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Canada

Public sector workers go on strike



People take part in a public sector union demonstration in Montreal, Saturday, September 23, 2023. Members of several Quebec public-sector unions are continuing to vote in favour of strike mandates by large margins. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Graham Hughe

CBC News, Nov. 21, 2023 - Less than 24 hours before public sector strikes were slated to get underway, Quebec's labour minister announced a conciliator was being called in to help contract negotiations.

Jean Boulet announced the initiative on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday morning in response to a request from a labour group that represents about 420,000 public sector workers in education, health and social services. The group is known as the Front commun, which translates to "common front." It will hold a three-day strike starting Tuesday.

The common front has rejected Quebec's latest contract offer — a 10.3 per cent salary increase over five years and a one-time payment of \$1,000 to each worker.

Unions haven't said publicly whether they've made a counter-proposal, but their previous demands have included a three-year contract with annual increases tied to the inflation rate.

While the conciliator will assist with the negotiations, their recommendations won't be binding.

And regardless of what the unions want or the conciliator recommends, Quebec Treasury Board President Sonia LeBel said there are some demands the province simply cannot meet due to staffing shortages.

LeBel said she does not have any teachers to add overnight, but she is offering to put teaching aides in classes instead.

See Page 4 Common front

Montreal's nearly \$7-billion budget and the tax increases people will face - See story on page 4

Notre Dame des Philippines Catholic Mission of Montreal Turns 34 in December (p.3)



The Plante administration presents the 2024 budget. Benoit Dorais, city's interim executive committee leader in charge of finance, Mayor Valérie Plante and Serge Lamontagne, city manager. Tim Sargeant/Global News.



Rosie Calumpiano, (5th from the left) impersonating St. Teresa of Avila, was one of the winners of the church's humorous version of the Halloween Party. See article on page 3.



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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Reflecting on the trajectories of conflicts and proposed solutions

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

As history tells us, wars always inflict untold human sufferings. But why do they occur and what could have prevented them from ever happening again, or who should have done something to shorten their durations? Who should have known better and should have proposed measures to prevent them from happening?

There are currently important international organizations that have become involved in the resolution of conflicts or keeping potential aggressions from happening but this did not deter Vladimir Putin's ambition to annex Crimea, and now attempts to conquer Ukraine to restore the past glory of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Putin's decision to invade Ukraine has resulted in a stronger alliance of the United States with its allies in the European Union and an increase interest in NATO membership.

When summits or other conferences occur, we learn about the Global North, Global South, APEC, ASEAN, G7, G-20, UN, EU and other types of organizations that discuss climate change, economic cooperation, pandemic response, and

other world issues. What roles do they play in global politics and socio-economic agendas?

To have a view of the world order and the relationships among the different countries, it was generally agreed that the Global North would include the United States, Canada, England, nations of the European Union, as well as Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and even some countries in the southern hemisphere: Australia, and New Zealand. The Global South is generally seen as home to Brazil, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and China, which, along with Nigeria and Mexico, are the largest Southern states in terms of land area and population. The overwhelming majority of the Global South countries are located in or near the tropics. It seems obvious that the countries that are well developed have an important role to play in world affairs and they are referred to as the Global North. They must provide the leadership in resolving conflicts and promote cooperation between the rich and the poor countries. If they find a way to propose solutions to conflicts and provide leadership, we shall eventually find the Holy Grail of peace. But it is not a simple matter to find

strong leaders who will agree on a common approach to world peace and prosperity. The United States has always been an active player in world conflicts but due to its own local political divide, it has not been strong enough and has to seek the support of its allies in the western world.

Since the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, we have a continuous saga of human sufferings by the Ukrainian people and their valiant efforts to protect their country with the generous support from the European Union and the United States. We still have no idea how this conflict will end and then another war erupted between Israel and Hamas that controls the Gaza strip.

How are these two conflicts interrelated and how should they be resolved?

For Washington, like for Kyiv, a key issue in the wake of the Israeli-Hamas war will be maintaining support for Ukraine's defense against Russia. This requires both providing military and economic assistance to Ukraine and Israel simultaneously, and working to ensure that the public's attention does not drift away from the war in Ukraine.

The Israel-Hamas war has caused major divisions among the European leaders according to one diplomat who said "We have to keep one thing in mind for this European Council: (It) is the most divisive conflict in the world — also within the EU."

Recognizing the need to end the conflict in the Middle East, the idea of a two state solution proposed since the Oslo Accords in 1993 is being mentioned by many more people including our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Biden who said: "In our view, it has to be a two-state solution," ..., reiterating a comment he made during his visit to Israel. "And that means a concentrated effort for all the parties — Israelis, Palestinians, regional partners, global leaders — to

put us on a path toward peace." But the question still remains - Is this still possible, and how can this be done when the territory that was supposed to be for the state of Palestine has been vastly fragmented? The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is long running and complex but primarily rooted in a dispute over land with immense historical and religious significance to Jews and Muslims (as well as Christians).

On the other hand, the opinion expressed by an expert like Josep Borrel, EU foreign policy chief, offers a negotiated settlement of the Ukraine-Russia conflict as he suggests *that the U.S. has four steps it can take: clarifying its plans for future support to Ukraine, making commitments to Ukraine's security, issuing assurances regarding the country's neutrality, and setting conditions for sanctions relief for Russia*. He concludes: "A dramatic, overnight shift in U.S. policy is politically impossible — both domestically and with allies — and would be unwise in any case. But developing these instruments now and socializing them with Ukraine and with U.S. allies might help catalyze the eventual start of a process that could bring this war to a negotiated end in a time frame that would serve U.S. interests. The alternative is a long war that poses major challenges for the United States, Ukraine, and the rest of the world."

Likewise, finding an earlier end to the conflict between Israel and Hamas must not be just maintaining the status quo but must be aligned with the principles of international law, human rights, and recognition of sovereignty of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Needless to say, this poses a huge challenge to world leaders to achieve the acceptance of the two-state solution after so many years of apparent neglect and futile efforts in the implementation of the Oslo Accords. #

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Fely Rosales Cariño
Social Tidbits

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi
Chief Editor

Tony San Juan
Toronto News

Joy Rosales
Administrative Asst.

Publisher, April 1998-present
North American Filipino Star

Alvin D. Veloso
Pete Guidote
Contributing Writers

Audrey Tougas
Local Journalism
Initiative, 2023-2024

Bert Abiera
Founder-Publisher, Filipino Star
Nov. 1982- Nov. 97

Sam Kevin
Show Biz News & Layout Editor

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Why the Oslo Peace Process failed

And what it means for future negotiations



U.S. President Bill Clinton stands between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat as they shake hands after signing the historic Oslo Accords at the White House in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 13, 1993. J. DAVID AKE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

By Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Sitting on the South Lawn of the White House on Sept. 13, 1993, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Under a brilliant, cloudless sky, an uncomfortable Israeli prime minister and a beaming Palestinian leader clasped hands in pursuit of peace as an

See Page 18 Oslo Accords



ALVIN DAHAM VELOSO, M.ED.
FAMAS President, 1971-72
2018 Retired Teacher, U.S.A.,
Canada, Manila

Christmas is the season of love and giving, and the establishment of the Filipino Catholic Mission of Montreal in December of 1989 speaks volumes of the pride, joy and gratitude to church authorities for the greatest gift given to the Catholic community of Filipinos in Montreal. Notwithstanding the hard times, the Catholic Mission has survived and grown as a spiritual community of Filipino Catholics, enabling the

Notre Dame des Philippines Catholic Mission of Montreal Turns 34

In fact, there is a shortage of manpower to help.

As a welcoming church, with goals focused on evangelization and sanctification, the various ministries are fortunate to have a Filipino priest, originally from Calapan, Oriental Mindoro. Father Cruz's arrival to replace the late Father Ruben Elago has been a blessing and has further energized the spiritual and religious vibrancy. He arrived in early June and it did not take long for him to energize and revitalize a Mission Church who waited passionately and prayerfully for his arrival. Even within a short period of barely ten weeks, he has already changed the image of Notre Dame des Philippines into a faithful community with eager members inspired by his energetic and dynamic leadership.

The primary goal of Notre Dame des Philippines is to provide spiritual and religious services and guidance to Filipino Catholics in the province. The presence of Filipino priests, which started with Fathers Carmelo Gosioco, Frank Alvarez, PME, Ruben Elago, MSP (deceased) and,

the devotees. Language builds bridges and opens the door for people to work in harmony and performs best when there is rapport with one another and with the curate.

At a young age of 53, Father Cruz exudes hope, life and vitality. His pastoral style of friendliness and approachability depicts an image of a true "servant of Christ" whose main

ceremony for the opening of a new business or moving to a new place of residence. Photos of such a practice are included in this article.

The integration of customs and traditions bequeathed by the early Spanish missionaries during the period of the Christianization of the Philippines alongside Latin America, is rich in pageantry which has deepened the



Photo shows guests at the blessing of the new Veloso residence on Nov 18, 2023: Guia Tan-Baldino, Alice Panado, Cely Wan, Casey Thomas-Veloso, Dante & Julie Tabamo, Narciso and Ofelia Mejia, Corazon Remegio, Hilda Tan-Veloso, Father J.R. Cruz, M.S.P., Jennifer Tan Baldino, Delia Peñaranda, Melvin Veloso. Mynia Peñaranda not in photo.

goal as the pastor is to minister to the flock and lead them to the path of sanctification. He has energized the community. People started to gravitate

religious fervor and devotion of Filipino Catholics. It has been a blessing to have Filipino pastors at the helm. Their familiarity and understanding of the



Father J.R. Cruz, M.S.P., Pastor of Notre Dame des Philippines with Melvin Veloso and Delia Peñaranda assisting in the blessing of the new Veloso residence in Cote St. Luc, November 18, 2023.

community to tailor its spiritual life that mirrors Filipino religious heritage, proud of its identity. Thirty-four years into the life of the Filipino Catholic Mission is a milestone celebration of thanksgiving and joy, to acknowledge the contributions and dedications of the faith community and the stewardships of Fathers Carmelo Gosioco, Francisco Alvarez, PME, Roberto Ruben Elago, MSP, who worked hard to preserve and promote the cultural identity of Notre Dame des Philippines as the first Filipino canonically established church in North America.

For over three decades, the church carried out its goals and objectives of evangelization through the various ministries. Incidentally, the PREX, Program (Personal Renewal Experience) at the Catholic Mission has become the springboard for would-be disciples to learn the ropes of volunteer service. The bustling activities keep people on guard doing all kinds of works from catechism, fund raising, and other religious activities. Due to the various celebrations of the church ministries, there is no room for idleness.

now, Father Jamilcar Rommel Cruz, MSP, (Mission Society of the Philippines) has given an ambiance of fraternity and identity as Filipino Catholics. His versatility in Tagalog, as a native from Occidental Mindoro, makes it easy to find communality with



Smiling ladies: Delia Peñaranda, Guia Tan-Baldino, Mynia Peñaranda and Jennifer Tan-Baldino



Souvenir photo with guests at the new apartment blessing: Dante Tabamo, Narciso Mejia, Z. Kharroubi, Alvin Veloso (host). Back row: Casey & Melvin Veloso, Guia and Jennifer Tan-Baldino, Nov. 18, 2023 (By Mynia Penaranda)

to his pastoral approach, friendliness, and ability to listen. His understanding of the Filipino psyche is an essential trait for an apostolic journey.

