

# FILIPINO STAR

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Montreal's only Filipino-Canadian newspaper

## Filipino community mourns the death of Montreal's "Godfather" Alberto Abiera

Written by by Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi)

The news about Alberto "Bert" Abiera's passing on November 11, 2024 was just a few days shy of the 90th birthday celebration that was organized for him on November 16 by Svetlana Suarez in the name of Samahang Makabayan that annually honors him as the "Godfather of Montreal" with a party and invites everyone to attend.

Abiera was brought to the Montreal Neurological Institute by ambulance Saturday morning at 11 o'clock, accompanied by a neighbor, Monica Regacho. Immediately afterwards, many other Filipino-Canadians then learned about his serious condition. The doctors said that he would not last more than two days so



**Alberto Abiera**  
Nov. 16, 1934-Nov. 11, 2024



**Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippines national hero, has a monument in the MacKenzie King Park which is just one of Abiera's legacies.**

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## First Filipino-Canadian owned private school marks its 35th anniversary


A former high school teacher of the Montreal Catholic School Commission, English sector, now known as the English Montreal School Board, established the first Filipino-Canadian owned private school on November 1, 1989 known as the Gilmore Business Institute which was first located on 4246 Giroard Avenue near Monkland, in NDG, Montreal. The school was renamed Gilmore College International in 2000 when many international students came to register in its credit programs under an education permit for Office Systems Technology, Accounting and Automation as well as International Trade.


In its 35th anniversary, Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, the founder and the director-general, would like to raise awareness of the existence of her private school by putting an article in the community newspaper to call the



**Photo of the inauguration of Gilmore College International's headquarters at 7159, ch. de la Cote des Neiges held on October 24, 2015, showing the cutting of the ribbon ceremony by the founder and director-general, Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi with MP Anthony Housefather, the guest of honor at the ceremony.**

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**SONA LAKHOYAN OLIVIER**  
Députée de Chomedey  
MNA for Chomedey

sona.lakhoayanolivier.CHOM@assna.qc.ca  
430-686-0166

From Page 1 Gilmore College  
 attention of all Montrealers, specially the newcomers and immigrants who need to learn how to speak French as it is now required in almost all dealings with the provincial government. This private school is highly qualified and ready to cater to their educational needs. Its founder is academically qualified to supervise its teaching faculty as she has been doing this job for the past 35 years in a private school

“brain waste” as they certainly do not need university education to be employed doing menial tasks. She believes that the knowledge based economy needs more mental skills and offers a lot of opportunities to find better jobs but in order to find them, people must possess excellent communication skills that all employers want.

Marking the 35th anniversary of the school is an important milestone but it may not be useful if the public



**Gilmore College International Faculty**



**Students in English and French courses**

setting, besides the fact that she graduated from three universities, namely, University of the Philippines in a B.A. degree in English Literature, Diploma in Education from McGill University, TESL Certificate and Master of Arts in Educational Studies in Philosophy from Concordia University.

Various statistics and academic reports indicate the fact that many immigrants with university degrees usually end up with dead-end jobs in factories doing repetitive tasks or cleaning offices and homes. Many studies have shown that there is a

does not appreciate the advantages a private school offers such as income tax deductible tuition fees for all courses which are very reasonable, experienced teachers, small groups set up in all the classes, proficiency certificates issued upon successful completion of a course, personalized instruction, flexible schedules and pleasant, cozy atmosphere in spacious classrooms. Schedules are flexible as they are set up according to the students' needs and availability.

According to the latest news,

the government of Quebec has decided to reduce the enrollment in French language courses in adult education centers due to budget cuts. It is surprising to know that many people are still waiting but why don't they search for a private school instead of always counting on government schools paid by taxpayers' money? Perhaps, they really have no idea that they have another option so this article is to let them know that there is another school in Montreal that is accessible to all residents of the CDN-NDG borough which is centrally located and close to all amenities.

The founder and director general is very passionate and committed to do her best in making sure that all students who go through the doors of Gilmore College International acquire the skills they need not only in finding the career they want but also to have all the ideal traits of being a human being.

Thirty five years in the life of

any organization is a record to be proud of, but the real pride is not in the number of years but in the insights developed from teaching different kinds of people from all walks of life. She believes that teaching is like building a castle invisible to the human eye as the values she shares with students remain in their hearts and minds.

Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi has devoted many years of her life to education - 25 years as a business education teacher in a public school and 35 years in her own private school teaching French, English and Filipino languages as well as accounting and office automation courses. She hires retired nurses to teach the PAB program. She believes in the value of education and wants to make sure that all those who need to reorient their careers or adjust to their new life in Canada are able to use the educational resources offered at Gilmore College International. #



**ANTHONY HOUSEFATHER**  
 Member of Parliament - Mount Royal  
 Député - Mont-Royal

“**Congratulations to Gilmore College International on its 35th Anniversary!**”

As the Member of Parliament for Mount Royal, I am proud to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Gilmore College International. Founded by Zenaida Ferry in 1989, Gilmore College has become a pillar of education in our community, empowering students to develop essential skills in language, accounting, and nursing aide.

Over the years, this institution has helped countless individuals, including newcomers to Canada, reach their potential. I commend Zenaida for her dedication as the first Filipino-Canadian to establish a private school in Quebec, and for her ongoing commitment to education.

Congratulations to everyone at Gilmore College on this remarkable milestone. Here's to many more years of success!

Best wishes,  
 Anthony Housefather  
 Member of Parliament, Mount Royal

📍 316-4770 avenue de Kent

✉️ anthony.housefather@parl.gc.ca

☎️ 514 283-0171

📄 anthonyhousefather.libparl.ca



**FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK**

**November, the time to remember our heroes and also plan to celebrate the coming holidays**

**Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi**

It is during this time of the year that makes us realize how the year is almost over, and there are lots of things yet undone. It is also the time when we observe important historical events - November 11 is observed as Remembrance Day to commemorate the end of World War I hostilities and to honor those who have served in defense of their nation: On November 11, 1918, Germany and the Allies signed an armistice in the Forest of Compiègne, France, ending hostilities on the Western Front. The armistice took effect at 11 AM, the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

A central element of Remembrance Day is the Two Minutes of Silence, which takes place at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

In Canada, people start wearing poppies on the last Friday of October and continue to wear them until Remembrance Day on November 11. The poppy is a symbol of remembrance for Canadians who died in battle, and those who are serving or have served

today. The poppy's popularity comes from the poem "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae, a Canadian who served in World War I. The poem describes poppies growing among the graves of soldiers in Flanders, Belgium, where McCrae saw many battles.

Remembrance Day was originally called Armistice Day. In the United States, it's known as Veterans Day.

Besides the historical significance of November, it is also a time to be prepared for the coming of another year, and to make sure that we remember the things that remain in our to do list. In the Catholic community, November is a time to remember those who have died. The end of November marks the end of the Liturgical Year, and the First Sunday of Advent begins the New Year

There is a lot to do and November seems to make us realize that time is really flying so we better get things done faster before it is too late.#

**Statement by the Prime Minister on Remembrance Day**

November 11, 2024  
Ottawa, Ontario  
The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on Remembrance Day:

"Today, we honour the Canadians who have served and defended our country. We share their stories of undaunted bravery. We remember.

"For generations, Canadians have answered the call of duty. In the tunnels and trenches of Vimy. On the beaches of Dieppe and Normandy. In the mountains of Afghanistan. Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans have – throughout every chapter of our history – kept Canadians safe. Signing up to serve in times of war and peace. Leaving behind their family for days, weeks, and months. Fighting shoulder to shoulder alongside Allies, against artillery fire, missiles, and bombs. Some returned home from the battlefield never truly the same. Others never returned at all.

"Earlier this year, we marked 80 years since over 14,000 Canadians stormed Juno Beach on D-Day. The tragic loss we faced that day, the sacrifice our troops endured, and the defining victory that D-Day inspired is a vivid reminder of their courage and devotion.

"Canadian Armed Forces members continue to serve to this day – during wildfires and floods, in remote search and rescues, training our Ukrainian friends, and standing guard for our country and continent. When our friends and Allies see the Maple Leaf emblazoned on a uniform, they see a legacy of courage that has kept

the world safe and prosperous. That legacy will live on – through epitaphs, through monuments and memorials,



through stories of patriotism, and through remembrance.

"On Remembrance Day, it is our tradition to pay tribute to those who have served. But it is also our obligation. A way of recognizing a debt that we can never fully repay. When families gather to reflect across small towns and big cities, at cenotaphs and cemeteries, during ceremonies, and on sacred ground – we remember. When our kids read 'In Flanders Fields' or listen to the 'Last Post' for the very first time – we remember. When the country takes a moment to pause at 11:00 a.m., proudly wearing poppies over our hearts – we remember.

"On this Remembrance Day, and every day, let us pay tribute to Canada's veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members. Let us carry the light of remembrance into the future. We stand today, free and at peace, because of them. "Lest we forget."

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**Bert Abiera (R.I.P.)**  
Nov. 16, 1934-Nov. 11, 2024  
Founder-Publisher, Filipino Star  
Nov.1982-Nov. 97

*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.*

**The North American Filipino Star**  
7159, ch. de la Cote des Neiges  
Montreal, QC H3R 2M2  
Tel.: 514-485-7861

**Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi**  
Chief Editor  
Publisher, April 1998-present  
under the revised name of  
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**The only Montreal Filipino-Canadian community newspaper**

**Sam Kevin**  
Show Biz News & Layout Editor

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**Alvin D. Veloso**  
Pete Guidote  
Contributing Writers

**New International Student Program regulations take effect**

November 15, 2024—Ottawa—Canada's diverse and inclusive society, high-quality educational institutions and potential opportunities to work or immigrate after graduation have made Canada a leading destination for students from around the world. The International Student Program must be sustainable, and students must be protected from abuse within the system.

Over the past year, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has taken significant steps to ensure the sustainability of the International Student Program by rooting out fraud and protecting students from bad actors and financial vulnerability. As announced in our 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan, Canada's temporary resident population will decrease over the next few years to align with our long-term economic goals and strengthen the integrity and quality of our temporary resident programs.

Today, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, confirmed that new regulations impacting the International Student Program have now taken effect, including the change to the number of hours international students may work off campus that was proposed earlier



**Marc Miller, Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC)**

this year. With this change, eligible students can now work up to 24 hours per week off campus while their classes are in session.

Moving forward, international students must apply and be approved for a new study permit before changing learning institutions. This change is in line with the important work we have been doing to strengthen the integrity of the International Student Program.

Designated learning institutions (DLIs) play an important role in protecting the student program against misuse. Since 2015, IRCC has been working with DLIs to strengthen student compliance reporting. There will now be consequences for DLIs that fail to submit compliance reports or verify

See Page 7 International Student

From page 1 The Godfather

they made a Facebook post about the sad news and asked that prayers be dedicated to him. I was one of those people who saw the photo of Bert lying unconscious on a hospital bed. It was difficult to describe the grief I felt for him and prayed hard, hoping that there would be a miracle for his recovery.

