American Filipino Star Editor



Montreal, April 29, 2021 - It was a pleasant surprise to receive a request from the office of the Honorable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, to have a one-on-one interview. The purpose is to reach out to the Filipino community in Montreal in explaining some features of the 2021 Federal budget that will have a beneficial effect on families of ethnic communities.

In response to my questions in a

worsens.

Alain Mongeau, the founder of electronic music festival Mutek, said he's planning a hybrid model of the event for this year.

Mongeau told Global News he's not bothered by all the new rules, that there's cause for celebration.

"They don't bother us. You have to be very optimistic about the fact that festivals can happen this summer," he said.

"The second thing we could be happy about is the fact that we consider light at the end of the tunnel. We are on the way."#

— With files from Global News' Gloria Henriquez

community for the creation of Place Jose Rizal at Mackenzie King Park and have created a strong bond with the Filipino community.

Together with Rotrand, Perez was the instigator of declaring June Filipino Heritage Month. The Filipino Heritage Month has become one of the major events in CDN-NDG every year with thousands participating. Perez is also an honorary Knight of the Order of the Knights of Rizal and was responsible for translating the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities into the Filipino language.

"I am proud to say that I have been a friend and a strong supporter of the Filipino community over the years. I look forward to working collaboratively with different community groups as Borough Mayor."

CDN-NDG Council's June 7 agenda will include a motion presented by Perez and Rotrand to reinvigorate the Montreal - Manila friendship that dates initially from 2004.

Perez is working closely with Philippines Ambassador to Canada Rodolfo Robles to move the friendship forward.#

30-minute interview, the Minister pointed out that in view of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Government has provided a budget for affordable housing units, establishment of a high quality child care system, financial assistance to small businesses, and prevention of domestic violence. He emphasized that the construction of affordable housing units will benefit more families, specially new immigrants. The recruitment and training of early childhood educators will be a priority in building a national childcare system. Recognizing that low income seniors have been greatly impacted by the pandemic, Budget 2021 proposes to meet the immediate needs of this group of seniors by providing a one-time payment of \$500 in August 2021 to OAS pensioners who will be 75 or over as of June 2022. Budget 2021 then proposes to introduce legislation to increase regular OAS payments for pensioners 75 and over by 10 per cent on an ongoing basis as of July 2022.

By Zenaida Kharroubi

## Feds commit nearly \$200M to be able to mass produce mRNA vaccine in Canada

Sarah Turnbull CTVNews.ca Producer - Published Tuesday, May 18, 2021 11:55AM EDT

OTTAWA -- The federal government is committing almost \$200 million to boost the manufacturing capacity at a Mississauga, Ont.-based plant in order to fulfill future vaccine and therapeutics needs.

Federal innovation minister Francois-Philippe Champagne spoke to the announcement on Tuesday, stating that Resilience Biotechnologies will receive \$199.16 million, which will go to "modernize and expand" the company's facilities – a project with a total price tag of \$401.51 million.

"Once completed, the new facility is expected to be able to manufacture between 112 million and 640 million doses of mRNA vaccines per year – a significant boost to our domestic capacity. This will position Canada well to attract vaccine manufacturing for both the Canadian market and the export market," said Champagne.

Ottawa has previously announced funds to bolster mRNA vaccine production in the country, but not at this scale.

In January, the government promised to dish out up to \$5 million to Calgary-based Providence Therapeutics and Northern RNA to "build a pipeline of mRNA vaccines." Millions of additional dollars have gone to firms that make viral vector vaccines.

While Resilience Biotechnologies isn't generating its own product, when contracted it will work with other firms to mass produce their drugs. The project is expected to be completed in 2024, but they aim to have some capacity come online as early as 2023.

The federal government has so far been reliant on international vaccine production and manufacturing because of a lack of domestic capacity.

"Our biomanufacturing sector had been in decline for almost four decades...But one thing is clear, Canada is well positioned to grow its leadership in the life sciences sector," said Champagne.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also weighed in on the news, touting its potential impact on job production.

"This funding will maintain and create 500 well-paying, full time jobs at the Resilience facility in Mississauga, positions that people can rely on to provide for their families. It will also mean 50 co-op spots which will help young people get their foot in the door in a growing sector," he said.

The federal budget earmarked \$2.2 billion over the next seven years to bolster Canada's vaccine production.

That included \$500 million for capital and infrastructure at universities and research hospitals, and \$1 billion in Strategic Innovation Fund money to help the most promising life science and biomanufacturing companies.

Earlier in the year, Procurement Minister Anita Anand told a House committee that she had asked international suppliers to manufacture their vaccine in Canada and all declined.

"The manufacturers reviewed the identified assets here in Canada and concluded that biomanufacturing capacity in this country, at the time of contract, which was last August and September, was too limited to justify the investment of capital and expertise to start manufacturing in Canada," Anand said on Feb. 4.

Being at the mercy of external suppliers has at times caused unexpected shipment delays over the past several months.

In a statement to CTVNews.ca, Conservative health critic Michelle Rempel-Garner said today's announcement doesn't solve the issue of getting more vaccines in more arms in the immediate term.

"Today's announcement will not help Canadians get a COVID-19 vaccine faster. It's inexcusable that Canada is well over a year into the pandemic and Justin Trudeau is finally investing in the manufacturing of vaccines in Canada," she said.

This week, Canada is receiving 4.5 million vaccine doses from Pfizer and Moderna, the largest batch to date.#

With a file from The Canadian Press.

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# The politicization of community pantries in the Philippines

*Despite its noble intentions, a community pantry relief initiative in the Philippines is not exempt from the harsh realities of domestic politics. Yet it continues to be a national symbol of compassion and solidarity, bringing out the best of Filipinos during the pandemic.*



**Cardboard signs in Filipino - give what you can, and take what you need. This community pantry is on Batasan Hills, Quezon City**

**Ana Patricia Non. organized the first community pantry on Maginhawa street**

By Andrea Chloe Wong, The Asean Today published May 11, 2021  
 "Let a thousand community pantries bloom," declared Philippine presidential spokesman Harry Roque. The Philippines' community pantries are a philanthropic initiative that has spread across the country since mid-April in an effort to feed the poor and hungry as COVID-19 cases continue to surge. Roque's statement came after government officials accused the pantries of inciting rebellion and anti-government sentiments. In an attempt to curtail its politicization, Roque called for the initiative to be replicated nationwide and highlighted the altruism behind it.

Similar to food banks in other countries, the community pantries in the Philippines offer immediate relief to low-income families. The makeshift grocery booths have sprouted on street corners and in small alleys, offering free bread, rice, fruits, vegetables and canned goods, and have become a means of daily survival for millions of Filipinos. By the end of April, there were already 358 community pantries scattered across the Philippines. Their rapid spread across the country has meant the difference between life and death for many. With the double burden of job losses and rising prices, many families face hunger as the country has yet to recover from one of the world's longest and strictest COVID-19 lockdowns.

In an effort to fill the gaps in government relief efforts, many Filipinos in the past month have been inspired to establish pantries in their neighborhoods. The first pantry was opened on April 14 by Ana Patricia Non, a 26 year old in Quezon City. "I'm tired of complaining. I'm tired of inaction... The fact that this has gone viral, it means this is a gut issue," she said.

The Philippine government provided up to PHP 8,000 (US\$ 167) in 2020 and PHP 4,000 (\$83) so far this year for each of the country's 18 million low-income families. But this support is not enough for daily essentials and has left many Filipinos feeling they have to

depend for themselves.  
**Government alleges community pantries linked to Communist Party**

Despite the altruism behind the community pantry, some government officials perceive it as a threat against the state, with links to the country's communist movement. The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF ELCAC) claimed that these pantries are supported by the Communist Party of the Philippines. The task force was established by President Rodrigo Duterte to quell communist insurgency in the country

See Page 19 Community pantries

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

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### Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Anthony Housefather

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Breaking barriers . . . By Gus Mercado

# President Biden nominates Filipino American Gina Ortiz Jones as Undersecretary of U.S. Air Force

Joe Biden has, once again, fulfilled his old promise to the Filipinos that he would honor Filipino veterans of war. When he was Vice President and Senate President, he helped shepherd a bill to finally recognize and compensate Filipino WWII veterans who had fought under the American flag but denied benefits for 70 years.



**Gina Ortiz-Jones with her mother, Victorina Ortiz**

Then this week, he chose a Filipino-American veteran of the Iraq War, Gina Ortiz Jones of San Antonio Texas as the new Undersecretary of the U.S. Air Force.

Gina is battle-tested, not only in the sensitive intelligence warfare in the

Middle East, but also in the political arena. It is all too convenient for ultra-

well-funded Republican congressman Will Hurd. Independent political analysts



conservative critics to overlook Gina's impressive resume and smear her as a gay person, just as they did during the campaign. We worked very hard for Gina when she ran twice for the US Congress and almost made history against all odds, running in the worst and terribly gerrymandered district that spanned 500 miles from San Antonio to El Paso in a conservative red state. She waged a hard and excellent campaign covering the 500-mile wide district and lost by only 900 votes to an established and

say that if not for her being gay, she would have won the district.

