



The Official Junior High School Publication of La Consolacion College Caloocan

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**Family and Faith:** Teatro Unitas presents 'SALITA: Sa Lilim ng Tayutay' in a dramatic and historic inaugural Fellowship Night (Photo by Guiliana Elijah P. Buenaventura, Clarence B. Jargue, and Kristine A. Coloquio)

SC delegates, learners join  
7th KADSA Leaders'  
Congress PAGE 2

Is This the Finish Line?  
PAGE 4

The Climate Crisis:  
An Existential Threat  
PAGE 6

Teaching a Legacy  
PAGE 9

LCCian snags gold in  
Taekwondo Meet  
PAGE 16

# LCC launches first-ever Fellowship Nights

Kriza Justine L. Anaviso, Anna Francheska S. Cruz, Kristine A. Coloquio

Under the starlit embrace of December nights, LCCians experienced evenings of unity and prayer at the inaugural Fellowship gathering held at the LCCC Quadrangle from December 12 to 14.

This initiative was born out of a profound inspiration during a faculty retreat in Baguio City.

During this retreat, the faculty pondered deeply on how the school could provide tangible means to live up to its realized mission as a community of missionaries, evangelizers, and friends.

It was through this reflective process that the idea of worship nights took root, envisioning gatherings with students and parents growing deeper connections within the LCCC community.

Thus, the Fellowship Nights became a symbol of shared dedication to living out the school's mission and nurturing a vibrant community of faith and friendship.

The nights of gathering were enlightened by catechesis of Fr. Anthony Acupan, OSA, highlighting the importance of being good missionaries, evangelizers, listeners, and friends of Jesus.

"Kasama ang pamilya sa paghubog ng anak," Fr. Anthony stated. "As the child grows, their parents are already there to guide them. The love that a parent has for their child endures forever." He added.

During the second night, Enzo Ligaya, Robert Kent Pedregosa, and Hailey Rafferty Rivera led liturgy through shared prayer and gospel.

The ceremonial lighting of the advent wreath was then executed by the Aguilar family.

Subsequently, the Knights of the Altar and Friends of Mo. Consuelo performed a captivating doxology, adding a touch of reverence to the evening.

One of the most highlighted parts of the program was the play, "SALITA: Sa Lilim ng Tayutay" presented by Teatro Unitas which talked about the importance of family that touched the hearts of the audience.

In an interview with Jewel Ashley C. Viterbo, one from the main cast, expressed, "It is truly a dream come true to perform on the stage once again, especially in school activities like the Fellowship Night. It provides an excellent platform for honing

our skills and showcasing our talents."

Moreover, Anjhay Bernas, another actor, shared his journey all throughout the play, "Nung una, may mga alinlangan pa ako sa sarili ko na baka hindi ko kaya o 'di kaya mapahiya ko lang sarili ko. Pero thanks to Sir Mar Angelo Manuel, napatatag mga loob namin, at thankful din ako sa mga kasama ko na nagtiyaga at nagtulong-tulong para matapos namin itong theater play ng successful."

The night was made more meaningful by the testimonials given by students, teachers, and alumni. The two students, Kami Riley Hidal and Emeraine Santos, shared their experiences as students, which inspired many individuals present in the event.

The LCCC's alumnus and alumna, Mr. Jion Carl Redoña and Mrs. Honeylene Rivera, sympathized with us about their journey that happened inside and outside the school.

May Yuson Pascual, a parent who attended this gathering, shared her thoughts and experiences that night. "Actually, in exceed nito 'yung expectations

ko, I never thought na magkakaroon ng theater play."

"Super well-organized din nung event, may color coding pa per grade levels kaya madali lang hanapin kung saan nakapwesto. Also, the teachers are very welcoming din, mararamdaman mo rin talaga 'yung genuine feelings nila when it comes sa mga gathering na ganito," she commended.

As for Mr. Daryl Appegu and Mrs. Honeylene Rivera, the structure of this event was built on family, "Importante siya kasi this kind of event brings us family as a whole, bihira lang din kasi yung mga ganitong event like mga family day sa school. Importante siya to bring the family, na mas maging malapit pa." Their every thought was materialized into the night.

The program concluded in lively dancing and singing of LCCians and a community salusalo, exemplifying the spirit of unity and love.

As attendees departed the event, they left with valuable lessons and cherished memories to carry with them in the days to come. Meanwhile, there is widespread anticipation for the event's return next year.

## Senior lad, lass crowned '24 Mr. and Ms. United Nations

Marnisha Krismae C. Cruz

From the land of smiles – Thailand!" In a celebration of cultural diversity and international camaraderie, La Consolacion College Caloocan hosted its annual Mr. and Ms. United Nations pageant on October 26 at the LCC quadrangle.

The event showcased various global cultures and traditions, bringing together students and faculty in a vibrant display of unity.

Furthermore, the occasion highlighted the crowning of the winners, with Alexander Ezikel Santos and Angela Shersen Andrey from Thailand emerging victorious as Mr. and Ms. United Nations – embodying the Thai culture and grace captivating audience and judges alike.

"We actually did not expect to win this contest, but with the help of those people around us, we overcame this and felt assured that we could do our best even if it was our first time," Alexander stated.

Angela added, "It feels good to see that my teachers and classmates supported me during practices and the contest proper."

On the other hand, Gabriel Domingo of India and Carlux Cassey Ramirez representing Mexico bagged First Runner-up, while Samuel Vincent Palanca and Louise Julianna Lumanglas proudly represented the Philippines securing 2nd Runner-up.

To finish, Andrew Jacob Domingo of Mexico and Mheibelle Cleofe Sagun representing India clinched the 3rd Runner-up titles, further showcasing and proving the global representation and diversity of the event.

The festivities kicked off with a colorful parade of nations outside the school, where LCCians dressed in the traditional attire of their chosen countries.

The sophisticated details of their costumes reflected the beauty and significance of numerous countries and cultures, which added visual charm to the program.

During the pageant, batch teams from grade 7 to 12 collaborated to present

creative and cultural entrances that highlighted the unique qualities of their contestants and countries.

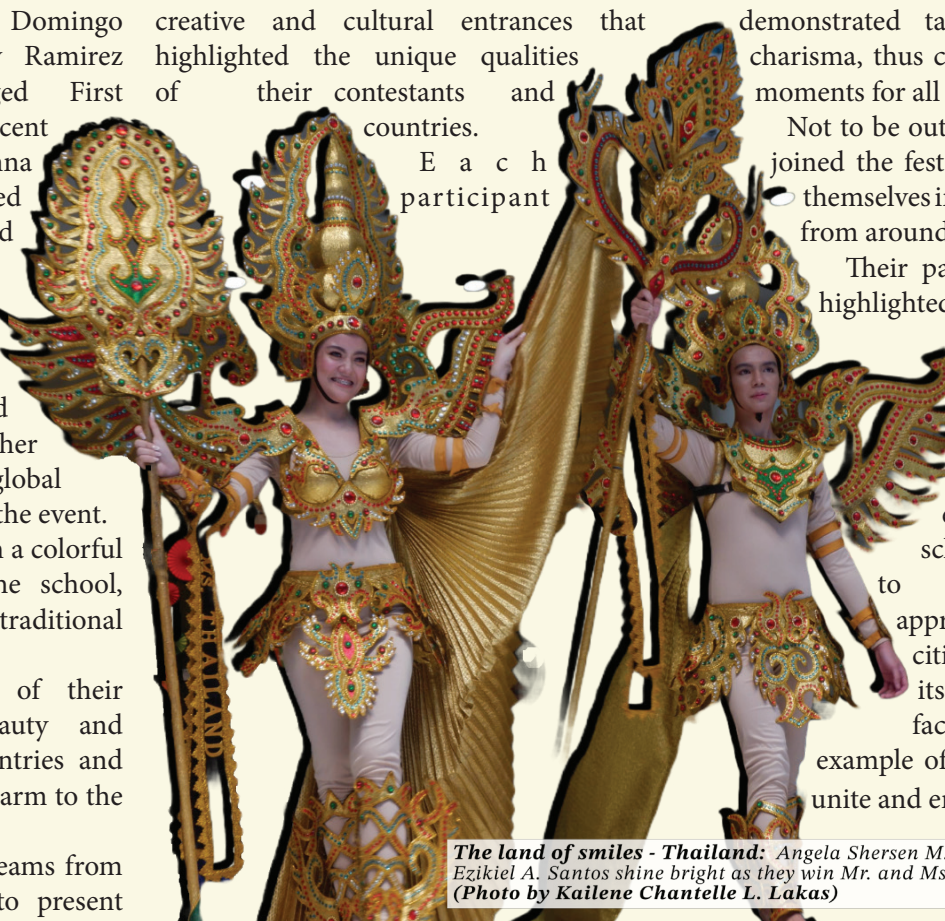
Each participant

demonstrated talent, beauty, and charisma, thus creating memorable moments for all in attendance.

Not to be outdone, teachers also joined the festivities by adorning themselves in national costumes from around the world.

Their participation further highlighted the festive atmosphere of the event.

The LCC Mr. and Ms. UN was a success, embodying the school's commitment to raising cultural appreciation and global citizenship among its students and faculty. It served as an example of how diversity can unite and enrich communities.



The land of smiles - Thailand: Angela Shersen M. Andrey and Alexander Ezikel A. Santos shine bright as they win Mr. and Ms. United Nations 2023 (Photo by Kailene Chantelle L. Lakas)



## SC delegates, learners join 7th KADSA Leaders' Congress

Carla Venice S. Manalo

Representatives from various schools under the Kalookan Association Diocese Schools (KADSA) converged at The Greenery in Baliuag, Bulacan on October 9 and 10 to participate in the 7th KADSA Leadership Congress aimed at refining their leadership acumen.

Commencing with a solemn Eucharistic mass, Fr. Kennedy A. Neral, Ph.D., KADSA Superintendent, set the tone for a two-day journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

Mr. Nancy Garcia, one of the speakers, took the lead with an interesting plenary session.

Inspired by the wisdom of Mother Teresa, Garcia urged students to lead with empathy and resilience, echoing the wisdom, "Love until it hurts, until it no longer hurts."

Subsequently, the second day commenced with a spirit of service as student leaders participated on a community immersion activity at Subic Elementary School.

Distributing much-needed school supplies and hard hats, the leaders embraced the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the young learners.

During the election of the new KADSA Student Board, Ian James L. Balarao and Jewel Ashley C. Viterbo emerged victorious as committee chairs, entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing athletics and cultural arts initiatives within KADSA.

Reflecting on his newfound role, Ian

James L. Balarao expressed a mix of humility and determination, "As a first timer to be elected in this board, I feel a lot of pressure and at the same time grateful, kasi nabigyan kami ng chance na i-represent 'yung LCCC in this election na possibly mag host ng events and for me, need mo mas maging role model and mas confident sa ibang mga tao especially in other schools and also to my fellow LCCians."

In a spirit of collaboration and friendship, student leaders worked together to facilitate workshops centered on themes of hope, equality, accountability, responsibility, and trust.

Through shared experiences and collective dialogue, participants collected invaluable insights into their roles as builders of change.

The summit culminated in unity, joy, and healthy competition, as students engaged in various activities improving camaraderie and personal growth.

Participating schools in this event were De La Salle Araneta University, Immaculate Conception Academy of Malabon, La Consolacion College Caloocan, Notre Dame of Greater Manila, San Jose Academy, St. James Academy, and St. Gabriel Academy.

With LCC's involvement, this serves as a living proof of its mission to molding compassionate, empathetic, and visionary leaders willing to shape a brighter tomorrow.



Dance Club members draw attention with their spectacular choreography during the annual Opening Salvo. (Photo by Giannah Gabrielle P. Albilar)

## Clubs embark on excellence, commence through opening salvo

Kriza Justine L. Anaviso

Clubs, orgs – youth, assemble!

In an electrifying start of the new academic year, students, and moderators united at the quadrangle on October 6 for the annual opening salvo which heralded the commencement of club activities.

As clubs confidently made their way to the grounds, the festivities kicked off, displaying not only LCCians' active participation but also their unity through chants and smiles.

The introduction of skilled club moderators became the focal point, creating cheers and applause from the crowd.

Moreover, Mr. Weldann Lester Panganiban and Mr. John Angelo Manlapaz brought excitement and energy as they led the event as hosts.

In the light of the event, Mikaella Kristyn Quimpo, president of the Environmentalist Club, shared that their plans for this academic year is to cultivate variety of seeds, both non-flowering and flowering plants with medicinal properties to benefit those who would need them.

"We have plans like basketball, volleyball, and badminton league. My vision is not only for my club, but also for all the clubs - to accomplish their planned projects," Mr. Manlapaz, Sport Club moderator, said in a statement.

"Delivering and executing these projects could help the students not to only enjoy but also foster socializing skills and develop different aspects of their life," he added.

Additionally, Dhon Virgilio Gonzales, Lens Club member, highlighted the club's agenda, including capturing moments through photography and engaging members' editing talents for creating vibrant visuals.

As the program unfolded, selected students showcased their talents. Da Capo mesmerized the audience with their musical prowess, while the Dance Club brought joy with their creative choreography, earning cheers and applause from the delighted crowd.

Vheanize Alvarez, a dance club member, reflected on her experience of leading a group for the first time, "We are extremely overjoyed and united not just by what my club presented, but also by every club's effort. All these really made the event thrilling and memorable.

The celebration also included commemorating World Teacher's Day, featuring dance performances and a heartfelt song serenade by the Student Council officers dedicated to the teachers.

A heartwarming gift-giving in honor of the hard-working and dedicated teachers followed subsequently.

Adding more accent to the festivities, the Student Council organized interactive games that encouraged student interaction.

With the success of the opening salvo, anticipation runs high as LCCians look forward to the new school year packed with promising endeavors and exciting discoveries.



Builders: KADSA delegates engage in dynamic team-building activities and community outreach initiatives during the two-day Leaders' Congress. (Photo Courtesy of KADSA Student Board)

## Young scribes bag awards in Likhaan tilt, extend successful campaign

Jewel Ashley C. Viterbo

LCC's campus journalists showed outstanding performances during the 8th KADSA Likhaan Press Conference on November 10, 2024 at St. James Academy, Malabon.

Participants from various KADSA schools competed in different categories, and LCC claimed victory across individual and group contests, earning 1st Runner-Up Overall Championship in the event themed "KADSA Campus Journalists: Transforming Communities with Truth and Love."

Setting the winning culture, Hailey Mallari (4th Place News Writing), Anna Cruz (4th Place Feature Writing), Immarey Alcala (4th Place Editorial Writing), Sofie Piad (4th Place Copyreading and Headline Writing), Dhon Gonzales (3rd Place Sports Writing), Carla Manalo (2nd Place Column Writing), Jiah Sapigao (3rd Place Editorial Cartooning), and Elyse Bantolino (4th Place Photojournalism)

made impressive runs in the individual category.