Bert, as most friends call him or Tata Bert by younger people, is well-respected and loved not only for his enormous contributions and generosity but also for his wit in making sarcastic remarks which just made people laugh. Most Filipinos look up to him for guidance and he was always willing to volunteer his services.

Bert Abiera immigrated to Canada from his hometown of Iloilo City about 52 years ago, and occupied jobs related to printing or publishing. He started with a tabloid named Bulalakaw which later became Tamaraw times with his friend, the late Tony Fernandez, assisted by Ricardo Ribaya as photographer.

Bert had always been helpful to anyone who needs a place to stay so he was always surrounded by people who benefitted from his unconditional support, in particular Filipino seamen who "jumped ship." During his term as FAMAS president in 1986-87, he started a successful fund-raising event called Munting Binibini which enabled him to raise money to start a building fund, Succeeding presidents of FAMAS continued using the same method of raising money by holding an annual Munting Binibini contest until there was enough money to buy a duplex building on Van Horne Avenue. I learned about this when he asked me to include his article about FAMAS history in the North American Filipino Star and what he contributed to have a Filipino community center

Bert had published the Filipino Star from November 1982 until he decided to close it down in November 1997 after the visit of the Philippine President, Fidel Ramos. It was during one of the meetings of the La Liga Rizalista when he told everyone that he could no longer continue publishing the paper for lack of support. At this time, I was the interim chairperson of the La Liga Rizalista as the late Lina Fernandez and her husband, Tony, urged me to undertake this role. Bert was one of the members as he was an ardent admirer of Dr. Jose Rizal, our national hero. For



**FB post by Dolores Belandres showing the urn of Bert's remains.**

this reason, during the Centennial Year of Philippine independence, he advocated for the installation of the bust of Rizal in Montreal which was realized with the support of James de la Paz who had a political clout at City Hall during this time of Mayor Pierre Bourque.

I tried to help Bert by putting an ad in his newspaper but he just did not have enough support from local businesses whose ads could have helped cover the costs of printing. In fact, when he gave up printing the



**Fely Rosales Carino interviewed Bert Abiera for Mabuhay Montreal TV, a weekly TV community show that aired from Dec. 13, 2013 to January 30, 2016. Taken during Bert's 80th birthday celebration he hosted for all his friends at the Hellenic Community Center on Wilderton Road**

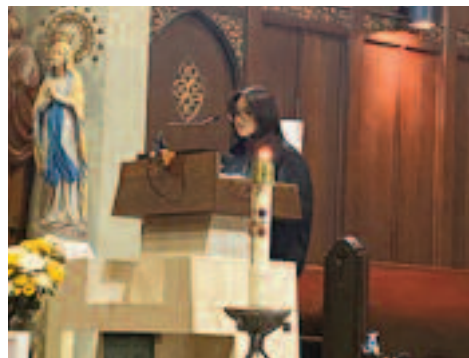


**FAMAS Executive Board 1986-87 when Bert Abiera (seated in the middle) was the president.**



**Souvenir of one of Gilmore College's annual Christmas fellowship parties which Bert always attended. This photo was taken on December 9, 2018.**

paper, there was over \$2000 account payable with Payette and Simms that I paid on his behalf when I took over the paper.



**Amira Putal delivering an eulogy for his Grandpa, Alberto Abiera**

In order to support a newspaper, there should be at least 40-50% of the newspaper for advertising but it was not the case for the Filipino Star. Bert then asked me to find people who would be interested in helping

support the newspaper by being shareholders of the company to raise the capital needed. Following his request, I was able to convince a dozen people to be shareholders of the company for \$500 each preferred share,

meetings. I tried to refund everyone but ran out of money so there were two people left unrefunded much later until someone I knew volunteered to buy their shares.

As per the original agreement, Bert would continue producing the paper monthly with a modest compensation of \$300 monthly. When Bert decided to visit the Philippines in November 1998, I paid him all his salaries and I continued to work with him doing the cut and paste method of preparing the layout for printing the paper monthly. In his absence, I was able to continue publishing the paper alone starting with the November 1998 edition. Rushing to pick up an ad of Sauli Zajdel from the office of the Monitor for this edition, I fell down 16 steps of the Decarie building where I had moved my school and also where I produced the newspaper. As all students had already left, I had to call 911 myself and went to the Montreal General Hospital emergency. Fortunately, after 9 hours, I was told to go home as I did not suffer from any concussion.

For a short period of time, I received some help from Hilda and Alvin Veloso for a few editions. Bert came back after a few months and wanted to volunteer to help me out but since I already learned to do the paper myself, I did not need his assistance anymore.

I no longer remember when I met Bert for the first time but perhaps, it was in 1983 when my parents arrived in Montreal as that was the time when I began joining community activities with them. At this time of writing my tribute to Bert, I remember him as a true gentleman, soft spoken, and always appeared calm even when someone offended him. Whenever I see him in community meetings, I usually offered him a lift home when he moved to the apartment nearby in Isabella. I remember that he used to live in a high rise apartment building on Decarie Boulevard but I only started working closely with him when he sold the paper to me in 1998. A Canadian man was apparently interested in taking over the paper but he told me he preferred another Filipino instead which seems to demonstrate Bert's patriotic and cultural heritage that charity begins at home and to patronize our kababayan (fellow citizen)

Knowing Bert and working with him closely, I was absolutely shocked to see the Facebook post. Many other people shared my feelings and thoughts as they wrote messages to say how much they cared about him. Indeed, his legacies will be forever etched in the memory of all Montrealers. In the words of Mr. Marvin Rotrand, he is a "giant" in the community, and he will be greatly missed.

Remembering Bert's birthday celebrations also makes me recall the joyful times I had whenever I attended them. I have vivid memories of the big 80th birthday gala that he hosted at the Hellenic Community Center on November 14, 2014. Fely Rosales Carino, the North American Filipino Star social editor, interviewed him for our TV show that used to be televised every Friday night by ICI. I also attended his

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## Celebration of the life of Bert Abiera

Last night I joined some 200 mourners at the funeral of Bert Abiera at St. Malachy's Church.

Family, friends and so many community leaders were on hand as Bert was universally esteemed. There was a heavy sense of sadness hanging over the church. Bert had so positively touched so many people and the hurt was compounded when we learned that he died due to an accident, a fall in which he sustained a major injury to his brain.

I had the honour of joining Bert's granddaughter and Al Abdon,



**Martin Rotrand delivering his eulogy during the memorial mass**

President of the Filipino Heritage Society, in giving an eulogy. Bert came to Canada in 1972. He was always proud of his Filipino roots but he saw the opportunity for a better life in Canada and he worked hard to achieve it not only for himself but for the entire community.

Many at the church told stories about how Bert helped new arrivals get settled. His founding of the Filipino Star and his time as President of FAMAS was

From Page 4 The Godfather

birthday party held at 6767 Cote des Neiges on November 18, 2022. He was probably joking when he insisted with Fely who acted as the emcee for this birthday that it was his 90th birthday, but it was still two years short as he would have been 90 years old only on November 16, 2024. Never did I ever imagine that he would be gone too soon.

A celebration of Bert's life well-lived was held during a memorial mass where eulogies were delivered by those who were requested by Svetlana Suarez held on Thursday, November 14 at the St. Malachy's Church on Clanranald. They are: Mr. Marvin Rotrand, former councillor and now the Director General of United Against Hate Canada, Al Abdon, Chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal, Jeannette Perignon, Dolores Belandres of the FHSM and his granddaughter, Amira Putal.

At the reception after the memorial mass, Svetlana asked me to speak after all his friends had spoken as she knows that I also worked closely with Bert. I also met Bert's relatives who travelled from New Jersey and took care of the funeral arrangements and cremation.

The death of Alberto Abiera created a big hole in the community's heart. He left but he will always be remembered. May the Good Lord keep him safe and let him rest in peace. #

remembered. He was a devoted member of the Knights of Rizal earning high rank and lifetime membership.

His work promoting charities was recalled and people spoke about how whenever there was a dispute in the community everyone would turn to him to smooth it over. His word was always trustworthy and his judgement good. People started calling him the Godfather, in a positive way, as the arbiter of the community who could ensure that disputes did not get out of hand.

During the service we heard how Bert had always promoted the friendship of the Filipino and Jewish communities. He along with Reverend Orlan Racacho have ensured that Canadians learn about the Rescue in the Philippines when President Quezon opened the doors of the country to Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust, one of the few world leaders to do so.

Bert stood with Israel joining the annual Israeli Day as part of a delegation that marched under the flags of Canada, the Philippines and Israel. He was a convinced federalist and was active in getting candidates who believe in the promise of Canada and in a country that is welcoming to immigrants of diverse origins.

He believed you need to show you care by participating. I can't recall any major community event I participated in where he was not present. He always took part in the annual Philippines Independence Day Parade in Snowdon. He never missed the gathering at the Dr. Jose Rizal monument at Mackenzie King Park to honour the birth anniversary of the national hero of the Philippines.

## An eulogy by Al Abdon, chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal

We gather here today to celebrate the life and legacy of Alberto Abiera, commonly known as Bert, Tata Bert, Ninong Bert and the Godfather. This is a man whose impact on our community and the lives he touched will not be forgotten.

When I was 10 we used to live in the second floor of the house where my parents built to be our ancestral home. I saw a man hanging by our window trying to attach bantings in preparation for the fiesta in San Juan. He and his team were able to fill the whole length of the street with colorful bantings just like the Mardi Gras of New Orleans. That man was Bert Abiera.

He had impressed a child of 10 the value of volunteerism.

Three decades later in Canada, I met him again in 1978. This time he was a journalist. He had formed a community tabloid named "Bulalakaw" and later Tamaraw Times with his partner the late Tony Fernandes. Bert and Tony together with their roving photographer Ricardo Ribaya worked hard to keep the Filipino community informed of the latest news about Filipinos adapting to their new home. Bert's journalistic skills kept the paper afloat and years

People should know that Bert was the prime instigator of having the City of Montreal officially name the area surrounding the monument of Dr. Rizal as Place Dr. Jose Rizal. He worked to organize a petition that garnered 1200 names which I tabled at City Council,

Bert seemed never to miss a single gathering. I'm not sure where he got the energy.

Many prominent people attended last night including City Councillors Stephanie Valenzuela and Sonny Moroz and Borough Mayor



**Souvenir of Bert Abiera's 80th birthday at the Hellenic Community Center, November 14, 2014 with Marvin Rotrand and friends.**

leading to an eventual motion that made the name official.