Be that as it may, her appointment as Undersecretary of the Air Force, a position that she is eminently qualified for, will be a huge source of pride for Fil-Ams and the Philippines. She will be the first Filipino-American immigrant to hold a high Undersecretary position in the Federal government. Regardless of our own political affiliation, we should all unite behind Gina and support her nomination. It will be a

feather in all our caps.

Because of the remaining strength of bigoted politicians in the US Congress and Senate, Gina's nomination looks good but is not guaranteed. To overcome this hurdle, we are launching a massive letter-writing campaign to the U.S. Senators to strongly seek their support for the nomination of this very deserving Filipino-American.

**YOU WILL BE PROUD OF GINA, BUT SHE NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

Wherever you are, you can prepare a one-page letter or fax to your two Senators. You can find their mailing address and contact information at this website

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>. If you represent a group, print your letter on your organization's letterhead. Or you could do it in your individual capacity as a voter in your state. It will be just as effective. Mention Gina's distinguished service in the US Air Force, having deployed in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Mention also the historical fact that the Philippines and the United States have been strong allies and partners for more than a century. As we speak, both nations have resumed military exercises in the West Philippine Sea. If you need assistance or more information, please email this writer at [gusmercadotx@gmail.com](mailto:gusmercadotx@gmail.com).

National politicians added gasoline to the fire

The current surge in anti-Asian hate crimes was exacerbated by the incendiary rhetoric of former President Donald Trump, who had continued to refer to COVID-19 as the "China Virus" or "Kung Flu", blaming China for the pandemic. He could very well be right, but when he branded the pandemic as the "Chinese virus", and the racism-prone US Senator Ron Johnson called it the "Asian pandemic," the unintended consequence was a sudden xenophobic hysteria against Chinese and Chinese-looking Americans of Asian descent throughout the nation. Asian-Americans, including those born and raised in the U.S. were harassed, coughed and spat on, bullied, blocked from entering grocery stores, told to "go home", even physically assaulted and some killed. While a 57% majority of Americans describe the COVID-19 pandemic as a natural disaster, 43% believe some groups are responsible.

This unfortunate choice of words by our national leaders followed a long American history of using diseases to justify anti-Asian xenophobia – one that has helped to shape perception of Asian Americans as "perpetual foreigners." There's a clear correlation between former President Trump's incendiary comments and the subsequent hate speech spread on social media and the hate violence towards us, says Russell Jeung, co-

## Op. Ed. Asian Americans and friends stand united against anti-Asian hate

"Hate crimes against Asian Americans are un-American and they must stop!" (President Joe Biden)

By Gus Mercado

America's long history of hatred and violence against Asians reared its ugly head once again with the recent tragedy in Atlanta where 8 women, 6 of them Asian were massacred by a racism-motivated young white man wielding a weapon of war that he had just bought.

The killings marked the dreadful pandemic year as one of intense and misplaced anti-Asian racism in the U.S. According to an advocacy group "Stop AAPI Hate" there have been more than 500 hate crimes reported involving discrimination and violence targeted at Asian people in the past year alone. Many more had not been reported. A coalition of civil rights groups estimated more than 2,100 incidents.

In Midland, Texas .An Asian family including two young children were stabbed at a Sam's. The assailant was captured and said he stabbed them because he thought they were spreading Coronavirus. The Asian family was not even Chinese.

A Filipina nurse tearfully reported that after working 18 hours straight in a hospital's emergency room, she stopped at a grocery store to buy some essentials and was greeted by a couple of old ladies shouting anti-Asian

slurs. The Filipina nurse is fair-skinned with Chinese facial features.

Closer to home, a diminutive 77-year-old Filipina who is a charter board member of the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce in North Texas was denied service at a local QT grocery store and was given the dirty look by the clerk who was mumbling racist words. The feisty senior citizen who is a martial-arts aficionada held her ground and was ready for anything untoward. It was her burly and outspoken American husband who confronted the clerk and strongly put him in his place. Meanwhile, a story went viral about a 75-year-old Chinese woman in San Francisco who fought back and sent her assailant to the hospital.

Stories circulated around New Year 2021, some captured on video, about elderly Filipinos and other Asians actually being assaulted on San Francisco and New York streets. A 91-year-old Thai retiree in Oakland was assaulted during his morning walk and killed. A Filipino's face was slashed in a subway station. All for no reason except a mistaken belief that the Chinese brought COVID-19 to the U.S. And it didn't matter that many of those assaulted were not even Chinese.

Is this American enough?

It also didn't matter if the victims of anti-Asian hatred were born and raised in the U.S. and served heroically in the military. Last night, CNN showed 78-year-old Lee Wong, a war veteran and Purple Heart recipient who came to the U.S. as a child, giving an impassioned speech in a town hall meeting. He tearfully shared that when people looked at him with accusing eyes, he told them he is an American. And some would say "You are not American enough, you are not patriotic enough!" So, at the town hall meeting he took off his shirt and showed everyone the scars that covered his entire body caused by 6 enemy bullets that pierced his body during the Vietnam War. And he declared: "Is this American enough?" "Is this patriotic enough?"

Asian-Americans do not deserve the xenophobic and bigoted attacks against them that are spiking in America, falsely attributing to them the origin and meteoric spread of Coronavirus. Asian-Americans are also victims of the pandemic. And hundreds of thousands of Asian American medical professionals and hospital workers who risk their own lives saving COVID-19 victims are heroes who deserve to be thanked and congratulated, not hated.

# This Toronto woman is fed up with anti-Asian attacks on public transit. She wants to provide safe transportation for Asian Canadians

By Urbi Khan Staff Reporter  
Mon., May 3, 2021 (Toronto Star)

Whenever Julie Kim left the house growing up, her mom would say something to her in Korean which roughly translates to "go safely" in English. Whenever she came home, her mom would say, "She came back safe."

"It was just parents looking out for their kids," said Kim. For Kim and her family, this was customary.

The sentiment and saying is what inspired the name of her ride-share initiative "Go Be Safe" to help members of the Asian diaspora community in Canada. The initiative aims to cover Uber and Lyft fees for those belonging to Asian communities in Toronto and Vancouver who feel unsafe taking public transit during a time when violent anti-Asian incidents are on the rise.

Kim was compelled to take action after a series of anti-Asian hate crimes occurred on the TTC earlier this month.

Three separate incidents were reported to Toronto police in April. Police are investigating the incidents as hate crimes as one victim, a woman, alleged

that the suspect spat on her and yelled racial slurs. Police believe all three victims were of Asian descent.

"I think that really pushed me over the edge," said Kim. "Enough is enough. Like, someone really needs to take a stand. And this is my way of fighting back ... not to say that we're scared to be in public ... this is my way of wanting to help out."

This year, the Toronto police reported that anti-Asian racism spiked following the Atlanta spa shootings on March 16. In 2020, there were 15 anti-Asian hate crimes reported to Toronto police, which was up from just three in 2019.

But many instances of anti-Asian racism are not reported to the police. The Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) Toronto chapter released a report in March showing that 643 complaints of anti-Asian racism were submitted to the council's online platforms from March 10 to Dec. 31, 2020. Almost 50 per cent of the incidents occurred in public spaces such as on the streets, sidewalks and parks across Canada. Almost 10 per cent of the



**Julie Kim**

incidents took place on public transit.

## Anti-Asian racism on the rise

The Chinese Canadian National Council released a report in March detailing 643 incidents of anti-Asian racism across Canada submitted to its platform

from March 10 to Dec. 31, 2020.

73 % of incidents reported were of verbal harassment

11 % of incidents reported were of physical force, aggression or unwanted physical contact

49 % of incidents happened in public spaces like parks, streets and sidewalks

10 % of incidents happened on public transit

SOURCE: CHINESE CANADIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL STAR GRAPHIC

With sufficient funding, Kim aims to reimburse up to \$40 of Uber or Lyft rides with proof of payment and a selfie for verification purposes submitted via a Google form. Reimbursements may take up to five to seven days after a submission is received and will be sent by e-transfer.

For now, Kim is primarily focused on seniors, women-identifying folks and those with physical or mental disabilities within Asian Canadian communities. However, she wishes to branch out to more communities once Go Be Safe has more funding.

From Page 6 Asian Americans

founder of Stop AAPI Hate and professor of Asian American Studies at SFSU. AAPI, the Coalition of Asian Chambers of Commerce, Asia Societies, the Anti-Defamation League and many other anti-minority discrimination advocacy groups have banded together with the support of their elected officials to fight the anti-Asian bias and hate. The mayors of Austin and Houston have formed special Task Forces and elevated police presence in Asian communities. A Covid-19 Hate Crime Bill has been introduced in Congress to protect the beleaguered communities. President Joe Biden has sought to undo the damage wrought by his predecessor. Shortly after taking office in January, he signed an Executive Order denouncing anti-Asian discrimination. During a March 11 speech on the anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said that hate crimes against Asian Americans are "un-American" and they "must stop!"

The "Model Silent Minority Community", discriminated for a century, now lives in fear

There are 575,000 Asian businesses in the U.S. that feel threatened. The scapegoating is reminiscent of old racist tropes that led to the discrimination of Asian immigrants in the U.S. – from the quarantining of San Francisco's Chinatown during the bubonic plague of the 1900s, to the rounding up of Japanese Americans in internment camps during WWII, to the traditional discrimination in visa quota allocation against Asians by the U.S. Immigration Service over the years. It did not help that historically, hardworking Asians have been the subject of scorn and jealousy as America's "silent model minority community" with the highest per capita income and the highest education level in the U.S. among immigrant groups and the least chances of getting into trouble with the law.