In the group categories, the Radio Broadcasting Team (English) bagged 1st Runner-Up.

Alexa Hidalgo, Jhanelle Valenzuela, Nathania Go, Chrome Manansala (3rd place Best News Presenter), Yesha Briones (2nd Place Best News Anchor), Kent Pedregosa (2nd Place Best Technical Application), Jewel Viterbo (1st Place Best in Scripwriting), and the team (2nd Place Best Infomercial) highlighted the publication's excellence.

In the Collaborative Desktop Publishing (Filipino), LCC delegates captured 4th Runner-Up, with commendable individual placements from Marnisha Cruz (5th Place Best News Page), Nadya Calina (5th Place Best Feature Page), Emeraine Santos (5th Place Best Editorial Page), Audrey Hernandez (5th Place Best Sports Page), Princess Dizon (5th

Place Best Layout), Guilana Buenaventura (5th Place Best Photojournalist), and Safiyah Wee (2nd Place Best Cartoonist).

Continuing the success, the Online Publishing Team (Filipino) also made a mark as they grabbed 4th Runner-Up as Kriza Anaviso, Anjhay Bernas, Sydney Del Rosario, Julie Bascos (5th Place Best News Section), and Franchezka Oyson (1st Place Best in Layout) manifested multimedia literary and competence.

Finishing the successful run, the JHS

school paper, Ang Kalatas, made a strong impression in the School Paper Contest, achieving 2nd place across several pages and being named the 1st Runner-Up Over-all - Best Student Publication. With a forward-thinking vision, the publication aims to join other conferences in the future to expand its experience. Under the expert supervision of Mr. Mark Angelo Tabaniag and Ms. Kathleen Veronica Castro Raga, the JHS Publication maintains its loyalty to excellence and innovation.



Beaming with Honor: JHS campus journalists celebrate their triumph at the KADSA Likhaan Press Conference, clutching awards as they continue their successful streak. (Photo by Jewel Ashley C. Viterbo)



# LCC community unites in the living rosary

Anne Lorraine E. Carag

To commemorate the month of the Holy Rosary, LCC Caloocan gathered as one community in praying the annual Living Rosary, afternoon of October 27 at the school quad.

At exactly one in the afternoon, the solemn prayer commenced with the lighting of candles by the student council officers of the grade school, junior high school, and senior high school departments.

With the help of the Religion teachers, selected staff, parents, and students held candles to represent each rosary bead.

Each solemnly walked to the center of the quad to form a rosary figure while reciting the Sorrowful Mysteries, together with the community.

Moreover, selected LCCians staged symbolic tableaux that portrayed significant events in the life of Jesus while some personalities such as Bryan Paul Sabalza, Nadyne Audrie Calina, Mr. Maron Quiambao, and Mr. Weldann Lester sang worship songs which uplifted the spirit and earnestness of the event.

Samantha Laira Palanca portrayed the revered figure of Mother Mary, captivating the audience with her portrayal of maternal love and grace, becoming the focal point of devotion and reverence.

According to Ms. Julieta Cruz, Campus Minister, "Rosary allows us to encounter Mary and to enter the mysteries of Jesus Christ. From his Incarnation to the Cross, to the Resurrection, we come to understand that God has revealed himself and saved us."

She added that LCCC is a Catholic Marian institution, and this is the community's way of showing love to Jesus and his mother, Mary.

Likewise, Mr. Weldann Lester Panganiban, Grade 9 Religion teacher stated, "The Church calls us to gather around Mary to pray especially in these times when war and conflicts are overwhelming."

"More than just guidance in our daily endeavors, we are also asked to pray for one another. It is only then that we could truly experience the joy of being in God's

presence," he concluded.

The event culminated in interpretative dances performed by students, harmonized with the community singing in simultaneous fashion. As a gesture of celebration and reverence to Jesus and Mary, candies and coins were distributed to all attendees.

The event's triumph not only lay in its meticulous planning and execution but also in the unwavering faith exhibited by the LCC-C community. It illuminated the Rosary as more than a customary ritual but as a wellspring of spiritual fortitude, sanctuary, and guidance in their lives.



**Hail Mother Most Pure:** Mary, portrayed by Samantha Laira V. Palanca, is enthroned as Queen of Heaven in the 2023 Living Rosary (Photo by Immarey Hailey P. Alcala)

## Bridging Cultures, Connecting World: LCCians shine in English fest

Mikaella Kristyn M. Quimpo



**Peace Not War:** 10 - Piety, Champions of the Speech Choir Contest, deliver a dramatic performance during the English Month Culminating Program (Photo by Giannah Gabrielle P. Albilar)

With anticipation and camaraderie, faculty, families, and students assembled at the school quadrangle on December 4, 2023, to witness the crowning event of the English Month celebration: the highly awaited Speech Choir Contest.

Under the theme, "English as a Global Language: Bridging Cultures, Connecting the World," participating classes filled the venue with the harmonious voices, powerful movements, and dramatic screams.

Ultimately, 7-Charity, 8-Courtesy, 9-Patience, and 10-Piety emerged triumphant, and wowed the audience with their renditions of "Cry Freedom," "A Time for Everything," "If I Were A Voice," and "Peace Not War," respectively.

After a pandemic hiatus, the eagerly awaited event returned, with meticulous planning and preparation.

Significant to its essence of unifying cultures, it brought together students from different batches and sections through fascinating performances.

From recitations of various literary pieces to choreographed movements, each entry gave life into the event, showing the students' dedication and talent.

Also completing the list of winners,

7-Purity, 8-Diligence, 9-Humility, and 10-Peace secured the 2nd Runner-up title, while 7-Faith, 8-Courage, 9-Love, and 10-Amity clinched the 1st Runner-up.

Amidst the triumphant atmosphere, parents of Junior High School students gathered around to capture with their cameras the significant achievement of their children and cheering with support.

Reflecting on the event, one parent expressed pride in witnessing their child's performance: "My husband and I are proud of our son. Seeing him on stage was a moment of joy. LaCo did a commendable job in organizing this event and inviting us. Hopefully, it will happen again next year."

For Angela Marie Salvador, a performer from 10-Amity, the victory brought overwhelming emotions: "I was speechless when we won. Being announced as the first runner-up felt like a breath of relief. Our hard work truly paid off when we held that trophy."

Beyond the accolades, the event symbolized unity and collaboration among students.

Regardless of the outcome, the unified effort of students showed camaraderie truly bridging cultures and connecting lives.

## LCCians explore educational destinations in Laguna

Kriza Justine L. Anaviso

To help spark students' curiosity and provide opportunity to see, touch, and experience what they learn in the classroom, junior high school LCCians made the time of their lives in an educational tour on November 9.

The trip explored fun and historical destinations in the different places in Laguna, where LCCians discovered unique cultures and stories of places.

The tour embarked on a visit at the Gardenia Plant, where LCCians witnessed firsthand the cutting-edge machinery and skilled workers crafting delectable, aromatic breads.

Amidst the production, stringent cleanliness protocols and sanitation practices were diligently observed, ensuring a world-class standard.

The excursion continued in the Rizal Shrine in Calamba, Laguna, where they reminisced and relived Rizal's childhood through a timeless

collection of historical artifacts.

The shrine's well-maintained antique furniture, resilient through the passage of decades, offered a glimpse into the olden era, keeping alive the legacy of Rizal's formative years.

The tour culminated in an exhilarating visit to Enchanted Kingdom in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where the diverse group of LCC students reveled in a spectrum of emotions.

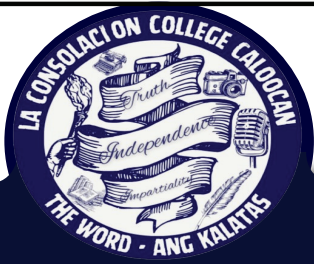
From tranquil to adrenaline-pumping, the park's array of rides catered to every taste, delivering boundless joy and fulfillment to all who participated in the thrilling experience.

Field trips stand as indelible memories for students who cherish and value local places and culture, linking their appreciation with newfound knowledge in an atmosphere filled with joy and learning.



**EK Magic:** LCCians take on Enchanted Kingdom's rides with laughter and excitement! (Photo Courtesy of Enchanted Kingdom Facebook Page)





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## Is This the Finish Line?

In the streets of many cities is where the “King of the Road” runs rampant as it carries Filipinos from one place to another. What if it’s the King of the Road’s time to step out of its reign?

The traditional American jeepney reigns, leading the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to promote traditional jeepney phase-out in the project Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) to lessen climate change, that led to the discouragement of numerous jeepney drivers of the mandated complete phase-out by the end of the year.

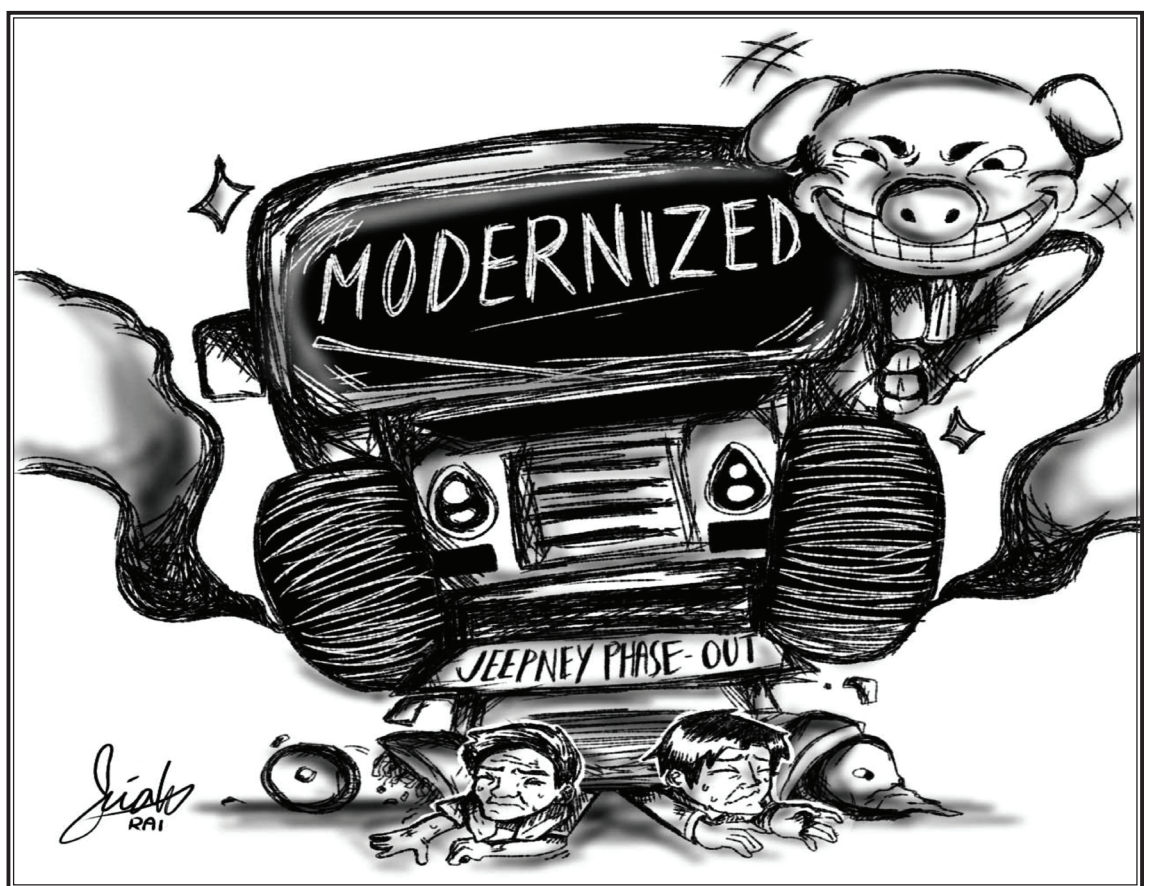
Commuters have always commuted from one place to another because of the affordable fares of jeepneys. While at the same time, their wages are minimum or even less. In effect, Filipino jeepney drivers and commuters stand dejected of the news.

Tsupers, or Filipino drivers, earn a minimum wage of 500–2500 pesos per day, and at the price of 2.4–2.6 million pesos, modernized jeepneys are heavy for their pockets.

The US military jeeps or jeepneys, are a part of Filipino culture and heritage. For a long time, it has been a symbol of Filipino spirit, resourcefulness, and creativity, so the phase-out will bring big change to Filipino culture.

Isn’t it rather questionable how other countries, such as Thailand, are able to improve their transportation but still preserve culture?

The Philippines is a third-world country, with ongoing economic challenges and changes, Filipinos’ lives are uncertain. When jeepney drivers earn a minimum wage, it is unable to meet the country’s aspirations, and



the aim of modernization.

Indeed, traditional jeepneys are harmful to the country’s current problems of climate change, and modernized jeepneys will bring greater upbringing.

However, jeepney drivers can’t sustain PHP 2.4–2.6M with their current state and their minimum wage. The pushing of LTFRB for the modernization and complete phase-out shows their indifference of many suffering tsupers.

The strict upholding of the Clean Air Act is needed, as the country’s climatic challenges

worsen. though, traditional jeepneys, which are unappealing, must be renewed yet conserved for the better. The government must be wary of keeping up the roles of mass transportation in the country. In that sense, jeepneys are not the only transportation in need for improvement but also MRT, LRT, buses, and subways.

The finish line of the King of the Road’s reign is never near; in decades, these jeepneys will continue to set a reminder of Filipino culture. There may be a big improvement, but it is necessary.

## Journalists: Bearers of Truth

“The pen is mightier than the sword.” Any means of violence is weaker compared to the truth. Have words of truth scared the administration that they label the bearers of truth?

Amidst the quiet lives of Filipino journalists is the continuous labeling and accusatory remarks of being a part of communist or terrorist groups. The current administration labels these journalists as New People’s Army (NPA), especially when they protest, disagree, and call out the actions of the nation’s leaders.

Many journalists



IMMAREY HAILEY P. ALCALA

are red-tagged as they protest against the state. However, journalists do such actions for their desire of upholding the truth and the best for Filipinos - that is what makes the current issue infuriating.

Red-tagging truthful journalists are the promotion of biased news and silencing of the truth. Whilst on the other hand, Filipino journalists only do their part of the job by being the voice of the nation.

Indeed, the existing Anti-Terrorism Law is used to condemn terrorists. However, can they guarantee the proper use of this law, or will they use it to fork tongues of journalists?

Journalists represent minorities who are in need and not given enough coverage. The continuous

act of red tagging will only cause harm to these people, as the administration continuously shuts their voices, leaving them in the same situation, or even worse.