In fact during the many years I served the neighbourhood as its City Councillor I would hear often from Bert who would alert me to problems and needs. His presentations were always cogent and well documented and it aided me in having the Borough provide support.

You would always see him at Pista Sa Nasyon and galas and festivals organized by organizations that represent Filipinos from different regions of the country. Everyone was honoured to have Bert at their event.

Filipino organizations hold their events at a variety of venues such as the Hellenic Centre, the main hall at 6767 Cote des Neiges, St. Kevin's Parish hall and the Ruby Rouge in Chinatown and

Gracia Katahwa. Recently elected School Commissioner Chelsea Craig was present as was her predecessor Ellie Israel.

There was a reception in the parish hall afterwards. Speakers fondly remembering Bert included Dario Boco for the Knights of Rizal, Gerry Danzil of the United Pilipino Seniors, Svetlana Suarez for Ang Samahang Makabayan and longtime friend Dick Dahiroc.

Other notables present included Rey Balansi, Regional Commander for Eastern Canada of the Knights of Rizal, Manny Lagasca, former President of the Filipino Chess and Social Club, and Estella Tablas President of the Pangasinan Association.

Bert will be sorely missed. He would have been 90 tomorrow. #

Filipino seamen who had gone AWOL to Canada in search of better living conditions. He was even searched at his place and handcuffed by the RCMP for a brief time.

Balingbing!. Bert was known to be Balingbing. It has a negative connotation to some but a blessing to others. To my knowledge I have never seen Bert campaign for a political group. During community events, he only attended those that are non-political and non-biased. That is why he was respected and revered by community leaders.

He was proud of his achievement when as president of FAMAS he was able to raise a large sum of money at the Munting Binibini contest way back in the 80's. Now, the concept has become the standard fund raising event of associations.

Bert played a pivotal role in several community projects, one of them being the installation of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal headed by James De La Paz. Together they worked tirelessly to pursue their dreams in establishing a landmark which now serves as a vibrant gathering place for ceremonies, families and friends. It created a revitalization of MacKenzie King Park a part of which is named Place Jose Rizal.



**Al Abdon delivering his eulogy to Bert in St. Malachy's Church**

journalist, Bert demonstrated his unwavering compassion, as he tirelessly volunteered his time and resources to help those in need. It is a well known fact that he welcomed

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An eulogy

# End of an Era: The Closing of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) and Its Lasting Legacy"

By John Leo Lete, Local Journalism Initiative

The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS), based at Concordia University, was a prominent institution dedicated to researching and advocating genocide prevention, human rights, and policy. The institute was founded by Frank Chalk, a professor in the history department, and the late Kurt Jonassohn in 1986.

Created to address pressing global justice issues, MIGS was recognized for its contributions to international policy discourse and its role in initiatives to prevent mass atrocities. Recently, however, Concordia University announced its decision to close MIGS due to financial constraints, prompting questions about the institute's legacy and the broader implications for human rights research in Canada.

## Background of MIGS

MIGS was founded with the mission to advance the understanding and prevention of genocide and mass atrocities worldwide. Its objectives encompassed educating policy-makers, advocating for intervention in cases of human rights abuse, and raising public awareness about the importance of genocide prevention. Over the years, MIGS achieved significant milestones, including the influential Will to Intervene project, which advised on policy strategies for



**The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) was affiliated with Concordia University (Felix Côté, CBC)**

preventing mass atrocities. Furthermore, MIGS hosted numerous human rights conferences and collaborated with global organizations, solidifying its role as a critical hub for digital rights and conflict zone policies.

## Reasons for Closure

The decision to close MIGS was attributed primarily to financial constraints. Concordia University cited ongoing funding challenges, which made sustaining the institute unfeasible under the university's current budget. While Concordia did not elaborate extensively on other contributing factors, the closure reflects a broader trend of budget cuts in academic and research institutions facing economic pressures globally.

This shift poses challenges for institutions dedicated to specialized, impactful research, such as MIGS.

## Impact of the Closure

The closure of MIGS represents a significant loss to the field of human rights and genocide prevention. Without MIGS, the Canadian and international community loses a key advocate and thought leader in policy development and atrocity prevention. The institute's research output and influence in policy circles will be missed, potentially impacting educational and research resources available to students and professionals. Stakeholders, including human rights organizations and alumni, have expressed concern about

the vacuum this will leave in advocacy and academic research within Canada.

## Future of Human Rights Advocacy and Research in Canada

Though MIGS' closure is a setback, other institutions in Canada and abroad continue to work in related fields. Organizations such as the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and the Centre for International Governance Innovation play vital roles in promoting human rights.

Additionally, former MIGS scholars and supporters may find new ways to continue their advocacy through partnerships or new projects. This moment also serves as a call for increased funding and support to ensure that human rights research and advocacy can continue effectively in the future.

MIGS leaves a legacy of impactful contributions to human rights and genocide prevention. The institute's research and advocacy work has shaped policy discussions and public awareness of mass atrocities, and its absence highlights the need for dedicated spaces for research and dialogue on global justice issues. Sustainable human rights advocacy and research require ongoing commitment from both the public and private sectors to foster an environment where such vital work can thrive.#

# Employer's final contract offer escalates ongoing labor negotiations, raising stakes of potential lockout threat

By John Leo Lete, Local Journalism Initiative

In a pivotal move in its labor dispute, the Port of Montreal issued a "final" offer to its dockworkers, including significant salary increases, but with conditions that have spurred mixed reactions from the union. The dispute has intensified in recent weeks, with partial strikes paralyzing major operations at Canada's second-largest port. If unresolved, the employer has warned of a potential lockout, placing over \$400 million in daily goods movement at risk.

The dispute between the Port of Montreal and its nearly 1,200 longshore workers, represented by the Syndicat des débardeurs du port de Montreal, centers around wages, scheduling flexibility, and work-life balance. Workers have been without a collective agreement since December 31, 2023, and union members launched a partial unlimited strike on October 31, followed by a complete strike on overtime across the port on October 10. In recent months, the union has advocated for wage increases in line with those granted to counterparts in Halifax and Vancouver, amounting to 20% over four years, while also seeking improved scheduling provisions.

## Details of the Final Offer

The Maritime Employers Association announced last week that their final offer comprises a 3% annual pay increase for the first four years, followed by a 3.5% increase for the next two years.

According to the MEA, this offer would bring the average total compensation package for a longshore worker at the Port of Montreal to over \$200,000 per year by the contract's end. The association emphasized that this substantial offer reflects the high availability required of employees and aims to address long-standing compensation concerns.

The MEA's proposal also includes a request for a minimum one-hour notice from workers in the event of an absence—an increase from the current one-minute requirement. This change, they argue, would reduce management difficulties that heavily impact day-to-day port operations.

## Lockout Threat

If the union rejects this final offer, the MEA has signaled its readiness to enact a lockout after 9 p.m. on Sunday, limiting port operations to essential services and activities unrelated to long shoring. Such an action could significantly disrupt Canada's second-largest port, further impacting industries that depend on its services and adding



**Port of Montreal longshore workers held a three-day strike outside the Maisonneuve Termont terminal in Montreal at the end of September. (Christinne Muschi/The Canadian Press)**

pressure on both sides to reach an agreement.

## Union's Response and Worker Reactions

Union leadership has yet to formally respond to the final offer, though initial reactions from workers suggest skepticism, particularly around scheduling requirements and work-life balance concerns. While the MEA's salary increase proposal marks a considerable shift, union representatives argue it does not fully align with the increases provided to

their counterparts in other Canadian ports.

## Economic and Operational Impact

The impact of a lockout at the Port of Montreal could reverberate across various sectors, with potential supply chain disruptions affecting retailers, manufacturers, and businesses reliant on the port's daily throughput of \$400 million in goods. Economists warn that prolonged operational halts may contribute to

See Page 7

Port strike

# Tragic Accident on Ontario's Highway 401 Claims Lives of Three Quebecers, Leaves One Injured

By John Leo Lete, Local Journalism Initiative

Ontario, Canada – Nov 10, 2024 – Ontario's Highway 401 was the scene of a tragic multi-vehicle accident that resulted in the deaths of three

profoundly impacted both the victims' loved ones and the local community. Victims and Casualties

Among the deceased were a 25-year-old male and a 22-year-old female, both of whom were pronounced

ongoing investigation. The OPP's specialized collision teams collaborated with the Office of the Chief Coroner, taking detailed assessments to aid in accident analysis and ensuring accurate documentation of the event.

This tragic accident serves as a reminder of the importance of road and traffic safety, especially on busy highways like Ontario's 401. Drivers are urged to stay vigilant, maintain safe following distances, and adjust their speed to current road conditions.

Awareness and caution can make a crucial difference, particularly in heavy traffic or unexpected slowdowns. By practicing safe driving habits, we can all contribute to reducing accidents and protecting lives on our roads. #



**Ontario Provincial Police secure the area with crime scene tape following an ongoing investigation." (88.7 myFM News staff)**

Quebec residents and left one person with serious injuries. The accident occurred around 1:15 p.m. just west of the County Road 40 interchange in Quinte West, Ont.

## Details of the Incident

In a tragic accident on Ontario's Highway 401, three members of a Laval, Quebec family lost their lives, while a fourth remains seriously injured. The collision occurred on Saturday afternoon as the family's minivan, traveling westbound collided with the rear of a transport trailer. Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are actively investigating the incident, which has

dead at the scene. Tragically, an eight-month-old child succumbed to injuries shortly after being transported to the hospital. The only survivor, a four-year-old child, was airlifted by Ornge Air Ambulance to a trauma center in Toronto and is receiving treatment for serious injuries.

First responders, including firefighters, paramedics, and police, arrived promptly at the scene and provided immediate assistance. The westbound lanes of Highway 401 remained closed for several hours as emergency teams worked to manage the scene and secure evidence for the

## From Page 5 An Eulogy

During the Knights of Rizal ceremonies, you cannot fail to notice an individual with a commanding posture among the knights wearing a dark suit, a sash and sunglasses just like Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He is no other than Alberto Abiera, Life time member, a Grand Knight Officer 4th degree and an Archivist at the Council. He is one of the pioneers and instrumental in forming the Knights of Rizal in Montreal.

During his tenure as community leader, he was awarded the following: In 1998 - Service Award by PBSSQ; 1989 - Volunteerism Award by FAMAS; 1997- Presidential Citation by the Centennial Movement; 2010 - The Milestone 35 by the Philippine Basketball Association; 2014 - Filipino Artistic Achievement Award in Journalism by Filcan Publications, Inc.; 2023 - The Gawad ng Pagkilala Award by Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal; 2024 - The Most Outstanding Filipinos Abroad by Binibining Filipinas of the World Awards in Brampton, Ontario

Bert was most of the time serious, stern and did not talk much. But in social gatherings, have you seen Bert Abiera dance? He got the moves of Barack Obama's pelvic sway combined with Mohammed Ali's foot work on Michael Jackson's "Beat it."