## Asian Americans are builders, not destroyers

A former President of the United States once said that if Asian-American doctors and nurses (particularly Filipinos, Indians, Chinese and Korean) would leave the country, the entire American health system will collapse.

Unbeknownst to many mainstream Americans especially the

younger generations, Asian-Americans have played a significant role in the building of this country and to its supremacy as the most economically powerful nation on earth. Notable Americans of Asian descent have been responsible for the country's global leadership in high technology and modern sciences. Among these are the Asian-American CEOs or co-founders of Fortune 500 companies such as Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, Master Card, You Tube, Hotmail, NVidia, FitBit, Adobe, Pepsico and many others. It was also an Asian-American scientist who discovered the cure for the Ebola virus and is busy at work on potential cure for COVID-19.

Asian Americans are typically soft-spoken and humble to a fault. The many thousands of Asian medical professionals will never flaunt their own personal sacrifices as front-liners and willing warriors in the war against the deadly Coronavirus. And the Asian business and technical professionals such as engineers, scientists, architects, accountants, educators and others are low-keyed as they lead the technology revolution in the country. They should all be applauded and thanked, instead of being shunned and mistreated by clueless and ungrateful segments of our society. And it is wrong to curb the immigration into this country of these skilled and talented professionals. America must continue to be open to Asian immigration, especially the highly-skilled professionals. America and all of us will be better for it.

*About the Author: Gus Mercado is Chairman/CEO of Datalogix, an all-minority telecom engineering company in Texas and Silicon Valley. His employees, mostly Filipino and Asian telecom engineers, have never missed a day of work during the pandemic, knowing their services are essential to the survival of the US economy. A Presidential BANAAG awardee, he served for 10 years as Founding Executive Director of the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce and State Chairman of the Asian-American Voters Coalition (AAVC) in the '90s. He remains active in advocating for national political and economic empowerment for Filipinos, Asians and other minority groups. Reactions to this article may be sent to gusmercadotx@gmail.com.*

## Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal: Moving Forward...

### Kimberly Gultia, FHSM Outreach Director

Inspired by the 2018 declaration of Filipino Heritage Month in the Borough of Cote des Neiges/Notre Dame, the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) was formed. For three years now, under Chairman Mr. Al Abdon's leadership, the organization has served the Filipino community through its events and initiatives. Like many associations, FHSM has been affected by the COVID19 pandemic. When the health crisis hit the country last year, in-person meetings and events were prohibited. This crisis, however, did not stop FHSM from helping the community and pursuing its goals. True to the bayanihan spirit, its members responded to the community's immediate needs by organizing food distribution for 16 families from June to October 2020. Via video conferencing, FHSM has continued its educational programs such as computer retention courses for seniors and knitting classes and social activities like bingo nights.

The organization has been active, not only with projects involving its members but also with initiatives that reach the larger community. With these programs, FHSM has sought to gather, inform, and connect. By organizing events, the group has gathered the community to celebrate important occasions. One of them was the March 14, 2021 3rd - anniversary virtual celebration of the proclamation of June as Filipino Heritage Month. To inform, FHSM has launched Heritage Hour, a series of online conversations with scholars and persons of interest where people share knowledge about the Filipino culture. To reach a broad audience, the group posts these talks on their social media platforms. FHSM has also sought to connect via projects with Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) and through three ongoing outreach projects: La Ville Extraordinaire, Digital Story Telling Project, and the Newspaper Collection and Preservation Project. Since late 2020, members of the group have participated in La Ville Extraordinaire, a three-year research initiative headed by Dr.

Cynthia Hammond of Concordia University. This federally-funded oral history project will highlight the urban stories of older Montrealers. The Filipino community, through FHSM, is one of four groups included in this endeavour, which will culminate with an exhibit at the Mémoire des Montréalais(es) museum. Through interviews and the participants' creative works, this undertaking will showcase Filipino urban memories and articulate the critical place Filipinos occupy in the city. Aside from Concordia University, the group has also partnered with the Atwater Library.

Through the library's digital literacy program, members have attended online sessions to digitize their old media (photos, audio and video recordings) and create digital outputs to tell their personal stories. Because FHSM recognizes the potential of newspapers to reveal culture and history, the organization has also started a project aiming to collect, preserve, and digitize old and current Filipino community newspapers. The group hopes to partner with an institution to facilitate the storage of these periodicals, safeguard them, and make them available to the Filipino community and anyone researching the story of Filipinos in Montreal.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, FHSM has continued to work hard for the community. Invoking the spirit of bayanihan, the organization moves forward in promoting Filipino values and tradition. In this spirit of volunteerism and passion for Filipino culture, FHSM celebrates Filipino Heritage Month in June. The organization is currently planning three online events for the coming month: the Opening of Heritage Month on June 1, 2021, Heritage Hour on June 8, 2021, and the Celebration of the Literary Works of Jose Rizal on June 20, 2021. Information about these events will be posted on the FHSM Facebook and Instagram pages. We hope you will join us in celebrating our Filipino heritage. Mabuhay, FHSM! #

# Personality of the Month

By Fely Rosales Cariño



## Cora Aberin

Let's meet Cora Aberin, a most worthy feature of the Personality of the Month of May! Cora's parents, Lorenzo Santiago and Pacencia Adriano Santiago, were both from Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines. In the mid 50's her father was assigned to work in Asingan, Pangasinan where Cora was born on March 2, 1956. Her siblings are: Teresita S Cruz, Elvira S. Pagsibigan, and Lauro Santiago. The family moved back to Malolos where Cora completed her elementary grades. She finished high school in Marcelo H. del Pilar High School (MHPHS), also in Malolos. After high school, she started a secretarial course which was interrupted by her migrating to Canada on July 2, 1974. Upon arrival, she enrolled at Vanier College to finish her course but was offered a permanent job as office clerk at Liberty Home Products. She then continued her studies part time, attending evening classes.

From 1988 to 2014, Cora held a prestigious position in Real Estate Holding Company in Montreal. Total jobs held since are 40 years at Liberty Sites, Ltd. Real Estate Company, two years at Bochi Brothers Clothing Company, and one year at SSP Trudeau Airport Food Services. I say, what a woman of prodigious work ethic!

Amang (Aquilino) appeared in her life at Vanier College where they found themselves classmates in an accounting class. Amang's parents hail from Nueva Ecija, Philippines, but settled down in Manila, specifically at Blumentritt where Amang was born. As far as Cora remembered, a friend (Lino) told her that Amang had his eyes set on her. This was after her performance with the Philippine Dance Theater of Montreal Group in the formal FAMAS Independence Ball at Chateau Champlain circa 1981. Amang knew he was bewitched. He suspected that this

enchanted lady must have many suitors. Cora agreed there were but Amang was the most persistent. After a few dates, Amang asked Cora if he could meet her parents (a Philippine tradition). Ever the gentleman, he did and met with their approval. So, after two years of courtship, Amang's persistence finally paid off! He won the bride's heart and they decided to tie the knot.

Wedding bells chimed on June 2, 1984, at St. Malachy's Parish, Montreal. Thereafter, their children were born. Anthony Chris (with one daughter) works at Jewish General Hospital; Allan Jayson is an Air Canada Flight Attendant who works at Apple Co. part time; Adam Lorenzo (with a one-year old son) works at Air Canada Customs Service; and Charlene Ann, a Dawson college graduate in professional photography, a McGill Education graduate, and now pursuing her Master's Degree in Education at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. Clearly the children have inherited their parents' diligent and industrious traits!

Cora, while a Social Committee Chairman of the Dance Theater of Montreal, local Filipino organizations tried to lure her to be a full-fledged member. Among others, she finally chose FAMAS. Consequently, she was elected as President in 2015-2017. Among her accomplishments that hold fond memories during her term were: hosted Cardinal Tagle's visit to Montreal, built a 12x20 Gazebo at the FAMAS Center backyard on Van Horne, Montreal, led a fundraising activity that yielded \$11,000 for her daughter Charlene Ann in the Famas Munting Binibini in 2000 and another \$10,000 in 2010. In her turnover, there was \$25K GIC of which \$10k came from her term of office and \$5k was put in building funds. A total of \$30k was turned over. It seems like a gifted fundraiser can be added to her resumé!

Now let's talk about Cora's passion for volunteerism. If you do not know it yet, Cora is also an extremely good cook! And she certainly uses this talent towards worthwhile causes; she donates food for different community functions. Unsurprisingly, she has a catering service too and is a reliable provider for all-occasion parties, big or small. Is there anything she can't do?

Furthermore, she is also a devout Catholic and a willing volunteer no matter what the task at hand. She served as warden at Saint Malachy's Parish for 6 years. How about that title! She also taught catechism for the Religious Educational Program of Saint Monica Parish, also in Montreal. At St. Malachy, she was a member of the Social Committee. She spearheaded fundraising efforts to help celebrate the Parish's 80th anniversary celebration. When it comes to fundraising, leave it to Cora. She is that intense and good. In addition, there are other offices she enjoyed holding - among them is the fundraising event she held for The Philippine Benevolent Scholarship Society of Quebec (PBSSQ) under the leadership of Au Osdon. Her benevolent help in food donations is too numerous to mention!