It is said that these people who disagree with the nation want to start a revolution, even calling them communists or terrorists.

However, the act of protesting and demanding to the state is their right. It is vital that they hold leaders of the country accountable, rather than blindly following.

Activism is an essential ingredient of democracy. Therefore, to uphold the truth and press freedom is needed in the country’s current state. Activism is every Filipino’s constitutional right; it is the reflection of their actions. At the same time, red-tagging is a representation of their guilt.

## Spectrum: The Captive of Chain

At birth, you are assigned two genders: male and female. What if your gender doesn’t conform to the norm? Shall you live a life full of hope for acceptance?

The LGBTQIA+ community has faced discrimination, violence, and social injustices. This led Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago to file the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression Equality Bill (SOGIE BILL) on January 20, 2000, which is still fought in court today.

Filipino youth, especially members of the LGBTQIA+ community, found the news dispiriting. Being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community isn’t something they can control. So why does it seem as if they are being denied basic human rights?

Unsolicited shaming continuously happens to Filipino youth, calling them derogatory names. It is a human right to express themselves, so it is questionable why transwomen and transmen continue to be deprived of comfort by using their

present pronouns?

Creativity is a gift to every Filipino; however, a drag artist, Pura Luka Vega, was put behind bars and was declared a persona non grata due to his creativity. He was arrested for the violation of the Revised Penal Code Article 201, stating that “immoral doctrines, obscene publications, exhibitions, and indecent shows are penalized.”; as he performed a drag performance of the Ama Namin remix whilst dressed as Jesus Christ.

Filipinos are known to be hospitable. However, there are rising cases of abuse and violence towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Because of their gender orientation, they could easily be punished, abused, or killed.

School is a place to gain knowledge, values, and morals,

but to some, it is a place of mental, physical, and verbal bullying and abuse. In Olongapo city, a gay high school student named “Carlos M.” experienced being called derogatory remarks and experienced verbal and physical abuse.

Almost every senator of the country denied the signing of the bill as it does not follow the religious beliefs of Filipinos, Christianity.

However, the SOGIE Equality Bill is for every gender, not just the LGBTQIA+ community. It’s to promote every gender and sex’s equality, freedom of expression, and stop all discrimination towards any gender.

Speak out the hue of gender that cannot be left behind.



ANJHAY JULIAN V. BERNAS  
GUILIANA ELIJAH P. BUENAVENTURA



## EQUAL VOICES, EQUAL CHOICES: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

"It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals," by Emma Watson seems to be ironically accepted in today's time when misogyny still prevails in society. If everyone truly wants change, why is it that many are still stuck in the mindset of the past? Patriarchal customs and traditions are established in the majority of the societies in the country, where men are granted greater authority and control than women. Over the period of time, discrimination and stereotyping women are the most crucial issue that is happening in the Philippines.



KRIZA JUSTINE L. ANAVISO  
CARLA VENICE S. MANALO

It is, indeed, absurd to follow misogynistic norms. Individuals should be treated with dignity and without discrimination, regardless of their gender. Misogyny and sexism in politics is a prevailing issue in the country. Politics is still viewed as the domain of men, despite the fact that the country have had two female presidents that both had an impact on empowering women. Some people still choose to vote for men, believing that they are more capable of leading than women.

As statistics show from a study, a total of 18.75% of women were elected as barangay officials out of 784 barangay positions. According to the Victorian Government, gender equality provides a community that is safer and healthier for everyone, which the Philippines clearly lacks, given that in the information given by the Philippine National Police (PNP), 12,543 women are still abused as of 2021. In addition to that, misogyny fundamentally violates the basic principles of human rights and equality. It deprives women of their natural dignity and their right to fair and respectful treatment regardless of their gender, which is evidently seen in the data provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) where 34.5% of women engage in the workforce, juxtaposed to 54.8% of their male counterparts.

Empowering women acknowledges gender inequality. It is necessary to promote rights and opportunities for every individual regardless of their gender. Feminism is a movement to seek rights that are equal to men and not higher than they are; it is not about switching in the hierarchy but rather demolishing it. Promoting gender equality in society can greatly aid in dismantling misogynistic practices that have been occurring over the period of time. People must understand that all individuals, regardless of their gender, should be treated equally and live their lives free from injustices and discrimination. No man or woman is created to be inferior to others. It is now time to collectively move forward and take a step towards the change people desire. Make a mistake and learn from it, not repeat it.

### The Unheard Voices Behind Bars

Nowadays, social injustice is a prevalent issue, where a wall between the wealthy and the impoverished can be seen due to injustice. In pertaining justice, is depending on people's status really relevant?

In the bright and peaceful life of every Filipino citizen, is an underlying struggle and fight for a fair system. Daily, they seek for a system free from the chains of greed and personal interests of people in power.

It feels disheartening that people can be so merciless to those individuals in terrible situations. The country will remain in chaos because of the unfairness of the system, where justice can be bought by the powerful.

If social injustice continues to be perpetrated by the government, the nation's reputation will remain in jeopardy.

Increase of crime rates may happen as well if the poor continue to be robbed of justice, especially as those in power prefer to pick the side of the influential.

Bias in the legal system will inevitably lead to setbacks, as they focus only on those who are at the top of the food chain,

rather than those in need. People who work in the legal industry may favour wealthy, leading to those in need to be deprived of proper justice.

The administration remained silent regarding this issue, and their sole defense was that people in positions of power who got released from prison were innocent, and those in positions of poverty were accountable or at fault.

Indeed, the mindset of innocent until proven guilty is a principle that serves as the cornerstone of the legal framework. It is ironic how those who were supposed to be adhering to this straightforward premise appeared to be unable to comprehend what it meant.

The country needs a government that ensures those who are guilty should be held accountable whatever life status they have, and the victims should receive the justice they deserve.

**"THE COUNTRY NEEDS A GOVERNMENT THAT ENSURES THOSE WHO ARE GUILTY SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE WHATEVER LIFE STATUS THEY HAVE"**

The current government already has a lot of power over Filipino lives. Indigents seek justice while influential people who are accountable are living their lives to the fullest. Would you acquiesce to them controlling your rightful justice as well, or would you stand up for the rights you were unfairly deprived of?



ANNE LORRAINE E. CARAG  
SAMANTHA NICOLE D. KING

### Accountability in Confidential Fund Use

At home, school, and community, Filipinos learn different morals and values to be honest and be a person that can be trusted. What if the leaders of the nation are the ones who lack such morals and values?

After the Office of the Vice President (OVP) proposed confidential funds in the country, it was revealed on September 25, 2023, that the OVP, Sara Duterte, spent P125-million confidential funds in just 11 days in 2022, as confirmed by the Commission on Audit (COA).

It is necessary for Filipino citizens to speak up against this gruesome event, as the use of tax and money of the people are used by politicians for their own benefits. The urgency lies in implementing safeguards to prevent potential misuse and ensure responsible financial management.

The expenditure of confidential funds highlights the urgent need for checks and balances to prevent misuse and maintain responsible financial management. Without proper oversight, the risk of funds being used inappropriately becomes a pressing concern, jeopardizing the trust citizens place in their government.

While acknowledging the importance of national security, the absence of oversight on civilian agencies' use of confidential funds compromises democratic principles. To address this, reallocating funds to establish

security entities with robust oversight mechanisms is essential.

Moreover, the combative rhetoric, labeling critics as 'enemies of the state,' undermines the democratic process by stifling legitimate concerns. Suppressing dissent hinders progress and limits the ability to address the real issues at hand, hindering the democratic values they aim to uphold.

While some argue that confidential funds are necessary for national security, it's crucial to balance this need with transparency. The absence of oversight can lead to potential misuse and erode public trust.

A different approach involves reallocating funds to established security entities with clear oversight mechanisms.

Advocating for accountability in confidential fund use is not an attack on national security, but a call to uphold democratic values. The urgency lies in implementing oversight and transparent practices, preventing potential misuse, and maintaining the trust citizens' place in their government. By addressing these concerns, Filipinos can ensure the responsible use of confidential funds without compromising the democratic fabric of the nation.



JEWEL ASHLEY C. VITERBO

**"ADVOCATING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONFIDENTIAL FUND USE IS NOT AN ATTACK ON NATIONAL SECURITY, BUT A CALL TO UPHOLD DEMOCRATIC VALUES"**

### The Value of Survival

Everyone strives for the acquisition of commodities at regular pricing, with residents not having too many problems with growing prices. The power of money and the happiness it brings to individuals; the happiness of saving and securing money.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reports that inflation in the country rose from 5.3 percent in August 2023 to 6.1 percent in September 2023. This raises the inflation rate for the year to 6.6%.

Filipinos grew distressed by the news, as they knew that inflation contributes to

the progress of the economy. Inevitably, this slows down access to basic necessities as their costs continue to increase.

People who continuously strive to afford goods yet feel like their status is also constantly traveling in a circular motion, as the country does not move forward and are still unable to get along with the society.

The value of the Philippine peso decreases when this rate rises due to the fact that Filipinos can no longer buy as many goods for the same amount of money.

Inflation is a huge source of concern since the money people work so hard to save may lose value in the future. This is because it affects people's purchasing power as well as their lives.

Due to its overwhelming debt to other nations and mountain of debts, the nation is continuously struggling. It is tough enough to survive, since even a basic element required for their survival is difficult to obtain.

Citizens of the Philippines should assist

in managing finances and educate all Filipinos about inflation early in life in order to adapt a resolution.

Indeed, wealth is powerful as it has the ability to manipulate a whole country, putting it in great danger. Are Filipino citizens still capable of battling with money? Or are they just surviving?



HAILEY MARGARETTE L. MALLARI



## "THE CLIMATE CRISIS: AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT"

Alexa Rae S. Hidalgo

The climate emergency now is no longer an isolated environmental issue but also an existential threat. Each year that goes by, our environment's conditions worsen, and it is expected that 2023 will be the most alarming year for our environment due to it breaking many climate-related records by "enormous margins," according to a report.

Most of these reports about our climate are linked particularly to the temperatures in our oceans, which have absorbed the excess heat caused by human carbon pollution. These rises in temperature in the oceans raise serious threats to sea life and coral reefs, as well as increasing the power and occurrence of large tropical storms, which in turn also affects us humans greatly.

People across the planet have been hit with deadly heat waves and floods, and sometimes even with both extremes in

succession. According to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, the three months to September were the hottest period ever recorded, and it was believably the hottest in approximately 120,000 years.

An international coalition of authors who published a report about the climate crisis in the journal "BioScience" stated that "Humanity has made 'minimal progress' on curbing its planet-heating emissions,

with major greenhouse gasses at record levels and subsidies for fossil fuels soaring last year."

It is estimated that by 2030 and 2050, climate change could lead to 250,000 deaths annually due to malnutrition, malaria, heat stress, and other health diseases that are heavily affected by climate change. So, this leaves us to

take into full consideration that if we do not stop the continuous destruction of our surroundings, we are bound to not exist anymore.

As much as it is a terrifying topic to tackle because of its complexity, we need to understand it in order to save our home. As mentioned by Ms. Greta Thunberg, an environmental activist from Sweden, it is either "We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations, or we can continue with our business as usual and fail, and that is up to you and me."

That goes without saying that if we badly want to strive for the better and the best on this planet, we must fill our hearts and minds with passion and bravery to take actual action and save mankind and all its life forms.



## MOM, ARE ALIENS REAL?: THE POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

When a friend reassures you that you aren't alone, their intent is typically to offer comfort during challenging times. Yet, these words take on a profound and cosmic significance when we consider the possibility of life beyond our planet. In the vast expanse of the universe, the question arises: Is Earth the sole harbor of life, or are we part of a broader cosmic community? In the shadows of our existence, could there be other intelligent beings navigating the cosmos?

As a child, I often wondered about the existence of aliens, or for a better word, extraterrestrial creatures. I wouldn't consider myself a conspiracist, but for myself, the possible survival of other life forms is probable if we take into consideration how massive our universe is.

On September 14, NASA, the well-known government agency, issued a proposal for research regarding UAPs, or Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena. They also held a briefing for the proposal and brought up a recent sighting of "alien mummies" in Mexico. The creatures were discovered by Jaime Maussan, a firm

believer in the existence of extraterrestrial creatures.

I can assume that the masses' opinion about the matter would be divided, considering Maussan's well-known history of his alien sightings turning out to be major hoaxes. Though it is still unclear whether the "alien mummies" are extraterrestrial creatures or just animal remains, who knows? Maybe humanity is one step closer in discovering the other secrets of the universe.

This answer only leaves us to think about the several possibilities and formulate our own questions. If various species exist, do species exist that share our human characteristics? Or are there some that are so different that they're unrecognizable?

If we were to discover the secrets of the universe, would it allow us to be awakened? Or would it serve as Pandora's box? For now, no one knows. And the only thing we can do is wait for an answer and ponder in the process. But before you go to sleep and look at the black, velvety darkness that is the sky, stare at it for a few seconds and tell yourself, "I am not alone."

## THE FIGHT OF THE CENTURY : How Vaccines Work to Protect Your Body Against Future Diseases

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

Most of the human population have probably been vaccinated, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein the mass lined up outside various hospitals and schools in order to receive the Corona virus vaccine to ensure their safety. But how do vaccines exactly work?

"Vaccines can train your body to prevent sicknesses before they even start. They do this by introducing something called an antigen into the body, which imitates an infection and primes the immune system to respond." As stated by the Pfizer website.

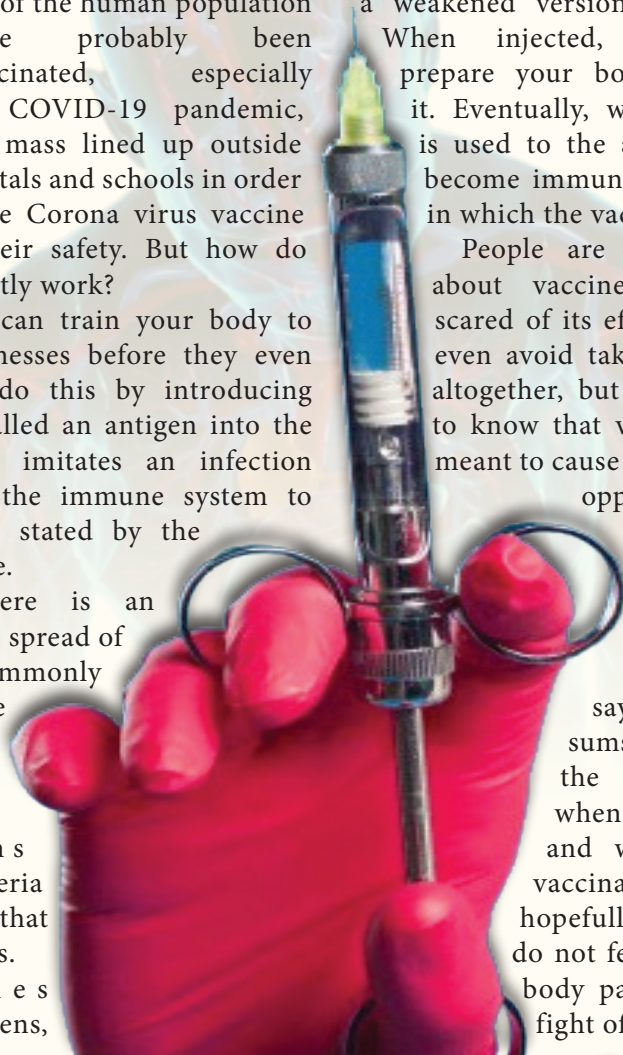
When there is an epidemic, the spread of diseases is commonly caused by the pathogens that invade one's body. Pathogens are bacteria or viruses that cause diseases.