Imagine that.

Nobody would expect that this would be Bert's last year on earth. Up to his last days, close friends are preparing for his 90th birthday, exactly on the date of his birthday which is November 16, this Saturday. People are shocked by his demise.

Tata Bert, because of your commitment and dedication, you inspired countless kababayans. At FAMAS, you tirelessly volunteer most of your time and resources to help those in need.

As we continue to honor his memory, we are reminded of the profound difference one person can make in the lives of so many. His legacy will live on through countless years to come in our community.

Goodbye Bert...Salamat sa iyong tulong sa ating comunidad. #

## SPECIAL OFFER TO BUSINESSES

For the Christmas 2024 edition, the North American Filipino Star, which is the only Filipino-Canadian owned newspaper in Quebec, is seeking your support by putting an ad. A 15% discount for full page and half page ads & 10% for other sizes will be applicable. Contact us by email: [filipinostar2@gmail.com](mailto:filipinostar2@gmail.com)  
Deadline: Dec. 7, 2024

From Page 6 Port strike regional economic strain, potentially escalating costs for consumers and businesses.

## Next Steps in the Negotiation Process

With the employer's final offer on the table, both sides face a critical decision. The union may either accept the terms, counteroffer, or prepare for a lockout that could occur within days. Should negotiations continue to stall, arbitration or mediation could be potential next steps.

As the Port of Montreal approaches a potential lockout, the stakes remain high for dockworkers and management alike. Both parties face mounting pressure to find common ground, as the outcome will not only impact workers but also the broader economy and supply chains tied to the port's operations. #

## From Page 3 International student

acceptance letters. With this change, a DLI could be suspended from welcoming new international students for up to a year for failing to provide the required information.

These improvements will provide greater oversight while supporting international students and safeguarding their academic experiences in Canada.

Quote: "By fixing the off-campus work limit to 24 hours per week, we're striking the right balance between providing work opportunities and helping students stay focused on their education. We also expect institutions to support our efforts to preserve the integrity of the International Student Program. International students should have a positive, successful experience in Canada, and the important changes made today will help with that."

– The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

## Quick facts:

To work off campus without a work permit, international students must be studying full-time in a post-secondary academic, vocational or professional training program, or a vocational training program at the secondary level offered in Quebec, that lasts at least six months and leads to a degree, diploma or certificate.

International students who are eligible to work off campus may work full-time during breaks in their academic calendar, such as the summer break between school years or the winter break between semesters.

Twice a year, designated learning institutions are expected to submit a report to IRCC that indicates whether each study permit holder associated with their school has remained enrolled. Students who are no longer enrolled can be investigated and face enforcement action, as they may be breaking their study permit conditions.

Designated learning institutions in Quebec have not, to date, participated in student compliance reporting. It will take Quebec and IRCC some time to set up this reporting system for Quebec DLIs. As such, Quebec DLIs have a grace period before they are required to comply with the compliance reporting requirement.

The new letter of acceptance (LOA) verification process has been a success. Since its launch on December 1, 2023, through October 6, 2024, IRCC has received almost 529,000 LOAs for verification confirmed nearly 492,000 LOAs as valid directly with designated learning institutions (DLIs) identified more than 17,000 LOAs that either didn't match any LOA issued by a DLI or that the DLI had already cancelled before the individual applied for a study permit. #

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## Finding solutions to the doctor shortage in Quebec

By Angela Lacuesta, Internship Program Journalist, NEPMCC

In an academic report released by the Official Publication of The College of Family Physicians of Canada, there are multiple factors that may have caused the doctor shortage in Quebec. The main factor cited is the increased number of graduated medical students and doctors who have left Quebec to practice in other provinces, mostly to Ontario. The drastic decrease in doctors and specialists in the public system may have also happened due to other factors such as the increase of the aging population and the decrease in the number of young people who want to become doctors. Consequently, retiring doctors do not have any replacement in the healthcare system.

In 2023, there were 26,001 registered physicians in Quebec where 47% of them were family physicians and 51.4% specialists. On the other hand, according to research, 25% of the Quebec population is without a regular physician but in Montreal, the percentage is higher as 32.4% of the residents do not have a doctor.

Christian Dubé, the Health Minister of Quebec, explained in a recent conference that 400 out of 2,536 graduated doctors left the province between 2015 and 2017. The Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec reported that a total of 780 doctors left the public healthcare

institutions in Quebec due to work and healthcare conditions such as unattractive policies of physician employment, underfunding in healthcare and the workplace



**The lack of doctors in Quebec's public healthcare system requires a solution (Photo by Shutterstock)**

environment.

The costs of training a doctor in Quebec range from \$435,000 to \$790,000, thus Dubé believes that this high cost would be unproductive if the doctors move to another province or the private sector in Montreal. For this reason, he proposes a bill to prevent a further decrease in the number of physicians in the public healthcare sector. The bill will stipulate the conditions for healthcare students and physicians to do their practice in Quebec's public healthcare systems for a certain period of time before

transitioning to their desired placement to practice their field such as moving to other provinces like Ontario or moving to the private healthcare system in Quebec.

physicians per 100 000 people than the rest of Canada. In spite of this, more than twice as many of its residents do not have physicians."

The government of Quebec plans to use the bill to aid the future of the public healthcare system by increasing the amount of practicing doctors working in its institutions. Health Minister Dubé released a statement during a question period saying that the possible bill would be used to "strengthen [Quebec's] public network and attract our professionals to work there from the beginning of their careers." Dubé believes that by implementing this bill mandating a period of time for practicing doctors, the public healthcare system in Quebec would greatly improve especially with the shortages in hospitals, clinics and other healthcare networks. The bill he proposed was supported by Premier Légal.

In a statement published in the Montreal Gazette, Dr. Isabelle Leblanc, of the group Médecins québécois pour le régime public, stated, "We are appalled but not surprised by these numbers [...] and we think something should be done as soon as possible to put a stop to it." She agrees with the decreasing number of specialists and doctors in the public healthcare system and wants to put a stop to the increasing levels. A research report by the Official Publication of The College of Family Physicians of Canada states, "Quebec has 16% more family

Due to the importance of solving the doctor shortage, he is considering the use of the notwithstanding clause to overrule any possible violations to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically that of mobility rights. The notwithstanding clause, although rarely used, may be invoked if the proposed bill contravenes any part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This bill will be introduced in the spring session of the National Assembly.#

## Migrant Spring mobilization and march against Quebec's new immigration policies

By Angela Lacuesta, Internship Program Journalist, NEPMCC

The number of immigrants in Quebec grew throughout the years, this has begun to raise concern for the Quebec government as they worry the french language and culture will disappear from the bilingual province. To combat the said issue, the Quebec government suspended two of the major pathways to permanent residency, the Quebec Selection Certificate and the Quebec Experience Program and changed many of the immigration policies to decrease the immigrant population.

On Saturday, November 2, 2024, at 1:00pm, an event organized by Quebec Coalition for Regularization and Migrant Justice was held in response to the immigration policy changes in Montreal, Quebec. The march and mobilization event allowed many immigrants of all status to gather and raise awareness in response to changes that would negatively affect them. They began the mobilization march near the Rosemont metro station and ended near the Jean Talon metro. The mobilization aimed to demand certain changes to the policies of the government.

The current population of

Quebec in 2024 is 9,030,684 with a substantial part of the population composed of immigrants. The Government of Canada site states, "most newcomers to Canada settle in one of the country's three largest cities: Toronto, Ontario, Montreal, Quebec and Vancouver, British Columbia". In 2023 Quebec gained 217,600 people in the net migration while the population was 8.98 million. The main increase to the population was due to the increase of both natural births and immigration and this number continues to increase in 2024. As the numbers continue to rise, the government of Quebec fears the loss of the French language and culture, the lack of infrastructure such as housing, lack of employment and other concerns. To combat this fear, the federal government issued changes to the immigration policy to reduce the number of immigrants in Canada.

Many immigrants residing in Quebec disagree with the changes made. They disagree with the radical right wing turn that Canada currently has on immigration. This is what has empowered many migrant workers and immigrants to take part in the mobilization and march.



**Participants in the mobilization march in Montreal, Quebec (Sarah-Maria Khoueir)**

Through this event, the immigrants of all status aim to spread awareness and express their opinions on the recent immigrant policy changes in Quebec. They want the government to change its policies and to facilitate their ability to reside in Canada to work and live rather than adding policies that prevent them from settling in Quebec. Some of their demands include: the addition of an inclusive regularization program for people who do not hold an immigrant status, the exemption of immigrants already in Quebec from changes, allowing immigrants settled in Quebec to gain permanent residency.

The immigrants and migrant workers who joined the mobilization and march strongly disagree with the

changes of immigration policies. A speaker from the crowd stated: "We are going to show [the government], our power is not to vote, our power is not in the ballot box, but our power is to stop this economy and our power is to stay at home and so, we are calling all migrants to go on strike on December 18, as a start, and we'll have a rally at 4 pm near metro Parc on Wednesday, December the 18th for International Migrant's Day. Enough is enough." The speech seemed to have encouraged the migrants to voice their opinions and join a protest on the same date that coincides with the International Migrant's Day in Canada.#



# G20 summit in Brazil highlights top global issues but needs more work

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration emphasizes the taxation of billionaires, energy transition, support for COP30 in Brazil, and solutions to global challenges, with a focus on sustainable growth and the fight against poverty. Support for unprecedented themes in the forum marks the Brazilian presidency.

The declaration addresses social inclusion, the fight against hunger and poverty, the taxation of billionaires, measures for the energy transition, the global governance reform, and the acceleration of climate action, while also supporting COP30 (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in 2025, which will be held in Belém, Brazil. These are the central commitments of the historic G20 Leaders' Declaration in Rio de Janeiro, released on Monday, November 18.

The document, which achieved consensus among all member countries, reinforces the group's commitment to addressing global challenges and promoting strong, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Within the declaration, leaders reaffirm their dedication to crucial issues that shape the global future.

Ever-present wars and trade tensions dominated the agenda, but G20 leaders, meeting in Rio, did agree to boost climate funding, tackle poverty and work toward a new tax on the ultra-rich.

The world's many geopolitical crises and Donald Trump's imminent return to the White House overshadowed this week's G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with leaders using a more neutral tone to describe



**Biden, Lula, India's Narendra Modi, Germany's Olaf Scholz and other world leaders were in Rio on Monday Image: Eric Lee/The New York Times/AP/picture alliance (Nov. 18, 2024)**

the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon in their final joint communique.

Unlike the 2022 summit in Bali, which explicitly condemned Russia's "aggression" against Ukraine, and last year's summit in New Delhi, India, which called on G20 members to shun the use of force, Brazil's G20 declaration avoided direct blame.