What is it that they say, that behind every successful woman is ... a loving and doting husband? No wonder when asked what her future dream is, she said, "to travel in exotic places where I plan to consume with fire all the romantic attention and energies I have deprived Amang because of my community involvement." How SWEET naman! Amang, handa ka ba? (Amang, are you ready?). I say the Filipino community owes a debt of gratitude and a debt of love to Mr. Persistence, Amang himself! Truly a match made in heaven! Indeed, what a privilege it is to know two good role models of the Filipino community. Cora and Amang, may God grant you His blessings and favor till the end of time!

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# Philippine Ambassador Robles meets Ontario Filipino-Canadian leaders

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT-Retired

The Philippine Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Rodolfo D. Robles, on April 30, 2021, met with several Filipino Canadian leaders in Ontario. As arranged and organized by the Philippine Consul General to Toronto, Honourable Orontes Castro, the meet-and-greet session in Toronto, Canada was undertaken via Zoom Meeting. The virtual meeting followed a series of get-to-know-you engagements which R.P. Ambassador Robles initiated to meet with Filipino Canadian leaders across Canada.



**His Excellency, Rodolfo D. Robles  
Philippine Ambassador to Canada**

Notable leaders and representatives of Filipino Canadian community organizations in Ontario, including certain elected and appointed civic officials of Filipino heritage, severally welcomed warmly and wonderfully the new Philippine Government envoy. Aptly acting as host and moderator of the online meeting, Consul General O. Castro after his

opening remarks formally introduced Ambassador Robles and also presided over the evening's very productive meeting.

Amongst those who joined in are Manitoba MLA Jon Reyes, Brampton Councillor Rowena Santos,

Ajax Councillor Lisa Bower, TCDSB Trustee Garry Tanuan, DPCDSB Trustee Luz del Rosario, Toronto Medical Officer of Health Dr. Eileen De Villa, professional & community association heads of FFCO, FCAV, FHHC, KOR-Canada Region, MFFC, PCCF, PIDC, PPCO, PTAC and many leading Filipino Canadian non-profit organizations.

In his short address, Ambassador Robles thanked the members of the community for joining him and also shared his current initiatives for the Filipinos and their families in Canada. ConGen Castro introduced each of the participants and allowed each one to describe briefly the nature and work of their respective organizations. Ambassador Robles listened and welcomed the suggestions and concerns presented by the leaders on areas, where the assistance of the Philippine Government would be meaningful and significant. The good Ambassador

praised the contributions and achievements of the various community organizations in Ontario and in other Canadian provinces, particularly citing the vital role of Filipino Canadian health care workers and frontliners during the pandemic crisis. He cited the "Credentials Recognition Canada" endeavour and also encouraged the participants to continue promoting and propagating their Filipino heritage and values with their children and the next generations of Filipino-Canadians.

The online event was one of several initiatives being undertaken by Ambassador Robles of reaching out through the civic and community leaders to over 900,000 Filipinos and Filipino Canadians in the 10 Canadian provinces and three territories. The meeting was also a good way of enhancing further Filipino and Canadian diplomatic and economic relations. #

# Ontario Legislature passes Filipino Heritage Month Act

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT-Retired



**Doly Begum, MPP  
Scarborough Southwest**

May 13, 2021, will go down in the history of Ontario, particularly in the Filipino Canadian community, as the significant day that the Ontario Legislature officially proclaimed "the month of June in each year as Filipino Heritage Month" in the premier province of Canada. Bill 217, known as the "Filipino Heritage Month Act", was sponsored at Queen's Park by Doly Begum, the NDP Member of Provincial Parliament for Scarborough Southwest, Ontario.

MPP D. Begum worked diligently and determinedly regarding the filing and passage of the Act as a Private Member's Bill. On October 20, 2020, for the First Reading, the Bill went through the standard legislative process, the Second Reading on March 25, 2021, and then on May 5, 2021, the Bill was considered and reported without amendment. Finally, the Third Reading was carried out on May 13, 2021.

The Act's preamble has provided the rationale and reasons for the salient proclamation, stating that

the "Province of Ontario publicly acknowledges and affirms the contributions that Filipinos make in Ontario as part of the vibrant social, economic, political, and cultural fabric of our province." and that the province is home to over 337,000 people of Philippine origin." Recognizing further, the Bill states that the "Filipino community has contributed to all aspects of Ontario's prosperity and diverse heritage for generations", as well as, that the province recognizes the "positive impact and the countless economic contributions the Filipino Canadian community has made and continues to make in Ontario and throughout the rest of Canada and the world".

Further stating the justification for the Bill and its purpose, the Act is aimed at providing "all Ontarians, both today and in future generations, with an opportunity to learn about and celebrate the rich heritage and histories of the Filipino Canadian community, and also give Ontarians a chance "to reflect on the roles and contributions of Filipino Ontarians in communities across the province, including the work of those Filipino Ontarians who are essential workers in keeping Ontarians safe and healthy" under the pandemic circumstances.

Doly Begum was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in the 2018 provincial election. At 29, Doly Begum was the youngest New Democrat among the party's caucus. Now 32, MPP Begum is the Deputy Opposition Whip and has been appointed to a key new role as critic for Citizenship, Foreign Credentials, and Immigration Services in the Official Opposition by NDP Leader Andrea

Horwath. She was also a Member of the Standing Committee on Social Policy and served as a critic of early learning and childcare. She moved to Canada as a child with her parents and brother from the Moulvibazar District in Bangladesh and has lived in Scarborough most of her life. Begum is indeed a shining exemplar of a progressive-minded politician and a truly Asian-Canadian at heart.

Many believe that the province's "Filipino Heritage Month Act", together with the two similar official proclamations by the City of Toronto in November 2017 and by the House of Commons in October 2018 including declarations in Alberta and other Canadian cities and municipalities

considerably complete the full recognition of the contributions and value of Filipino Canadians within the fabric of Canadian society. Meaningfully, the passage of Bill 217 is a historical milestone to be profoundly cherished and proudly celebrated from generation to generation. #

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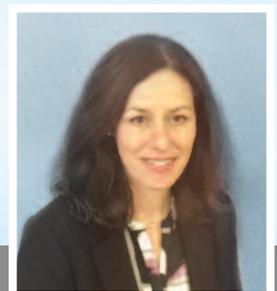
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**Zucchini boats with chicken**

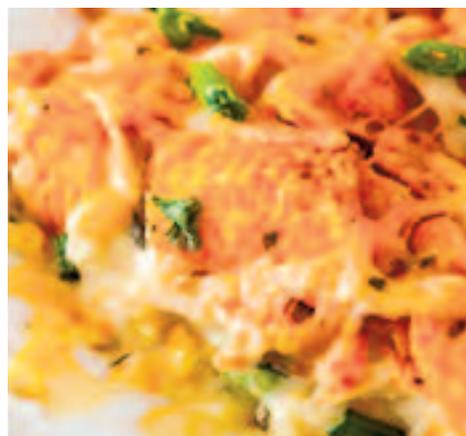
**Ingredients**

- 1 pound chicken breast raw
- 4 medium zucchini
- 3 strips bacon cooked and chopped
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup Mexican blend cheese

**Instructions**

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- In a medium pot boil your chicken until it reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Remove your chicken from the pot and use two forks to shred the chicken.
- In a medium mixing bowl stir together the chicken, bacon, garlic,

- ranch, salt, and pepper.
- Cut your zucchini in half lengthwise.
- Using a spoon scoop the seeds out of the zucchini to create a well for your filling. Place the zucchini into a 13x9 baking pan.
- Fill the zucchini with your chicken mixture.
- Sprinkle the tops of the zucchini with cheese and cover the pan with aluminum foil.
- Bake for 20 minutes and remove the aluminum foil and continue to bake for another 5 minutes.



**Doritos Mac and Cheese Casserole**

**Ingredients:**

- 8 oz Philadelphia Chive Whipped Cream Cheese
- 10.5 oz condensed cream of chicken soup

- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 3 cups chicken, cooked, shredded
- 8.75 oz canned corn
- 3 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 3 cups Doritos, crumbled

**Instructions:**

- Preheat oven to 400F.
- Dump cream cheese and chicken soup into a large mixing bowl.
- Whip together with an electric mixer until smooth.
- Set aside 1/4 cup of the chopped green onions and add the remaining onions to the mixing bowl.
- Also add the shredded chicken, drained canned corn, 2 cups of the shredded Mexican cheese blend, salt, pepper and garlic powder to the bowl.
- Stir all of the ingredients together until fully combined.
- Dump the mixture into a greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish and spread it out evenly.
- Sprinkle the crumbled Doritos on top.
- Sprinkle the remaining cup of shredded Mexican cheese blend and 1/4 cup of chopped green onions on top of the Doritos.
- Place the dish in the oven and bake until the cheese on top is starting to brown. 17-20 minutes.
- Serve and enjoy!