The Catholic Mission symbolizes the Filipino Catholic identity, Hispanized under the aegis of Spain, that has withstood the crisis of history and continued to evangelize the world. In addition to the Catholic faith, it prides itself as the harbinger of religious customs and traditions introduced by the early missionaries.

Filipinos love their culture and showcase their pride and talents in many ways possible. The annual religious calendar of events such as, Christmas, Easter, Holy Week, Marian feasts, memorials for the dead are among many opportunities to display their hidden talents. A common religious practice is to have a blessing

Filipino psyche are a big plus for the Filipino Mission to move forward in its apostolic journey. A friendly and wholesome ambiance is doubtlessly creative and productive

A display of the Filipino culture and pride will be at the forefront when Notre Dame des Philippines celebrates the 34th year of its canonical installation on December 10, 2023. Plans are underway for a solemn anniversary to highlight the spiritual and religious achievements in service to the Church and the faithful community. The solemn celebration will serve as an occasion for the Mission's various ministries to display their talents and appreciation for the spiritual growth of its membership.

Following the liturgy, a reception will be held at the church basement #

From page 1 Common front

Eric Gingras, president of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), said, "the main thing is not going on strike. The main thing is getting a deal done, and that's the thing we're hoping we're able to do in the next weeks."

He said negotiations are happening more in the media and online than at the appropriate tables. François Enault, with the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), said the conciliator will put pressure on both sides to set dates, meet and "try to find some solutions."

A union outside the common front, the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE), is launching its unlimited strike on Thursday.

Quebec wants public sector unions to submit counter-offer in strike negotiations

The FAE represents about 65,000 teachers and members have indicated that, even though their salaries will stop, they're ready to stay on strike for as long as it takes.

The FAE and the Fédération Interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ), also outside the front, are not currently requesting a conciliator.

Quebec schools announce closures as multi-day teachers' strike approaches

Rachel Watts · CBC News · Posted: Nov 15, 2023 - Service centres across Quebec have announced that schools and daycares will be closed as of Tuesday due to striking workers — some for an undetermined period.

The Front commun syndical and the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ), which together represent Quebec teachers, school support staff and nurses, will be walking off the job. The Front commun syndical hits the streets from Nov. 21 to 23 and the FIQ Nov. 23 and 24.

This has led many service centres to announce that all activities will be suspended.

Schools and daycare services will be closed, no educational services or extracurricular activities will be offered and school transport will be cancelled.

In addition, as of Nov. 23, the 65,000 primary and secondary school teachers belonging to the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE) will go on an unlimited general strike. You can read a full list below of school service centres affected.

The FAE comprises nine unions in 12 school service centres across the province including Montreal's largest French language school service centre.

Parents warned about closures across province During the strikes, union members will be picketing in front of schools.

"The nature of the teachers' strike is such that it is impossible for us

to know where and when picket lines will be set up, which could make it difficult, if not impossible, to access certain locations," reads a letter sent to parents from the Centre de services scolaire de la Capitale, in Quebec City.

The Eastern Townships School Board will be extending its planned fall break until Nov. 23. The board says two shared campuses in Montérégie will also close on Nov. 24 because of the FAE strike.

The Centre de services scolaire du Val-des-Cerfs in the Eastern Townships has received notice of the FAE's unlimited general strike, and for the time being is advising parents that students should not come to its establishments from Nov. 21 to 24. It will provide an update if the strike continues during the week of Nov. 26.

Unions announce 3 more strike days as 420,000 Quebec public workers walk off the job today

The Centre de services scolaire des Mille-Îles, northwest of Montreal, says it has not yet received an official strike notice from the FAE but intends to follow the same plan as other centres.

The FAE does not represent any unionized employees at the Centre de services scolaire Marie-Victorin in Montérégie. Unionized employees will be on strike from Nov. 21 to 23, and activities will resume on the morning of

appreciate your understanding and collaboration during this time," the notice says.

'Negotiations are not a one-way street'

In an emailed statement, Florence Plourde, director of communications for Education Minister Bernard Drainville, wrote that the province is aware of the inconvenience for children and their parents.

"We're doing everything in our power to avoid this by making serious proposals," said Plourde.

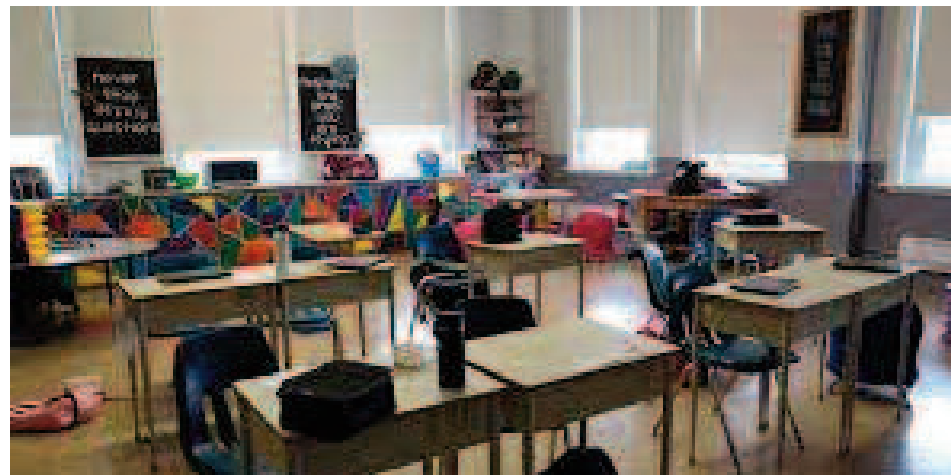
Plourde said Quebec is still awaiting the union's counter-offer, and that the government's most recent proposal represents \$8 billion in spending.

"Negotiations are not a one-way street," wrote Plourde. "The unions must come back to us with a counter-offer."

Some education and health-care workers say they're walking off the job because they're overworked and underpaid.

The following service centres and school boards have announced closures for three days, Nov. 21-23.

- English Montreal School Board.
- Lester B. Pearson School Board.
- Riverside School Board.
- Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board.
- Eastern Townships School Board.



The unlimited strike will affect school service centres across Quebec, including the Montreal and Quebec City areas. Several schools have already announced closures next week. (Isabelle Larose/Radio-Canada)

Nov. 24 according to the usual schedule.

School service centres in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region also warned parents that classes will be suspended next week.

EMSB schools shutting down too

The English Montreal School Board (EMSB) said in a notice Wednesday that there are four different unions representing its staff, and they all gave the board official notice that they will be striking for the three full days.

This will lead to the closure of all elementary and high schools as well as adult and vocational classes. There will be no childcare services during that time either, the EMSB said.

As for FACE, a specialty elementary and secondary school downtown, its employees are members of the FAE. That means all FACE classes are cancelled indefinitely and the board vows to update parents of any changes to the situation.

"We are aware that this strike may inconvenience your family. We

- Centre de services scolaire des Trois-Lacs (CSSTL).
- Centre de services scolaire Marie-Victorin.
- Centre de services scolaire des Appalaches.
- Centre de services scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke.
- Centre de services scolaire du Val-des-Cerfs.
- Centre de services scolaire des Chic-Chocs.
- Centre de services scolaire des Îles.
- Centre de services scolaire des Hautes-Laurentides.

The following service centres are planning to close their schools and daycares Nov. 21-23 and potentially longer as part of a general unlimited strike.

- Centre de services scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys.
- Centre de services scolaire de Montréal (CSSDM).
- Centre de services scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île (CSSPI).
- Centre de services scolaire de Laval (CSSL).

• Centre de services scolaire de la Capitale.

• Centre de services scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais (CSSPO).#

Montreal's nearly \$7-billion budget and the tax increases people will face

Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante's administration unveiled its \$6.99-billion financial roadmap for 2024, with the mayor calling it a "responsible" budget with a modest increase in spending. Municipal spending will rise by \$235 million — or 3.5 per cent — from the previous year, largely because of rising costs for things such as snow removal, garbage collection and gasoline.

Cities are at the forefront of global upheavals, including the opioid crisis and climate change, and face growing needs related to homelessness and mental health care, Plante told reporters. "Montreal is the flashpoint for the crying needs that are specific to major cities here but also elsewhere, which are the local consequences of the major international conflicts that are shaking us up," she said.

"I am thinking, among other things, of the opioid crisis, which is everywhere in North America and which is wreaking havoc, and many other vulnerabilities, such as the issue of homelessness and even mental health."

Homeowners and business owners will have to dole out more money under the plan.

Property taxes for residential buildings and dwellings will rise by an average of 4.9 per cent across the city — which the Plante administration touts is lower than the greater Montreal area's high inflation rate of 5.2 per cent recorded last August.

But the average property hike for residents next year will be higher than the provincial inflation rate of 4.6 per cent, according to the city's documents.

The biggest hike is a 7.2 per cent average increase for the Pierrefonds-Roxboro borough while Anjou is not far behind with 6.3 per cent. The Mercier—Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce boroughs will also climb by 5.8 and 5.5 per cent, respectively.

Which neighbourhoods will see the lowest rise in property taxes? Homeowners in the central borough of Ville-Marie will pay 2.6 per cent more on their next bill while the Saint-Leonard borough will see a 3.9 per cent increase.

This represents an average increase of \$227 for a single-family home valued at \$694,541, according to the budget documents.

Business owners will also be hit with higher property taxes — with some areas to see staggering increases in the double digits.

The average increase in Montreal will be 4.6 per cent, but

See Page 5 Montreal budget

Forum Jeunesse Francophonie

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

On October 22, 2023, Salomé Assor, in collaboration with Benjamin Bitton, the General Director of La Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec, orchestrated the Forum Jeunesse Francophonie. The forum centered on three key themes: the French language and the future of Quebec's identity, intercommunity

discussion, some youth participants observed that the use of French in public conversations is commonplace. They highlighted a perceived alarmist reaction to the increasing prominence of the English language, noting that globalization has played a significant role in this shift.

They highlighted the paradox of prioritizing the protection of the French language at the expense of



From left to right are Salomé Assor (she organized the event), John Green, and Yvan Cliche.

relations and coexistence in Quebec, and the ecological challenge. Each topic was allocated 20 minutes for presentation by a panel of experts, followed by a 50-minute discussion and debate involving a diverse group of approximately 15 individuals aged 17-29, representing various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The primary objective of the workshop was to address the concerns of the youth and provide them with a platform to articulate their ideas.

Workshop I: The French Language and the Future of Quebecer Identity

The expert panel for this workshop comprised Éric Bédard, a university professor at TÉLUQ and a historian, alongside Akli Ait-Eldjoudi, a philosophy teacher at the Cegep of Sherbrooke. Bédard initiated the session by providing a succinct historical overview of Quebec, focusing on the impact of loyalists and English settlers in La Nouvelle France. He emphasized the decline of French and underscored the need to preserve the language as a fundamental aspect of Quebecer identity.

During the subsequent

English and indigenous languages, leading to restricted opportunities, and working conditions. Felipe, a 17-year-old aspiring French teacher, expressed concerns about schools being ill-equipped to teach proper French, with students often writing as they speak, lacking appropriate grammar.

In response, Eldjoudi added insights into the understaffing issues faced by teachers, emphasizing the delicate balance between dedicating time to fully educate students on writing skills and maintaining mental well-being. He also stressed the critical role of literacy education in fostering a functional democracy, as much of it is about debate and deliberation. Eldjoudi concluded by emphasizing the need for both great ambitions and the means to achieve them, "Il faut avoir de grandes ambitions, mais aussi les moyens pour ces ambitions".