Instead, it vaguely referred to the "suffering" caused by the conflict — a likely compromise to achieve consensus from G20 members, especially those aligned with Moscow.

While the summit was underway, Ukraine used — for the first time — longer-range US missiles against Russian territory, prompting Moscow to revise the Kremlin's nuclear doctrine, setting out new conditions for how nuclear weapons would be used. This escalation caused consternation among G20 leaders.

The final communique hardly mentioned Israel, which has been criticized for its tactics against the Iran-backed Hamas and Hezbollah in the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. G20 leaders did, however, reaffirm the

urgent need to boost humanitarian aid to the region, called for cease-fires and emphasized support for a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians.

Argentine President Javier Milei, known for his libertarian views and skepticism toward multilateral organizations, even signed the final communique. However, he later issued a statement, saying he did not support several points in the declaration.

"Milei signed the document. I would call that a victory," Tomas

See Page 13 G20 Summit

# Canada postal strike remains unsettled

Nov. 20, 2024 - Talks continue between Canada Post and the union representing striking postal workers with the help of a special mediator.

This strike exposes many challenges to the crown corporation's survival.

Canada Post is losing money now. Canada Post is going to lose more money next year and even more money the following year. And what they don't understand is they are on the edge of going out of business," Ian Lee, associate professor at Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, said in a video interview with CTVNews.ca on Monday.

Canada Post has no choice but to transform into a parcel post courier service, Lee said, noting he's on board with the Crown corporation's recently announced proposal to deliver parcels seven days a week.

While rural residents and small businesses rely more on Canada Post, most Canadians live in cities and use electronic means to communicate



rather than written letters, Lee said. As well, a growing number of businesses are going digital, he added.

Canada Post CEO Doug Ettinger suggested during the Crown corporation's annual general meeting in August that the current operation isn't sustainable. Over nearly two decades, it went from delivering 5.5

billion letters a year to about two billion today, Ettinger said.

Amid Canada Post's mounting financial struggles and concerns about its future, a postal strike has shut down services nationwide since Friday as negotiations continue between the Crown corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) for

new collective agreements.

## Canada Post proposals

During the national strike, Canada Post has offered proposals to address its financial woes and employees' concerns.

Even with losses exceeding \$3 billion since 2018, Canada Post said it is proposing offers to protect and enhance what's important to its employees. The company pitched wage increases of 11.5 per cent over four years and additional paid leave while protecting defined benefit pension and job security provisions, according to Canada Post spokesperson Lisa Liu in an email to CTVNews.ca on Monday.

But Lee said employees' demands for better working conditions, pensions and wages will make Canada Post's deficit bigger and accelerate the company's decline.

The Crown corporation acknowledged the need to position

See Page 12 Canada Post



**CPR course for PAB graduates conducted by Mitch Zeitlin, an external instructor who specializes in first aid training.**



**Career Orientation Seminar with Professor Isaac Goodine, an international educator who came with his wife Gloria (seated, 3rd and 4th from the left) held on August 22, 2016.**

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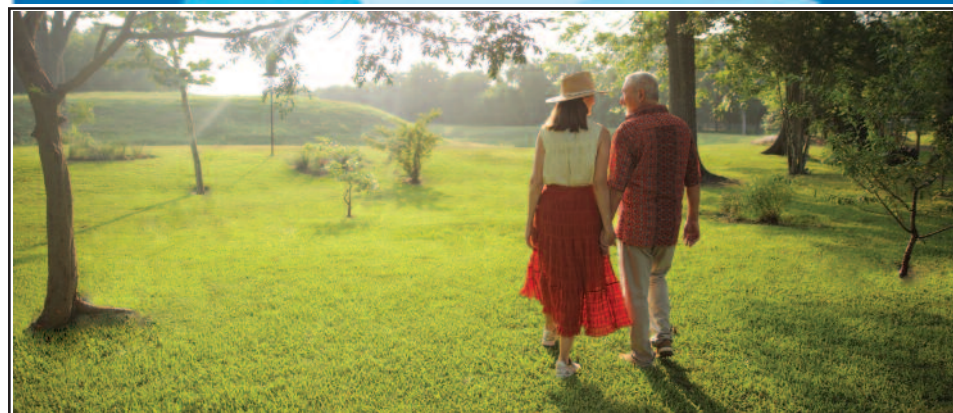
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**Recipes selected from various sources**  
**Cooking with love provides food for the soul.**



This **balsamic salmon** recipe features a balsamic vinegar glaze made with garlic, honey, white wine, and Dijon mustard that makes baked salmon fillets taste extraordinary.  
 Prep Time: 10 mins  
 Cook Time: 20 mins  
 Total Time: 30 mins  
 Servings: 6  
 Ingredients:  
 aluminum foil  
 nonstick cooking spray  
 4 cloves garlic, minced

1/3 cup balsamic vinegar  
 4 teaspoons Dijon mustard  
 1 tablespoon honey  
 1 tablespoon white wine  
 salt and pepper to taste  
 6 (5 ounce) salmon fillets  
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano  
**Directions**  
 Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil, then spray with nonstick cooking spray. Coat a small saucepan with nonstick cooking spray; place over medium heat. Cook and stir garlic in the hot pan until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in balsamic vinegar, mustard, honey, white wine, salt, and pepper. Simmer, uncovered, until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes.  
 Arrange salmon fillets on the prepared baking sheet. Brush fillets with balsamic glaze; sprinkle with oregano.  
 Bake in the preheated oven until flesh flakes easily with a fork, 10 to 14 minutes. Brush fillets with remaining glaze; season with salt and pepper. Use

a spatula to transfer fillets to a serving platter, leaving the skin behind on the foil.



**Pad thai**, the wonderful national noodle dish of Thailand, is now served in many trendy restaurants. Make it at home with this recipe that can be adjusted to your taste. Add your favorite ingredients and make it as spicy or tart as you want to. It is also great as a basis for a stir-fry of leftovers. This is a recipe for those who like it hot — if you can't handle the heat, go easy on the chile sauce.

**Ingredients**  
 1 (8 ounce) package dried flat rice noodles  
 1/4 cup fresh lime juice  
 1/4 cup chicken stock  
 3 tablespoons fish sauce  
 2 tablespoons oyster sauce  
 1 tablespoon white sugar  
 5 teaspoons Asian chile pepper sauce, divided  
 1/4 cup vegetable oil  
 1 tablespoon chopped garlic  
 8 ounces medium shrimp - peeled and deveined  
 8 ounces skinless, boneless chicken

breast halves - cut into 1 inch cubes  
 2 large eggs, beaten  
 5 cups bean sprouts, divided  
 6 medium green onions, chopped into 1 inch pieces  
 2 tablespoons chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro  
 1 medium lime, cut into 8 wedges

**Directions**  
 Fill a large bowl with hot tap water and place noodles in it to soak for 20 minutes.

Stir together lime juice, chicken stock, fish sauce, lime juice, oyster sauce, sugar, and 2 teaspoons chile sauce in a small bowl. Set aside.

Heat a wok or large skillet over high heat and add vegetable oil. When oil is hot, stir in garlic and cook for about 10 seconds. Add shrimp and chicken; cook, stirring constantly until shrimp is opaque and chicken is cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes.

Move everything in the wok out to the sides and pour in eggs in the center. Cook and stir eggs until firm. Add noodles to the wok and pour in the sauce. Cook, stirring constantly, until noodles are tender. Add a bit more water if needed to finish cooking noodles.

Stir in 3 cups bean sprouts, green onions, and remaining chile sauce. Remove from the heat and garnish with chopped peanuts. Taste for seasoning, adjusting the spice or lime juice if needed.

Serve garnished with remaining 2 cups bean sprouts, fresh cilantro, and lime spread it evenly over the top.

-o0o-

From Page 9 Canada Post

itself better for the future with a new delivery model and by growing its parcel business. It proposes seven-day-a-week parcel delivery, more competitive pricing and "other important improvements."

The strike has brought mail delivery across the country to a halt. Only certain government cheques are still being mailed out.

An agreement between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) allows some unionized employees to deliver federal support payments during the labour dispute. Those payments include the Canada Child Benefit, Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan.

Excerpts from CTV, CBC News  
 Food and beverages

**GST/HST-free over the holidays**

Canadians won't have to pay GST or HST on a selection of items this holiday season, the prime minister vowed on Thursday, Nov. 21st.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the news during a morning news conference, promising relief to Canadians still dealing with cost-of-living concerns. The tax break, which still needs approval in the House of Commons, will last for two months.

The items are under the following headings:

- Food and beverages
- Kids stuff and games
- Literature and trees

This GT/HST free is for a period of two months starting on Dec. 14, 2024 to February 15, 2025.

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DEC. 6	GANDANG LOLA CORONATION NIGHT MARRIOTT COURTYARD COTE VERTU \$40	FAMAS
DEC. 7	CHRISTMAS PARTY OLYMPIA PONTRE CLAIR \$15	SWISS 514-813-0572
DEC. 7	CHRISTMAS PARTY FAMAS BASEMENT POT LUCK	AKLAN ASSOCIATION
DEC. 7	CHRISTMAS PARTY HOLY CROSS CHURCH - VILLE LA SALLE POT-LUCK 12 NOON	KAKIRUP
DEC. 8	CHRISTMAS FAMILY EVENT SAINT THOMAS CHURCH FREE	FCAWI
DEC. 14	CHILDREN'S PARTY 1 PM DOLLAR CINEMA - DECARIE SQUARE \$25	FFCAQ
DEC. 14	CHRISTMAS PARTY 6 PM ZAMBANGUENA BELLA CUISINA \$50	FFCAQ
DEC. 15	CHRISTMAS PARTY INDOUCTION ANNUNCIATION CHURCH TMR \$35	KALIHUKANG BISAYA
DEC. 20	CHRISTMAS PARTY 6767 CON	PSSD
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## Social Tidbits

# Montreal Community News

## Fely Rosales Cariño

### A Trip to Remember

To me, the week of October 26 to November 2, 2024 are days to remember. My daughter Joy and I visited Calgary, Alberta where my siblings reside. It was a joyous reunion with my sisters (Evangeline and Nnette) and brothers (Nonol and Tony) and their families as we fondly reminisced and ate at restaurants to our heart's desire. These goldenagers (how time flies!) posed happily for pictures galore. The pictures now included grownup nephews and nieces and grandchildren! What a delight to see them and be with them again. I haven't seen them in years I don't know how long. We phone each other often but seeing them in person are two different things. With the passage of time, health issues now in the forefront, our visit was nostalgic. We laughed at the folly of yesteryears as we shared common body aches and pains. We never know when we could be together again. Such is the brevity of life. So young ones, remember us tenderly as you navigate your life in the present.