**Mango habanero and grilled shrimp**

**Ingredients**

- 1 lb (454 g) fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined, 8/12 count (about 10 large shrimp)
- 4 bamboo skewers soaked in water for 30 minutes
- Olive oil, for drizzling and grill Marinade and Sauce
- 1 habanero chili, seeded and chopped
- 1 green onion, roughly chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon (7.5 ml) finely chopped fresh ginger
- 1 mango, peeled, pitted and roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) roughly chopped cilantro leaves
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) rice wine vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt

**To serve**

- Chopped cilantro
- Lime wedges

**Instructions:**

- To prepare marinade, place the habanero chili, green onion, garlic cloves, ginger, and mango in a blender or food processor. Blend mixture until smooth.
- Turn off the blender and add the cilantro and rice wine vinegar and lime to the mixture.
- Pulse in blender until ingredients are evenly combined.

- Season with salt.
- Reserve 1 cup (240 ml) of marinade for basting and dipping.
- Place the shrimp in a sealable freezer bag, pour marinade over the shrimp and toss to coat.
- Let shrimp marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
- Remove shrimp from marinade and thread 5 shrimp onto 2 soaked bamboo skewers (one skewer through the top of the shrimp, the other through the tail).
- Drizzle shrimp skewers with olive oil and season with salt.
- Preheat barbeque to medium-high heat 375-400 F (190-205 C).
- Brush grill with oil.
- Place a narrow sheet of foil down on the heated grill.
- Place the shrimp on the grill while leaving the sticks over the foil to prevent burning.
- Grill shrimp for one minute or until nicely caramelized and charred.
- Flip shrimp and baste with the reserved sauce set aside earlier.
- Shrimp will be done when they turn pink and opaque.
- Remove shrimp skewers from grill and serve with left over sauce.
- Garnish with cilantro and lime wedges.



**Margarita Shrimp**

**Ingredients**

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) tequila
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup (120 ml) frozen concentrated orange juice
- 1 lb (454 g) peeled medium shrimp, 8/12 count (about 10 shrimp)
- 1 fresh jalapeño, cut into quarters lengthwise
- 1 small red bell pepper, cut into quarters lengthwise
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, cut into quarters lengthwise
- Kosher salt or other coarse salt
- 4 bamboo skewers soaked in cool water for 30 minutes
- Oil, for grill

**To serve**

- Lime wedges

**Instructions:**

- For marinade, combine tequila, lime juice, orange juice, and salt in a small bowl.
- Place shrimp into a shallow bowl and pour marinade of top. Place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
- Preheat grill to high temperature
- Drain shrimp from marinade and discard the marinade.
- Slide a shrimp onto skewer; add a piece of jalapeño, red bell pepper, and yellow bell pepper to rest in the curve of the shrimp. Repeat this order on the same skewer.
- Assemble remaining skewers.
- Sprinkle them lightly with coarse salt.
- Brush grill with oil.
- Grill the skewers uncovered over a high heat for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes per side or until shrimp are just opaque with lightly brown edges. The jalapeño and bell peppers should remain a bit crisp.
- Pile skewered shrimp, jalapeño and bell peppers onto plate.
- Serve hot with lime wedges.#

From Page 3 Quebec

On June 11, bars will be able to open terraces for outdoor drinking. Outdoor sports and recreation activities will also be allowed, with a cap of 25 people.

By June 14, Legault said most regions will be at the yellow level, which means people from two different households can gather indoors and bars can reopen.

On June 25, fully vaccinated people will be able to assemble indoors without masks or social distancing. Outdoor festivals will also be allowed and summer camps can open.

On June 28, most regions will switch to green zones. Indoor gatherings will be permitted up to a maximum of 10 people from three residences, and all indoor team sports will be permitted.

By the end of August, most mask requirements will be lifted,

except for perhaps public transit and a few other exceptions. However, the lifting of mask restrictions still hinges on vaccination rates, Legault said.

He wants 75 per cent of people 12 and up to have a second dose before the masks come off indoors.

**Reopening depends on vaccination rates**

Legault stressed that this success relies on everybody doing their part by getting vaccinated.

He said the plan is to gradually scale back measures every two weeks, but health officials will be keeping a close eye on the situation. Any sudden uptick in cases could delay the process.

Quebec set a goal of administering the first vaccine dose to 75 per cent of adults by June 24, but now officials expect to reach that goal by June 15, Legault said. #



**Social Tidbits  
Community News**

**Fely Rosales Cariño**

Hi everyone! I'm quite hesitant to make predictions anymore, unlike in past issues. Why? Because every time I did, my hopes were dashed by more hospital cases than the day before. For now, I'll just be realistic. I now like to stick to the everyday TV weather predictions. This morning the meteorologist indicated that the last vestiges of snow are disappearing. Although the pandemic refuses to bid adieu, at least for now, there is a ray of hope. So, Welcome Sunshine! THANK YOU LORD! Every morning when you wake up, remember always to ask God's help. He answers in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Community News:

The Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec (FFCAQ) President Minda Mazzone has launched a Senior Stretching Activity called Essentrics, held virtually every Saturday from 10:00-11:45AM. The teacher is Emay Avergonzado. Any senior can join. The meeting ID is 687 844 3834. The passcode is: ESSENTRICS.

Chairman Al Abdon of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) has just successfully staged its first virtual "Heritage Hour", a monthly event highlighting the different aspects of cultural and social heritage the Philippines has to offer. It consists of an interview and a panel of four interviewers. For its first guest, FHSM has chosen Snowdon Councilor Marvin Rotrand, who delighted the audience with his knowledge of places in the Philippines he has visited with wife Jacqui. He has extensive knowledge of the songs, the dialects, and special dishes from each province. He has even met many dignitaries in the Philippines and was invited to Malacanang Palace for special events. He was honored by former Philippine Ambassadors to Canada. He and wife Jacqui enjoyed several trips to the Philippines. Marvin's genuine penchant love of everyone he meets, his enduring friendships, his ever-willing desire to help and please, and his generosity are all wrapped in one capsule that describes Marvin. I heard that different ethnic groups are pushing him to run for councilor again next November. I'd be the first to endorse you, Marvin.

Update from FAMAS:

The Filipino Associations of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS) has several ongoing programs. The Digital Literacy program for Seniors is held every Saturday afternoon at the FAMAS Center, Van Horne, Montreal, Quebec. The instructor is Joseph Gonzales and the assisting teacher is Racquel Trinidad. Furthermore, their Pantry program is ongoing. Those in need, especially seniors, can go to the FAMAS Center on Saturday afternoons to get their food supplies. Then there is the Language Heritage Program which aims to enable a learner to speak conversational Filipino. This starts with storytelling sessions. Other officers will take turns teaching as long as their time permits. A folk zumba is also being planned. Get ready with your dancing shoes! Kindly call FAMAS at 514-341-7477 for further details. Thank you for this information, courtesy of Team Malaya's Joseph Gonzales.

And let's not forget good deeds! Donating to disasters hold a special place in our hearts, no matter what season. The following is Knights of Rizal's Eastern Commander James de la Paz's report on donors for victims of the recent two typhoons in the Philippines. Our huge thank you to each of them is in order. Aurea Querquis (\$5), Cesa Gladys (\$10), Pamana ng LuzViMinda Dance Company of Montreal (\$100), Linda Legata (\$30), Cuisine de Manille Restaurant (\$100), Maria Luisa Ermino (\$100), Atty. Lito Domingo (\$20), Lene Catedrilla & family (\$50), Lilia Esguerra, Ahmon Institute (\$250), Simon Hana (\$20), Nazeem & Myrna Othman, Kim Colors (\$50), Lorenzo Tolentino (\$20), Josie & Amelia Quiambao (\$50), Norma Satisk Vohra

(\$100), Gene Magalit & Shirley Carrera (\$50), Gaby & Sheila Segal (\$100), Erik Hammon & family (\$100), Ciony Nueva (\$35), Rodolfo & Yolanda Santos (\$40), Marcy Ellaus & family (\$20), Flora Lim-Cortez & family (\$20), Vito Vosilla & Joie Dayo (\$30), Sir Diony de los Reyes (\$25) and Edwina Cedilla & husband (\$50). Thank you, all! Your generosity is very much appreciated.

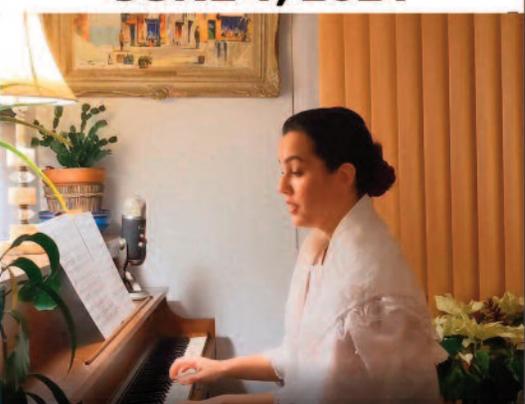
Last night, May 6, 2021, from 7 to 9 pm, I was invited to attend a webinar combating Misinformation and Harmful Stereotypes. This event is part of a series of discussions throughout the month of May to commemorate Asian Heritage Month. It was held with the presence of Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth. The information gathered from this will be a reference to be used by the Federal Secretariat to coordinate with Asian community leaders. This is done as a significant step for these Asian community leaders and the Government of Canada to eliminate all signs of Anti-Asian racism. Further discussions are ongoing. The Jewish community and the Filipino community did celebrate the help extended by Filipinos to Israel during the Holocaust. The celebration was well-documented by Reverend Orlan Racacho. Come April next year, Rev. Racacho will again mark the occasion appropriately.