Workshop II: Intercommunity Relations and Living Together in Quebec

The expert panel for this workshop included Pierre Ancil, a historian and emeritus professor at the University of Ottawa, and Rachida Azdouz, an essayist, psychologist, and

Some of the city's largest spending increases are for public transit. The city anticipates spending an additional \$48.4 million in 2024.

The bulk of the increase — \$34 million — will be used to cover the bus and Metro fares of seniors. As one of its key election promises, the Plante administration introduced the measure last summer.

The biggest cost in Montreal's budget is public security, at 18.3 per cent. The Montreal police department will get a \$33.8-million increase to its budget. #



specialist in intercultural relations.

Ancil commenced the session by presenting a brief historical account of Jewish communities arriving in Quebec and the past 150 years of immigration that contributed to Montreal's economic development.

He also delved into the significance of Bill 101, which designated French as the primary vector for integration. Azdouz followed with an exploration of the multifaceted elements shaping one's identity, including prejudice, heritage, and the appropriation of narratives. She highlighted the cultural shock experienced by immigrants and the subsequent loss of equilibrium in their identity.

During the ensuing discussion, youth participants asserted that despite immigrants being integral to Quebec's history and demonstrating willingness to integrate, they often feel that they are in a hostile environment. Mischael, a Filipino immigrant, echoed this sentiment, expressing a sense of outsider status despite learning the language, history, and cultural pieces.

In response, Ancil noted a tendency within the government to attribute the decline of the French language to immigrants, undervaluing their efforts. Azdouz highlighted the formation of an "versus them" narrative among different parties in Quebec, encapsulating a French versus everyone else dichotomy.

Workshop III: The Ecological Challenge

The expert panel for the final workshop included Yvan Cliche, an energy specialist at the University of Montreal and former Hydro-Québec employee in international developments, and Daniel Green, an environmentalist who managed the Société pour vaincre la pollution.

Cliché began by stating that Quebec is currently not in an energy transition but an addition, blending green, renewable energy with traditional charcoal energy. He outlined potential measures and opportunities for Canada to address climate change, including decarbonization, transitioning to electrical network systems, utilizing

abundant minerals and established infrastructures, and engaging in trade with neighboring countries. Green's presentation focused on the tangible consequences of climate change on Quebecers, citing instances such as deaths from asthma and heat strokes during the summer, as well as pollution affecting various regions. He unequivocally stated that these consequences, a burden that the youth will inherit, are a result of actions by his generation. Green emphasized the need to dispel the belief that politicians prioritize public well-being, and asserted that things will not be okay,

"Non, ça ne va pas bien aller".

During the ensuing discussion, Jacob from the youth panel questioned the viability of moving towards a greener future without implementing measures that may cause minor damages but yield long-term benefits. An example cited was Trudeau's pipeline plan, seen as a potential source of income for investing in renewable energy. Green responded by dispelling the notion of using damaging energy sources for profit, emphasizing the irreversible damages such actions entail. The prevailing sentiment, according to Green, should be to reduce contamination, not contribute to it.

Felipe, a youth panel member, inquired about the possibility of consuming more responsibly within the current capitalist system. In response, Cliche suggested that certain options, including government initiatives, could potentially mitigate gas emissions.

Green challenged the sustainability of creating new jobs through non-renewable energies, asserting that such endeavors often result in sacrificing one's life to make money, "Gagner sa vie en la perdant?". He gave the group a call to action, urging the youth to express their discontent when political decisions prioritize economic interests over public welfare. Green concluded by emphasizing that the youth, not himself, holds the key to finding solutions to the climate crisis, "il y a une solution, ce n'est pas moi qui vais la trouver, c'est vous."

In summary, the forum provided a platform for in-depth discussions on the role of the French language and the future of Quebecer identity, intercommunity relations and living together in Quebec, and climate change, involving both the youth and expert perspectives in Quebec.

Disclaimer: The names of the youth participants were not fully disclosed to protect their privacy. #

From Page 4 Montreal budget

merchants in the Lachine and Saint-Laurent boroughs will be hit with 14.3 and 12.1 per cent, respectively.

Montreal will also be charged 6.1 per cent more to pay for shared public services including police and fire departments as well as public transit. This could lead to higher property taxes for homeowners in the cities and towns as their respective mayors prepare to release their budgets.

More money for public transit, police

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ONTARIO Community News

By **Tony A. San Juan**
OCT-Retired

Ontario Filcan Teachers organization holds annual conference

The Philippine Teachers Association of Canada (PTAC) conducted its yearly conference on November 11, 2023 at the North York Central Library, Yonge Street, Toronto. PTAC, organized in 2006, is a socio-professional association composed of Filipino-heritage Ontario Certified Teachers (OCT) and education professionals in Ontario as well as former educators and teaching professionals in the Philippines.

and school administrator in a First Nation school in the Northwestern Ontario. The speakers were introduced by Marissa Ciacico and Maricon Bernasor.

Attended by PTAC members and other special guests, the conference was led by President Cielito L. Drapeza and assisted by the Event Organizing Committee comprised of Maricon Bernasor, Marissa Ciacico, Mary Ann Santos, and



The PTAC 2023 Conference Participants posed with their resource speakers.

With its theme "Emerging Challenges of Teaching in Ontario Schools", the 17-year old organization invited two Filipino-Canadian resource speakers who presented significant topics in education impacting teachers and educators in the practice of their profession. Those who delivered and shared their insightful information and meaningful experience are Lily Ann Capalad Adams, and Ryan Alexander Reyes. Adams is the Principal of Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School and the first Filipino-descent woman high school principal at the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). Reyes, an Accredited in Public Relation (APR), is the Public Relation Specialist of the Ontario College of Teachers, the professional licensing body for teachers in the province.

TCDSB Principal L. C. Adams, using a powerpoint presentation, delivered the topic on "Building Effective Relationships in Schools" including the players and stakeholders in the education of students. O.C.T. Public Relation Specialist R. A. Reyes provided "Advice to the Profession" with a focus on appropriate practice responsibilities and discipline. Richard F. Llanera, the first Filipino principal of the North Caribou Lake First Nation High School in the North was PTAC's special guest. Llanera shared his journey and experience as a teacher

Richess Vinluan. The five-hour conference commenced with the singing of the Canadian and Philippine national anthems, followed by a prayer led by Beverly Belo and the welcome address of President C. Drapeza. Mary Ann Santos ably served as Event Emcee, while Richess Vinluan and Maricon Bernasor aptly provided tech and A/V support.

The event also held a two-minute silence in remembrance of Canadian fallen soldiers and war veterans. Organizationally, the conferees celebrated the birth anniversary of Mary Ann Santos, and as planned, conducted the election of 11 Executive Officers and 14 Board Directors for the 2023-2025 term. The newly elected officers and directors will be inducted to office on December 9, 2023 during its annual PTAC Christmas Potluck gathering at the Earl Bales Park Community Centre, North York, Toronto. The conference proved to be a successful and productive experience for all the participants as they engaged their professional resource persons to a lively and interesting exchange on "learning the ropes" regarding the challenges of being a teacher in the Canadian education environment. #

Gilmore College International celebrates its 34th Anniversary and holds a meeting with community association leaders

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative, Montreal, November 4, 2023

On November 4th, 2023, Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, founder and director-general of Gilmore College International, invited leaders of non-profit associations as well as the first

apply in reply to the call for concept proposals to overcome the social isolation of vulnerable seniors.

To realize the project, Kharroubi shall have the responsibility to complete and submit documents on or before the deadline of November 15,



Front row - L to R: Irma Osano, Homuttee Apannah, Marion Lowe-McLean, Ben Bade, Zenaida Kharroubi, Amy Manon-og, Rose de la Paz, Juvy Vales, Remedios Monteagudo, Nida Verginom. Back row: Al Abdon, Rey Beltran, James de la Paz, Dario Boco, Bernie Oabel, Reynold Omictin.

Filipino-Canadian councilor elected in Montreal's CDN-NDG Borough for Darlington district, Stephanie Valenzuela, Sonny Moroz, elected city councilor for Snowdon, and Marvin Rotrand, formerly Snowdon councilor, and currently the national director for human rights of B'nai Brith Canada to explore the possibility of filing an application for funding programs for vulnerable seniors.

The anniversary celebration served as an exploratory meeting to gauge the support and collaboration of the community associations as it is Kharroubi's goal to file an application for her private school to become a body organization. Both non-profit and profit organizations are eligible to

2023 at 3:00 p.m. which must illustrate that the project will be executed over a four to five-year period with a budget from one to five million dollars. This involves a two-step process, the first is a competition to select the best concept proposal that is innovative and answers the government's priority areas, and the second step, if successful, the applicant shall be invited to provide a detailed plan for the proposals' implementation by next summer 2024.

As the backbone organization, Gilmore College International shall have the responsibility of facilitating and coordinating the collaborating

See page 7 - Gilmore's initiative

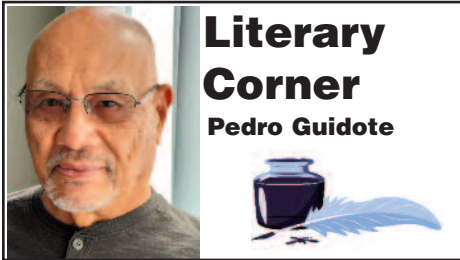
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Literary Corner

Pedro Guidote

Words for the Present

Genuine compassion is based on a clear acceptance or recognition that others, like oneself, wants happiness and have the right to overcome suffering.

On that basis one develops concern about the welfare of others, irrespective of one's attitude to oneself.

That is compassion.
The Dalai Lama

You'll never find a better sparring partner than adversity.
Not being beautiful was a true blessing.
It forced me to develop my inner resources. The pretty girl has a handicap.
Golda Meir

To live in the hearts of those we leave behind is not to die.
Thomas Campbell

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.
Harry Truman

He who has something to live for can bear almost any how.
Friedrich Nietzsche

From Page 6 Gilmore's initiative

organizations' activities, managing and allocating funds, monitoring each group's progress and ensuring that proper reporting of results shall be made to the government in a timely manner and providing plans to secure funds to continue the service to overcome the social isolation of vulnerable seniors.

Discussions, questions and answers as well as comments were made by the participating members of the meeting. Reynold Omictin of Kalihukang Bisaya conveyed his enthusiasm for the project. His organization had initially intended to undertake a similar initiative, but the plans were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given their frequent collaboration with seniors, Omictin viewed this meeting as a

chance to contribute to his community. He emphasized the wealth of knowledge seniors possess and their desire to feel useful rather than a liability. As a contribution to the project, he suggested that his association could aid in teaching seniors first aid responses, thereby enhancing their autonomy.

Marion McLean, founder, and president of Les Passerelles Globale, recognized the potential of the project and proposed developing seniors' capabilities through holistic healing arts. She acknowledged that skills and diverse lived realities among organizations could complement each other, fostering comprehensive and thoughtful approaches to the project. McLean's insights were drawn from her extensive experience in community



Alvin Veloso, James and Rose de la Paz, Audrey Tougas, Reynold Omictin wait while Z. Kharroubi and Rey Beltran work on a document.

development and activism, where for example, she and other activists addressed poor housing conditions for black communities in Montreal. Their



Stephanie Valenzuela, Sonny Moroz, and Nida Verginom, taking a selfie souvenir photo.

efforts in raising awareness and advocating for change resulted in tangible actions that significantly improved the living conditions of these communities.

Marvin Rotrand, former city councilor and current human rights



Marvin Rotrand, Sonny Moroz, seated at the other end of the table, and association leaders waiting for more guests to arrive.

national director, B'Nai Brith Canada, recognized that raising awareness about the experiences of senior communities was a constructive

ambitions or collaborating with local Members of Parliament to effectively manage the substantial scope of the initiative.