### The Filipino Service of Montreal - Lupus Awareness

This event was celebrated on November 9, 2024 at the Hotel Radisson at 6500 Cote-de-Liesse, Montreal with proceeds going to the Singer Family Foundation of the Montreal General Hospital. Fundraising efforts were led by Ramon Vicente Jr (of the Blacksmith Band) and Ester Nuguid Vicente, overall coordinator of the evening. Guest Speaker was Lupus Specialist Dr. Arielle Mendel. Noted for their help are Svetlana Suarez (Financial Security Advisor, World Financial Group), Cesar & Tess Manuel of Pinoy Pansitan (Marketing Director), Honesto 'Ernie' De vera (Yoga Teacher), and Raymond Tsin (Royal Le Page).

Live music was provided by the Blacksmith Band, featuring the Chris Pineau Quintet Band and DJ Dennis Mayuga. The Blacksmith Band began their repertoire, easily putting the crowd in a good mood. They belted old timers' favorites such as All of Me, Jolene, Tennessee Waltz, Blue Bayou, Cuando Cuando, You are My Everything, and other danceable music, easily filling the dance floor to capacity. Prominent in the Filipino community who enjoyed listening to the 1950s music were Claro Bermudez, Elvie Maximo, Al & Cora Abdon, Melanie Polo, Dolly Belandres, Fred & Jovy Narvas, Marvin & Jacqui Rotrand and many others.

### Parties Galore!

We, Filipinos, love a good party, don't we? Let's list them. The Pangasinan Association of Quebec held a Dinner and Dance on October 12, 2024 at the 6th floor on 6767 Côte-des-Neiges. This was led by its (forever) President Estela Tobias.

The Filipino Golden Agers Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FILGA) also brought about a revival headed by its President Roland Salvador. They also had a costume party competition held on October 12, 2024 at 1180 rue Decarie, Montreal at My My Restaurant.

The Association of Filipino Seniors of Montreal (AFSM) celebrated its Halloween Party on November 2, 2024 at the Ganesh Palace, 300 Marcel Laurin. It was really a costume party.

The Knights of Rizal (Eastern Canada Region, Montreal Chapter) On October 19, 2024, the KOR sponsored the Binibining Maria Clara 2024 Coronation at St. Kevin Church Hall at 5608 Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal. Part 1 of the program started with the welcome address by Sirolan Bueno, Montreal Chapter Commander., followed by messages from Councilors Sonny Moroz (Snowdon) and Stephanie Valenzuela (Darlington), Marvin Rotrand (ex-Councillor), and the acknowledgement of KGOR, LM Regional Commander Rey Balansi. The crowd enjoyed the entertaining vocal solos of Ms. Eden Grace Balansi-Labo and Sophia Marie Danzil, Munting Bb. Maria Clara 2024. They were also treated to a special dance number by the Kalihukang Bisaya Group (Marjo, Ruby, and Jaja).

Part 2 of the Program was the presentation of the reigning beauties of the royal court: Her Majesty Queen Bb. Maria Clara 2024 Ysabel Domingo with escort Jason Yvan Cohen, 1st runner-up Bb. Jeferlyn Camacho (escort Jared Bueno), 2nd runner-up Bb. Elica Gene Bongalonta (escort Skylar Bongalonta), 3rd runner-up Bb. Ayesa Sanchez (escort Jeremia Novida), and 4th runner-up April Amaro Hansen (escort Armani Gaboc Amioglu). Special awards were the Miss Photogenic, Miss Popularity and Best in Gown. The beauties were serenaded by Keith Bonjoc and Jun Bonyad. Proclamation was delivered by Sir Rey Balansi, ECR Regional Commander. To be commended is Sir Freddie Espinoza, the evening's Master of Ceremonies, for a job well done.

### Côte Saint-Luc

The Council meeting held on October 20, 2024 passed a resolution declaring June as the Filipino Heritage month in Côte Saint-Luc. This meeting was attended by important community leaders led by Marvin Rotrand (founder, United Against Hate Canada) and Al Abdon, Chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM). Councillor Mike Cohen read the resolution. He also informed the group that in 2018, the Canadian government adopted a motion recognizing the contribution of the Filipino community to Canada and the richness of the Filipino language and

culture. According to Côte Saint-Luc Mayor Mitchell Brownstein, there are more than 2000 Filipinos in his city. He appreciates their vibrant contribution and welcomes them with open arms. "Keep coming!" he says. Both Rotrand and Abdon are planning a project to promote Filipino Heritage Month and to encourage the twinning of Canadian cities with Philippine municipalities.

### Did You know?

Do you like to Play Mahjong? Many Filipinos enjoy this old Filipino favorite. This is a popular tile game of strategy, skill, and calculation. You can purchase your mahjong card (how about that!) at the Cummings Center Boutique, Jewish Public Library. This game will be played on Sundays at 10am until December 1, 2024.

### Bert Abierra

Bert, may you rest in peace, our dear brother. Bert, well-known and well-loved, was described by Marvin Rotrand as a "giant in the Filipino community." Kind and helpful, he listens to the needs of others. In the past, he has helped friends by letting them stay in his apartment until they can find a place of their own. He made them feel welcome and did not charge them for their stay. This is why Bert is also called Montreal's "Godfather." He also often volunteered in the FAMAS building by setting up banners, streamers and tents. You can find Tata Bart, as he is affectionately called, wherever decorations are needed to be set up. He was also very hardworking. There was a time when he published the Filipino Star and I'd help him edit the manuscripts submitted and

From Page 9

G20 Summit

Marques, a research fellow at GIGA Institute for Latin American Studies in Hamburg, Germany, told DW, referring to the president's previous criticism of the G20.

Rio may have been the last chance for US President Joe Biden to back policies that Trump is more hostile to, like climate change and the proposed tax on billionaires. Biden told the gathering that developing countries need "enough firepower and access to capital" to protect their nations from the effects of climate change.

The G20 leaders recognized the need for trillions of dollars in climate finance for low-income countries but failed to mention the need to transition away from fossil fuels. While the last point may have been welcomed by Trump, the US president-elect is set to wind down US financing of climate initiatives, which could now be an excuse for other countries to follow suit, citing their many domestic challenges.

"Because of the economic stress that advanced economies are under and the debt taken on during the

food would be ready in the oven. We would work into the night to meet deadlines until my late husband Jimmy came to fetch me after his work at the hospital.

Bert was also very funny. He knows a lot of stories about this and that person. He will relate these stories without divulging their names. And Bert is the kind of person who will give his last dollar to someone in need. With this kind of attitude, Bert had many friends, no enemies, and is well-respected in the community. In fact, he was supposed to be honored by his friends on November 16, 2024 with a birthday party at the Community Center in Côte-des-Neiges. Many have already confirmed their attendance. With his passing, it would no longer be a birthday party but a funeral gathering. Goodbye, Bert. You possessed excellent attributes and you bore them in quiet dignity. We will remember your smiles, your backpack, and your signature Philippine hat. We will do well to emulate you in any capacity. You will be in our hearts forever!!!

I'd like to end with a word from Scripture: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Lamentations 3: 22-26

Until next issue. God Bless!

pandemic, the likelihood of a step change in amounts of international public finance for climate action is pretty unlikely," said Butler.

### New tax on ultra-rich moves forward

Lula continued the push for a new tax on the world's wealthiest people, who French economist Gabriel Zucman estimates pay an effective tax rate of just 0.3% of their wealth. The proposed levy could raise up to \$250 billion (€237billion) annually from the nearly 2,800 billionaires globally. Their combined fortune is some \$13.5 trillion, according to the Forbes World's Billionaires List.

Advocates for the wealth tax have said the funds raised could be used to tackle growing global inequalities and climate projects, especially among heavily indebted low-income countries. And while the final communique said G20 would "seek to engage cooperatively to ensure that ultra-high-net-worth individuals are effectively taxed," the leaders didn't create a binding agreement on implementing a global wealth tax.

Excerpts from: Report by Nik Martin (DW) G20 & Brasil G20 News website, Nov. 19-20/24

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# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### Lovi Poe admits she has faced criticism regarding her skin color



**The 33-year-old actress recalled that during her early acting days, she faced several rejections for projects due to her physical appearance.**

Actress and entrepreneur Lovi Poe is all about embracing beauty and self-love. Beginning her career in the limelight at a young age, Lovi's journey to self-love was not an easy path.

The 33-year-old actress recalled that during her early acting days, she faced several rejections for projects due to her physical appearance.

"When I started in the industry, I received a lot of flak because of my skin color. I was too dark. I remember, when I did my first TV series, they would put a lot of foundation on me to make me look lighter," Lovi said during the launch of her makeup line "Love, You by Lovi Poe."

Despite the challenges and bad comments about her appearance, Lovi kept her head high and slowly learned to accept herself. During the interview, Lovi added that she was one of those hard-headed kids who refused to put on makeup.

"But I was one of those stubborn kids. I was hard-headed. I put my foot down even when I was young and just refused the foundation on my skin. I decided I was just going to embrace myself for

who I am," Lovi added.

Being in the showbiz industry for almost a decade, Lovi eventually learned to embrace herself and learned the real meaning of beauty through her journey.

"My definition of beauty when I was young sa ngayon is malayo na, kasi before hindi mo naman maiwasan kapag bata ka na parang may certain person ka na gusto mo gayahin in my case si Britney Spears yun. But now yung definition ko ng beauty is from within, kasi when I see someone who has an aura na parang happiness and joy. I find that for me beautiful," Lovi said.

(My definition of beauty when I was young and now is way deeper, because when you're a kid you have this certain person that you want to imitate, in my case it was Britney Spears. But now my definition of beauty is from within, because when I see someone who has an aura of happiness and joy. I find that for me beautiful)

"We should not forget what makes up unique and different are what will make us shine," she added

#### **Expanding her horizons**

After the success of her film, "Guilty Pleasure", Lovi is now expanding her knowledge into business.

In partnership with Ready Set Glow, Lovi launched her makeup line called "Love, You by Lovi Poe."

Beyond just cosmetics, this new collection celebrates individuality and promotes beauty standards that embrace all skin tones, embodying a powerful message of love and self-acceptance.

"I didn't expect to have my own make-up line," said a tearful Lovi. "Finally, it's real. I'm really excited that it's finally out. I just couldn't expect everything to happen like this. I'm just simply thankful," Lovi said.

Her makeup line includes Statement Setter Brow Trio, and Skin Poetry Scented Body Shimmer Spray. Myself, and I Lippie and Heart-in-Bloom Cream and Powder Blush Duo.

"Love, You by Lovi Poe" makeup line can be purchased via [readyssetglow.ph](http://readyssetglow.ph). ■

### Pokwang airs frustration over lost e-wallet money



**Comedian Pokwang**

Comedian Pokwang lamented how she lost money through unauthorized transactions by 30 unregistered numbers in her e-wallet in an Instagram post Saturday.