Vaccines contain antigens,

a weakened version of pathogens. When injected, the antigens prepare your body by fighting it. Eventually, when your body is used to the antigens, it will become immune to the disease in which the vaccine is for.

People are often skeptical about vaccines. A lot are scared of its effects, and some even avoid taking the vaccine altogether, but it is important to know that vaccines are not meant to cause harm but do the opposite.

Remember that it will get worse before it gets better—this saying practically sums up the use of the vaccine. Thus, when the time comes and we need to be vaccinated once again, hopefully far from now, do not fear, and let your body participate in the fight of the century!



## An Overview of the Nipah Virus: Is it just like COVID-19?

Yesha Andrealy B. Briones

In the midst of Covid19 Pandemic, 6 positive Nipah Virus cases, with the first case who's source of infection was unknown and 2 family relatives who were infected from the first, as well as 2 deaths in the Kozhikode district, were reported in India last September 12-15, 2023.

After reporting the said cases, 1288 contacts of the victims were traced, including high-risk relations and medical employees who assisted the victims, since September 27. Fortunately, there were no new cases of the virus reported since the 15th of September in India.

This was not the first time an outbreak

of the Nipah Virus happened in the world. The Virus was first encountered way back 1999 in Malaysia among pig farmers.

Symptoms of the Virus may include the following: fever, headaches, vomiting, sore throat, myalgia (muscle pain), drowsiness, and dizziness. In severe cases, altered consciousness and neurological signs that lead to acute encephalitis are experienced. Fatality rate starts at 40% up to 75% if not handled immediately and properly by local and clinical management.

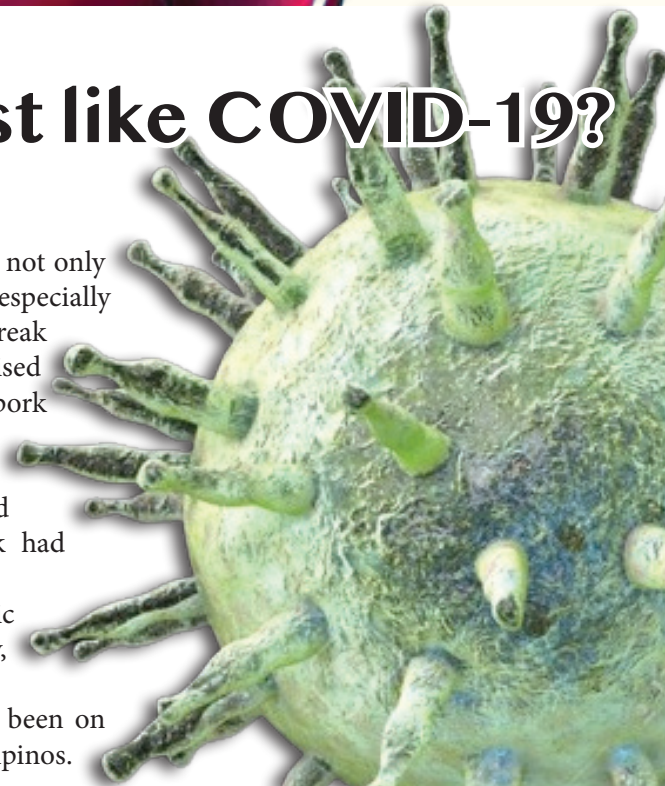
As of this time, there are still no vaccines invented to prevent Nipah Virus, although, the WHO has already marked the virus as

a priority illness. The virus can not only infect people but also animals, especially pigs, thus when the outbreak was reported, the WHO advised everyone to avoid the intake of pork for the meantime.

Presently, the local government of India released a statement that the outbreak had officially ended last October 26.

By good fortune, the zoonotic virus didn't reach the country, the Philippines.

On this note, the DOH has been on lookout for the health of the Filipinos.





# More than a Melody:

## The Psychophysiological Effects of Music on Mental Health

Amara Venice Y. Pacual

“Music can heal the wounds  
that medicine cannot touch.”  
— Debasish Mridha

What would you do if music were to cease to exist? Imagine a world without albums, vinyl, instruments, or streaming services. For some, it would simply be incomplete, like coffee without creamer or a library without books. Most teens would agree that their lives wouldn't be complete without music, as an average teenager spends 2.5 hours a day listening to it. And understandably so, it helps in self-expression, boosts one's creativity, and makes for a great conversation starter. However, besides all that, music can also have tremendous effects on a person's mental health. It can improve our focus, which is why it is recommended for students to listen to classical music while studying to make them more alert and aid in memorization. I personally indulge in the works of Debussy, Tchaikovsky, and Brahms when studying for an examination. Though, it doesn't stop there. Music can have a beneficial effect on your brain chemicals such as dopamine, which is linked to pleasure and satisfaction, and oxytocin, which is the “love hormone.” In a study conducted in 2019 by students from the University of Kafkas in Kars, Turkey, it showed that college students who listened to classical music every day for two months had significantly lower anxiety levels.

In another study conducted in 2016 regarding the influence of music on anxiety induced by the fear of heights, subjects with different degrees of their fear were allocated to a group that experienced an immersive virtual reality scenario, in which they descended and ascended on an elevator platform that had a supporting structure that was 350 meters tall.

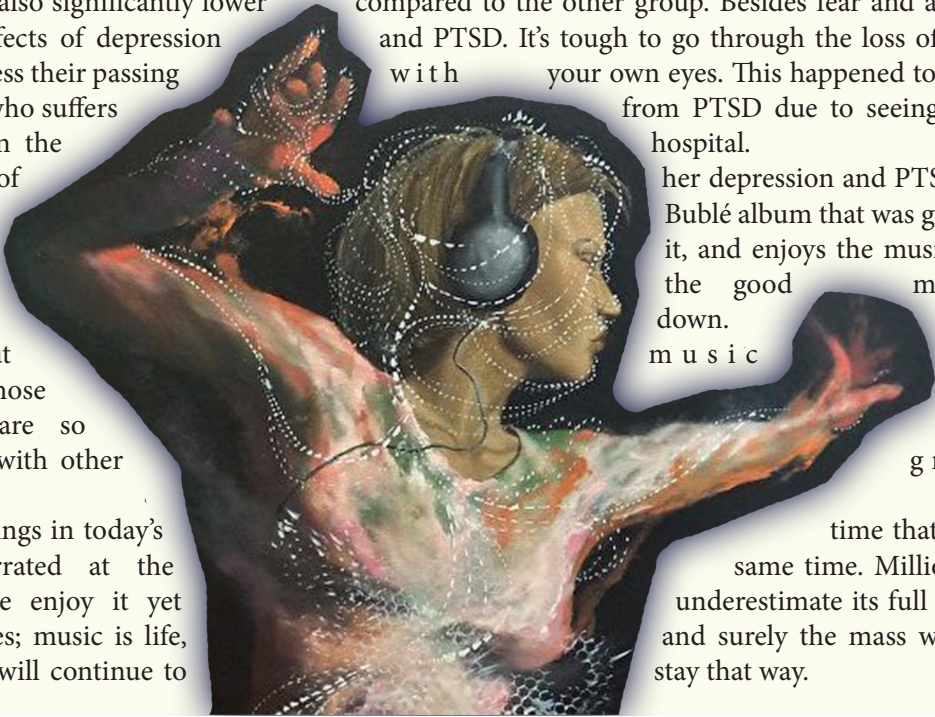
For the experiment, there were two groups created: one group that experienced the ride with background music and one who didn't. During the experience, the subjects' heart rates, galvanic skin responses, and body balance were recorded. Their subjective anxiety was also measured using three in-depth questionnaires.

They noticed that after the experiment, post-stress recovery was faster for the group that had listened to music. Their anxiety levels were also significantly lower compared to the other group. Besides fear and anxiety, music can help alleviate the effects of depression and PTSD. It's tough to go through the loss of a loved one, especially when you witness their passing with your own eyes. This happened to Casey Clark, a writer from New York who suffers from PTSD due to seeing her beloved grandfather pass away in the hospital.

When the symptoms of her depression and PTSD get severe, she grabs her Michael Bublé album that was given to her by her grandfather, plays it, and enjoys the music that makes her reminisce about the good memories. Eventually, it calms her down.

“It sounds cliché, but music actually serves as an escape in those moments when the flashbacks are so intense, and I can't get out of them with other grounding techniques.” Clark stated.

Music is one of the things in today's time that is seemingly appreciated and underrated at the same time. Millions of people from all over the globe enjoy it yet underestimate its full potential and benefits. Music saves lives; music is life, and surely the mass will agree that until the end of time, it will continue to stay that way.



# “Catching Z's”:

## The Importance of Sleep on Brain Development

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

As students, we're probably aware of what all-nighters are. It is when an individual goes through a whole night without sleep, possibly relying on caffeine to stay awake. We may pull one when we need to cram a review for an upcoming examination or to finish a performance task—but how do all-nighters affect our bodies exactly?

Did you know that the average human could go as far as 11 consecutive days without sleep? Though it isn't stated how long we can survive without sleeping, after 3–4 days, one might begin to hallucinate.

On the first day, one might feel drowsy—you know? That feeling you get during an afternoon class. It is tolerable, and you can manage to do your daily tasks, but you will likely be more sluggish. One might find it difficult to do activities that require a person to be alert, like driving. Which is why some countries or states have specific policies in which a person cannot drive if they are deprived of sleep.

On the second day, you will feel a “detachment” within your mind and body; this is called depersonalization and can occur when you go 48 hours without sleep. You will also start to feel more confused, irritable, anxious, and filled with delusions.

On the third day, your immune system will continue to decline, and your mood will worsen. One might start to

experience disordered thinking and hallucinations at this point in time. The effects that were previously stated will continue to heighten.

On the fourth day onwards, you will most likely have a distorted perception of reality, having trouble differentiating real life events from hallucinations. This is called sleep deprivation psychosis.

To sum it all up, continuous lack of sleep can cause a person to lose their sense of reality. They might begin to develop anxiety or depression and feel detached from their own body. Of course, lack of sleep can result in not only mental disorders but also physical ones. Sleep deprivation can be linked to numerous health problems like kidney and heart diseases, stroke, and diabetes.

In your life as a student, there will eventually come a time wherein you'll have to lose sleep, but as much as possible, try to prevent it. Do your schoolwork immediately to stop them from piling up, take power naps, and avoid drinking caffeinated drinks at night.

So as sleep deprivation is continually normalized nowadays, with students losing sleep over schoolwork, let this serve as a reminder to at least try and maintain a healthy sleeping schedule for you to be in tiptop shape during classes and for you to stay alert and energized throughout the day.



# Essentiality:

## Eco-friendly Product Supports Green Marketing

Princess Mel L. Dizon

“There must be a better way to make the things we want, a way that doesn't spoil the sky, or the rain or the land.” - Paul McCartney

The significance of the environment and sustainability all started in the late 1970s in the United States of America with the creation of the “Earth Day” movement. However, Americans are oblivious to the polluted environment that they are living in, especially their government. There were no legal acts or laws to protect our environment which Senator Gaylord Nelson, an American politician, was highly concerned about.

He started a movement that would not only make the situation an urgent national political issue to amend but also raise public awareness that society needs public support to protect and preserve the planet Earth. Senator Nelson did a great job in bringing the public's attention to participate in the movement, and it became the reason why regulatory acts were established.

After a couple of years, an association held a workshop named “Ecological Marketing” in 1975. This was associated with Green Marketing in the late 1980s to early 1990s. According to AMA or the American Marketing Association, Green Marketing is defined as the development and promotion of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Their strategy was to improve the quality of our environment by marketing eco-friendly products to influence the whole business operation to have sustainable practices.

In today's era, when picking a shop or a chain, Gen Z also considers the brand's aesthetics. Recently, a famous brewery chain in the Philippines, Starbucks, released its newest collection of glass cups, tumblers, and more that are 100% made of recyclable materials. Starbucks Vice President of Business Strategy, Partner and Customer Relations Amelia Landers said that their latest round of reusable tests contributes to their goal for all consumer packaging to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable in the future.

With the help of our highly eco-conscious generation, eco-friendly products will continue to be in high demand, just as they showed support for Starbucks' newest collection.





## Embracing Modernity: The Rise of Hydroponics

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

With our developing technology, evolution seems rapid. From the invention of electricity to the development of artificial intelligence, humanity has undoubtedly gone a long way.

However, has mankind supposedly gone too far and become reliant on technology? Without it, could humanity survive? And with this technology, should the mass be afraid of it or embrace it instead?

When you hear the word “farming,” typically you’d envision a large plain with dedicated farmers, working tirelessly under the scorching sun. Nonetheless, as times change and technology evolves, humanity keeps finding modern alternatives to otherwise daunting tasks.

Hydroponics is a better alternative compared to traditional farming. It comes from the Greek words “hydro,” meaning water, and “ponos,” meaning labor.

Hence, hydroponics quite literally translates to water working, as instead of growing the plants in soil like farmers normally do, they use a water solution filled with nutrients typically found in soil, making it unnecessary for the plants’ survival.

Due to this, the risk of soil-borne diseases has been reduced. It also reduces the rate of pests and fungi, the usual enemies of traditional farming. No pests also mean no pesticides, meaning that there is less risk of infections and that good quality in crops is ensured.

Besides eliminating the risk of diseases and ensuring good quality, hydroponic planting can be a great space saver because it does not rely on soil. Thus, it can be used in extremely cold regions, desert areas, and even areas with water shortages due to droughts, allowing a continuous supply of food within cities.

There are two systems of growing in

a hydroponic setting: active and passive. Active systems do not require the grower’s full attention, though they may be complicated to set up, as they need pumps to circulate the water solution from a reservoir. The pumps are then connected to the roots of the plant, allowing it to fully absorb the nutrients given to it. Any excess solution circulates back to the reservoir.