Be vaccinated. But remember Psalm 91:1-2, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." God bless us all. #

**FILIPINO HERITAGE SOCIETY OF MONTREAL**

# JUNE IS FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

**JUNE 1, 2021**



**Virtual Celebration of the "Launching of Heritage Month" 7PM by Zoom & FB Live**

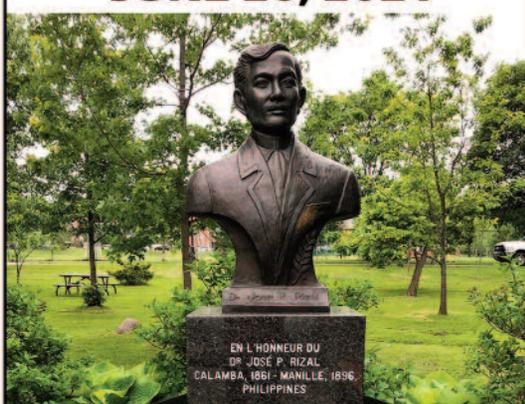
**JUNE 8, 2021**



**HERITAGE HOUR**  
Guest: Alberto Abierra

**Online conversations with scholars and persons of interest 7 PM by Zoom & FB Live**

**JUNE 20, 2021**



**Celebration of literary works of Dr. Jose Rizal 7 PM by Zoom & FB Live**

**ACTIVITIES 2020 - 2021**

**Computer Retention for Seniors    Digital Story Telling Project    Recreational Bingo    Knitting**  
**Collection and Preservation of Filipino Periodicals**  
**La Ville Extraordinaire: Learning from older Montréalers' urban knowledge through oral history research-creation**  
**Affiliated with Concordia University's Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS)**

# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### Kim Chiu regrets not going to college but hopes to continue studies someday



Kim Chiu opened up about how she regrets not earning a college degree, but looked forward to going back to school someday.

Chiu's revelation came after she answered some of the most searched questions about her in her YouTube vlog.

One of the questions was, "Where did Kim Chiu go to college?" to which the actress answered that she did not get to finish her studies at all.

"Isa 'to sa mga regrets ko in life, na hindi ako nakatungtong ng college. But I think everything happens for a reason at dito ako dinala (showbiz)," she said. (This is one of my regrets in life, that I did not get to study in college. But I think everything happens for a reason and I was brought to showbiz instead.)

She believes that acting is part of her destiny and supporting three of her siblings in their college education is already rewarding for her.

But unknown to some, Chiu did try to pursue higher education. She attended the University of the Philippines Open University from 2015 to 2017, but was not able to finish her business management course because of the demands of her job as an actress.

She let fans know of her enrollment back then, as seen in her

Instagram post in August 2015.

"Hindi ako nagtagal kasi hindi ko kinaya. Ang daming assignment, ang daming projects, tapos nagte-teleserye pa ako," she now admits. "Though hindi ko naman sinisisi 'yung projects na 'yon because those are opportunities."



(I did not get to finish the course because I could not handle it. I had many assignments, many projects, and I was also doing a series then. Though I am not blaming those projects because those are opportunities.)

Even though her attempt at higher education did not go as she

planned, Chiu is not closing her doors at the possibility of studying again.

"Ang pagaaral, I'm sure naman nandiyan lang 'yan and there's always a way and time na makabalik tayo sa pag-aaral. Makakakuha tayo ng college degree.

Soon. Hindi natin iyan iba-block," she said.

(I'm sure studying will always be there and there's always a way and time to get back to my studies. I'll earn a college degree. Soon. I will not block that [possibility].)

Aside from her desire to study again, Chiu also talked about

her relationship with fellow actor Xian Lim to answer a question about whether they are already married. She denied this and stressed that they are still just in a relationship.

"Wala pa kami doon (We are not yet there)," she answered. "Let's see."

Chiu also talked about her Chinese heritage and looked back on her audition for Pinoy Big Brother in 2006. ■

### Pia Wurtzbach recalls being a waitress before she became Miss Universe



Pia Wurtzbach has encouraged netizens to never give up on their dreams, as she recalled being a waitress as one of her odd jobs before she became an international celebrity.

On Instagram May 23, Pia said that her first dream was to become a singer.

Then she became a waitress before she realized she wanted to become a chef.

"Looking at this photo, I'm glad I had the courage to say YES to chase my dreams and I hope as you read this, you find the courage to chase your dreams too!" said the German-Filipino beauty queen.

Her full post:

"Did you know that my first dream was to become a singer? Well, things didn't pan out that way but I did start with modeling and then acting. I even worked as a waitress before realizing I wanted to become a chef. So I did actually graduate from culinary school and as they say, the rest is history.

"Looking at this photo, I'm glad I had the courage to say YES to chase my dreams and I hope as you read this, you find the courage to chase your dreams too!" ■

# BTS wants to visit the Philippines again



**BTS at the 62nd Grammy Awards in Los Angeles in 2020.**

The members of South Korean pop group BTS thanked their Filipino fans for their continued support, saying they would like to return to the Philippines to "hear the cheers" of ARMYs.

In a recorded interview at the launch of the group's commercial for Smart Communications, the BTS members said they would like to visit the country again to be reunited with their Filipino fans.

"I'd like to visit again as soon as possible to hear the cheers of ARMY in the Philippines," RM, also the

all the ARMY who support us from far away," the youngest member Jungkook added.

RM recounted how the septet frequently visited the Philippines for their tours.

"I think we always went to the Philippines once a year during our tour and a lot of fans are waiting and supporting us even with a hot weather," he said.

"Philippines can't be left out for Southeast Asia tour. [Filipino] food is also delicious," said J-Hope.

Addressing fans, Jimin said, "We know very well that



**BTS last visited the Philippines in 2017**

group's leader, said.

"I heard that there are a lot of ARMY in the Philippines, I'd like to see you as soon as possible," said V.

"Yes, I'm very grateful to

you are always sending us messages through social media."

"You are also doing various activities such as uploading videos that cover our

songs or dances," he said.

In the same interview, Jin said he would like to go on vacation in the country.

"[The] Philippines is a great country and I really want to go there as a vacation spot," he said.

Rapper and songwriter Suga, meanwhile, shared that he occasionally watches Philippine basketball.

"They (Filipinos) really love basketball," Suga said, responding to RM who questioned in jest if he actually watched the sport.

"I enjoy watching it these days," Suga added.

The group last visited Manila in May 2017 as part of its "Wings" tour.

The Grammy-nominated group recently partnered with Smart Communications for the company's "Live Your Passion With Purpose" campaign.

Smart executives have said the company planned to hold a virtual event with BTS but it was not immediately possible because of the group's busy schedule.

Countries have banned in-person events and restricted international travels since last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

## Regine Velasquez, Ogie Alcasid get their COVID-19 vaccines



**Ogie Alcasid and Regine Velasquez getting their vaccine.**

Celebrity couple Regine Velasquez and Ogie Alcasid both had their COVID-19 vaccines and encouraged others to also get their jabs.

Alcasid showed a photo of him and Velasquez giving a thumbs-up as they had their shots administered to them, as seen his Instagram page.

"Kaming mag asawa ay may [comorbidities] kaya nakakuha po kami sa [Quezon City local government] ng slot at kami ay napabakunahan na," he said. (My wife and I have comorbidities so we received a slot from the Quezon City local government and we have already been vaccinated.)

He did not specify which vaccine they received but Quezon City has already given

its residents at least 100,000 doses of Sinovac's CoronaVac and AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine.

"Sa mga taga-QC, download po natin ang EZ consult app para maka rehistro na po tayo at antayin natin ang abiso sa email natin," Alcasid said as he urged others to also get vaccinated. (To those living in Quezon City, download the EZ consult app so that you can get registered and wait for an email advisory.)

The government is currently vaccinating people under the A1 to A3 categories, which covers medical frontline workers, senior citizens and people with comorbidities. ■

## Jinkee Pacquiao defends self from allegations she married Manny for money



Jinkee Pacquiao, wife of boxing-champ Senator Manny Pacquiao, has opened up about gossips which really affected her.

In a recent interview with celebrity doctor Vicki Belo, Jinkee recalled how she would hear rumors that she married her husband for money.

Jinkee told Vicki how she would ask for financial assistance from their godparents so that Manny would have cash when he trains for boxing.

future. Hindi mo naman alam kung ano ang future mo dito. Basta nagmahal ka lang, magkasama kayo, may mga ups and downs. Pero hindi mo alam kung ano ang mangyayari in the future," she said. (I mean, God holds the future. You don't know what's in store for you in the future. I just chose to love, be with him despite the ups and downs.)

Jinkee and Manny have just celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary.



"Alam 'yan ng mga ninang namin kasi ginigising ko sila ng maaga. 'Ninang, help me, help us'," she shared. (Our wedding godparents knew our humble beginnings. We would wake them up early in the morning. 'Ninang, help me, help us'),"

"I never thought: 'Can he provide for me?' Jinkee told Vicki in Pilipino.