"Naghahanap-buhay po ako ng marangal nagbibigay po ako ng hanap-buhay sa mga single mom, tapos isang umaga pagka-gising mo simot ang laman ng GCash account??? Iba't ibang number na hindi naka-rehistro halos nasa 30 numero na hindi naka-rehistro!!!" Pokwang wrote in the caption of her Instagram post that came with the screenshots of the unauthorized transactions on her GCash account.

The comedian questioned the registered SIM card law after she found out about what happened to her e-money.

"Ano nangyare sa registered SIM policy ngayon? Nakakaiyak binangon ko mag-isa ang negosyong pinabayaan ng taong inasahan ko, pinagkatiwalaan ko, pati ba naman dito naisahan pa rin ako? Nakakaiyak talaga," Pokwang said, seemingly referring to her ex Lee O'Brian.

She and O'Brian parted ways this year. They had previously been business partners.

Pokwang called on GCash to address the issue. Her latest post included the statement issued by GCash.

"A few GCash users were affected due to errors in an ongoing system reconciliation process. This incident was isolated to a few users and we assure our customers that their accounts are safe. We have identified and reached out to our affected accounts. Wallet adjustments are ongoing," read the statement of GCash. ■

## Kris Aquino placed in isolation due to worsening condition



**Kris Aquino**

Kris Aquino has been placed in isolation.

She made this known via social media recently.

According to Kris, this was decided upon by her doctors due to her worsening condition, noting that with her immune system seemingly getting weaker, “wala na 'kong panlaban sa kahit anong viral or bacterial infection.”

The former actress, who recently announced her plan to return to TV, shared the update via Instagram on Sunday, November 10.

She admitted that her situation is quite “lonely.”

“So many rules for family and friends na gusto akong dalawin Yes, it’s lonely,” she said.

“I always try my best to highlight the positive because having 6 autoimmune conditions is depressing. Hindi po ako nagkamali, in my last update I had 5 diagnosed autoimmune disorders, but just like the Pop Mart Care Bears na 6 ang laman given

to me by my new friends @rouge\_and\_orange #6 is the supremely punishing rheumatoid arthritis,” she added.

But she is going to continue with the fight if only because she doesn’t want to disappoint those praying for her.

“Kahit gaano katapang ako, there are moments especially pag nagsabay sabay my unexplainable allergies, my lupus, rashes, fever like heat in my entire body, migraine, and rheumatoid arthritis flares, the worst, stabbing/crushing deep bone pain in my knees, hips, ankles, plus my high blood pressure (170/116); I ask myself kaya ko pa ba (can I still do this)?,” she said.

“What keeps me going? I refuse to disappoint all those praying for me. Ayokong maisip nyo na binalewala ko yung time & effort ninyo. Because your compassion has deeply touched my heart,” she added. ■

## Bea Alonzo says 2024 the ‘hardest year’ of her life



While she emerged “happier” from the challenges she faced in the past 10 months, Bea Alonzo regards 2024 as the “hardest year of my life.”

The actress said this in a conversation with celebrity doctor Aivee Teo, as seen on the latter’s YouTube vlog on Tuesday, Nov. 19.

The two of them were exchanging updates on their recent endeavors when Teo pointed out that Alonzo looked content, happy, and “very at peace with [herself]” despite what she had previously gone through.

While they did not immediately mention any specific instance, it can be noted that Alonzo called off her engagement with actor Dominic Roque earlier this year.

“You look liberated. Why?” Teo asked, to which Alonzo answered, “I don’t know. Life happened. My God! This must be like the hardest year of my life.”

Nonetheless, Alonzo underscored that she also achieved significant milestones in her career as an actress and an entrepreneur in 2024.

She further noted that during this year, she was able to do more and has found balance between her work and personal life.

“Maybe that’s why I’m much happier now because I get to live my life,” she said.

Sharing her learnings from the past months, she stated, “When things don’t go according to plan, maybe it’s better to trust God’s plan because God’s plans are always better.”

“Naniniwala ako do’n sa quote na ‘This too shall pass’ kasi everything passes; everything’s fleeting — may it be good times or bad times,” she added.

Alonzo also declared that instead of having resolutions, she has set her goals for 2025. “I will be really aggressive in putting in the work to achieve those goals.”

## Nadine Lustre faces backlash for promoting gambling in recent social media post



**Nadine Lustre and the post that caused controversy.**

Actress Nadine Lustre recently sparked controversy after posting a photo on social media that caught the attention of many netizens. In the image, Nadine is holding a cellphone with an online gambling website or app on the screen.

The post quickly became the subject of criticism, with many accusing Nadine of promoting gambling. Netizens expressed their disappointment, noting that such content seemed out of character for the actress, who is well-known for her advocacy work and positive influence, particularly on issues related to

the environment and youth empowerment.

In the comments, some users pointed out, “It’s very not Nadine,” emphasizing that the post did not align with the public image the actress has cultivated over the years. Furthermore, Also, Nadine is singing the song featured in the gambling ad, which added to the controversy.

Despite the backlash, Nadine has yet to comment on the issue or address the reactions from her fans. The silence has left many curious about whether the post was a mistake or if there is a deeper explanation behind it.. ■

**Showbiz Gossip** *Continued from p.15*

## Heart Evangelista hailed 'fashion icon' in Dubai



**Heart Evangelista**

Actress Heart Evangelista has been honored by the Dubai-based fashion platform Fashion Factor with a fashion icon award.

The platform announced Heart's recognition through an Instagram post earlier this week.

"A true style visionary, her passion for fashion shines in every day of her life. Heart's world is both remarkable and

inspiring; she is not just a fashion icon but also a generous advocate for others. Always concerned for those around her, her thoughtful approach leaves a lasting impact," Fashion Factor wrote on Instagram.

Heart was among those who attended the 9th edition of Fashion Factor held from October 26 to 27 in Dubai's Media City. ■

## Pinoy continues to turn heads on 'The Voice'



**Sofronio Vasquez**

A 32-year-old Pinoy from Mindanao is turning heads in the 26th Season of "The Voice."

Sofronio Vasquez just made it to the Top 20 of the American reality competition, wowing show judges with his take on Dusty Springfield's legendary soul hit "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me."

Though it is still everybody's guess if he would

actually make it all the way to the championship round, Sofronio has no doubt, already earned the notice of many.

One of the show judges, singer Jennifer Hudson, was so moved with Sofronio's performance that she playfully threw her shoes at him.

She expressed, "Did you all get to see that? ... The talent is crazy!" ■

## BINI shatters records as first Filipino 'Best Asia Act' winner at MTV Europe Music Awards



**BINI celebrates as the first Filipino group to win 'Best Asia Act' at the MTV EMAs.**

Filipino pop group BINI has made history by becoming the first Filipino act to win the "Best Asia Act" award at the

2024 MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA). The all-female ensemble, often referred to as "The Nation's Girl Group," celebrated their groundbreaking achievement in a social media statement, saying, "This honor means the world to us, seeing Filipino music shine on the global stage. Maraming salamat po!"

BINI's victory was announced during the awards ceremony, which took place on November 10 in Manchester, United Kingdom. The group stood alongside global heavyweights such as Taylor Swift, LISA, Sabrina Carpenter, and Ariana Grande in one of the most-watched music events broadcast worldwide.

This year has been monumental for BINI, marking them as a rising force in the Asian music scene. Just months before their MTV win, the group received the "Voices of Asia" award at Billboard Korea's K-Power 100 event, an honor they shared with fellow Filipino act SB19. Additionally, BINI was celebrated as the "Rising Star" at Billboard Philippines' inaugural Women in Music event in March.

Their MTV win not only highlights the growing influence of Filipino pop (P-pop) on the international stage but also reflects the increasing popularity of Asian artists in global music awards. ■



# Legault's concerns after Trump's victory

By Angela Lacuesta, Internship Program Journalist, NEPMCC

The election of Donald Trump on November 5, 2024 against Kamala Harris immediately caused a lot of concern among Quebec politicians, but in particular, Premier François Legault who fears that Trump's victory will result in a rapid increase of immigrants in Quebec. In the press conference held Nov. 6, Legault said he would not want the immigrant population overpowering the rest of the province.

Trump has pledged in his campaign that he would "get every migrant criminal out of our country, and I'll get them out fast. We have to. We have no choice. They're taking over our country." His main issue is that illegal immigrants are taking over many jobs. He says in the same speech, "All your jobs have gone to illegal aliens." Trump aims to seal the border to prevent illegal border crossing and stop the increasing immigrant population in America. The possible deportation or displacement of immigrants from the United States may lead migrants towards Canada, causing great concern specifically in the province of Quebec because it has been overloaded with more immigrants than anywhere else in the country.

Canada's demographics is made up of more than 468,817 immigrants. In 2024 from April to June, the government of Canada accepted 3,113 refugee claims made by irregular border crossers, but estimates around 500,000 undocumented immigrants are still residing in the country. However, it is expected to decrease this number with many policies that are set to be enforced. Out of the 334.9 million people in North America, immigrants mainly from areas such as Mexico, China, India, Philippines, etc. make up around 14.3% of the population with 24% being unauthorized immigrants and 24% permanent immigrants. The rest of the population are said to be immigrants born in America.

Most observers believe that many immigrants may be either deported or in danger in the United States of America. This increases the risk of greater number of immigrants or asylum seekers to look for security in Canada because of its proximity to the United States. But Canada as a whole has been trying to limit the amount of immigrant intakes, especially in Quebec. In the past, the majority of immigrants in Canada ended up in provinces like Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec.

The increase in immigration levels concerns the Canadian government as it would make it difficult to enforce the recent changes to immigration policies. This issue is especially worrisome in Quebec where François Legault had decided to close two pathways which allows immigrants to become permanent residents in



**Quebec Premier François Legault reacts to the election of Donald Trump at a news conference before question period, Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at the legislature in Quebec City. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jacques Boissinot**

Quebec. Legault states in a recent conference, "560,000 temporary immigrants is the equivalent to all of Quebec City, so of course it has an impact on the housing, on education, on health care and on the future of French, so Mr. Trudeau has the obligation of solving the problem he created". He fears public services, infrastructure, economy, and other services in Quebec would be impacted due to the increased immigrant population.

At the end of October, the Federal Government had released a statement aiming to reduce the number of immigrants in Quebec. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated, "Now, it is time to make the adjustments to stabilize the immigration system that we need and get it working right for Canadians. Today, we're announcing that we will reduce the number of immigrants we bring in over the next three years, which will result in a pause in the population growth over the next two years." This statement was released before Donald Trump's election and may be an issue if he moves forward with the deportation and reduction of immigrants in America. Trudeau continued on with his speech including information regarding Quebec's government and how it would handle the situation, "The measures announced today will continue to reduce temporary immigration in Quebec, but as you know, the Quebec government has its own permanent immigration targets and selects the majority of its temporary immigrants. It is therefore responsible for taking action in the areas it controls to contribute to our shared objectives of reducing temporary immigration and protecting the French language." Trudeau also added that the government would prioritize francophone immigration. He stated

that he aimed to "stabilize [Canada's] population growth to give all levels of government time to catch up, time to make the necessary investments in healthcare, in housing, in social services to accommodate more people in the future." However, the future of Canada may be altered due to the possible increase in immigrants and asylum seekers.