On the other hand, passive systems are easier since they do not require a pump. One has to simply submerge the plant in the solution. This system isn’t as complicated, although it requires the grower’s full attention as the water needs to be damaged frequently to eliminate the growth of algae.

However, with great benefits also come drawbacks. To set up a hydroponic system, you’d need a lot of money to cover the expenses for things like air pumps, plumbing systems, temperature controllers, and the reservoir. They are also high-maintenance and require one’s full attention.

Additionally, hydroponic systems are prone to water-borne diseases and rely heavily on electricity, making it a risk of negative impact if a power outage ever occurs.

Some farmers even go against hydroponics, as they don’t consider it organic farming. However, a Ninth Circuit panel ruled that hydroponically grown crops can be considered organic. “Food does not have to be grown in soil to merit the organic label,” They stated.

Even so, hydroponic systems are an example of a system whose benefits outweigh its setbacks. They can be of great use and when executed carefully and responsibly, can possibly be a solution to a globally recognized problem, food shortage. Technology can both be good and bad, but it is up to us how we want to use it.

## Nuclear Solution: *Harnessing the Full Potential of* an Atom

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

What would you do if you were to be brought back to the Stone Age? An era wherein electricity, one of humanity’s most primal needs, ceased to exist. Do you think you could survive?

Ever since the invention of practical electricity in 1831 by Michael Faraday, humans have relied on electricity and its ever-evolving nature. From the public transport systems, you use on the way to school to the small desk lamp that illuminates your workspace as you study at night, electricity is necessary—electricity is everywhere.

Nevertheless, all good things come to an end. The desk lamp you use to study at night will eventually run out of battery, and it will continue to stay that way unless you replace it. However, there could be a solution to this conundrum: an unlimited source of electricity. That’s where power plants come in.

Power plants (sometimes referred to as power stations) are industrial facilities that generate electricity from primary energy. They often use one or more generators that convert mechanical energy to supply power to the electrical grid for society’s electrical needs.

The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant is a structure filled not only with concrete and cement, but also layers of controversy. Considering the increasing instances of power outages in the country, could we possibly overlook its contentious history and open it for the public’s use? Or would it do more harm than good to our economy once its doors finally open?

Construction of the power plant began in July 1967 during the Marcos regime, and it cost US\$2.3 billion (₱129 billion) to build, which is why it was considered to be responsible for 10% of our country’s external debt, leading the mass to have mixed opinions about current President Bongbong Marcos Jr.’s decision to reoperate the power plant.

Prior to that, what even are nuclear plants, and how can they be a solution to the country’s electricity crisis? Nuclear power plants are power plants that use the process of nuclear fission, a reaction in which the nucleus of an atom splits into two or more smaller nuclei. This reaction

allows nuclear energy to be generated.

Hence, nuclear power plants prove to be a better solution compared to coal plants, as coal emits toxic gases that contribute to the pollution of land, air, and water. Nuclear plants are also cost-effective as opposed to coal plants because our country’s plants use imported coal, an element with continuously increasing price.

By far, nuclear plants are the best option for unlimited electricity, but just because they are the best option doesn’t mean that they don’t have cons. “Nuclear is the country’s best alternative because it can reliably supply a large amount of power, though it won’t, by itself, be enough.” As stated by Carlo A. Arcilla, Director of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute.

Allowing a nuclear plant to operate is like taking a gamble. A mishap could happen and could lead to the loss of numerous lives, which is what happened to Chernobyl in April 1986. Additionally, this disaster would be the cause of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant’s mothballing.

Besides the risk of accidents, the power plant also had problems during its construction. Thus, to ensure the public’s safety, the power plant would have to be inspected and possibly rebuilt to make it eligible for performing safely and effectively. Many experts, like Sara Ahmed, argue that it would be costly to guarantee the reliability of the plant.

She also added that nuclear plants are inflexible and cannot accommodate fluctuations in energy needs when affected by factors such as weather. Nuclear plants go offline when affected by typhoons, which are common in the Philippines. When this happens, the energy can be crippled, causing brownouts that ironically are the reason why power plants are needed in the first place.

Considering the pros and cons of the nuclear power plant, the country’s government officials need to be reasonable in making a decision not only for the safety of our economy, but also for the safety of the public. The mass can only hope that whatever the final decision may be, it may aid in the country’s progression and hopefully be a step towards growth and consistency.

## “Deep Dive”: The Unexplored Depths of the Ocean

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

Recently, there has been an online trend circulating about what a certain person’s “Roman empire” is. To put it simply, one’s Roman empire is something a person thinks about often, or multiple times a day. It pokes fun at the fact that males, or specifically males in the US, tend to fixate on the Roman empire. And with that, I ask, “What is your Roman empire?” I tend to fixate on a lot of things, but one that really irks me is about a post I saw a few years ago, captioned “We know more about the moon than the ocean.” It gave me chills and to this day, it still manages to stick in my mind. My “Roman empire” is about how little we know about the world’s oceans and what could possibly lurk beneath its dark and pressurized waters. The deepest recorded part of the ocean is called “Challenger Deep,” discovered by Navy Lt. Don Walsh and Jacques Piccard in 1960. This part can be seen beneath the western Pacific Ocean, and it is approximately 10,935 meters (35,876 feet) deep. Considering our latest advancements in the field of technology, and with certain

spacecraft reaching other planets, it bothers me that the latest record of the deepest part of the ocean was still in 1960. The “Challenger Deep” is located on the southern part of the Mariana Trench. So far, no human has ever walked on the Mariana Trench. It might seem like a simple task at first, but when you consider the pressure, that’s when the seemingly simple task starts to turn daunting. Due to this overwhelming pressure and tension on the deeper parts of the ocean, it is difficult for people to figure out what species inhabit it, and that’s what makes it scary. For most people, it’s not about the absence of light or the complete darkness that covers the ocean, but the creatures that lurk in it. Thus, for now, let the fact that we know more about a foreign planet than we do about our Earth’s oceans be your “Roman empire,” too. Hopefully, our technological advancements can also help in the field of marine biology. Though I don’t know about you, I’d rather know less about the ocean, as it seems that the more, I find out, the less I know.





# TEACHING A LEGACY

Anna Francheska S. Cruz, Carla Venice S. Manalo, & Keith Bella O. De Gracia

**“Y**ou are matter, and you matter, so please make everything matter in your life.”

*“I was their teacher, I did everything I could. I gave my best to make them the best that they could be.”*

*“Kaya mahirap maging teacher, kasi kinakailangan ‘yung lesson mo lalagyan mo ng puso!”*

Everyone who has ever been taught anything knows what a teacher is. All of them have at least one word to define one, yet within the myriad of definitions each student can conceive, is there an answer to what makes a teacher, a teacher?

It was June 1990 when a great mind started to begin her legacy. Looking up at the institution of La Consolacion Caloocan, she didn’t know that 33 years later, her footprints would still be imprinted on the very floors of its halls. Here is the story of a teacher who can carry every definition of the word.

Back in the very first days, Mrs. Maria Melissa C. Lanuza taught science to grade 2 and 7 students, only with the burning fire of determination and passion in her heart. She was also once lost but was eventually found. Education was never the first choice of career. She originally studied chemical engineering at Adamson University, yet faith meddled when she had to stop studying for 2 years because of asthma, as if it were telling her to go another way.

This voice keeps echoing inside her mind. Indeed, it was the cliché thing called “calling.” La Consolacion College Caloocan was, at first, chosen because of its convenience, but 33 beautiful years flew by when she realized there was more than that. The school has been the second home she and her four children have stayed at. For Ma’am Leslie, it was a sacrifice—a sacrifice for her children to graduate from a private school. It is the future of her children that she chooses and will always choose.

*“I have to stay, kahit na parang nakakabwisit na ‘yung mga nangyayari. Pero kasi gusto ko ngang matapos sila sa private school.”*

Still, with every storm, she sees the rainbow through the eyes of her children. *“Mga anak ko talaga ‘yung inspiration ko. Lagi kong sinasabi, never compete with my children, you will never win.”*

Then, a step. There was one step left before she finished her masteral, but it was a step she didn’t take. She encountered crossroads; between her family and the possibilities her career had to offer. “I had to make a choice between family and pursuing that. Pinili ko ang family ko.” Yet when she was given the chance to look back, she felt unmotivated and didn’t

see the reason to continue her masteral because of her disappointment with the system. “Feeling ko kahit anong gawin ko, kahit maganda magiging achievements ko, wala akong mararating. Magiging stagnant ako.”

Ma’am Lanuza went through a lot of unexpected turns, but every turn was a redirection towards her true purpose. Her journey was indeed full of obstacles and challenges, but through these challenges, students can look up to a respectable teacher, a teacher who serves not only as a guide in studies but also in life. She proves that God has a plan for each of us, though we may not understand it at the beginning.

There’s an unspoken rule to care, to show effort against the difference of interests, and to sacrifice when there’s no need to. Ma’am Lanuza handles her current advisory class—Grade 7 Faith—with the same compassion a mother has for her child. With every stressful event, she goes out of her way to

show; what she wants to say, she can say. Her enthusiasm makes even the simplest moments—conversations in a jeepney—a core memory. She’s the kind of person who shows up on time and makes every second of it matter. She defied the challenge of the pandemic when she became the president of the faculty club during that period, for she stood by the purpose of her very title and gave her best in fulfilling her duties.

*“Anak ko! Anak ko! Anak ko ‘to!”*—spoken like a true mother, these are the words Ma’am Lanuza said to

the president of her grade 7 advisory class, Ayisha Jillian Gamundoy, when she placed champion in the Impromptu Speech Competition. She knows when to care and how to make things matter. “Mamita” was after all, the nickname her fellow teachers gave her. Her teachings extend beyond the

of being a teacher is her students. She celebrates their success and comforts them in their sorrow. *“Ang dami-dami naming ipinagmamalaking estudyante. Grabe, I’m so proud of all my students.” True enough, she’s a teacher by mind, heart, and soul.*

The youth may change, and the children may grow, but every so often, students who know how to show respect and gratitude come, and these students are worthy to be taught. Educators like Ma’am Lanuza consider the success of their students as success of their own. Knowing that someone you nurtured can shine and deal with the adversities of life certainly brings great pride to a teacher like her.

Even to highly respectable teachers, Ma’am Lanuza is someone they can look up to. According to Ms. Rea Tongco, *“She’s a knowledgeable, enthusiastic, napaka talented niyang tao, energetic, at tsaka committed na teacher.” “As a teacher, Ma’am Lanuza is a good teacher. A teacher with a heart and a teacher with concern for her students,”* remarked Mrs. Desina Barba. To teachers such as Mrs. Elma Balarao, Ma’am Lanuza’s strong confidence serves as her inspiration to do the same. *“Kung ano ‘yung gusto niya, nasa loob niya, ‘yung gusto niyang sabihin nasasabi niya.”*

Here’s to the remaining chapters of the magnificent 33 years—the legacy borne out of a great teacher, a friend, and a mother. With her service to this educational ground, her next chapter will be within the skies; travelling to new places, seeing new faces, yet never forgetting those of the ones she changed. These floors will forever bear her footprints, and these walls will forever be painted with her wisdom.

Here’s to honor that wisdom with a message for her students.

*“I was their teacher, I did everything I could. I gave my best to make them the best that they could be. Kung may pagkukulang man, I don’t think I have to apologize, kasi dapat magkakapartner kami. Partner ko sila, partner ko ‘yung parents nila, pero as far as I know they are all good, they all did well. At sana ‘yung mga estudyante ko ngayon, I wish them all the best, and that bear in mind that I did everything I could para matulungan sila sa kanilang growth and future. I want all of them to become ideal citizens of the world, and that they become globally competitive.”*

*Unang una pala, globally competitive, pangalawa, ideal citizens of the world, at syempre outstanding stewards of nature. Totoo ‘yan, buo ‘yan sa puso ko, ‘yan ang gusto ko ma-achieve para sa kanila.”*

Mrs. Lanuza, La Consolacion College Caloocan may have started as a foreign world, but you’ll look back on it and see the home you have built within its walls. Your footprints serve as the path for educators to follow, for you have set a standard to what makes and shapes a teacher. Let your remaining journey be more of a testament to your greatness. Thank you, for your wisdom and will forever be embedded within these grounds.



ensure that her students are well-guided away from a preventable yet sometimes inevitable indignity.

*“Isa siyang guro na strikto sa kanyang mga estudyante, pero strikto na kung saan makakakita ka ng lambing,”* remarked by Mrs. Liezl Miranda. Strictness comes with her character yet she knows how to adapt to each student’s needs. *“Hindi naman pwedeng you stick with the luma, you have to evolve as well with the needs of time.”* Time changes, students change, and so do we, for it is the only constant thing we have.

Truly, her confidence needs no effort to

students, for even those who already experienced the lessons in life have learned a few things from her: to have the strength to voice your mind and to become fearless when it comes to judgement.

Sturdy as a wall, she faced the ups and downs of life. Perhaps she wants to take the plunge. It was in her experience that she saw various people, and with that, she witnessed the gradual change of manners among the students over the years. It seems to her that respect is slowly vanishing from one of the cornerstones of life. Nonetheless, her favorite part



## ONE STEP; A HUNDRED YEARS BACK

Anna Francheska S. Cruz

Here I am, the land, the very stone I'm standing on; it all screams the "present." Modernity, where history is the past, and in all the wonders of the world, nothing can ever turn the time back, for even the greatest scientists wracked their brains for an

present—the land as old as time, Vigan City.

The houses, the people, and the building with the cracks that experienced war. Stones with the forgotten dust, bearing the marks of the forgotten heroes. With each glance, I see a glimpse of the past: horses galloping, and the creaks of each open window, birthing maidens receiving a whole sonnet from their beloved's eyes—a love story from first sight.

My heart's jumping from the adventure I'll be experiencing. Vigan City is in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Philippines. It is very well known for preserving history on its grounds. Proving what it is known for, as I searched for a traveling vehicle, I was informed of its only vehicle—the Kalesa. A horse! I'll be traveling on a horse! I guess one way of experiencing history is to be in one after all.

The ride transferred me to different parts of the city. Welcome to Calle Crisologo! A cobbled-stone street, lined with ancestral houses dating back to the Spanish colonization. Even the aromas smell ancient. It seems every step materializes my soul to its very depths, making me a part of history itself. As I stare into the line of houses, each one seeming to have been lived once by families and children such as myself with the same hopes and dreams, I am then reminded of my legacy and the story I'm writing.

As I travel down this street, delicacies uncontrollably waver into my scent, making me desire their taste on my tongue. At night, it's even more fascinating. With lights that travel for miles, radiating to

my eyes, making me relive a fairy tale I've never experienced. Now my ride is taking me to another wonder, the Vigan Cathedral. A must-include in your visit to Vigan City. Outside it looks like a normal church, but inside is where the majesties begin. With its Neo-Gothic structure, silver-paneled altars, and Chinese embellishments. The whole place was something described only in fantasies, but this fantasy is a living reality. As I look up at the crisscrossing ceiling with the gold and white stripes, I see all but the royalty ball.