Jinkee said she never imagined that she would have the kind of life she has right now.

"Kumbaga, God holds the

Manny has penned a sweet message for wife Jinkee.

"Happy 22nd Anniversary babe! On this special day, I thank God for every moment spent loving you. I don't know where I'd be in life without you. With the guidance and grace of our Lord, we have proved that nothing is impossible. My career has reached heights because you are by my side. Words cannot express how much I adore you. I will love you always and forever. Happy 22nd anniversary Babe!" ■

## Sunshine Cruz lauds daughter Sam for completing junior high despite showbiz career



Sam Cruz (left) and her mother, Sunshine Cruz

Sunshine Cruz could not be prouder of her daughter Sam, as the young woman managed to still focus on her academics while also handling a career in show biz.

Salle Zobel, from where her older sister Angelina graduated last April. Angelina is now taking up marketing management at the De La Salle University.



The Cruz sisters: Angelica, Sam & Chesca and mom Sunshine

"Congratulations Sam! It is such a heart-filling moment seeing you graduate from Junior High School onwards to Senior High! These are definitely moments that cannot be replaced," Sunshine told her daughter via an Instagram post yesterday, May 14.

The post came with several photos of Sam's virtual moving-up ceremony that the family, including Sunshine's partner Macky Mathay, celebrated at home. The 16-year-old student finished her junior high studies at De La

"Thank you for fulfilling your promise to me that even if you have started your career in show business and have been busy, you still made sure that you made your studies a top priority in your now many obligations. We love you Sam!" Sunshine said.

Sam is one of the three daughters of Sunshine Cruz with former husband Cesar Montano. She joined ABS-CBN's talent management unit Star Magic last March. ■

# Marjorie Barretto updates netizens on relationship with sisters Gretchen, Claudine



**Marjorie Barretto**

In a rare instance, Marjorie Barretto briefly talked about her relationship with sisters Gretchen and Claudine.

In a recent vlog of actress-singer Toni Gonzaga, the mother of Julia Barretto admitted that she's still not on good terms with them. But she said that it's not out of "hate" and rather out of "peace."

"(It's like) there's just more peace when in that space," she said. "There's just too much pain that it's just going to be more peaceful kung hindi bati (if we're not okay). But it doesn't mean that karga-karga ko araw-araw, na nagigising akong galit na galit sa kanila. Hindi, e, hindi ganun, e. (But it doesn't mean that I have this ill-feeling towards them, that every day I would wake up feeling so angry. It's not like that.)"

After handling things in her

own way, Marjorie confidently said that she's emotionally okay now.

"Definitely, not from a place of hate," was how she put it.

"Well, I don't look back at it na masakit pa yung dibdib ko or I won't wish ill of them. Di ba 'pag galit ka, 'pag hate mo yung tao, di ba? Gusto mo masamang mangyari. Wala ako dun. (Well, I don't look back at it as if it makes my heart ache, or I won't wish ill of them. I mean, sometimes when you're mad, you have this hatred towards him/her. Like you wish something bad will happen. But I'm not in that state.)"

She reiterated: "It's not coming from a place of unforgiveness. I just want peace."

In terms of the criticism of others, Marjorie noted how she can shut down from the judgment of



**Marjorie Barretto on Toni Gonzaga's show "Tonitalks"**

other people.

"There's so much that they don't really know that goes on behind that story. And I refuse to share," she said. "We are public figures but we are not public property. Because at the end of the day, kahit among sikat mo, pag-uwi mo, (regardless of your fame, when

you come home) you are normal like anybody else. We have the same problems, we have the same needs..."

"So parang, I want to protect that side of us because that side of the fame or, that's not forever, you know?" ■

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**Gretchen, Marjorie & Claudine Barretto**

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## How can we stop the next pandemic?

### Here's what a WHO panel recommends

Stephanie Nebel/Reuters/Staff  
Published Wednesday, May 12, 2021  
GENEVA -- A new global system should be set up to respond faster to disease outbreaks to help ensure no future virus causes a pandemic as devastating as COVID-19, an independent World Health Organization review panel said on Wednesday.

The experts found crucial shortcomings in the global response in early 2020 - including a delay in declaring an emergency, a failure to impose travel restrictions and an entire "lost month" when countries neglected to respond to warnings - that let the virus quickly spread into a crippling pandemic.

To address those problems, the WHO should be given the power to send investigators swiftly to chase down new disease outbreaks, and to publish their full findings without delay.

"It is critical to have an empowered WHO," panel co-chair and former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark told reporters on the launch of the report "COVID-19: Make It the Last Pandemic."

Co-chair Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a former president of Liberia, said: "We are calling for a new surveillance-and-alert system that is based on transparency and allows WHO to publish information immediately."

Health ministers will debate the

### Sue Montgomery presents her first candidate for the electoral district of Snowdon

Montreal, May 5, 2021 - (CDN — NDG), Ms. Sue Montgomery, is proud to present her first candidate in the municipal elections of 2021. Ms. France Stohner will be candidate for the position of city councillor for the Snowdon district on the Côte-des-Neiges — Notre-Dame-de-Grâce borough council under the banner of Courage - Team Sue Montgomery.

"I am very happy that France is joining our dynamic team. She is an



**France Stohner**

exceptional woman who will represent the citizens of Snowdon District well. France will be a city councillor who listens to the people she represents and works conscientiously on issues of importance to the Snowdon District community," said Sue Montgomery.

"I am honored to join this great team of diverse women and men who have the experience and determination to advance issues important to our community. As city councillor for the District of Snowdon, I will work tirelessly to provide innovative solutions to advance our common cause of improving the quality of life for all citizens," said France Stohner.

Courage - Team Sue Montgomery will present candidates in the 5 districts of the CDN-NDG borough in the upcoming municipal elections in November 2021. Ms. Montgomery will run for mayor for a second term to guide her troops through the challenges ahead.

findings at the WHO's annual assembly opening on May 24. Diplomats say the European Union is driving reform efforts at the UN agency though this will take time.

"We look forward to working with our member states to discuss the recommendations of this panel and the other committees to build a stronger WHO," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

The panel urged the WHO and World Trade Organization to convene governments and drugmakers to hammer out an agreement on voluntary licensing and technology transfers to boost vaccine production. If a deal can't be reached in three months, then a so-called TRIPS waiver on patents should apply, it said.

Clark called for "banging heads together" to get a commitment to secure licenses along with tech and knowledge transfers.

"Let's be clear about this. We're dealing with pharmaceutical companies in the North that have the technology," Johnson Sirleaf said.

#### LOST MONTH

The experts noted that Chinese doctors in the central city of Wuhan had reported cases of unusual pneumonia in December 2019, with the WHO picking up reports from the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control and others.

But when the WHO's Emergency Committee met on Jan. 22, it stopped

This organization, made up of citizens from all walks of life, bases its political commitment on four main values: integrity, courage, community and innovation. It is a party that stands out from other political parties because it is forward-looking and focused on transparency, with elected officials who will maintain a real dialogue between themselves and the residents they represent. It is also a party that will allow all its councillors to express their opinions and ideas freely without fear of reprisal. Together, we can transform our community into a more prosperous, more sustainable and more just place to live - a better future for all of us

#### Biography of France Stohner

France was born in the Philippines and grew up in Montreal. Since 1984, she has spent most of her life in Côte-des-Neiges — Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. As an uninvited settler immigrant on Turtle Island, she was raised in a family with limited resources, and struggled to finish high school.

Despite this, France overcame the challenges that many immigrant and racialized families face. In order to finish university, she worked for many years in the service industry. She further pursued a Master's degree in Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Spirituality from the universities of Ottawa and Saint-Paul, to serve the needs of immigrant communities. France now works as a mental health counselor, and continues to champion for equality and justice as a long-time community organizer, and new mother. She strives to nurture a culture of politics that is more attentive, accessible, and exemplary of the multifaceted communities she serves. Throughout her life, France faced and triumphed over many challenges, and continues to surround herself with community. She draws from her life experiences and education to promote economic opportunities in Côte-des-Neiges and advocates for the rights and well-being of members of the Côte-des-Neiges community.



**In this file photo dated Monday, March 9, 2020, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization, centre, speaks during a news conference on updates regarding the coronavirus COVID-19, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. (Salvatore Di Nolfi/Keystone FILE via AP)**

short of declaring an international health emergency. That declaration did not come until eight days later, costing crucial time.

The committee, acting under the WHO's International Health Regulations, also declined to endorse international travel restrictions that would have slowed the spread of the virus. The experts said those guidelines need to be changed.

Governments, meanwhile, failed to grasp that the emergency declaration was the WHO's "loudest possible alarm," the experts said.

"It is glaringly obvious to the Panel that February 2020 was a lost month, when steps could and should have been taken to curtail the epidemic and forestall the pandemic."

Instead of preparing their hospitals for COVID-19 patients, many countries engaged in a "winner-takes-all"

scramble for protective equipment and medicines, it said.

The panel did not lay specific blame on China for its actions in the early days of the pandemic, or on WHO head Tedros, who was accused by the United States under then- U.S. President Donald Trump of being too deferential to Beijing.

Lawrence Gostin of the O'Neill Institute for national and global health law at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. said a weakness of the report was its failure to point fingers.