During the Quebec provincial announcement after Trump's re-election, François Legault explained his solution and aspirations to prevent border crossing and increases of the immigrant population. He stated: "What I want to do is make sure that

## Canada braces for potential migration influx following Trump's victory

Canadian officials are on alert, preparing for a potential wave of migrants crossing the border from the United States after Donald Trump's recent election win. As political and social tensions heighten south of the border, Quebec leaders are expressing concerns over the province's ability to accommodate an influx of new arrivals. Quebec Premier François Legault, along with Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, has voiced apprehension about the strain that an increased migrant flow could place on the province's social services and integration systems.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in Quebec is actively developing contingency plans to handle a potential rise in irregular border crossings. These measures include deploying additional personnel and establishing operational protocols to manage a sudden surge in border activity. Experts caution, however, that Canada may still face "messy" and "dangerous" situations if more individuals attempt to cross the border outside of designated entry points, especially as legal avenues tighten. These irregular crossings can pose

Mr. Trudeau, the federal government, takes this seriously and I want to follow up every week about the number of new immigrants we get in Quebec. I want to make sure that he protects the border, the physical borders. That he protects airports and if needed I will make sure to have some of our people making sure of that". He ensures the strengthening of the border patrol and updates of the immigration in Quebec. Another Quebec leader, St-Pierre Plamondon, of the Parti Québécois, said during his conference, "I think we are dealing with serious issues here because there will be migration. I don't know what level. It is to be verified, but they're talking about 20 million people". He also worries of the possible rapid influx of immigrants coming from the United States.

The laws and policies put in place to prevent extreme immigrant populations are hoped to achieve the desired immigration levels that are suitable for Canada as a whole. One of the main issues of the decrease in immigrants may result in a much lower level than targeted. This is because of the economic value that immigrants have in Canada. When there are not enough immigrants, the workforce shrinks. However, if the number of immigrants is above the wanted target, it may result in the loss of employments for its citizens. Both the government of Quebec and Canada are implementing policies and security measures to ensure their target rates of immigrants do not increase more especially with the re-election of Donald Trump who wants to decrease the number of immigrants in America.

o0o



significant challenges to both the safety of migrants and the capacity of border enforcement teams, emphasizing the importance of readiness on both sides.

In response, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has reassured Canadians that the government remains committed to safeguarding the integrity of Canada's borders. Efforts are underway to balance national security with humanitarian considerations, ensuring that Canada upholds its commitments to regulated immigration while preparing for contingencies. With resources poised for rapid response, the government aims to manage any increased migration flows responsibly and efficiently, in cooperation with provincial and local authorities.

Source: Global Opportunities, Nov. 12/24

# PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2024

By Fely Rosales-Cariño



**STEPHANIE ABDON (center), General Jennie Carignan, current Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) of Canada, (left) and on the right, Governor General Mary Jeannie May Simon CC CMM COM OQ CD**

Let's give a warm applause to the Personality of the Month, Miss Stephanie Abdon! If her family name rings a bell, you guessed right. She is the daughter of Al Abdon (Chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal, FHSM) and Cora. Born in Montreal in 1980, she has two siblings, Wynne and Alfonso Jr. (AJ). She was schooled in Montreal - high school in Lower Canada College and then Dawson College. Though born and bred in Montreal, she has visited the Philippines twice, in 1995 and 2010, where no doubt she enjoyed being with lots of uncles, aunts, and cousins. Later, she earned a certificate in Human Resource Management from Algonquin College, Ottawa, Ontario.

Hearing about her achievements, I had my sights on her as a Personality candidate for this column. She's an army babe and I'm always impressed with anything military! She has been with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) since 1997. She initially joined as a Reservist and in 2004 was transferred to Regular Forces. She holds the rank of Master Warrant Officer, not bad for someone who, at the tender age of 12, was already an Army Cadet! She seems to have a sense of her destiny early on and then pursued it with singular devotion. I admire this about Stephanie: determined and steadfast, she persevered in her career and was ultimately successful. Another feather in her cap is her joining the Filipino Canadian Defence Network (FCDN) which aims to encourage "the inclusion and representation of

Filipino-Canadians within the Defence Team." She will officially retire from the CAF on Dec 11 this year.

One would describe Stephanie as a successful young woman and she has this advice to future leaders in the community: to be "curious about today's current events, our environment and who you are as a person. Lean into family, friends, and colleagues for help, as it is not a sign of weakness but a sign that we are human." While personal development is important to her, she is also selfless; she notes that we should care for others and care for the environment as well.

It's not all about her; how refreshing! (A note of huge commendation and congratulations to proud parents, Al & Cora! Well done, please take a bow! And we are proud of you too.)

When asked about her role models, she mentioned two. First is former US First Lady, Michelle Obama, who she sees as an advocate "for poverty, education, nutrition, physical activity and healthy eating." She regards Michelle as an inspiration to all women due to her intelligence and hard work ethics. The second is retired General Rick J. Hillier, the Canadian Forces Chief of Defence Staff (2005-2008). Though known as a strong leader, he showed a spirit of collaboration and "listened to what troops had to say regardless of rank or stature." General Hillier also favored supporting the CAF during the war in Afghanistan. She shares a favorite quote of the General, "If you're a leader, you're all

about people." Much like Stephanie.

Stephanie lists many happiest moments in her life: when her parents visit her when she gets posted to a new city, when she bought her first home, and when she was "selected and invited to the Leafs Troops Appreciation game in January 2023 at Scotiabank Arena, Toronto." But I'm sure the most memorable time was when she received an award, the Order of Military Merit, Member (MMM), by the Governor General of Canada at Rideau Hall on November 6th, 2024.

When I read Stephanie's profile, one thing that stood out to me was her personal moral value she lives by: "I always wake up in the morning and show gratitude for everything that I have (no matter how big or small) as it reminds me to appreciate the joys of life." I think I have stumbled upon her secret to success! Secret no more, I am immensely grateful at her willingness to share this personal motto of hers. This reminds me of that old hymn, "Count Your Blessings." I would now like to share the first stanza



**Stephanie Abdon with her parents, Cora and Al Abdon**

Hereby is the description of the insignia: The badge of the Order is a blue-enamelled, straight-end cross (four arms, narrow at the centre, wider at the ends) with an annulus in red surmounted by St. Edward's Crown. The annulus bears the inscription MERIT.MÉRITÉ.CANADA.

The insignia is worn around the neck, suspended from a blue ribbon, 1.5 inches wide, with gold edges (0.1875). The lapel badge, a blue cross with a red maple leaf centre, is worn on the undress ribbon. Elevations within the order are indicated by the wearing of the lapel badge of the current and previous levels on a single ribbon.

of this hymn:

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Thank you, Stephanie for this invaluable reminder that's much more precious than ruby or gold.

I am happy to close with Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

See you next issue and God bless!

**Looking to hire certified teachers for part time tutoring classes for elementary, high school and Cegep levels in languages, science and math. Please send your CV with references to: [zbc@gilmorecollege.com](mailto:zbc@gilmorecollege.com) Chosen candidates shall be called for interviews in January 2025.**



**PAB Batch 9 graduates with their teachers. Terry White, Amy Manon-og, Editha Fedalizo, Sophie Toledo and director-general, Zenaida F. Kharroubi, Oct. 7, 2007**



**10th Anniversary and Graduation Ceremony, Queen Elizabeth Hotel, with Philippine Ambassador Francisco Benedicto who assisted in the presentation of A.E.C. diplomas (Attestation d'études collégiales) in Office Systems Technology, Accounting & Automation and International Trade, October 29, 1999.**



**Batch 12 PAB graduates with their teachers, Dolores Belandres, Editha Fedalizo, Clarice MacKay, Nina Schiff, Sophie Toledo, Amy Manon-og, Terry White & director-general Zenaia F. Kharroubi. Sonny Moroz represented MP Anthony Housefather as guest speaker and assisted in the presentation of diplomas. July 7, 2017.**



**20th anniversary and graduation ceremony for Batch 6, PAB graduates held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, with Phil. Ambassador Jose Brillantes as guest speaker, October 24, 2009.**



# THE NORTH AMERICAN FILIPINO STAR

## November 2024 Pictorial News Most Outstanding Filipino Awards, 2024 From Bb. Filipinas of the World Beauty Pageant



**Al Abdon, Chairman, Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal Outstanding Filipino Award**



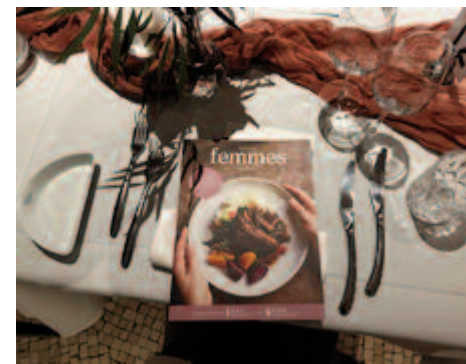
**OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS: Noah Aquino of Breakfast Television, Tennerose Dayandante, ICI Television and Von Canton, CEO/Founder of MCBN TV and Fiesta Extravaganza (from FB Post, November 3, 2024)**



**Michael Davantes, TV Host, Pinoy Pa Rin, ICI Television Outstanding Filipino Award**



**Mayor Plante, Polytechnique massacre survivors call on Ottawa for stricter gun controls on Nov. 19, 2024. (Alyssia Rubertucci, CityNews)**



**Recettes de femmes Recipes is available to purchase with all proceeds going to research in radiation oncology. (Tehosterihens Deer/CityNews Image) Nov. 19/24 Female chefs fund raiser for cancer research.**



**Montreal international students protest freeze on permanent residence "We have to start from zero," said Sahar Osati, a HEC Montréal graduate, at a protest denouncing the Quebec government's decision to close the door on permanent residency applications for international students. Gareth Madoc-Jones reports Nov. 15, 2024, City News.**



**It appears that North Korean troops will enter combat against Ukraine in the coming days, says US defence secretary Lloyd Austin. The US will allow Ukraine to use the missiles to hold onto the small chunk of Russian territory it occupies in Kursk, making the decision after the Kremlin allowed North Korean troops to fight there BBC News 11/18/24**



**A wildfire burns in Jennings Creek, N.J., as world leaders gather for climate talks in Baku, Azerbaijan, on the other side of the world. Drought conditions are considered a major factor contributing to wildfires in the eastern U.S. (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection via The Associated Press)**