It was hard to believe that this was a church, but I sat in wonder and respect for how much they care for the very place where one talks to God.

Now down to the last place, a plaza. The Plaza Burgos is located at the heart of Vigan. It is in place to honor the martyrdom of Father Jose Burgos. A death so vile and unjust, bearing the cruelty of the monsters who once set foot on this place.

Now, this plaza is best known for selling delicious empanadas. A plaza to its very core, with people laughing, kids running and flying kites. The scenery does not quite mirror the representation of the place.

Still, with history set in place, I think it's time to make a new one. One with a better ending. One that didn't have the same horrors, and one where even a kid like me can run off to, feeling the calmness of the wind and enjoying my time with those I love.

Now, my adventures are done for the day. I turned back in time through the

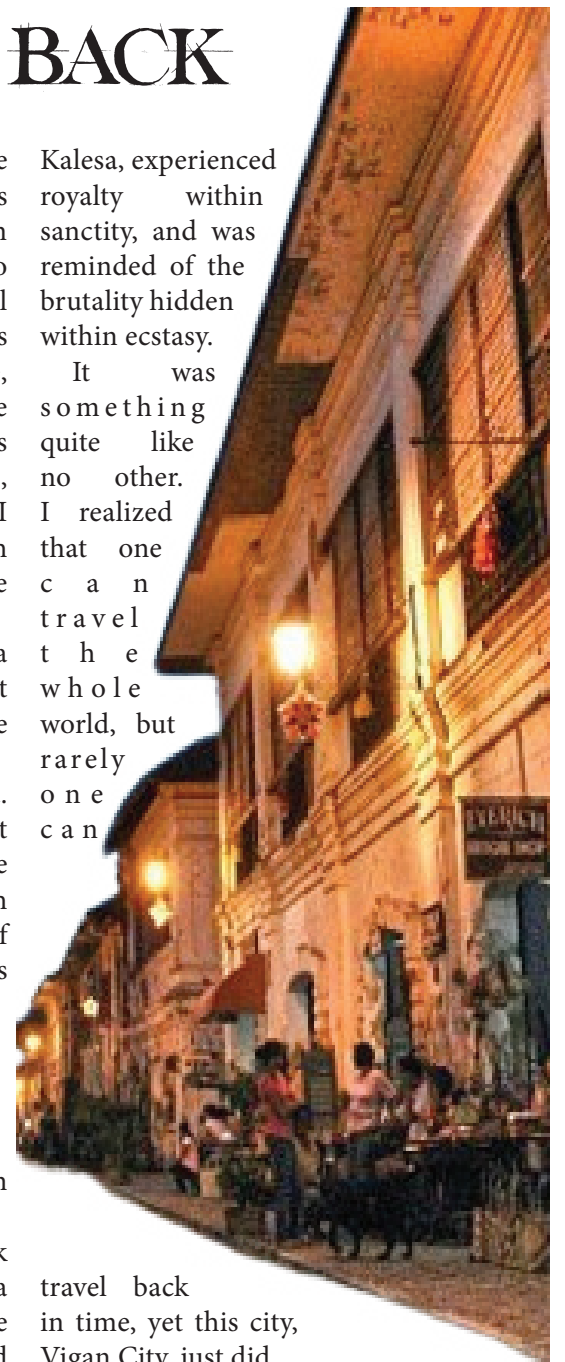
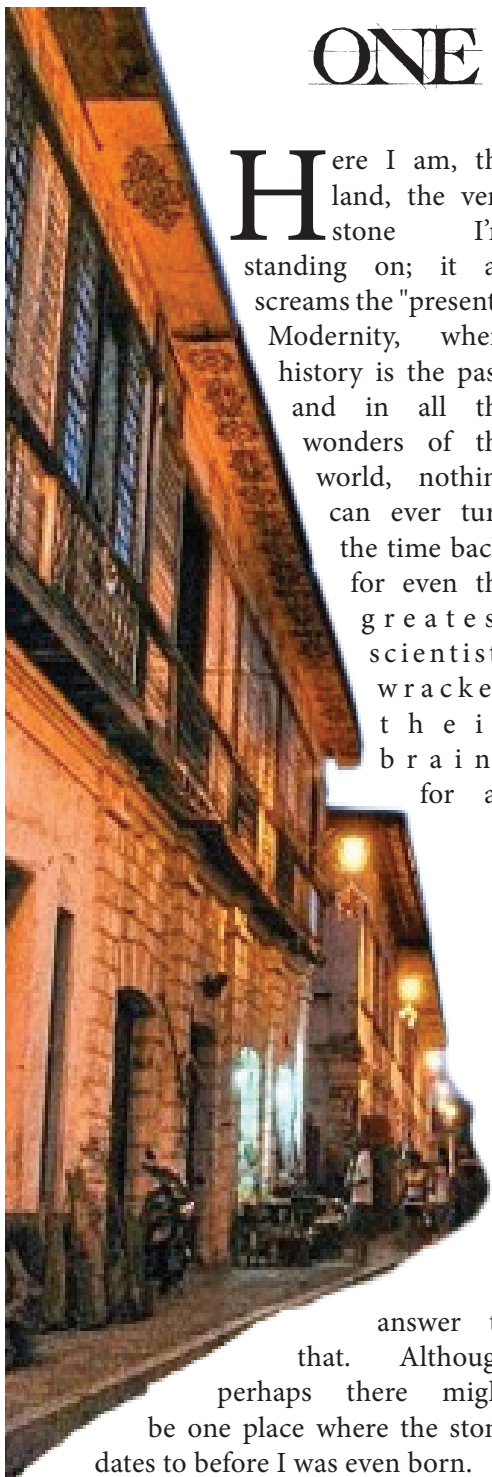
Kalesa, experienced royalty within sanctity, and was reminded of the brutality hidden within ecstasy.

It was something quite like no other. I realized that one can travel the whole world, but rarely one can

travel back in time, yet this city, Vigan City, just did.

As I was once in the present, now I'm in the past, with every footprint I leave behind carved into its scene.

All I took was one step and was thrown a hundred years back.



“Therefore, you now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” - John 16:22

On that one seemingly foggy day, perhaps with those of a foggy mind, Jose was suffering from an unusual twinge in his heart. He realized the time and the day and decided to visit his once-fallen hero's grave. He spent his time cleaning around and at the same time, clothing himself in the comfort of their memories.

The lifetime of a person is held forever and materialized in celebration during a dedicated day called All Souls Day. It is celebrated on November 2 every year as a way of commemorating and honoring the memories of a soul never to be forgotten.

Not all heroes wear capes. For Jose, his hero can be seen early in the morning reading the newspaper. Not a morning passes does Jose not think about his father. Now that he is gone, the memories seem more vivid. Like it's replaying in every corner he turns to, all but a hologram of reality never to be relived.

Jose tried to forget—not to remember the very day he lost a piece of himself. He was just coming back from school when he noticed the look plastered on his mother's face. Instantly, he knew life was going to be a lot more different from then on.

Life is always changing. Lives come and go; people will leave, and pain will always demand to be felt. One might even consider grief a blessing, that the pain meant what you had with that person mattered, for no love comes without hurt.

## I'LL WATCH THE FLAME TILL IT GOES

Anna Francheska S. Cruz

But what about those who didn't feel this grief? Did they win life? Were they so lucky to have never felt this pain?

Some children didn't have the loving care of a mother, a father, or maybe both. Perhaps there is a blessing in never having lost, but there is a tragedy in never having loved. Jose thanked his stars that even if they took his father, he still had the experience of growing up with one.

“Wasn't it funny?” He once thought. “With all this food, you'll think the dead could eat in the afterlife.” One of the heartwarming traditions Filipinos often commit to is to bring food, mostly the departed's favorites during visits and engage in a hearty feast with the rest of the family.

Additionally, it is believed that bringing or offering a candle is a representation of the prayer continually being repeated as long as it is alive.

Jose watched the flame flicker and waver. In his mind, he saw the candles of his 11th birthday cake, with dinosaur frosting and the cacophony of noises chanting his name. There was his father, with his camera documenting the whole party. Now, that camera is his only keeping of him. Memories and life alike stored inside a tiny box.

With Christianity widespread in the Philippines, Filipinos look at praying for the departed as a very sacred activity. To take honor in this belief, “Pasiyam”, or a 40-day prayer, is meant to honor the passing of a relative, maybe a grandfather or grandmother, into the afterlife. You'll pray a novena for nine days and one on the last day as a way of guiding and wishing for the peace of the soul of the departed.

Jose is not alone in this unfortunate yet inevitable suffering. The knife cannot be avoided, and time is a bitter reaper. It is known that the children bury the parents, not the other way around, yet sometimes a flower not ready to bloom gets

crushed before it ever gets the chance to grow. The grief of a parent cannot be understood, and the grief of a child cannot be understood. No grief is ever easily understood, for death is not a light subject. Yet as we all face the pain in a day dedicated to hurting souls, just knowing that there are others not quite in the same boat but all flowing in the same direction helps with the pain, even in the littlest amount.

He started grieving when he was fifteen. He is twenty now, and the wound is still bleeding. For five years, they never stopped visiting. For five years, they continued every tradition, for the dead are never truly gone until we forget. Jose and his family held the legacy of their fallen hero, never tiring to cook food, never tiring to pray those repeated hopes and wishes, never stopping to watch that flame flicker, and never letting go of those memories. The Day Dead, All Souls Day, celebrates the life of someone who once lived, and Jose vowed to never ever forget his father as long as he lives.





# KPOP, MY REASON TO LIVE

Azeah Jumei A. Dayrit

Have you ever been so obsessed with a band that your whole world revolves around them? Well, that's the case for a student who idolizes various groups in K-pop. From listening to their songs non-stop to collecting merchandise and buying tickets to their concerts, her love for K-pop is limitless.

"Stop spending your money on those Korean groups," as they said. I did not care. I love 'those Korean groups.' They saved my life in many ways that other things couldn't, even if they weren't aware of it.

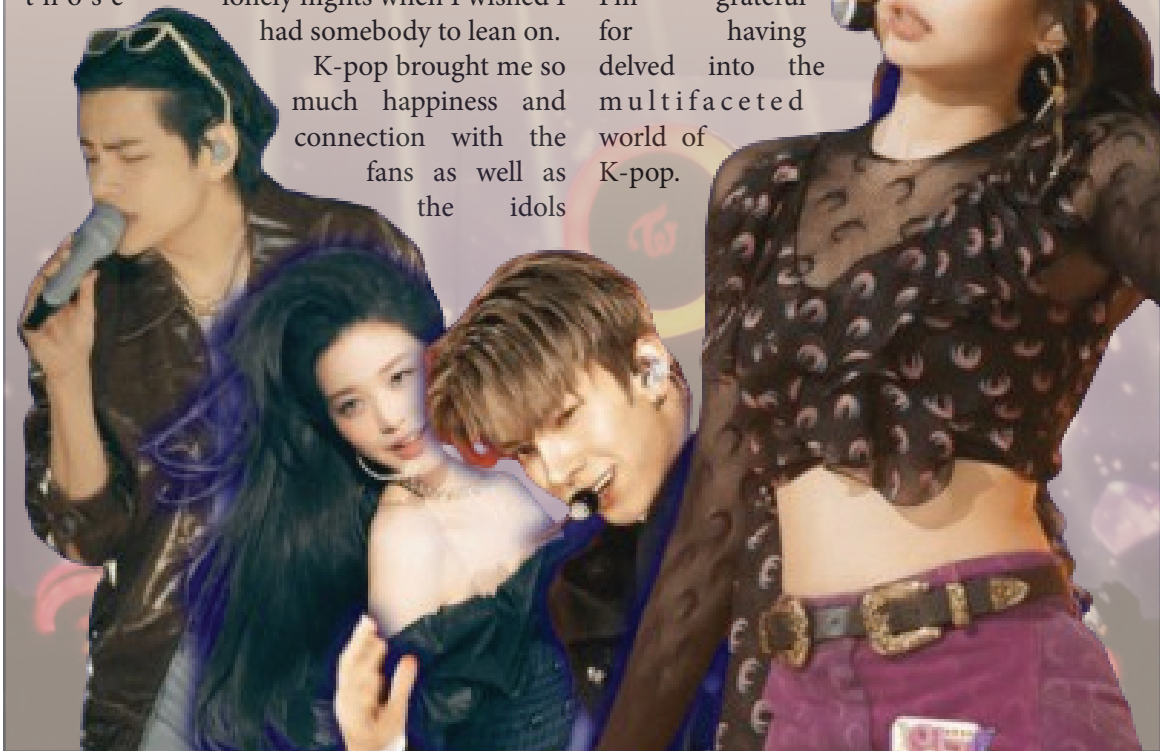
Discovering K-pop was an accident for me, but I do not regret it. K-pop has always fascinated me, not because of the idols' looks but because of their music. Not because of the 'upbeat' and 'catchy' songs they have but because I found in them the reason to survive those countless nights when everything felt like collapsing, when nobody was there on those lonely nights when I wished I had somebody to lean on.

K-pop brought me so much happiness and connection with the fans as well as the idols

themselves. It gave me the freedom to be the person I am. I aspire and dream of achieving the same success as my idols. The kind of success where I can watch my idols perform on big stages, like how Blackpink perform as headliners at Coachella and how TXT performed at Lollapalooza.

K-pop transcends mere musicality; it's an immersive experience that encompasses everything from the artists' crafted outfits to the captivating synergy of their songs and stage presence.

For me, K-pop is more than just a genre; it's a sanctuary, a space where not only I but countless others find solace and connection. The inexplicable feeling it evokes is a testament to its profound impact, and every day, I'm grateful for having delved into the multifaceted world of K-pop.



# IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DISASTER TO LOVE YOU, SUPREMO

Princess Mel L. Dizon & Samantha Nicole D. King

A hero isn't only measured by their strength but also by their willingness and perseverance to help others, whether they are helping people in their family, friends, community, or country. Just like my husband, Andres Bonifacio, he showed that all of us can be heroes even in our homes, and he taught us that a true hero is a person who really aims to make the world a better place to live in.

My beloved Andres Bonifacio y De Castro is known as the "Leader of the Philippine Revolution" and the "Father of the Filipino Nation." But from my point of view, he is also a good husband, partner, and father to our child.

Andres has always cared about our country, the Philippines. In 1892, he founded the Katipunan in Manila. I trust my husband, and I know that he intends to free our country from Spanish invaders, and that made me love him even more. He pursued me and asked for my parents' permission when I was 18. At first, my father didn't want him for me because he is religious and he can't accept someone who is against the church, but Andres, as a dedicated man, continued pursuing me for 6 months.