Similarly, Sonny Moroz, councilor of Snowdon District, observed that creating an application for November 15 was unrealistic as there was not enough time to prepare. Despite this, he acknowledged the project's potential and expressed confidence in Kharroubi's ability to lead it successfully. To address the time constraints, Moroz proposed the creation of a preliminary letter. While anticipating its rejection, the exercise would provide Gilmore College International and the participating organizations with valuable constructive criticism, which in turn could then assist them in refining their application for the upcoming years' deadline.

In summary, if the New Horizons Senior Pan Project secures government funding, it could contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable seniors. As the backbone organization, Gilmore College International would oversee the collaboration among funded entities, with each contributing valuable and diverse skill sets that complement one another. While some members of the meeting expressed minor concerns about the project's size, providing suggestions to enhance its success, the overall audience response during the project presentation was enthusiastic. This enthusiasm reflects a shared optimism about the potential impact of the project on aiding the social inclusion of vulnerable seniors. #

director. Rotrand suggested that she might consider either narrowing her

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Alouettes fans turn up in numbers for Grey Cup parade in downtown Montreal

Some dreary November weather didn't stop Montreal Alouettes fans from turning up in numbers at the Grey Cup championship parade on Wednesday.

Montreal upset the Winnipeg Blue Bombers 28-24 in the 110th Grey Cup at Tim Hortons Field in Hamilton. Some dreary November weather didn't stop Montreal Alouettes fans from turning up in numbers at the Grey Cup championship parade on Wednesday.

The weather in Montreal hovered around two degrees Celsius and reached a high of four as light rain fell on and off throughout the overcast afternoon.

Quarterback Cody Fajardo, who was named Grey Cup MVP, said the subpar weather was fitting after multiple games in Montreal were delayed due to Mother Nature. "There's been some weather delays and our fans stuck through it," said Fajardo after the parade. "The weather wasn't very great today in the parade, but they showed out."

"I had no idea how great it was



Montreal Alouettes players celebrate during the Grey Cup parade in Montreal on Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remior

going to be and then I went to it, and experienced it, and I'll remember that for the rest of my life." Fajardo threw 290 passing yards and completed a game-winning drive in the final minute with his third touchdown pass of the game to lead the Alouettes to a title.

The fans made sure to give their quarterback some love by chanting "M-V-P!" throughout the afternoon.

"The MVP chants are pretty high on my list (of things I'll remember)," said Fajardo. "I got a

couple of videos on my phone of people chanting MVP, and it's something that nobody will ever be able to take away from me -- we're Grey Cup champs and the Grey Cup is back home where it belongs."

Owner Pierre Karl Peladeau, a Quebecois billionaire who has stayed relatively outside the public eye since buying the team in March, made an appearance on stage at Le Parterre, a public square in the "Quartier des Spectacle" and led some "Ole, Ole, Ole" chants.

The Alouettes started free agency in February without an owner and lost several key players, leading many pundits to rank the team near the bottom of the league before the season began.

They defied expectations in the regular season by going 11-7 before defeating Hamilton, defending Grey Cup winners Toronto and perennial contender Winnipeg in the playoffs en route to the title. (Abridged version of news report by the Canadian Press)

Up to 900 foreign workers coming to Windsor to help build EV battery plant, NextStar says amid backlash



An aerial view of construction of the NextStar Energy EV battery plant in Windsor, Ont., is shown in June. (Patrick Morrell/CBC News)

CBC News · Posted: Nov 23, 2023
Company confirms job figures for first time since reports of use of South Korean workers caused heated debate

Amid pushback over plans to use foreign workers, NextStar Energy has confirmed it wants to hire hundreds of technicians from South Korea to help set up the government-subsidized electric vehicle battery plant in Windsor, Ont.

The company said Thursday that, in total, about 1,600 equipment manufacturers from outside suppliers will be assembling, installing and testing the equipment needed to make the batteries, including a "temporary specialized global supplier staff" of around 900, largely from South Korea.

It's the first time the company has commented on how many workers it wants in Canada to work on the

project, in the wake of backlash over a social media post shared by Windsor police that suggested the city would be welcoming 1,600 people from South Korea in 2024.

NextStar said the technicians from South Korea have "specific knowledge" of the advanced equipment.

"Upon completion of their work (lasting between three months to a year and a half), they will return home. These are not permanent full-time jobs," the company said in an afternoon statement.

NextStar said these 1,600 temporary jobs to install the equipment are over and above the 2,500 full-time permanent positions for Canadians, and another 1,600 temporary hires from the Canadian workforce to build the plant. #

Unprecedented tensions lead to 'staggering' hate crime increase: Toronto police chief



Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw provided an update Thursday on the city's hate crime statistics.

CBC News, Nov. 23 - Unprecedented tensions resulting from the Israel-Hamas war have led to a "staggering" increase in hate crimes across Toronto, the city's police chief said during a board meeting on Thursday.

Both the number of Islamophobic or anti-Palestinian and antisemitic hate crimes has risen significantly since Oct. 7, Chief Myron Demkiw said.

Demkiw said there have been 38 reports of antisemitic hate crimes and 17 reports of anti-Muslim or anti-Palestinian hate crime since Oct. 7, both numbers representing a significant year-over-year increase.

"These alarming trends in our city, our city which prides itself in our diversity, are the likes of which we have never seen before," Demkiw said. "To combat these deeply concerning issues, we have committed a significant number of resources to address these overall increases."

The 17 Islamophobic or anti-Palestinian hate crimes reported from

Oct. 7 to Nov. 20 represent a 1,600 per cent spike year-over-year, Demkiw said.

For reports of antisemitic hate crimes, there has been a 192 per cent increase from Oct. 7 to Nov. 20 compared to the same time last year, Demkiw said, an increase from 13 to 38.

He did say, however, that antisemitism makes up 40 per cent of all hate crimes reported so far in 2023, he said — 129 of 323 total.

He says the force's hate crime unit has been expanded from a team of six to 32. And that since Oct. 7, the unit has made 22 arrests and laid 58 charges.

Demkiw also noted a large increase in hate-related graffiti since Oct. 7. He said there were 63 instances of Islamophobic or anti-Palestinian graffiti reported from Oct. 7 to Nov. 20 this year, compared to two in 2022. There were 217 instances of antisemitic graffiti reported during the timeframe, he said, compared to 19 last year. #



Sa Ating Sariling Wikang Pilipino (Tagalog)

Ni Zenaida F. Kharroubi

Paano natin mapapabuti ang ating mga relasyon?

Alam ba ninyo kung paano natin mapapahusay ang ating sosyedad at kung paano tayo magkakaroon ng mabuting samahan?

Ayon sa isang artikulo na galing sa John Templeton Foundation "Featured Insights," may isang manunulat na pilosopo na si David Brooks ang sumulat ng isang libro na may titulong "How to Know a Person". Upang malaman ninyo kung bakit ito mahalagang malaman ng lahat na naghahangad matutong makisama, ang diskripsyon ay inilagay ko muna sa wikang Ingles:

"How to Know a Person, is a practical guide to fostering deeper connections at home, work, and throughout our lives. David joins the podcast to discuss the social and relational crisis in our society, why it's better to be an illuminator than a diminisher, and his practical advice on how we can become better people."

May mga bokabularyong ginamit ni David Brooks - illuminator at diminisher - na kung isasalin sa Tagalog ay taga-ilaw o taga-bigay liwanag, at ang kasalungat nito ay tagabawas ng liwanag o mang-babawas ng liwanag. Sa karaniwang salita, tinatawag natin na "positive people" o marunong makisama sa kapwa, at ang tinatawag na "negative" ay ang taong may masamang ugali.

Ayon kay David Brooks, ang ating mga mahusay na relasyon ang mahigit na kailangan natin sa buhay. ngunit ang mahusay na relasyon ang mahirap na makamit sa buhay. *"The thing we need most in life are healthy relationships. The thing we struggle with in life the most are relationships."*

Sa ating lipunan sa kasalukuyan, 54% na mga Amerikano ang nagsasabing walang nakakakilala sa kanila ng husto, at ang mga nagsasabing wala silang maraming kaibigan ay nagkuadruplo (quadrupled) Talagang marami sa atin ang hindi alam kung paanong magkaroon ng mahusay na relasyon. Maaring masisi natin ang social media dahil ang tunay na relasyon ay kinakailangan nating matutong makinig at makipag-usap. Dapat matutuhan natin kung paano sabihin ang hindi natin gusto sa magandang paraan na hindi makakasakit ng loob. Kailangan nating matutuhan ang magandang paraan kagaya rin sa karunungan sa paggawa ng anumang bagay kagaya ng isang karpentero sa pagtatayo ng bahay. Ang karunungan sa pagkilala sa kapwa

ay kailangang pag-aralan din. Ang kabuoan ng mga rekomendasyon sa librong ito ay nakalarawan sa sumusunod na mga salita na maaring maging gabay natin:

"...those steps to cultivate relationships, ask good questions, experience the joy that it comes from interacting with people, being more deliberate about it, and then those focusing on the day-to-day mundane interactions in which real character is made."

Kung sakaling subukan natin ang mga payo ni G. David Brooks sa pagpapahalaga sa ating mga relasyon, maaring lumigaya tayo at magkaroon ng maraming kaibigan. Kahit hindi sinasadya, maari din na tayo ay makapagbigay ligaya sa ibang tao na walang pumapansin sa kanila at dahil sa ating pagbibigay halaga sa kanila, nagkaroon sila ng panibagong pag-asa sa buhay.

Sa "interview" kay David Brooks, ikinuwento niya ang isang eksperimento na ginawa upang mapatunayan ang kahalagahan ng "conversation" sa ating lipunan o sociedad.

Nick Epley is a scholar of the University of Chicago, and so he understands, as all psychologists do, that the thing that makes us happiest and best is like, socially encountering another human being.

And he was one day on his commute, a commuter train up to Chicago from where he lived, and he noticed, well, people are happiest when they're talking to each other. I'm on a commuter train, no one's talking to each other. They're all on their screens with headphones on. And so he paid the people in commuter train over the next weeks to talk to each other on the ride.

And then he interviewed them all after the ride. And they were all happier. The introverts were way happier. Extroverts are way happier. People are just way happier when they talk to each other on a plane or a train or a bus or wherever. And so the first thing I would say to do is next time you're adjoining another person, start a conversation.

Subukan ninyong makipag-usap sa inyong kapwa kahit saan man lugar. Mapapatunayan ninyo kung totoong may kaligayahan ang maidudulot sa inyo ng pakikipag-usap sa kapwa tao, at maaring makasanayan ninyo ang magkaroon ng magandang relasyon sa inyong pamilya, kaibigan, kapitbahay, kaklase, o katrabaho. #

John Abbott College's Second 2023 Employee Union Strike

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

A second employee union strike took place on the campus of John Abbott College on November 21, 2023. After holding a half-day strike on November 6, 2023, the Cegep is currently planning to strike for three consecutive days, from November 21 to November 23.

currently attempting to close the salary-inflation gap.

Mastorakos asserts that the government's original offer, which called for a 9% pay raise over the following five years, does not match their inflation projection. The government's subsequent offer, which she claims again falls short of their inflation estimates, was a 10.3% pay



John Abbott College's striking teachers and employees demonstrating at the park to show their support of the strike

The following information about the strike demands, proposals, and staff and student reactions was gathered from an interview with Maria Mastorakos, the President of the John Abbott Faculty Association.