"In particular, despite marked delays in China's reporting of a novel outbreak in Wuhan and its impeding WHO in finding the pandemic's origins, the (panel) did not seek to hold the (Beijing) government accountable," he said.

### Balarama Holness, community organizer and former Alouette, will run for mayor of Montreal



#### Advocate Balarama Holness will be running for Montreal mayor under his new party, Mouvement Montreal. (Kate McKenna/CBC)

By Kalina Laframboise Global News

Posted May 20, 2021 10:18 am

Updated May 20, 2021 7:07 pm

Montreal's mayoral race has a new contender.

Balarama Holness, community organizer, jurist and former Montreal Alouette player, is officially throwing his hat in the ring.

He announced his candidacy Thursday morning under the banner of a new political party known as Movement Montreal.

"New blood, new ideas — that's what we want to bring to the table," Holness said during his announcement outside city hall.

"Right now it's the same old ideas, same old people and we want to bring new ideas."

The party says its campaign will focus on offering Montrealers "an alternative to the status quo." Holness said he will seek to unite the city by prioritizing citizens' desires for job security, affordable housing and accessible transportation.

"We are going to surprise people," he said. "We are going to have the best ground game out of any political party."

Holness is well known across the

city. The former CFL player won a Grey Cup championship with the Alouettes in 2010.

The activist has also helped push the concept of systemic racism forward in Quebec's political scene by forcing the city to confront the issue. He launched a petition in 2018 that was signed by more than 22,000 people.

Holness used a provision in the city's charter to trigger a public consultation that would include 7,000 participants and produce 38 recommendations, including that Montreal recognize the systemic nature of racism and discrimination against racialized groups.

The 37-year-old is running against Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante as well as Denis Coderre, who served as mayor from 2013 to 2017.

The election is months away, but several people have already announced their candidacy. Lawyer Marc-Antoine Desjardins and Félix-Antoine Joli-Coeur, a former political advisor, are also seeking the top job.

— with files from Global News' Brayden Jagger Haines and The Canadian Press

# Get Ready for Financial Shocks From Climate Change, Biden Tells Officials

*A warming planet holds potential risks for home prices, investments, banking and other aspects of the global economy, the government said.*

By Christopher Flavelle, May 20, 2021  
New York Times

WASHINGTON — President Biden has ordered government agencies to prepare for climate-related shocks across the economy, as escalating disasters threaten home prices, the value of retirement funds and even the stability of the global financial system.

The executive order signed Thursday is the latest indication of how climate change, once dismissed as a distant threat, is already complicating life for Americans. It follows a report last week from the Environmental Protection Agency, which showed that global warming is now being felt in the United States in the form of more heat waves, wildfires, floods and other disasters.

Mr. Biden's new push addresses the risks that disasters could pose to consumers, businesses, investors and the government itself.

Experts warn of two broad types of financial risk posed by a hotter planet: The growing cost to businesses and investors as climate-related disasters damage or destroy buildings, crops or supply chains; and the potential for a sudden drop in the

value of companies that depend on fossil fuels, as governments or consumers embrace wind, solar and other sources of energy that do not produce the carbon emissions driving



**President Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, right, on Thursday discussed potential risks posed by climate change to the stability of the U.S. financial system. Credit: Stefani Reynolds for The New York Times**

global warming.

Either could destabilize major sectors of the economy, prompting comparisons with the Great Recession of 2007-9.

"Our modern financial system was built on the assumption that the climate was stable," Brian Deese, head of President Biden's National Economic Council, said Thursday on a



**President Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, right, on Thursday discussed potential risks posed by climate change to the stability of the U.S. financial system. Credit: Stefani Reynolds for The New York Times**

call with reporters. "It's clear that we no longer live in such a world."

The order directs officials to report the risk that climate change poses to federal assets and tax

revenue. It tells the Labor Department to find ways to protect pensions. And it says the government should consider requiring the companies with which it does business to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions.

The emphasis on disclosure is crucial, said Mindy Lubber, chief executive officer and president of Ceres, a nonprofit group that works with investors to address the impacts of climate change. Faced with losing investors, customers and perhaps potential employees, companies with the biggest climate risks may feel pressure to modify their activities, she said.

"Once they go public with what their risks are, they're going to start mitigating their own risks," Ms. Lubber said.

Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen will play a central role in implementing the order as the chair of the Financial Stability Oversight Committee, an independent panel of government regulators. Her committee will assess climate-related risk to the stability of the U.S. financial system.

**From Page 5 Community pantries**

and has since been notorious for "red tagging"—labeling people as communist rebels, many of whom often end up dead. With the expansion of community pantries nationwide, NTF ELCAC spokesperson Antonio Parlade accused Non of deceiving people: "Same with Satan. Satan gave Eve an apple. That's where it all started."

The national police have also alleged that these community pantries are a means to turn people against the government. Parlade admitted that the police are profiling pantry organizers and accusing them of spreading propaganda. A few days after Non's community pantry went viral, police officers showed up in her neighborhood with assault rifles and asked for her personal details. Fearing for her life and the lives of other volunteers, Non closed her community pantry for a day and reopened only after getting assurances for her safety from the Quezon City mayor and the head of the national Department of the Interior and Local Government.

**Politicizing the pantries**

These government accusations are not without basis, as some political organizations have used the community pantries to raise criticisms against the government. Some of the pantries organized by one labor group distributed anti-government pamphlets and collected signatures for a petition calling on the Duterte administration to provide more financial assistance to the unemployed. However, the organizers of the labor group explained that the pamphlets contained calls for mass COVID-19 testing and financial assistance for the poor—issues that they have long been vocal about so "there is no hidden agenda." In

addition, the group insisted that they are not forcing anyone to sign the petition and denied having links to communist rebels that seek to overthrow the Duterte administration.

Because of the alarming politicization of community pantries, several mayors in the country appealed to the public not to exploit these initiatives to promote their ideologies. Joy Belmonte, the mayor of Quezon City where the first pantry was established, stated that she is only supporting "colorless and apolitical" community pantries: "Vested interests and political agendas are unwelcome as they can jeopardize the integrity of the majority of our community pantries that are put up for purely humanitarian objectives."

**Singing a different tune**

Meanwhile, due to public outrage over the temporary closure of Non's community pantry, the Duterte administration changed its official stance. Within days, it shifted from initially warning that community pantries are linked to communism to voicing support for them, and then putting up government-backed versions of the pantry. According to a press statement from the President's Communication Office, "The emergence of community pantries is laudable. It exemplifies the Filipino bayanihan (community) spirit during this challenging time of COVID-19." Even the police force changed course and eventually established community pantries. These efforts are seen by some in the Philippines as a way for the government and particularly the national police to improve their public image.

However, critics argue that the police's community pantries are not about mutual aid since the food will

come from the state. As the Philippine Sociological Society wrote in their analysis, these state-run pantries are a PR move to "hijack the narrative and to rob this movement of its optimism," rather than to fulfill the police's mandate to serve. According to



**Photo by Eyriche Cortez of a community pantry**

Noreen Sapalo, a lecturer from the University of the Philippines, the intention of the police is "to claim an initiative as their own and to frame the activity according to their set of rules."

"It's counter-propaganda, counter-insurgency and a publicity stunt rolled into one initiative—all to cover state failure," she said, referring to the state's launch of its own version of the pantries.

**Symbol of compassion and solidarity**

Despite their politicization by the government and political groups, community pantries in the Philippines remain a symbol of solidarity and compassion. Their proliferation is a display of national solidarity and a collective awareness that, while the pandemic has affected everybody, it is

tougher for some and even worse for most. The community pantries also reflect a faith in humanity based on compassion, relying on Filipinos to give selflessly without reward and trusting fellow Filipinos to receive without hoarding.



The community pantry in the Philippines represents many things to different people. For Elijah San Fernando, who set up a stall in his neighborhood in Quezon City, the presence of community pantries signifies the "absence of good governance." Though he maintains that it is not a condemnation against the Duterte administration, Roque is correct in describing the community pantry as "a showcase of the best in the Filipino character."

*About the author: Andrea Chloe Wong holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. She previously worked as a Senior Researcher at the Foreign Service Institute of the Philippines.*

# Lahat tayo ay nais malaman ang higit pa tungkol sa COVID-19 na pagbabakuna



Operasyon sa  
COVID-19 na  
pagbabakuna



## BAKIT DAPAT AKONG MAGPABAKUNA?

Pumoprotekta ito laban sa COVID-19 at tutulong sa iyo na makaiwas sa pagkakasakit. Kahit na maraming tao ang gumagaling nang hindi ginagamot, ang ilan ay maaaring mamatay dahil sa COVID-19 o makaranas ng mga problema sa puso o baga tulad ng pneumonia. Maaari ring maapektuhan ang nervous system.

## Ituloy natin ang pagprotekta sa ating mga sarili!

Sa pagdating ng mga buwan, hangga't hindi pa nababakunahan ang karamihan ng populasyon, mananatili ang COVID-19.



Manatiling  
nakadistansya



Takpan ang  
iyong mukha



Umubo sa  
iyong siko



Hugasan ang  
iyong mga kamay

[Québec.ca/vaccinCOVID](https://quebec.ca/vaccinCOVID)

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