In 1893, we got married at Binondo Church. Then, a year later, I came back to my parents' house to safely carry the beautiful gift that my husband and I received, our child.

Our poor child—I didn't even get to see him grow up. But he must have wanted to see you, didn't he? A few months later, he had already taken you from me.

Who's going to protect me now that the two boys I love are now sleeping in paradise?

A tragic event one after the other, our lives became such a mess after our marriage, but that didn't stop our will to fight for the independence of our country and to fight for the will of our marriage. You've not only carried the burden of being a loving husband and the father of our child, but you also accepted the challenge of being the "Father of the Filipino Nation," and for that, we admire you.

After all the things we've been through, I still love you. Your last breath may be despairing, but you've left a history to remember. I continued the things you started so that this war would end. This disease of mine is because of your absence, and my heart cannot bear it anymore knowing that you left too early, Supremo. This heart may have failed, but it's because it already misses your presence.

My love, I've left all our duties to our fellow Filipinos since I know you trust them. The story of the revolution is over. So now it's time to continue the story we didn't have the chance to do so. Loving you was brave; missing you was hard, but being with you again makes it all worth it.

“Words are fragile things, but they can break the strongest of hearts.” - Kavya Dixit

Maria was always wondering about her son's situation at school. She doesn't know if he's doing as well as what he shows or if it's all just a show. A mask, a facade, a pretend, because saying “I'm fine” is easier than explaining why he isn't.

One day, he went home with his face lit up with joy. Maria asked what made him so happy, and he told her all about it. His smile was so contagious that she couldn't help but share it. Suddenly, she wasn't worrying about him anymore.

A few days passed, and Maria was scrolling the internet just to pass the time when she came across this post about a boy. He was in the same grade as her son, who committed suicide at the very school grounds he was studying at. She learned about his face and his name, all unfamiliar and foreign, yet suddenly all she could see was the boy she gave birth to.

Yuwan Lorenzo Magdato was a student at Rizal Technological University who jumped from the 8th floor of its SNAGAH/TED building. He was a 7th-grade student and was thirteen years old, about to celebrate his 14th birthday, until this tragedy prevented that from happening.

Maria found out the cause that initiated this unfortunate event. Yuwan had written a letter before his death bearing the statement “I'm suspended,” and along with the added story of his classmates, it was concluded that a teacher suspended him

# YOU'LL SAVE ME WHEN I'M DEAD

Anna Francheska S. Cruz

for cheating.

This action was done in front of the whole class, embarrassing Yuwan. The teacher was also known for the intensity of her actions and words, which were possibly borderline cruel.

Maria reminded herself that this was a case, and a case does not mean it's happening to every student in every school with every teacher, yet she can't help but be concerned for the safety of her child.

Yuwan bears the soul of all the other students suffering from the same misuse of authority by those who should act as guidance.

This embarrassment acted as a pavement for kids who don't know any better but to act as predators, circling a small, young, and vulnerable prey.

Every added voice, criticism, judgement,

and insecurity slowly fill the well of the mind. Maybe for Yuwan, it overflowed for him to sacrifice years and years of life and youth ahead, now never to be experienced and written in the storybook of his journey.

These pages are never to be filled, never to be colored. Cut off in a chapter with the rest forever remaining blank words, which were possibly borderline cruel.

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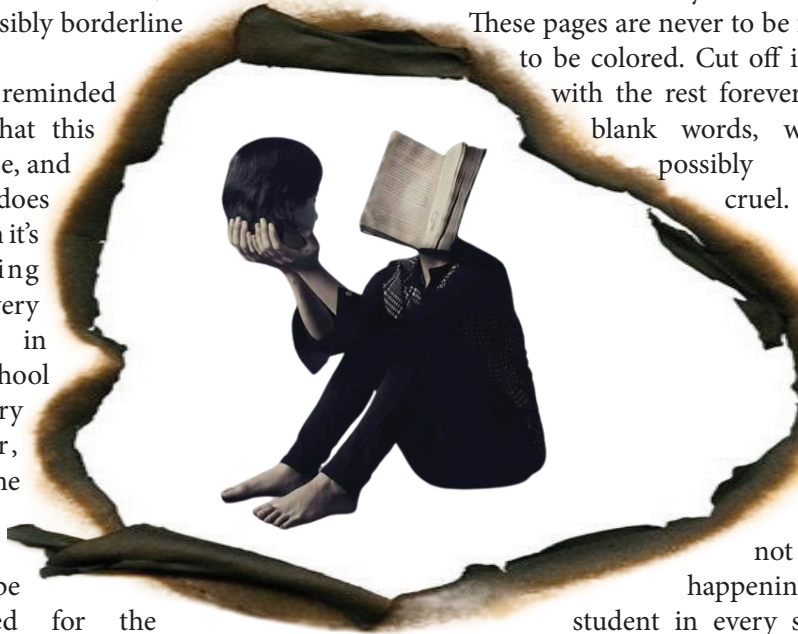
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Maria now feared the very same destiny that might happen to her son. Every smile and every laugh might be hiding a boy who feels all alone, never having the courage to say that everything might not be okay.

She decided there and then that she would pay more attention to her son; to see that in every “I'm fine,” it might not be. To ask how he is doing and to help in every way that she can. She would do anything not to let the same monster who stole the youth in Yuwan do the same to her son.

It starts with a smile, and ends with tears falling down a coffin, bearing a future never to be.



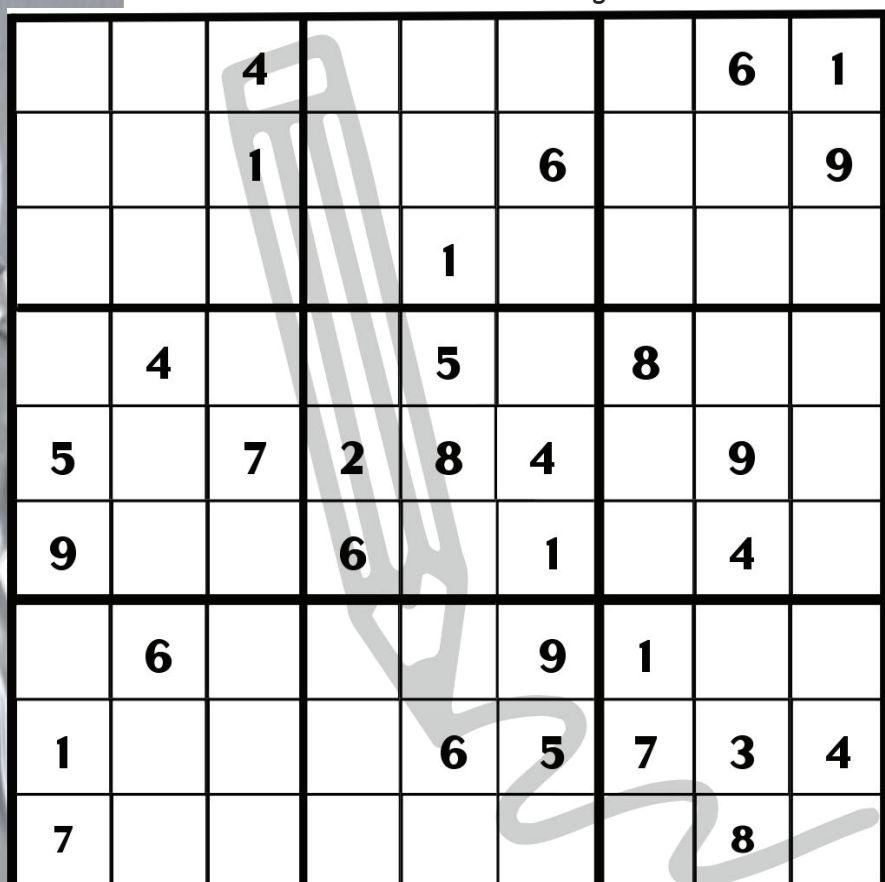


*Neesha Mae S. Gabule & Keyshia Louise B. Salazar*



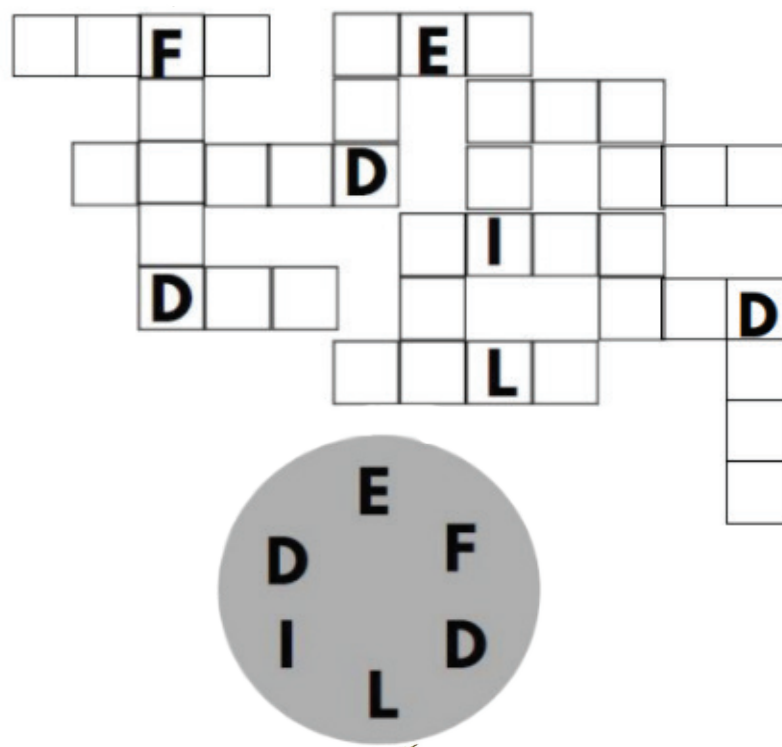
# SUDOKU

Anne Lorraine E. Carag



# WORDSCAPES

*Rhycel Rhian B. Torrejas*



# REACH FOR THE STARS

*Keyshia Louise B. Salazar*





# A Love Worth Waiting For

Kylle Angelo V. Dela Paz

If, by any chance, you wish to recall your steps to see if there's a twist of fate, you'll know where to find me. Right here, where you left me, right here, where I stood and cried overnight, you won't see me move an inch because I never left. I am now a prisoner of hope. A slave of time. So this is what it feels like to be lonely. But here I stay, in the remnants of our memories, the debris of love deserted. Because I never left. I chose to linger in the place where I felt happiness. I chose to be the ghost that reflects on our past. I hoped, against time, that you'd turn around and see what you've left behind, that when you finally look back, you'll see that I'm still waiting, still fighting, because I never left.

# MY CASTLE

Keeana Reyllie M. Flores

Dear Papa, I Love you so much, you're the first man who loved and broke me. You and mom always fight, but I always know what is right and that is to not choose a side. I love mom, and I love you too dad. The two of you made me and that's why I'm standing right here. Growing up I always look on the right, left, back, and front. But I can't seem to capture a glimpse of your smile. I do it again and again until I get tired. I realized that in the game of hide and seek you can never win if the hider doesn't want to be found. You're so good at our game to the point that I can't remember the resemblance of your face. But that's okay, because you're my father and I should always say thank you, even though I couldn't feel you. Growing up I got used to it and I just think that you're a bubble who got popped and evaporated on the air. I know you're there, but are you really? You're just like a ghost who suddenly appeared after all those years of finding you, you pop out of nowhere. You wrecked a steady castle that I built, I built that castle for years, and yet suddenly it broke down. I accepted you just like a kid who wants to be adopted, I accept your love and understand you. I was having fun with you, It's shocking but I'm starting to love someone whom I treated as a ghost many years ago. But when I was starting to include you in my newly built castle, you left without even saying bye to your princess. You left me standing alone waiting for your hug, you left me right here waiting for your kiss, you left me without saying goodbye, you left me without any explanation, you left your little princess' castle without shutting her door close. That door you left will stay open forever, until you come back to the castle we built in together. I'm your princess and you're my king. Without you my palace would never stand still, so please my king comeback to your princess, so that our castle could live steadily forever.

# Lover

Anna Francheska S. Cruz

List my tragedies from  
A to Z.  
Open my flesh,  
and enter the  
void. Voice out  
my echoes, a  
cacophony of  
silence.

Enter my kingdom,  
you'll see me  
hanging.  
Right now,  
paradise grows  
tombstones;  
my garden  
long dead.

# UNFINISHED BOOK

Kylle Angelo V. Dela Paz

Talk to me like we're nothing; I'll stay. Pass by like you don't know me; I'll stay. Leave me and act like it never happened; I'll stay. I saw your flaws, but I still chose to stay. Why? Because in every step you take, I see the beauty in you. I see the girl who loves wholeheartedly. But is this really the end? Are we going to be a book that is missing half of its page? Are we just a shard of a story that has missing sentences about each other's lives? I tried to write a tale, but my ink ran dry, and the wrinkled pages bear the unsaid.

We flew into nothingness. We wrote sincerely with every stroke of a pen on a blank page. We started a story, but why does it have to end on a cliffhanger? I am ready to refill the pen to finish the story, but why have you ripped those blank pages? I was hoping that there would be a wind that would slap me with the unspoken chapters left behind. Those words contain memories that will not be overlooked because they are already written. You may burn it, but I already have the copy in my restless heart.

And before long, the cruel truth came into my senses. That those pages would not be brought back. And I could not do anything about it. All of the idioms would be useless. The title "Love represents you" would leave me unsatisfied. The pain of the paragraphs that never materialized would be released. The pain of the absence in every period will stay. And here I am, with the story left hanging in the air. Still ready to risk it all again just to start over the unaccomplished volume with a happy ending.

# WITHERING FLOWER

Carla Venice S. Manalo

It was my turn to speak  
Yet something just hinders me  
My diluted thoughts began to creep in  
Afraid to be critically judged  
Again, I am a flower  
Required a sun to shine  
Yet grows in winter  
I am condemned to hold my peace  
And wither before I even bloom  
When will the chains be crushed  
So I could enunciate spoken words  
That could mean a lot



## Unspoken

Anna Franceska S. Cruz

## Words

The talk that comes with the voices  
of when I am surrounded by people  
faking advices.

The emotion that drowns me when I see  
another entity you please other than me.

I am an artisan of the mind.

I conjure something from nothing.

And to continue to believe after all that it is,  
well, isn't it folly.

It's the love, or lack thereof,

and sometimes I wonder if I'm to utter

the sings of the song never caroled.

In every letter, my signature carved,  
your name behind every thought.