What are the main reasons for the strike at John Abbott College?

Mastorakos states that on a national level, employees want salary increases and better working conditions on a sectoral level. She adds that they have been attempting to negotiate with the government for a year now, and no progress has been made. Strike votes and days are the only way the college estimates that they could have their demands met.

Did any negotiations or progress result from the November 6th half-day strike?

According to Mastorakos, the last strike appeared to have little impact on the government's policy choices. However, the strikes this week, she believes, may lead to reform, and that a meeting to discuss such is planned for the week of November 26.

What solutions or compromises would teachers find acceptable?

First, Mastorakos stresses the importance of pay adjustments. The union is requesting a three-year contract in which their pay would increase annually to reflect inflation. Additionally, they request raises of 2%, 3%, and 4% in the first, second, and third years respectively.

Mastorakos claims that because of the pandemic-related increase in inflation, workers saw a pay drop following the 2021 negotiations. She states that although their pay was adjusted for inflation each year by 2%, it was insufficient to keep up with the rising costs of living. Hence, they are

raise over the next five years. "They sweeten the pot by increasing it by 1.3% but it does not come to match" she says.

Second, Mastorakos stresses the importance of better working conditions. No matter if they work full-time, she claims that around 40% of Cegeps teachers are precarious workers and are therefore not employed permanently. According to her, their goal is to provide permanent employment opportunities for people, eliminating the need for them to reapply for positions every four months.

She also expressed the need for greater resources, particularly for students with special needs, in the classroom. She also notes that the whole common front—teachers, support staff unions, and support staff hospitals—is affected and striking, not only John Abbott's employees.

Did any of the teachers disagree with the strikes?

According to Mastorakos, there is usually a great deal of anxiety around strikes, especially because it is a legal strike and workers are not paid on those days. She also says that the strikes are disrupting the semester and that there is a lot of worry about how the students will meet all their competencies. She therefore states that there are some who oppose. Yet she notes that while there will always be those who oppose strike days, the great majority of teachers—at least at John Abbott College—are registering for them and manning the pickets. "We have a little less than 500 members, and there are over 400 members here," she states.

She mentions that John Abbott also has "Conted" teachers who

See Page 13 John Abbott College



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Recipes selected from various sources

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Tricolore stuffed pork

INGREDIENTS:

One 5-pound boneless pork loin, butterflied
1 onion
10 slices provolone piccante
4 whole jarred roasted red peppers
2 cups baby spinach
4 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 tablespoons olive oil

Special equipment: butcher's twine

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Peel and slice the onion into 4 rounds. Place in a 13-by-9-inch baking pan and set aside.

Using the tip of a sharp knife, score the pork fat in a diamond pattern, cutting about 1/4-inch deep. Unroll the loin so it is completely flat and sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Lay the provolone slices over the pork, shingling slightly. Open the peppers so they lay flat and tear or cut them in half so you are left with 8 triangles. Lay the peppers flat on top of the cheese, fitting them together like a puzzle. Distribute the spinach evenly over the peppers. Beginning at one end, roll the pork back up into its original shape with the fat on top. Tie the loin in 4 places with butcher's twine and sprinkle all over with 3/4 teaspoon salt.

Set the pork on the bed of onions and scatter the rosemary sprigs around. Pour the broth into the bottom of the pan and drizzle the pork with the olive oil. Roast golden brown on top, about 50 minutes.

Baste the pork with the pan juices and reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees F. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the loin registers 150 degrees F, about 40 minutes.

Allow the pork to rest for 15 minutes

before slicing. Strain the pan juices and serve alongside the pork.



Baked ham with cipotle-honey glaze

INGREDIENTS:

1 fully cooked bone-in ham (8 to 10 pounds)
1 cup packed brown sugar
3 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2-1/4 cups ginger ale
4 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, minced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1-1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325°. Place ham on a rack in a roasting pan. Using a sharp knife, score surface of ham with 1/2-in.-deep cuts in a diamond pattern. Bake, uncovered, 1-1/2 hours. Meanwhile, for glaze, in a small saucepan, mix brown sugar, honey, vinegar and ginger ale. Bring to a boil; cook until mixture is reduced by half, about 15 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Reserve 1 cup mixture for sauce; keep warm.

Brush ham with some of the remaining glaze. Bake, uncovered, until a thermometer reads 140°, about 30 minutes, brushing twice with additional glaze. Serve with reserved sauce.



Granny's apple scalopped potatoes

INGREDIENTS:

1 medium Granny Smith apple, peeled and thinly sliced
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup sliced sweet onion
4 medium red potatoes (about 1 pound), thinly sliced
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese, divided
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon minced fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
Chopped fresh parsley, optional

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°. In a small bowl, combine apple slices, sugar and lemon juice; toss to coat. Set aside. In an 8- or 9-in. cast-iron or other ovenproof skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir until crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Alternately arrange potato and apple slices in a single layer in same skillet. Combine 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese with cream, thyme, salt and pepper; pour over top.

Bake, uncovered, 50 minutes. Top with bacon and remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese. Bake until potatoes are tender and top is lightly browned, 5-10 minutes longer. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. If desired, sprinkle with parsley.



Cranberry-Orange Roast Ducklings

Total Time Prep: 20 min. Bake: 3 hours + standing Makes 10 servings

INGREDIENTS:

2 domestic ducklings (4 to 5 pounds each)
2 medium navel oranges, quartered
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, divided
4 cups orange juice
1 cup chicken broth
1/4 cup soy sauce
2 teaspoons sugar
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon grated fresh gingerroot
2/3 cup orange marmalade

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°. Pierce duckling skin all over with a fork. Place 4 orange quarters, 1 sprig of rosemary

and 1/4 cup cranberries in each duckling cavity; tie drumsticks together. Place on a rack in a roasting pan, breast side up.

In a bowl, mix orange juice, broth, soy sauce, sugar, garlic and ginger. Refrigerate 1/2 cup for glaze. Pour 1 cup over ducklings; sprinkle with remaining cranberries. Cover and bake 1 hour. Uncover and bake 1-1/2 hours longer, basting frequently with remaining orange juice mixture. (Drain fat from pan as it accumulates.) Mix marmalade and reserved orange juice mixture; spread over ducklings. Bake, uncovered, until a thermometer inserted in thigh reads 180°, 30-40 minutes. Discard oranges, rosemary and cranberries from cavities. Let ducklings stand 10 minutes before carving.



Key lime pie

INGREDIENTS:

1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
2 whole egg yolks
1/4 c. sour cream
2 tbsp. finely grated Key lime zest
2/3 c. fresh Key lime juice
1 homemade or store-bought unbaked graham cracker crust

TOPPING & ASSEMBLY

2 c. cold heavy cream
2 tbsp. granulated sugar
1 tbsp. finely grated lime zest
Lime slices, for serving

INSTRUCTIONS:

PIE

Step 1

Place a rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°. In a large bowl, using a handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat milk, egg yolks, and sour cream until smooth. Add lime zest and juice and beat until just combined.

Step 2

Pour lime mixture into graham cracker crust. Bake pie until crust is darkened and fragrant and filling slightly puffs and center is still a little jiggly, about 15 minutes.

Step 3

Let cool 30 minutes, then refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours or up to overnight.

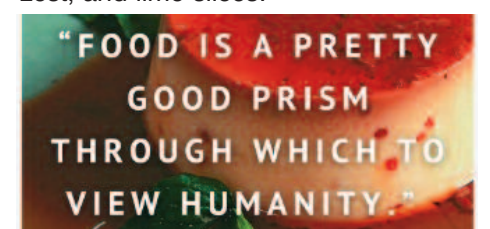
TOPPING & ASSEMBLY

Step 1

In a large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat cream and sugar until stiff peaks form.

Step 2

Top pie with whipped cream, lime zest, and lime slices.





Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Greetings to my Social Tidbits readers! How's everyone doing in the midst of the fall season? I know we finished our Thanksgiving last month, but our American cousins still await theirs. In this spirit, let's give thanks to our gracious Father from whom all blessings flow and whose eyes are always on His children.

Let's check our social calendar, shall we? You know Filipino parties are inevitable and unavoidable. We love them, can't get enough of them. These are the necessary constants in our lives. Let's start with the 24th anniversary of the founding of the Les Dames de Rizal- Kababaihang Rizalista (Montreal Chapter) on October 7, 2023, featuring a Munting Maria Clara Fashion Show. It was held at Saint Kevin Church Hall at 5600 chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal.

The program began with the Entrance of Colors with Sir Francis Bernabe, Sir Raymond Lastra, and Sir Sheldon Cohen. These flag bearers entered solemnly. The national anthems played and the opening prayer was led by Lady Rebecca Lososo. Welcome address was delivered by Lady Esphe Manaog, President of the Kababaihang Rizalista. This was followed by brief greetings from dignitaries.

They are Sir Gerardo Calderon (Supreme Commander, Knights of Rizal, KOR), Honorable Anthony Housefather (MP, Mount Royal), Her Excellency Maria Andrelita Austria (Philippine Ambassador to Canada), Stephanie Valenzuela (City Councilor, CDN-NDG Borough, Darlington District), Sir Dario Boco (Regional Commander, Eastern Canada Region), Sir Rey Balansi (Pursuivant, Eastern Canada Region), and Lady Bernardina Lizardo, among others.

During the intermission, Sofia Marie Danzil rendered a song. Amazing young singer! After dinner and the cutting of the anniversary cake was the start of the main event – the Munting Maria Clara Fashion Show.

But first I'd like to give special thanks to the following: Judge No.1, Alma Ydeo Tablada from Sison, Pangasinan. Alma, a single mother of six beautiful children (a feat by itself!), carry a wealth of work experience. A BSEd graduate, caregiver, she is also a business entrepreneur (Elite Executive of IAM Barley.) In addition, she won the title of Mrs Philippines Montreal, Manila 2022. At press time, she is the reigning queen of Miss Independence – Montreal, Canada 2023.

Judge No.2 was Richel Llacer whose passions for fitness and looking good made her an ideal choice as judge. A mother of two children, she is also a certified Zumba instructor. She has an advice to everyone: "Stay in shape. Be active. It makes you feel you are on top of the world!" What an inspiration; way to go, Richel!

Judge No.3 was Sir Febrio Hangdaan (KOR), an engineer by profession. He holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines. To date, he is CEO of Wigan Food Enterprises, and presently the Chapter Commander of Etobicoke, Ontario Chapter.

Now, we begin the fashion show. Each contestant was dressed to the nines. You should see their gowns – WOW – their outfits could easily mimic those of celebrities. And the way they carried themselves from the balloon filled entrance, parading in front of the judges, posing for photographs, and carrying their beautiful smiles until they reached the stage was simply breathtaking.

The contest was divided into three (3) categories - Native, Traditional and Modern. Here are the contestants in the Native Category: Sophie Marie Danzil, Kayla Jane Taluba, Elyssee Reuben Padua, and Sophie Vargas. In the Traditional Category: Sophia Nicole Bona, Layla Jane Taluban, Kylie de Guzman, and Kimberly Otida. In the Modern Category: Georgina Vargas, Elyssee-Rauben Padura, Kylie de Guzman, and Kimberly Otida. Certificate holders were Gemma Landolsa, Mary Ann Laxamana, Rosalina Ranga, Rosie San Juan Alma Ydeo, Isabelle de la Piedra and Baby Kim.

Sincere congratulations and a big round of applause go to the one and only Esphe Manaog, who almost single-handedly organized the fashion show. She is truly an event planner extraordinaire as well as a competent and kindhearted president!

Guess who just added one more candle to his cake! It's none other than the beloved chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM), Al Abdon. Freshly 74, he was the guest of honor on mid-October surrounded by family and friends. A HUGE Thank You to Jacques and Jeannette Perignon for graciously opening their lovely home to celebrate Chairman Al's birthday. FHSM members enjoyed a sumptuous potluck with plenty of leftovers, to the delight of all! Special mention goes to Cookie, their beloved puppy, who

doubled as the entertainer/host of the evening. (And thank you to the bartending skills of Jacques as well as the couple's supreme hospitality!

I must say the FHSM is a very good group. We all felt like family, as if we have known Al for many years. We enjoyed the eating part plus the happy picture taking session. Present were the chairman's charming wife, Cora, Wynne Abdon, Rina Abdon, Royce Coomis, Fely Bisares, Edrina Bisares, Joy Rosales, Elma Bulatao, Rebecca Aguilar, Ciony Nueva, Eppie Gevero, Nora Arcalas, Valent Lloyd Hughes, Dolly Belandres, Bert Abiera, and Ricardo Ribaya & wife Nila. Happy Birthday again Al! We love you!

Last Saturday, Oct 7, 2023, the Kahirup (Hiligaynon Association of Quebec) celebrated their 32nd Anniversary. Their 32nd? Really? Time does fly fast! They held it at the Olympia Reception Hall on 3855 Blvd. St Jean in Dollard des Ormeaux. The highlight of the anniversary was the induction of officers by Frank Baylis, CEO, Baylis Medical Technologies. Here are the new incoming officers: Jeannette Perignon (President), Elsa Montealegre (Vice President), Lea Baldelovar (Secretary), Amelia San

From Page 9 John Abbott College

sometimes only teach one course a semester, so they might not be present for the demonstrations. She notes that the reason for the large turnout is that all the staff are experiencing financial hardship, even the long-tenured teachers at John Abbott College who may be more financially secure. According to Mastorakos, the cost of food and even a new automobile is becoming ever more expensive due to inflation. Such she adds is a particular difficulty for the staff who drive to John Abbott, as it is in the suburbs. She also claims that the remuneration for a new teacher is insufficient, making it difficult for the school to recruit new instructors.

"It's not just about teachers, it's about the future of our public service and the future of our educational system" she adds.

Are there any concerns from students?

Mastorakos states that of course there are concerns from students. According to Mastorakos, the particularity of a strike is that it is "short-term pain for long-term gain", and that if one does not perceive the long term, the short term feels very immediate and anxiety-inducing. As a result, John Abbott College students

Juan (Asst. Sec.), Nida Meriales (Treasurer), Rosalinda Navarro (Asst. Treas.), Ramon Bangalan (Auditor), Maria Eloisa Dee (Auditor), Rose Ledesma (PRO), Marilyn Villanueva and Freddie Espinosa (Business Managers) and Arthur Caro (Asst. Bus. Mgr.). Peace Officers are Martin Donald, Richard Perignon and Jarred Caro. Advisers are Corren Caro, Edsel Canto, Consuelo Espinosa, and Azur Paginado.

Special mention goes to the the Subli folk dance performed gracefully by Jeannette Perignon and Rose Ruance. Lastly, kudos to the wonderful emceeing of Joseph Gonzales. You can always count on him to make any event lively!

As I come to a close, let's encourage one another in waiting for Advent, the expectation of Christmas - the birth of Jesus Christ. In the busiest season of the year, don't forget 1 Chronicles 16:11 that reminds us to "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually." Remember also His promise in Psalm 28:7 that says, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me."

See you next issue. God bless!

are very anxious about how this will affect them, such as if the semester will be extended. According to Mastorakos, regardless of these strikdays, the semester should conclude before Christmas. She does, however, add that there is a possibility the semester would run into January if there were further strike days.

According to Mastorakos, the college is trying to teach the students that the demands are also for them. Both pre-university students, who will be employed in five to six years, and technical program graduates will soon be joining the workforce in large numbers. She states that it might be difficult to see so far ahead when one is 17 or 18 years old, but if incomes are not adjusted right now, the students will not have a chance to have a salary that they can survive on in 5-6 years.

"Yes, it sucks, nobody likes to strike, nobody likes the disturbance to the semester, teachers least of all" she adds. She claims that given how disruptive and difficult the strikes are, the large number of teachers in attendance and the high strike vote count convey the importance of the demands. #

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FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Francine Diaz's scented success story



Kapamilya actress Francine Diaz

On a Friday afternoon at the activity center of Trinoma Mall, fans, predominantly teenagers, eagerly awaited the arrival of Francine Diaz.

When the 19-year-old actress stepped onto the stage, a collective burst of screams and adoration filled the air. Francine was a vision of teen sweet sophistication in a shimmering strapless white top adorned with delicate white flower accents and bell-bottom jeans.

As she swayed to the viral Rihanna hit, "If It's Love That You Want," the crowd was entranced. With every graceful movement, she seemed to channel the song's rhythm and

energy.

The event, graced by Bench's top executives, marked the grand unveiling of two fragrances passionately

promoted by Francine.

The teen actress has always loved fragrances, and she is excited to finally have her own scents. She worked closely

with Bench to develop two fragrances that reflect her personality: "Spring Day" is a fresh and floral scent, while "Royal Dream" is a more sophisticated and elegant scent.

Diaz hopes that her fragrances will bring joy and confidence to the people who wear them. She also wants to encourage people to pursue their dreams, no matter how difficult they may seem.

Her launch of Bench Scents is also a notable achievement. It is rare for a young celebrity to have their own fragrance line, and it shows that Francine is taking her career seriously.

From teen idol to variety show host

Francine began her career as a child actress, appearing in various television shows and films. She gained widespread recognition for her role in the hit ABS-CBN series *Kadenang Ginto*.

Just recently, Francine was selected to be one of the co-hosts of the noontime show *It's Your Lucky Day*. She was initially hesitant to accept the role, but she was eventually convinced by her fans and the show's producers.

Her hosting stint was short-lived, but it was a valuable experience for her. She learned a lot about hosting and enjoyed connecting with the audience. She is also grateful for the opportunity to have worked with such talented co-hosts and crew members.

"It was a learning experience for me. Every episode thought me many different things and I hope I can use them to in my next projects," she said.

One of the most rewarding aspects of hosting the show for Francine was getting to hear the stories of the contestants. She was inspired by their resilience and determination, and she learned to appreciate her own blessings more deeply. ■



Bench Scents launching is attended by Francine's supportive fans

Miss Universe crowns first Nicaraguan winner, Philippine bet Michelle Dee reaches Top 10



Nicaragua's first-ever Miss Universe Sheynnis Palacios brings home the crown. Our very own Michelle Dee reached Top 10 but did not advance to Top 5.

Twenty-three-year-old model and communications graduate, Sheynnis Palacios, made history on 18 November night (19 November in the Philippines) by clinching Nicaragua's first Miss Universe crown.

She was proclaimed winner

During the finals night, 27-year-old Danish-Thai model and entrepreneur Anntonia Porsild, representing Thailand, was declared first runner-up, while 22-year-old sports coach and model Moraya Wilson from Australia emerged as second runner-up.

Miss Universe 2022 R'Bonney Gabriel from the United



MICHELLE Dee in her final evening gown, designed by Mark Bumgarner and a tribute to Kalinga traditional tattooist Whang-Od.

of the 72nd iteration of the international beauty pageant, besting 83 other contestants, at the José Adolfo Pineda Arena in San Salvador, El Salvador.

States crowned Palacios.

Meanwhile, Philippine bet Michelle Marquez Dee made it as one of the 10 finalists.

During the final question-

and-answer, the three finalists answered the same question: "If you could live one year in another woman's shoes, who would you choose, and why?" Palacios, an audiovisual producer and mental health advocate from Managua, replied: "I would choose Mary Wollstonecraft because she opened the gap, and gave an opportunity to many women."

What I would do, I would want that gap, that income gap, would open up so that women could work in any area that they chose to work in because there's no limitation for women. That was in 1750. Now in 2023, we're making history."

Palacios was previously crowned as Miss Teen Nicaragua 2016, and then Miss World

Nicaragua 2020, going on to compete at Miss World 2021, where she finished at the top 40.

This year's Miss Universe is seen by many to be a history-making contest for its diversity, inclusivity and several improvements.

"Sabi ko, talagang hindi pa panahon natin mamatay. Kasi lahat umayon sa amin ultimo 'yung flight namin kinabukasan, hindi na-cancel," he said.

He also shared how Julie Anne felt regarding their traumatic experience in Israel.

"Takot si Julie... na parang ang dami nilang realizations ni Rayver na parang ganu'n pala. Hindi ko alam kung... kaya talagang, enjoy your life to the fullest talaga. Kasi life is too short. Hindi mo alam e," Zamora ended.

Michelle Dee after Top 10 finish in Miss Universe 2023: "Thank you so much for raising our flag with me."



Miss Universe 2023 Top 10 Michelle Dee: "Love and kindness over everything!"

Michelle Dee thanked Filipinos for raising the Philippine flag with her after finishing in the Top 10 at Miss Universe 2023.

Michelle held a broadcast on Instagram a few minutes after the Top 5 announcement.

In a series of replies in the broadcast thread, Michelle expressed her gratitude to the fans

who continued to cheer her and congratulate her on her performance at this year's Miss Universe held in El Salvador.

"Love and kindness over everything!" she greeted her fans.

"Mahal ko kayo. Thank you so much for raising our flag with me," she added. ■

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15*

Dolly de Leon honored to work with Nicole Kidman



Nicole Kidman and Dolly de Leon

Golden Globe nominee Dolly de Leon is filled with gratitude and appreciation for her international projects.

With upcoming roles in the highly-anticipated series "9 Perfect Strangers" starring Oscar winner Nicole Kidman, as well as movies like "Between the Temples" and "Grand Death Lotto," de Leon acknowledged the significance of these projects for her career.

As she embarked on shooting for "9 Perfect Strangers," de Leon felt a deep sense of gratitude for the chance to work alongside Kidman.

De Leon is set to star alongside with the renowned Australian actress in the second season of "9 Perfect Strangers."

De Leon recognized this opportunity as a milestone in her career and is thankful for the chance to learn and grow from working with such esteemed industry professionals.

"I'm so happy, I'm so excited and thrilled. I don't think it's just happening to me, it's happening to all of us kasi parang ito na 'yung chance natin to be in the world. Sobra akong excited it's the Nicole Kidman," de Leon said. ■

Andrea Brillantes no longer follows Kathryn Bernardo on Instagram



Andrea Brillantes and Kathryn Bernardo.

Days after Kathryn Bernardo seemingly unfollowed her on Instagram, Andrea Brillantes appears to have similarly removed the former from her following list.

Netizens were intrigued after noticing that Bernardo can no longer be seen on Brillantes' Instagram following list as of Tuesday, Nov. 21. It can be noted that the younger actress was still following the "A Very Good Girl" star last Nov. 17.

While the actresses have yet to publicly comment on the matter, this came amid rumors that

Brillantes had been meeting secretly with Bernardo's boyfriend, actor Daniel Padilla.

Bernardo and Padilla were also earlier hounded by breakup speculations, but the couple appears to have dismissed these after they were seen dancing together at an event.