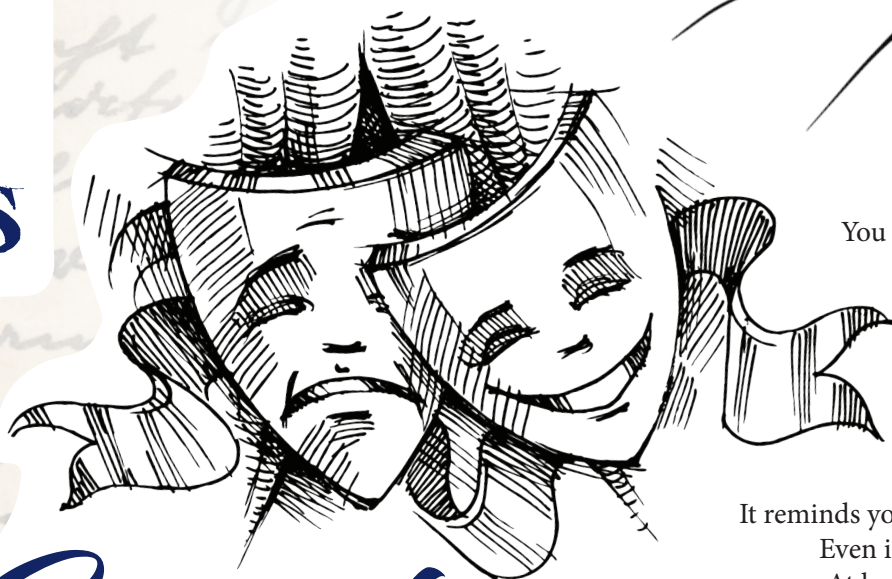
I'm all but a lost cost.

And if it's anyone but you I'll go,

yet your silhouette flashes on my every wall.

For another was never the search.

Perhaps it's just my destiny to drown  
in all my unspoken, unsaid, words.



Pain is a cold sensation  
You never expect you would  
sought

But if that would let  
them stay in  
your thought  
Wouldn't you accept  
it without hesitation

It reminds you that everything is real  
Even if it means you can't heal  
At least the memories remain  
And for sure I would do it over  
and over again

They say in time you would recover  
But what if I choose not to  
And decide to just wonder  
Across the field of my fictional  
view

I would rather be blind  
In the face of truth  
Than to be find  
Wasted among the youth

Sweetness  
in  
Sorrow

Carla Venice S. Manalo

## Hushed Light of Dusk

Guiliana Elijah P. Buenaventura

Lost in the hushed light of dusk, where shadows play and have a blast  
I find myself drowning with the thought of the past  
The city lights were glowing, and the streets were crowded with  
strangers  
However, one struck me, they weren't just a typical bystander.

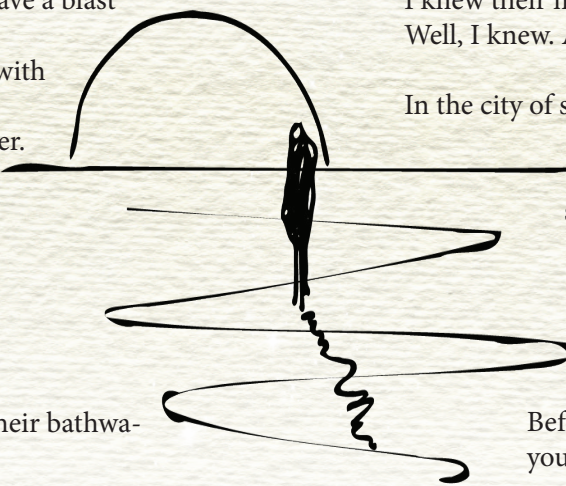
I chanced upon their face, looking so fair and gray  
I also took a glimpse of their eyes, still looking faraway  
I guess it will always stay that way  
Their eyes, faraway from mine, ever since that day.

It was indeed strange, for they were just a wanderer  
But I knew their favorite meal, or how warm they wanted their bathwa-  
ter

I knew their mother like it was mine, she just greeted me this morning  
Well, I knew. And now my heart is burning.

In the city of strangers, I stumbled upon someone  
I once called my home  
However, I'm no longer a resident, so I choose to  
stay alone.

But just this once, let me linger here, in twilight's embrace  
Lost in the wanderer's eyes that looked like space  
Just this once, let me admire you one  
last time,  
Before you go back to  
your new found solace

Whispers  
of  
Affection

Kriza Justine L. Anaviso

We once shared memories  
together,  
With our love that is, O so  
tender.

But why did you suddenly  
become a star,  
That now I can only admire  
from afar?

In our love that remained unspoken,  
My heart will remain broken.  
I have loved you for so many days,  
And will it be continued in secret ways?

Clandestine ache of my unseen scar,  
know you already come so far,  
I will continue to root for you,  
And I wish that this you knew.

A fondness without prize but with sweet pain  
Loving you will always remain,  
In the depth of my heart our love never dies,  
It will become butterflies even if it's all a lie.





## YOU &amp; ME

Ckrissey Jieleine M. Rivera

Out of all the words in this world, my  
favorite is you  
You are the art and artist that I admire  
so dearly  
Held my heart and wrote on it with a  
knife unknowingly  
I was hurt, but your name is there like  
a tattoo

I will never be the same  
Just tear my heart  
Please spare me, my love  
Our fights are driving my life insane

My heart sank in the sea  
You are my favorite pain  
Yet I still hope your ship won't sail  
Without me

FEARLESS  
MESS

Carla Venice S. Manalo

I'm not so bright  
I can't achieve great heights  
And I, for sure, can experience frights

I am not what you see  
I could only dream what I want to be  
I mean, I think there's no guarantee

Maybe I look fearless  
Maybe I look like someone who attained  
success  
But believe me, I'm more than a mess

But it's okay not to be the best  
It is okay not to suppress  
Besides, life is not a contest

I fail, cry, and even do something disap-  
pointing  
But, at least there's something exciting  
At least I think I am still prevailing

So, no, don't use me as an example  
I am a specimen of the word fall  
That shields within a mighty frightening  
wall

TRICOLORED  
NOOSE

Amara Venice Y. Pascual

They say the brightest stars die quicker;  
That applies to humans too, I fear.  
Though I'm afraid that when I perish;  
They would only serve as litter, the medals and  
certificates I once held dear.  
The stage is like a second home,  
The crowd's roars, my white noise.  
I do confess that I've grown accustomed;  
In using my achievements to fill voids.  
But I've decided to have a change of heart,  
And step down from this stool— my pedestal.  
To free my neck from this tricolored noose,  
As I am only human, after all.  
I refuse to be defined by digits,  
To break down over the number "89".  
I will no longer become a slave of competition,  
For in self-contentment, victory is mine.

The Last  
Missing  
Piece Is You

Nadyn Audrie O. Calina

In realms of love, where hearts collide,  
A puzzle incomplete, I confide.  
Through winding paths, I sought anew,  
Yet the missing piece is still you.

Whispers of fate, a cosmic dance,  
Two souls entwined in unexpected  
Chance.  
In yearning's depths, my spirit flew,  
For the missing piece is still you.

Through timeless echoes, love's sweet  
Refrain,  
Your essence lingers, unbroken chain.  
In dreams we meet, forever true,  
For the missing piece is still you.

In every beat, a symphony's plea,  
To merge as one eternally.  
In love's embrace, my soul feels true,  
For the missing piece is found in you.

## DAWN

Rafa Laurice A. Cruz

I was never sure about someone or something in my life, anything.  
Every decision I had to make, there was always so much hesitation.  
Even for the simplest things, I found it burdensome.

Choosing between coffee and tea.  
Between chocolate and vanilla,  
Or even between black and white.  
Don't bother for no matter how small it was, it would always leave me  
feeling uncertain.

But for the very first time in my very own existence,  
I feel sure about something.  
My heart knew something I was a hundred percent certain of, you.





**38,892**

## LeBron James shatters all-time scoring record, elevates NBA legacy

*Dhon Virgilio V. Gonzales*

LeBron James makes history as he sets a record and breaking the NBA All-Time Scorer title at the Crypto Arena during their match against Oklahoman City Thunder.

All cheering for King James, fans watched the match intensely as they witnessed him drawing closer to the 40-year old record. With a few more shots left, James was a basket away from claiming the new title—the title that pays off a player’s success and hard work.

It seemed like all the points he was able to score from the start of his journey came back and empowered him, which secured his success as he scored the final two points, reigning him as the new all-time scorer. Old title holder Kareem Abdul-Jabbar watched James beat his record with a joyous smile.

Seeing another player achieve every basketball player’s dream is undoubtedly the best feeling, as one can finally pay off their hard work and sacrifice. Who would expect that a young boy from Ohio would

be the current All-Time Score holder?

Behind his success, it all started with a passionate young kid with a dream.

Young James lived his life with his single mother. With the absence of his father for most of his life, he and his mother were left struggling to make ends meet which even resulted in them not having a permanent home. James’ early childhood started with difficulty and suffering as he once experienced living in poverty.

Despite their struggles, the family found a way to live. Gloria, James’ mother, found a job that would be able to support her child’s needs. It seems like the family’s prayers have been answered as Frank Walker, James’ football coach, willingly offered him a place to stay and welcomed him to be part of the Walker family.

Now having the means, this was the steppingstone of his basketball career as he was able to play in the American Athletic Union (AAU) basketball, which became the gate to his passion.

He quickly hastened his skills as James,

during his 8th grade, already showed off powerful dunks and shots that made him a basketball prodigy. He was also featured on the cover of Slam Sport Magazine 2002.

With James playing for the St. Vincent–St. Mary’s High School, his career continued to spark brightly as Reebok offered him \$10 million to wear their shoes, but James was a smart boy. With this incident, he realized his influence; he could demand from other competitor brands greater offers with higher amounts.

With 10.9 seconds left in the third quarter, people witnessed history made with James making a step back jump shot to finally shatter the record many thought will never be demolished.

“It’s surreal because it’s something that I’ve never made a goal of mine,” James said in awe after claiming the title as the NBA all-time scorer.

“I know I can play for a couple of more years; it’s all in my mind. My mind is still into it if I’m still motivated to go out and try to compete in championships. I feel like

that’s the thing that I can do for my group, my friends, and my franchise,” he added that his journey will not just end as he continues to step up for his passion.

Undoubtedly, James is one of the most influential players whose story is highlighted by his experiences that enabled him to grow into the person he is now.

Who would expect a young boy from Ohio to become a basketball legend in the industry when he grows up? Some people would think that his success was brought by connections or richness. The reality is, that James’ success was brought by his own pure dedication and hard work.

Despite his unfortunate start, LeBron James showed that anyone can be remarkable in the world by showing their passion and dreams. Even in a situation that seems to be unresolved, there is a way to be the person you dream and aspire to be.

With King James elevating his legacy, do you now consider him the GOAT?

## Esports: The Rising Popularity

*Sydney Aliyah C. Del Rosario*

In the fast-paced world we live in, digital gaming has become a vibrant cultural phenomenon, inviting the hearts of the younger generation. As technology continues to evolve, Esports has emerged as a thrilling avenue for competitive play and professional pursuit.

The Esports community is significantly growing all around the globe, with approximately 540 million esports viewers and 3.1 million active players as of 2023. As the audience continue to rise, along with it is the increase of its revenue with a current market value of 1.6 billion dollars and is forecasted to reach 5.48 billion dollars by 2029.

From small and humble video game competitions, it has now developed into a multibillion-dollar industry that the mainstream media is investing in as it keeps delivering fresh, and creative branding opportunities. As a result of its popularity, Esports is now recognized as an official event at the Olympic Games.

With the global rise of Esports, countries such as the USA, China, Brazil, South Korea, and France are known to be homes of active competition players with high rankings worldwide.

As the Philippine Government’s response to keep up with the rise of Esports and competitive gaming, the Philippine Games and Amusement Board (PGAB) officially recognized esports as a legitimate sport in the Philippines in 2017. This gives Filipino players a chance to play professionally and join

international tournaments to represent the country.

Including Esports to the curriculum opens avenues for youth to showcase their skills and provide opportunities to interact with other people. Digital gaming focuses on the ability of the mind to think critically and develop management training skills.

Like any other sport, Esports may come with risks as it is a free platform. Exposure to negative content, addiction, gambling, and health impacts may be observed.

With proper management and control, Esports may be a source of entertainment that can be turned into a career opportunity. The rise of Esports only shows how humanity adjusts to the development of technology in our world.

The swift rise of Esports serves proves humanity’s adaptability in the face of technological advancements. As Esports continues to reshape the boundaries of sports and entertainment, it underscores our ability to evolve, improve, and embrace the changing landscape of the world.



*The Rising Popularity of eSports in the Philippines (Photo by Hailey Margarette L. Mallari and Reiven Richard O. Mapanao)*

## LCCian snags gold in Taekwondo Meet

*Sydney Aliyah C. Del Rosario & Mikaella Kristyn M. Quimpo*

La Consolacion College Caloocan once again roared with triumph as an LCCian under Team LGPT (Love for God, People, and Taekwondo) Caloocan dominated the competitive Kyorugi Taekwondo tournament on October 28, 2023 at St. Matthew’s College in San Mateo Rizal. In a fearsome show of unstoppable skills and steadfast determination, Maria Joaquina Geronimo, from Grade 10 Fortitude, captured the gold medal in the tilt where several athletes gathered to compete for this year’s championship.

With constant persistence and commitment, Geronimo showed dominance to win rounds one and three, which proclaimed her as the winner of the match.

Even while contending with shortness of breath in the third round, Geronimo maintained a positive attitude, and it was precisely this resilience that paved the way for her success.

Despite having limited training time and being occupied by academic matters, Geronimo, driven by ambition and relentless effort, pushed aside her nervousness, and successfully brought home the gold.

Her road to success was a fruit of devout prayers and extended, around-the-clock practice sessions that made her reach glory.

“With every match, I made it through God’s guidance and trusting myself,” she said when asked about the reason behind her victory.

Moreover, Geronimo also expressed inspiration to her fellow athletes and students, “Learning how to manage your time is very important, but most of all, prioritize your health. You won’t be able to perform if you’re not doing well physically and mentally, so I advise you to always take care of yourself.”

“Always remember to pray and seek God’s guidance before every match. Be grateful for all your achievements and blessings,” she ultimately underscored.

With continued bigger dreams and ambitions, she will continue to pursue her career and use her skills to her advantage as she aims for a varsity scholarship in college.

In the meantime, Geronimo seems to be booked and busy, as she is starting to prepare for her next competition in the coming year.

Furthermore, for our LCCian gold medalist, dedication transforms into an accomplishment, turning the journey into a remarkable challenge for individuals to conquer.



*Champion's Glow: Maria Joaquina Geronimo shines in her gold medal moment following their dominant performance at the Kyorugi Taekwondo tournament. (Photo Courtesy of Maria Joaquina Geronimo)*