Bernardo and Padilla, who has yet to address the rumors as well, have been in a relationship since 2012. Meanwhile, Brillantes' last known relationship was with basketball player Ricci Rivero. ■

Heart Evangelista on Marian Rivera: 'Real queens support each other'



Marian Rivera and Heart Evangelista

Socialite-artist Heart Evangelista spoke kind words about her fellow actress Marian Rivera, closing the chapter of the years-long rumored feud between the two.

Their fans noticed that they've begun following each other on Instagram, even exchanging

comments on one of Heart's posts.

In an interview with several members of the media including Philstar.com at an 11.11 sale launch of a fashion retailer, Heart was asked about her recent exchange with Marian.

Heart shared that Marian is a colleague of her sister who have

been in touch for a while, and that she and Marian have several mutual friends.

"Hindi lang ako nagpapa-interview because I don't want [it to be seen as] publicity. Something like that should be from the heart," Heart continued. "Marian, we've always liked each other, and it's a true testament that queens should always support each other... Real queens support each other."

Related: Fans rejoice as Marian Rivera, Heart Evangelista now follow each other on Instagram

She explained that her situation with Marian has never been in troubling doubt, pointing to outside forces as to why a so-called rift emerged.

"It's really the people around us that make things bad....

Okay kaming dalawa as individuals," Heart said. "I really appreciate her. She has a very strong character. I really appreciate her kindness and her heart."

Heart also said that the recent events are something people can apply in their own lives as someone who does not want any rivalries, "Yung mga away natin sa ibang tao [na] nakakasalungat sa buhay natin, sometimes the person isn't our real enemy."

Heart is not sure if she will have a chance to work with Marian again anytime soon. They last appeared together in the 2011 comedy film "Temptation Island" with Rufa Mae Quinto, Lovi Poe and Solenn Heussaff.

"What's important is in the real world, we're okay," she ended.

'My love life isn't a priority': Kris Aquino breaks up with Mark Leviste anew

"Queen of All Media" Kris Aquino has broken up once again with Batangas Vice Governor Mark Leviste.

In her latest health update on Instagram, Kris said that she initiated the break up last November 3.

"A long distance relationship is difficult when undergoing very physically demanding treatments like my methotrexate and my Dupixent. But I got my latest blood panel, apart from my very low hemoglobin, all my autoimmune markers are slowly improving," Kris started her post.

"The truth is that I chose to lessen the stressors in my life and put my wellbeing first... on November 3, 2023, I initiated our breakup. It was a well thought out decision based on choosing to do what's best for me now. I'm dealing with so much and my love life isn't a priority," she added.

Kris didn't mention the reason but she asked her fans to pray also for her sisters.

"To protect my family's privacy, please allow me to not give details about something that's weighing heavily in our hearts (if you can pray for my sisters too, in the way you're praying for me, sobra sobra ang pasasalamat



Kris Aquino and Mark Leviste

ko)...," she said.

"Maraming salamat po, against all odds I am slowly getting better and by God's grace my autoimmune thyroiditis has gone into remission.

"And also because my doctors caught it early enough, my 5th autoimmune, the mixed connective tissue disease which was strongly pointing towards RA (rheumatoid arthritis) or SLE (lupus) in my latest panel seem to

not be a present threat.

"From 5, I'm now just battling 3, BUT 1 of them is the main contrabida because it's life threatening. THANK YOU for your prayers. God really is listening. #grateful."

Recently, Leviste said that he and Kris are still in a relationship.

They will supposedly celebrate their 7th monthsary this month.

"We're in a different level and I can only hope that everything will work out for the better. I can proudly say that we're still together, still going strong," Mark said.

"To my count, we are officially six months going on seven in a relationship this November," he added.

Kris clarified in the same post that Mark saying they are still in a relationship was no longer true when the news came out.

Angelica Panganiban reveals battle with potentially disabling bone condition



Actress Angelica Panganiban is currently battling avascular necrosis.

She revealed this in her most recent vlog, sharing how it took her by surprise.

She said, "Nakaramdam ako ng awa sa sarili ko na, 'Bakit

ako, bakit sa akin nangyari ito?"

But what is it exactly?

According to the Mayo Clinic website, Avascular necrosis is the death of bone tissue due to a lack of blood supply. Also called osteonecrosis, it can lead to tiny breaks in the bone and cause the

bone to collapse.

Anyone can be affected. But the condition is most common in people between the ages of 30 and 50.

Avascular necrosis is also associated with long-term use of high-dose steroid medications and too much alcohol.

The 37-year-old mother shared how it all started with her feeling a bit of pain around the hip area during her pregnancy with daughter Amila Sabine Homan.

"Six months into pregnancy, meron na akong mga nararamdamang sakit sa may hips," she recalled.

"Hindi ko actually mapinpoint noon kung sa hips, sa leg, sa likod or sa puwitan."

She added, "Nagtanong-tanong ako sa mga doktor and friends ko na naging mommy na rin, and lahat naman sila sinasabi na it's part of pregnancy."

"So nung nanganak ako, wala rin talaga akong time na pansinin kung ano ba talaga yung mga masakit sa katawan ko."

Angelica thought the pain would eventually go away.

It didn't.

The pain actually doubled following a recent trip -- to the point where she could hardly walk.

Initially, she tried therapy. It actually worked for a while but the pain returned with a vengeance. It became more persistent.

It was then that Angelica and fiancé Gregg Homan, decided to visit a bone specialist.

They were told what it is exactly that is ailing her.

"Namatay na yung mga bones ko sa balakang. Kaya pala hirap na ako maglakad," Angelica said.

She is now undergoing treatment. ■

From Page 2 Oslo Peace Accords

exuberant U.S. president embraced the duo, smiling like a proud parent.

The occasion was the signing of the first agreement of what came to be known as the Oslo Accords, which established an interim framework that, if implemented successfully, might actually lead to final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Even with all the challenges that lay ahead, I was convinced that the Arab-Israeli peace process was now irreversible.

Efraim Halevy, who in just a few years would become the head of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, would later write to me questioning my faith in that irreversibility and fearing the confrontation that could follow. Halevy's analysis proved all too prescient. Today, 30 years after that historic day, what remains of the spirit and much of the substance of the Oslo agreement lies bloodied, buried, and betrayed across an Israeli-Palestinian landscape that seems to leave little room for hope and none for illusions.

The most right-wing and fundamentalist government in Israel's history sits in Jerusalem, committed to the annexation of the West Bank in everything but name only, as well as expanding settlements and enabling settler terror and violence against Palestinians. The Palestinian national movement is deeply divided, resembling a kind of Noah's Ark where there are two of everything—constitutions, governments, security services, patrons, and even visions of Palestine. In Gaza, Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad plan and encourage terror attacks against Israelis, while in Ramallah, a weak and discredited Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority is unable or unwilling to control terror emanating from the northern West Bank.

Yet the lessons of Oslo still have some relevance, whatever the future holds for Israelis and Palestinians. Having had a ringside seat during those fateful years, four key takeaways stand out for me personally.

1. Interim can't be final.

On paper, the Oslo Accords seemed logical and compelling. Territory would be transferred gradually to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for its assumption of security responsibilities. As we'll see, the perverse dance between the occupier and the occupied would doom this approach. But it might have survived had the two sides been willing to make it clear from the outset what final outcome the interim period was supposed to produce, and then taken mutually reciprocal actions on the ground to prepare for it.

For Palestinians, that final outcome was an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. For Israelis, it was TBD—to be determined. Driven by domestic politics and their own doubts about the Palestinians' capacity for statehood and what it might mean for Israeli security, neither Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin nor his successor Shimon Peres were prepared to commit to any agreed outcome—even as an aspirational vision. You can look long

and hard for the term "Palestinian state" in the Oslo documents, but you won't find it. It would take another half-dozen years before the idea of statehood worked its way into Israel's negotiating assumptions. Not until 2001, as U.S. President Bill Clinton left office, did the United States formally and publicly articulate support for a two-state solution.

With no clear end goal to work toward, the process floundered. By 1999, not a single Oslo deadline had been met. Negotiations on permanent



Muslim worshippers are silhouetted while celebrating in front of the Dome of the Rock mosque in Old Jerusalem on May 13, 2021, before the morning Eid al-Fitr prayer, which marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

status had begun three times but produced nothing, and neither Israelis nor Palestinians could see where things were headed. But both had grown weary and wary of a seemingly never-ending interim process punctuated by Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israeli settlement expansion.

The result was the situation we have now: a strategic cul-de-sac in which the two sides are stuck and the gaps on issues such as borders and Jerusalem are as wide as the Grand Canyon, with no shared vision and no faith that one will ever materialize.

2. Leaders—and not just their negotiators—have to be willing to yield.

It seems like another world now given the state of relations between Israelis and Palestinians today, but back then, the negotiators for both sides actually worked hard together to solve problems and manage the ones they couldn't. It was less so for the leaders who had to deal with the politics of the negotiating process and defend what they could—and punt and parry the issues they couldn't.

In the early Oslo years before Rabin's murder in November 1995, the Israelis and Palestinians doing the negotiating laughed, yelled, and cried together against the backdrop of a roller coaster environment that included agreements, missed deadlines, Palestinian and Israeli terror attacks, and continuing frustrations and suspicions. They became friends. I saw security officials from both sides—hard men with blood on their hands—engage with one another with respect and even affection. At one negotiating session at the Laromme Hotel in Jerusalem, an exhausted West Bank security chief Jabril Rajoub laid down in the same bed with Israel Defense Forces' central commander Shaul Mofaz, jokingly pretending to take a nap.

For the negotiators, Oslo was not about zero-sum advantage but

mutual benefit. That view was best embodied by Oslo's two lead negotiators, Uri Savir and Abu Ala (both of whom have since died), who would become fast friends. Interviewing them both in 2013 on the 25th anniversary of Oslo, that sense of partnership was front and center. Abu Ala, also known as Ahmed Qureia, opined about the promise Oslo held: After decades of bitter struggle, during which both saw each other only through a barrel of a gun, they realized that it is possible to overcome hatred, misgivings, denial,

and their own red lines. Neither man was a dreamer, but both saw the opportunity that Oslo offered to better understand the needs of the other and to humanize the adversary.

I sometimes thought that, had the decision-making been left to Abu Ala and Savir, Oslo would have had a better chance of delivering. But in the hard and cruel world of Israeli and Palestinian politics, leaders had their own personal and political constraints with which to reckon.

For Rabin, dealing with the Palestinian issue was never his first choice. It is true that as defense minister during the First Intifada, Rabin began to understand that the conflict had no military solution, and by the spring of 1993, he had reached the conclusion that no one—not Jordan, not West Bankers, not Gazans—could replace the PLO as an interlocutor. But peace with Syria was his preference because of its strategic character and its avoidance of hot-button issues such as Jerusalem. Then, in August 1993, with the U.S.-mediated Israeli-Syrian channel making progress but with little chance of a dramatic breakthrough, the secret Oslo channel delivered—and suddenly, Rabin was thrust into dealing with the Palestinian issue head on.

Oslo Is Dead, the Two-State Solution Isn't

A two-state solution remains the only politically viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and, with the right Israeli and U.S. leaders, it can be achieved outside the Oslo framework.

In the Oslo Accords, Rabin made a historic decision with respect to the Palestinians. But translating that to an Israeli bureaucracy and security establishment that held the key to making life better for Palestinians on the ground proved much harder. By 1993, the policies of the Israeli occupation had become deeply entrenched in Israeli politics and day-to-day relations with

Palestinians.

Rabin had also locked himself into a public commitment not to dismantle any settlements during the interim period, and to do so only as part of a permanent status negotiations. He would later regret that decision when, in the wake of an Israeli settler massacring 29 Palestinians in Hebron, he resisted pressures from within his own government to remove the 400 settlers living there who required a large Israeli military presence to protect them. Rabin was fearful of reaction from the right-wing opposition and worried that Yasser Arafat, then the chairman of the PLO, would exploit the crisis to push for an international presence in the West Bank. Yet Rabin's unwillingness or inability to limit, let alone halt, settlement expansion diminished Palestinian willingness to implement their own commitments under Oslo.

As for Arafat, I was never really sure of his motives for accepting the Oslo Accords. They compelled him, at least for the moment, to recognize Israel without achieving any of the Palestinians' demands—not self-determination, not statehood, not East Jerusalem as a Palestinian capital, not the right of return for Palestinian refugees. My best guess is that for Arafat, Oslo represented Israel's, the United States', and the international community's validation of himself and the PLO as the only legitimate avenue for dealing with the Palestinians. Arafat put up with the interim process because, in essence, the entire world recognized him as the exclusive address for all matters Palestinian. It was the triumph of personal ego over national interest.

But Oslo proved to be the first and last concession that Arafat was prepared to make. In March 2002, during a mission with the George W. Bush administration's special envoy, Anthony Zinni, we saw Arafat at his headquarters surrounded by Israeli forces. Entrances barricaded, windows blacked out, candles on the table lighting an otherwise darkened conference room, there was Arafat with his black machine gun on the conference table, talking about martyrdom for the cause of Palestine.

He had come a long way, but could never quite make the transition from the mentality of a revolutionary leader committed to armed struggle and the use of violence against Israel to the world of compromise and diplomacy that would have been required, together with a foresighted Israeli leader, to bring about the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3. The occupier and the occupied aren't equals in negotiations.

The good news about Oslo was that Israelis and Palestinians had managed to hammer out a substantive and complex agreement between themselves directly, face-to-face. It's like that old adage: In the history of the world, nobody has ever washed a rental car. Why? Because folks only care about what they own. Oslo was an example of authentic ownership. Agreement was reached because the parties themselves had a sense of

urgency and a need for their own interests to come together without external pressure.

But the Israeli and Palestinian dual act was also bad news because of the power imbalance between the two parties: one the occupier, Israel, and one the occupied, the Palestinians. Given this reality, it was remarkable that anything got done at all in terms of

4. A mediator must be present—and credible.

In many respects, the early years of Oslo were a U.S. negotiator's dream. Israelis and Palestinians had finally done what we had been encouraging them to do for years: get together and work through their own problems themselves. Rabin briefed

What this meant in practice was a disposition favoring Israel on process, substance, tight coordination, and no surprises.

I'll never forget: On the fourth day of the summit, I saw the late Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat on one of the walking paths. He stopped and asked when the Palestinians were going to receive the draft of a paper that

Such a proposal will almost certainly be resisted by extremist ministers in Netanyahu's government, and it's unclear how flexible Netanyahu—who is desperate for a deal with the Saudis—will be. Still, it would be quite extraordinary if the presumed dead and buried architecture of the Oslo process was resurrected to try to redeem the fast-fading hopes of



Left: Construction on the Jewish settlement of Maale Adumim in the West Bank in May 1996. ESAIAS BAITEL/GAMMA-RAPHO VIA GETTY IMAGES
Right: A young Palestinian boy from East Jerusalem, wearing a Hamas headband, points a toy gun at an Israeli border police officer on Dec. 10, 1994, as the police tell the boy's father to leave the street outside Jerusalem's Old City walls. SWEN NACKSTRAND/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

territorial transfer, economic and security cooperation, and building Palestinian institutions.

The asymmetry of power was clear: As the occupier, Israel wielded the power of the strong—the capacity to impose its will on the Palestinians. This took the form of everything from settlement construction, land confiscation, and housing demolitions to closures of the West Bank cities and towns (preventing travel), and targeted killings. Settlement construction was especially egregious, with 115,700 Israeli settlers residing in the West Bank and Gaza at the end of 1993; by mid-1999, that number had risen to 176,973.

Palestinians, on the other hand, wielded the power of the weak: terrorism. As the weaker party in the negotiations, Palestinian leaders rationalized the use of terror and violence and the armed struggle against Israel as an acceptable instrument to fight back against Israeli occupation and the ongoing settlement expansion. Even though most of the terrorist attacks in the early Oslo years were carried out by Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad outside of the Palestinian Authority's control, Arafat—who never abandoned the use of violence as potential tool—could or would not do more to prevent terrorist attacks or arrest the perpetrators.

From Israel's perspective, land was transferred to the Palestinians, yet the terrorism continued, raising questions about the PLO's reliability. From the Palestinian perspective, Israel had put Palestinians on probation. Israel was appropriating land that Palestinians believed to be theirs, and any confidence-building measures were only offered in return for Palestinian performance and good behavior. These mindsets produced a barrier that, in the absence of a third party that could help balance the power asymmetry and press each side to implement their commitments, proved insurmountable.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the outlines of the Oslo breakthrough in July, minus the mutual recognition package. But neither Rabin nor Arafat wanted Americans in on the substance—Rabin wanted the United States involved only to pressure the Palestinians but was wary that the Americans might adopt a pro-Palestinian position, and Arafat was concerned they'd side with the Israelis.

And so, in the early years until Rabin's murder in late 1995, Washington's role was limited to hosting signing ceremonies, rallying donors, and playing firefighter at critical points when negotiations reached a crisis—such as when a terrorist attack occurred, or when Israeli settlement expansion or other unilateral acts threatened the process. What the United States didn't—and couldn't—do, largely because of Israel's objections, was create the one thing that might have actually given the Oslo process durability: a monitoring mechanism to hold each side to the commitments they had made and, if necessary, impose costs for a breach.

Doing so was a bridge too far. This was partly because of the United States' traditional special relationship with Israel, which made getting tough with the Israelis, especially on settlement expansion, off limits; partly because of the Clinton administration's determination to improve relations with Israel after the stormy years of former President George H.W. Bush; and partly because, when it came to Oslo violations, terrorist attacks were understandably viewed as more lethal than settlement expansion and pushed the United States to side with Israel.

From Oslo on, with Rabin's pro-peace successor Peres and especially with Ehud Barak at the Camp David summit, Clinton didn't want to jam up Israeli prime ministers. Far too often, Americans—myself included—essentially acted as Israel's lawyer.

we were preparing on the core issues. I said it was taking more time to prepare than we thought. Smiling, Saeb replied, "Aaron, you've given it to the Israelis first, haven't you?" I smiled back and kept on walking.

In the wake of Rabin's murder, the United States tried to take a more active role. From 1995 to 2000, working with Arafat and two Israeli prime ministers—Benjamin Netanyahu and Barak—Americans were able to keep the process alive, broker three interim accords, and strengthen Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation, with the CIA working directly with the Palestinians. But the same structural factors that made Oslo a long shot even in the heady days of the fall 1993—the absence of an agreed political vision, the perverse dance between the occupier and the occupied, and terrorism and settlements—were simply too much to overcome.

And what proved to be an ill-advised and ill-conceived summit in July 2000 at Camp David, however well intentioned, could not redeem what had already been lost.

In the 30 years since the Oslo Accords, Israeli-Palestinian peace turned out to be anything but inevitable. Looking back, Oslo represented a moment when Israelis and Palestinians came together in hopes of securing a better future.

Paradoxically, talk of potential Israeli-Saudi normalization has revived a key concept of the Oslo process focusing on the so-called Area C, which constitutes 60 percent of the West Bank and is where most of Israel's settlements are located. There are credible reports of various proposals made by the Palestinian Authority, the United States, and Saudi Arabia arguing that Israel should agree to transfer a significant portion of Area C to Palestinian control as part an agreement between Riyadh and Jerusalem to normalize relations.

progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

But even with this potential opening, there's still no clear pathway to end the conflict, and no organizing principle around which a majority of Israelis and Palestinians can rally. Without giving up hope—and we cannot—we also should not succumb to facile illusions and assumptions about silver bullets that can redeem a peaceful future for both peoples. If Oslo demonstrated anything, it's that even with leadership and partnership, the journey is long, hard, and strewn, more often than not, with failure.

None of this means that the past is inexorably prologue. None of us can see around corners, and abandoning the search for an equitable and durable Israeli-Palestinian peace is neither morally nor ethically responsible—and it's not in U.S. interests. We need leaders who see peace as critical to their own people and who are prepared to understand and work to accommodate the needs of the other side; a mediator who's prepared to be reassuring, patient, and tough on both sides when necessary; and an end state that recognizes that a durable and equitable solution depends on a balance of interests, not an asymmetry of power.

None of these things is available now. Yet the United States may someday have another opportunity to pursue Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, and we should do so without illusion and without believing we can do it alone or abandoning that pursuit if we run into serious challenges. And with right-thinking and courageous Israelis and Palestinians, support from the Arab world and beyond, and a fair amount of luck, one day—who knows—we might just get there.

Aaron David Miller is a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former U.S. State Department Middle East analyst and negotiator in Republican and Democratic administrations. Twitter: @aarondmiller2



NOVEMBER 2023 PICTORIAL NEWS



A photo op to mark the completion of the Elie Wiesel Park - The place name of this park was made possible by the resolution of Marvin Rotrand in 2019 and took fruition while he was still councilor but completed by Sonny Moroz who is currently the Snowdon councilor. Rotrand and Moroz requested the CDN-NDG Borough Council to hold an official inauguration of the park when all on-going residential construction adjacent to the park is completed. They also urged that the Wiesel family be invited from the United States as well as Jewish community leaders, community organizations and human rights advocates in Montreal.



Former first lady Rosalynn Carter, the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians, has died at the age of 96. The Carter Center said she died Sunday, November 19, after living with dementia and suffering many months of declining health. The statement said she "died peacefully, with family by her side" at 2:10 p.m. at her rural Georgia home of Plains.

"Rosalynn was my equal partner in everything I ever accomplished," the former president said in the statement. "She gave me wise guidance and encouragement when I needed it. As long as Rosalynn was in the world, I always knew somebody loved and supported me."

The Carters were married for more than 77 years, forging what they both described as a "full partnership." Unlike many previous first ladies, Rosalynn sat in on Cabinet meetings, spoke out on controversial issues and represented her husband on foreign trips. (AP News)



King Charles celebrates his 75th birthday a day early - with host of famous faces - The monarch was joined in the grounds of his Highgrove home in Gloucestershire by celebrity chef Raymond Blanc and The Repair Shop host Jay Blades - as well as community stalwarts who are also turning 75 this year. The King, who was born on 14 November 1948, will be spending his birthday on Tuesday with the Queen launching the Coronation Food Project, which aims to bridge the gap between food waste and food need. (Vanity Fair)



ASSERTION IN THE SKIES Streaking over the West Philippine Sea near Batanes on Nov. 21 is a formation of two FA-50PH aircraft of the Philippine Air Force (left) and two US fighter jets. **PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE HANDOUT**

China has accused the Philippines of enlisting "foreign forces" to patrol the South China Sea (SCS) to stir up trouble, referring to the three-day joint patrols this week by Philippine and US forces in the West Philippine Sea.

The Chinese military would maintain high vigilance, resolutely defend sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and resolutely safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea, China's military said on Thursday.

At the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon news briefing on Thursday, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Col. Medel Aguilar said a "passing exercise" was held with a US Navy vessel during the joint patrol. Whenever two vessels coming from different countries meet at sea and at the same time, there will be exchanges of communications, there will be maneuvers.